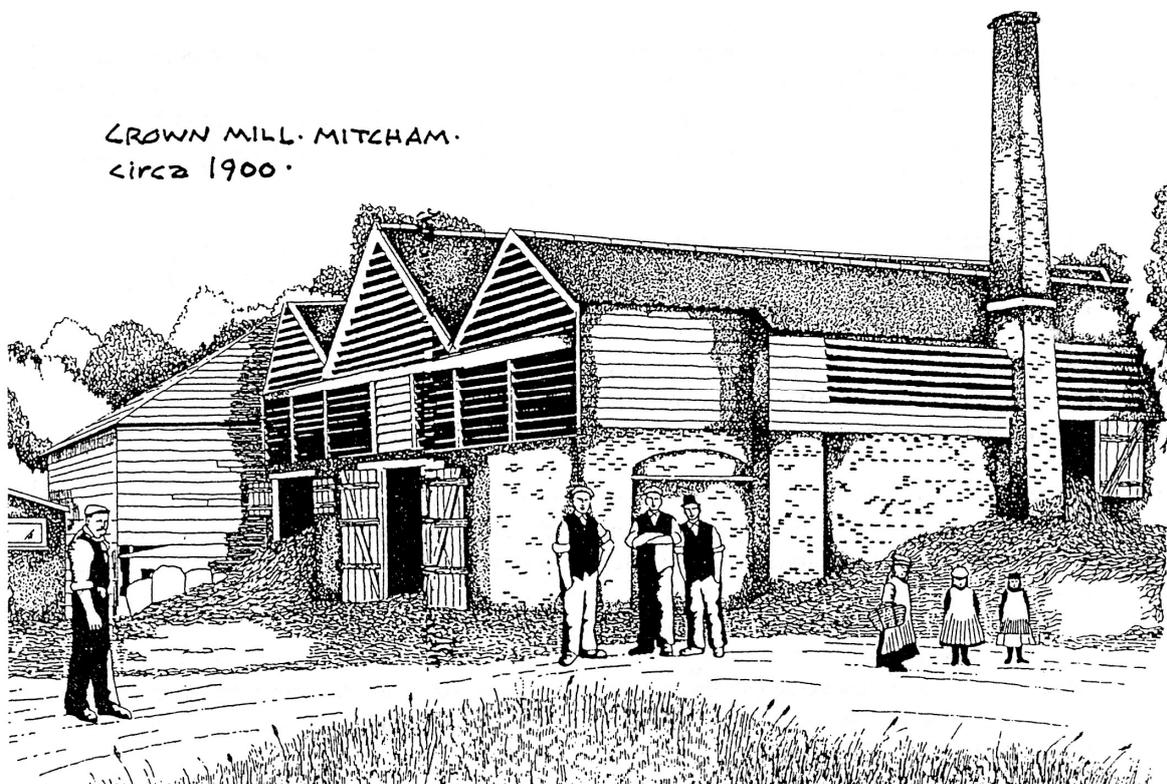


NEWSLETTER NO.5 – AUTUMN/WINTER – 1993

THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

The Vestry Hall Annexe – London Road – Mitcham –
Surrey CR4 3UD – Telephone: 081-648 0127



Museum open every Wednesday 1 – 4pm
and first Sunday of each month 2- 5pm

The museum also welcomes schools and groups by appointment

ADMISSION: ADULTS 20p CHILDREN & SENIOR CITIZENS 10p

REPORT ON ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, TUESDAY 7th
SEPTEMBER, 1993

The A.G.M., held in the Community Room at Centre Court, was well attended, even though Andy Vail did try to mislead everyone by sending them to the wrong door. Fortunately, aid was at hand in the shape of the helpful security staff.

The meeting was chaired by Peter Harris and We were pleased to welcome several guests – Paul Rutter of the National Trust, Julie White from the Snuff Mill Ecology Centre; Penny Parker, acting Borough Librarian and Cllr. Paul Harper.

Stephen Ashcroft has decided to step down as Chair of the Members Sub-Committee but remains on the committee and retains his interest in its activities. Thanks were given for his valuable contribution. The Rev. Andrew Wakefield has agreed to take on this responsible job, and Andy Vail has taken on the onerous task of Administrator. Other members of the Committee are Ray Leyden, John Viner, Roger Logan and Meg Thomas.

In the Annual Report the summary of special events undertaken by the voluntary helpers both in the Museum and at other venues was quite staggering, particularly looking at the number of schools that have visited the Museum.

Some letters of thanks sent in by the children were on show, indicating how much the visits were enjoyed. The forward planning reveals no let-up in this programme of activities and indeed displays the hope that the activities will be expanded.

The second part of the evening was spent listening to a very interesting talk given by Doug Cluett, Heritage Adviser to the London Borough of Sutton. He brought along some slides of the work carried out on Honeywood House while it was being restored to act as Sutton's Heritage Centre.

The slides showed Honeywood's own in-house river with its original brickwork in places. During the spring Honeywood had had its own plague of frogs, they obviously knew where to find a safe haven. As we saw, Honeywood is now a very worthwhile place to visit, and we thank Doug for the enjoyable talk.

We left Centre Court at about ten o'clock, escorted off the premises by the ever helpful security staff.

Written by Meg Thomas.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

The next event for the Wandle Industrial Museum members will be to join "A walk along the Wandle Trail" over the Christmas Season.

The walk is being organised by Colin Saunders (The Ramblers Association), who is also a member of the Wandle Industrial Museum. For details refer to the inside back cover. Please feel free to bring along other members of the family or friend to this event.

TO REPORT

New Coat of Paint for W.I.M.

Thanks to Heritage Action of Environmental A.I.M. our present home, The Vestry Hall Annexe, is to receive a new lick of external paint with the compliments of Dulux Paint. The project is being undertaken by Jolm Flowers using his Community Service Volunteers.

New Heritage Officer for Merton.

We welcome Sarah Gould, the new Heritage Officer for Merton. At present Sarah is based at the Central Library in Wimbledon. Merton Council's plan is for Sarah to run the future Heritage Centre at The Cannons in Mitcham. Members can contact Sarah on 081-944 8187.

The Vestry Hall Competition -

Congratulations to Valerie Cova of Merton Crossroads who won a years' free membership to W.I.M. for creating the winning caption to a photograph in their Newsletter.

Let the Train Take the Strain

Congratulations to Andy Vail who can now hear the distant sound of Wedding Bells. Andy, Andy, the Museum's part-time Administrator, has now accepted a full time post with British Rail. Andy's contribution has not only helped the growth of the Museum but has done much to contribute to Merton Borough's effort. Sadly, Andy has had to step down as Administrator but we are pleased to report that he will remain on the Museum's Committee.

Anyone who would like to apply for the post of part-time Administrator, please apply in writing for an application form and details before 6th January, 1994.





Merton Priory – The Chapter House

- a talk by Peter Harris -

Little now remains to be seen of the glory that once was Merton Priory. Founded in 1177 by the Augustinian monastic order, it survived the reigns of eighteen English monarchs. Ransacked in 1538 as a result of the dissolution under Henry the Eighth, its very stones were then literally carted off four miles away to Ewell, there to be used in the building of Nonsuch Palace.

These facts formed the basis of an informative talk given by Peter Harris on the 22nd August. It was held, appropriately enough, in the precinct beneath Merantun Way, in which the Priory's Chapter House remains are now preserved. The proceedings started at two-o'clock, when Ray Leyden, a member of our Museum, heavily disguised in a monk's habit of black cloak and cowl, introduced our speaker - fortunately not in Latin - to a gratifyingly large assembly.

Peter, it transpired, was eminently qualified to elaborate on his theme - the history of Merton Priory in general and of its Chapter House in particular. For the past several years he has been occupied in compiling an extensive thesis on the Priory, travelling the breadth of the land in the process. At Rochester Cathedral in Kent, for example, he was able to unearth much information about Walter de Merton, a former pupil of the Priory, later Bishop of Rochester and founder of Merton College, Oxford. Hundreds of miles further afield, at St. David's Cathedral, Pembroke, he was intrigued to find a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas a Becket, another former pupil, later ill-fated Archbishop of Canterbury.

The sketch is based on a model at Merton Priory, part of a permanent exhibition at The Wandle Industrial Museum.

The model itself is an interpretation of a typical Norman . Medieval abbey, and was constructed with reference to various excavations on the Priory site, and to plans of the church, chapter house and cloisters drawn up under the supervision of the late Colonel Bidder D.S.O., F.S.A., owner of Ravensbury Manor House.



Merton Priory



monks at church service

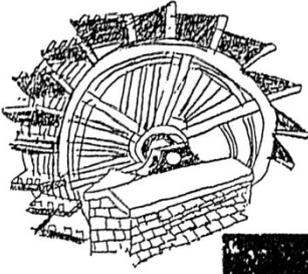
As to the Chapter House itself, only the excavated walls and a few other artefacts remain, yet With the help of numerous explanatory notices and diagrams, it was possible to conjure up an image of the place as it might have been when Merton Priory was indeed a power in the land.

The building, with its impressive Norman architecture. would have been used for various important ecclesiastical assemblies and parliaments, as well as for the routine administrative business of the Priory.

Certainly our own assembly of twentieth century "tourists" was much impressed by Peters talk. Not only was it an hour well spent, but it enabled us to gain further insight into yet another aspect of the varied history of the Wandle Valley.

John Viner





Polka down the Wandle!



The first ever grand 1993 sponsored Charity Walk was jointly organised in aid of the Polka Theatre for Children and The Wandle Industrial Museum.

The walk took place on Sunday 26th September and started at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre at noon, to reach Merton Abbey Mills for about 1.00 p.m.. National Trust Warden Paul Rutter led the walk along the banks of the River Wandle and sketched out the history of the river and the natural habitat along the way.

We were pleased to welcome the Deputy Mayor and his wife, who joined us on the walk along with a special appearance of Star Dog.

At Merton Abbey Mills we had another quiz which was organised by Paul Rutter, a free prize draw and a very special Duckathon, organised by John Hawks, the Manager of Merton Abbey Mills, which was not only exciting to watch but generated some very valuable funds on the day.

Special thanks to John and to Merton Abbey Mills for producing the entry forms and sponsoring the event.



A. R. SORRELL



The National Trust and The Ramblers' Association



WEEK OF CHRISTMAS WALKS

26 December 1993 to 1 January 1994 - Boxing Day to New Year's Day

A WALK ALONG THE WANDLE TRAIL

Tuesday 28 December 1993

Join Colin Saunders (Ramblers' Association) for a bracing post-Christmas walk along the 12-mile Wandle Trail from Wandsworth to Waddon, passing through two National Trust properties, with an option to visit a third.

The walk starts (for early birds) promptly at 9.30 am from Wandsworth Town station (*British Rail from Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Hounslow, Kingston, Richmond). Trains and buses will be running by then (on a reduced Saturday service), but you should check the times nearer the date*.

Those who cannot get to Wandsworth in time can join at Earlsfield British Rail station (* approximately 11 am) or Colliers Wood Northern Line station (* approximately 12 noon). If the party coming from Wandsworth is late, please wait - they will arrive in due course!

Lunch will be taken at the cafeteria in Morden Hall Park (by the garden centre, around 12.30 to 1.30), or there are pubs nearby. There is a National Trust shop at the cafeteria. Morden Northern Line station is nearby*.

The walk will finish at Waddon British Rail station * at approximately 4.30 pm (trains go from here to Clapham Junction, Victoria, London Bridge, West Croydon and Sutton). Those wishing to finish earlier can leave at Mitcham (2 pm) or Carshalton (3 pm) - British Rail stations nearby*.

The route runs mostly beside the River Wandle, and provides pleasant and interesting walking for most of the way. In Wandsworth borough, it is mostly urban, but you can see where the Wandle joins the Thames, and the route passes through King George's Park. The section through Merton borough includes the three National Trust properties: Wandle Park, Morden Hall Park (an idyllic setting) and the Watermeads Nature Reserve (limited entry - see below). Sutton borough's part of the trail is very green, with lots of trees and parkland, and includes one of the river's sources at Carshalton Ponds. Croydon borough has just a short stretch, but this includes the other source at Waddon Ponds.

Watermeads Nature Reserve. This is an optional side-trip, starting at 1.45 pm from the National Trust cafeteria in Morden Hall Park. There is a limit of 20 people, so if you wish to make sure of a place, you should book in advance by calling 081-686 0443 after 5.30 pm between 18 and 27 December - you will get a recorded message, then leave your name and telephone number. Those who decide to do this side-trip will not be able to continue along the rest of the trail, as it will be too dark. Mitcham and Mitcham Junction British Rail stations*, and buses to Sutton, Tooting, Morden, Stratham and Croydon* are nearby.

*** TRANSPORT ENQUIRIES: British Rail 071-928 5100; London Buses 071-222 1234**

ALL TIMES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE; you attend at your own risk, and the leader and organisers cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of late arrival at any point.

NEW BOOKS

Merton Priory.

The Museum of London teamed up with Merton Council to produce the glossy illustrated booklet about Merton Priory.

It starts by looking at the background of the area from pre-historic though Roman days to Saxon and Medieval times.

Excavations were carried out in 1921, 1962, 1976 and 1983 With the most extensive phase of digs beginning in 1986 when Savacentre submitted development plans.

The site was made up of a Church, cloisters which housed the living quarters, and infirmary, four cemetery areas and Chapter House.

Analysis of the site records and finds is still under way.

The booklet is available from borough libraries and W.I.M. priced £3.95.

Old Mitcham - Tom Francis, edited by Eric Montague.

Tom Francis was born in 1872 above his fathers shop in the heart of the village of Mitcham.

Early in his life he began to take photographs, of local people and buildings. In 1943 he catalogue his collection of photographs with notes which now has become a grand inheritance for all capturing the past.

Eric Montague has employed all his skills to edit this material and present a fine publication which reflects the life and times of Mitcham around the turn of the Century.

This book is available from the borough libraries and also the W.I.M. shop, price £12.95.

