

NEWSLETTER NO. 6 • SPRING • 1994

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

MAYOR'S COMMUNITY AWARDS

Peter Harris, one of the Trustee/Directors of the Museum was among the 22 borough residents who recently was awarded the Mayor of Merton's Award for Community Service. The award ceremony took place in the Council Chamber at the Merton Civic Centre on Monday, March 21st 1994.

The event was a fitting tribute to the many people who have worked so hard in the Borough and covering many different fields. The Mayor, Cllr. Marie Louise de Villiers stated that:-

"There are a great many people in Merton who do voluntary work which goes largely unrecognised". Cllr. de Villiers said:- "The Community Award was established as a way of thanking them publicly for their work in the Borough on behalf of the residents." Recipients of the Award have all made a valuable contribution to the life of the Borough and the lives of the people they have helped."

The Community Awards, were presented in the form of a small engraved trophy, given to each individual person.

Peter's award was given to him for his long service to the Borough, for his contribution to the Arts, Local History, and Education.

During the Award Ceremony, the Mayor, Cllr. Marie Louise de Villiers expressed a wish to visit the Museum in her capacity as Mayor in the near future. This is in the process of being arranged through the Mayor's P.A.

RIVER WANDLE BROADCAST ON L.B.C. RADIO.

On 14th December 1993, Peter D. Harris, was interviewed by Lawrence Spicer of L.B.C. Radio for the purpose of a documentary broadcast about the River Wandle.

The programme went on air on the 1st January 1994 from 1.00 p.m. till 2.00 p.m. and the Borough has a taped copy of it from L.B.C.

He was interviewed in the Museum about some specific aspects of the history of the river as were Tony Shaw, archivist from Wandsworth Library, Simon Mason of the Museum of London, and James Marriot of Platform.

If you missed hearing this interesting programme contact the Museum as we now have a copy of the tape.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

The next event for the Wandle Industrial Museum members will be a talk and slide show by Peter D. Harris on Arthur Liberty, William Morris and Merton Priory on Merton's famous stretch of the River Wandle.

The show will take place in the Main Building of Vestry Hall in the Ground Floor Meeting Room, to commence at 7.30 p.m. on the 19th May 1994. Please feel free to bring along other members of the family or friends to this event. Tea and biscuits will be provided.

TO REPORT

Welcome Aboard

We are pleased to welcome aboard Sheila Harris who has now filled the post of the Museum's part-time Administrator.

Sheila has been a local primary school teacher in Merton for the past 25 years and we are very fortunate to secure her services. A special message from Sheila is included on the inside back page.

Merton's Grants to Voluntary Organizations.

We are pleased to advise that the Grants Services Committee approved the Stage 2 decisions in respect of our Annual Revenue Grant Application for 1994/95. We are extremely grateful for the continuing support we receive from Merton Council, which includes the provision of our present accommodation. .

Wandle Meadow Park

The newly created park was formally opened by the Mayor of Merton, Cllr. Marie Louise de Villiers on the 9th April 1994 at 11.00 a.m.

The event was well attended and another page in the book for the Wandle history. You can find native trees, silver birch, alder, crack willow, frogs and toads, newts and dragonflies. Congratulations to Merton Council for making the vision come true. We shall be arranging future visits for our members.

Merton's New Heritage Centre

We welcome the new Heritage Centre which will preserve and record local history for present and future generations.

This will be located in the Cannons, Mitcham and will officially open to the public from 29th April 1994, and will be open between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. For further details contact the Centre on 081 640 9387.

Educational Visits

1994 VISIT FROM STANFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

On March 10th and 11th and March 17th and 18th Stanford Middle School came for the third year running to visit the Museum in March. As before this consisted of a Workshop on the Textile Industry and printing on the River Wandle with special reference to William Morris and Arthur Liberty.

Peter Harris showed the children a selection of slides showing the history of the Merton Abbey area, followed by a short section of a video showing the process of block printing done in the original way at David Evans Silk Mill in Crayford, Kent. They were then invited to handle various Liberty silk scarves and original Liberty printing blocks.

Afterwards the children were divided into two groups. One had a go at block printing using some of the Liberty printing blocks, whilst the rest had a tour and explanation of the Museum exhibits which were relevant to their visit. Then the two groups swapped over. Every child had their turn at printing and all the children who wanted could buy something in the Museum Shop.

Our stock of W.I.M. pens and pencils were completely sold out by the end of the last visit, and as it was 'Mother's Day' at the time there was a rush on heart shaped lavender soaps and lavender bags!

Stanford Middle School combined their visits with a trip to the Merton Abbey Mills Site and brought four classes to visit us, half a class at a time. This meant that the workshop was repeated eight times, but also meant that the groups were easier to manage in our rather small Museum.



Liberty Buildings

Every child came armed with a worksheet which they all did their best to complete. They were obviously well prepared for their visit and were well behaved, polite and enthusiastic.

Copies of their "Plan of Action" for the visits and worksheets were left at the Museum for reference.

Speaking as a new recruit at these workshops I found they worked very well indeed. It was a bit hectic repeating it 8 times but it got easier as it went along. We could have done with having a volunteer to man the shop as it was quite a task sorting out all the children's purchases, especially when they changed their minds!

I look forward to participating in some more similar workshops in the future.

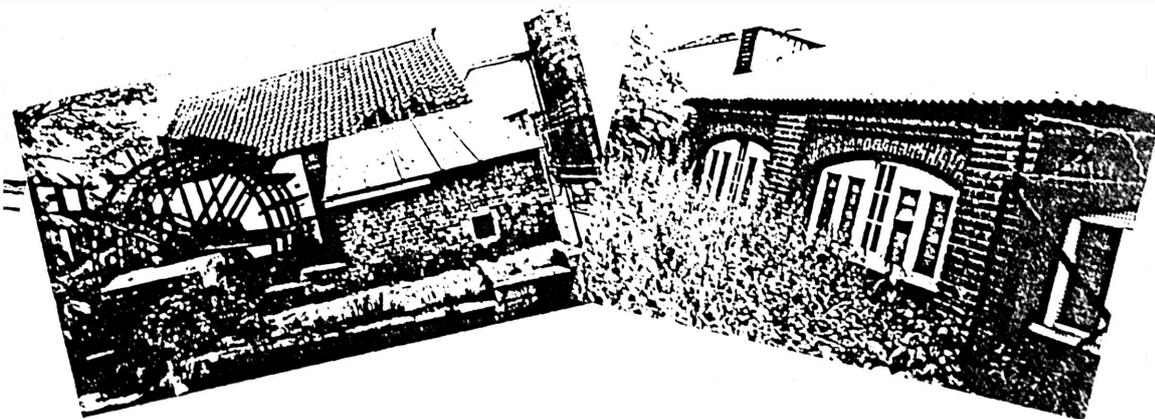
Sheila Harris
Administrator.

VISIT OF TWO PARTIES OF FRENCH STUDENTS

On February 21st and 24th this year, we had two parties of French teenage students visit the Museum which was a pre-arranged visit. These students came from St. Fulgent which is a small town in the Loire Maritime, right in central France. They were students specialising in Social Work. They visited Nurseries, Clinics and Old People's Homes in this country, and also visited London, Tower Bridge and the Science Museum.

The organisation behind these visits got in touch with our Museum and made the necessary arrangements. One group came to see us on the 21st, and the second group on the 24th. There were 20 students in each group. It was quite an experience to handle this as none of the students had any knowledge of the English language. They were taken on a conducted tour and explanation of the Museum and I had to talk to them a sentence at a time through an interpreter. I got the impression that they had never seen a Museum like this before. They enjoyed experimenting with the snuff. This created quite a bit of fun among the students. They had no idea what snuff was or what it was used for, or what it was made from. It appeared to have been a completely new experience to them. However, they enjoyed their visit to the Museum and we enjoyed having them.

Peter D. Harris



THE WANDLE TRAIL IN 1993

The most significant happening during the year was the establishment of the Wandle Trail Working Party, whose first meeting took place in November. Previously, matters concerning the Trail had only been aired briefly during meetings of the Wandle Group (on which I represent RA London Area; Graham Butler represents Surrey Area). As many other subjects are discussed at these meetings, the Trail did not receive the attention it deserves. The chairman of the working party is Ray Leyden of the Wandle Industrial Museum (which played the lead in establishing the Trail in 1988), with myself as co-ordinator.

The first meeting was attended by, among others, representatives of Merton, Sutton and Croydon Councils. The working party has thus provided the forum we have long been seeking for these boroughs to talk to each other concerning the Wandle Trail. Wandsworth, the fourth borough, did not attend, but wrote to express interest and asked to be kept informed of proceedings. We are trying to encourage them to send a representative - if you live in the borough, please ask your councillor to do what they can to help, as most of the work still to be done to complete the Trail is in Wandsworth.

Merton Council has been most active, by erecting Wandle Trail signposts at several key points and planning some new sections of riverside path (work on an important one north of Plough Lane, Wimbledon, is due to start in January 1994). A new section is also planned at Culver's Island in Sutton borough, who say they do not at present have any budget for signposting.

Wandsworth have also erected some signs, though their Parks Department frustratingly refuses to include the Trail's waterwheel logo, and a new riverside path is proposed south of King George's Park. We are particularly trying to get Wandsworth to plan a new path under the railway line west of Earlsfield, as this would avoid the need to divert via the busy Garratt Lane. We have asked Croydon Council to erect a sign at the southern end of the route (they only have a few hundred metres to look after), and we will be applying some gentle pressure on Sutton to start signposting their bit.

Something that still remains to be tackled by the councils is the matter of unprotected busy road crossings, of which there are eight. This applies especially at Plough Lane. Morden Road and London Road (all Merton Council), and Beddington Lane (Sutton Council).

If all goes well, we should be able to apply for the London Walking Forum's kite mark within a couple of years. This does depend on appropriate action being taken by the councils, so if you would like to help by writing to your councillor about any of the matters mentioned above. please contact me on 081-686 0443 and I shall be pleased to provide details.

I led the usual Christmas walk along the whole Trail on 28 December, as part of the RA's joint programme with the National Trust. It was quite well attended (62 people), and would have been more with better weather in the morning.

Colin Saunders
20 January 1994



MESSAGE FROM THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR

I started work at the Museum in March and I am slowly getting into the swing of things. As a local primary school teacher in Merton for the last 25 years, I would like to expand the Museum's work with the schools in the Borough. We can offer workshops about textile printing on the River Wandle with reference to William Morris and Arthur Liberty, and combined with a visit to Merton Abbey Mills, this can prove a very successful and meaningful experience. We hope to develop further workshops in the future.

The new Exhibition about Nelson is shortly to be constructed which should prove popular with schools. We hope to be able to work in conjunction with the Heritage Centre which is soon to be opened in the Canons House, Mitcham. As the two places are very close together, schools might find it convenient to visit the two together.

We also aim to encourage our members to play a more active part in the life of the Museum. We are shortly to take part in 3 outdoor events for which we need YOUR HELP.

Once again we are participating in the "Countryside Comes to Town" Conservation and Craft Fayre at Morden Hall Park over the May Bank Holiday weekend. We shall be having a stand and selling books and gifts from the Museum Shop. We need help with manning the Stall during this 3 day event.

DATES are:-	SATURDAY	30th April	
	SUNDAY	1st May	from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
	MONDAY	2nd May	

We shall also have stalls at 2 more events...

MITCHAM CARNIVAL DAY - SATURDAY 21st May, 1.00 to 5.00 p.m.

And MERTON GREEN FAIR - SUNDAY 26th June

If you can spare at least an hour to help at any of these events please telephone the Museum on 081 648 0127 and a rota of helpers can be arranged. N.B. FREE ENTRY FOR ALL HELPERS.

I am updating our list of volunteer helpers at the moment. We now have Mr. Len Sorrell who is the new Volunteer Museum Shop Manager. He is doing a great job but we could do with some extra help in the Shop on the first Sunday in each month and particularly on occasions when there is a School or Group visit to the Museum.

If you are willing to help or know anyone with spare time on their hands do please let us know. It is only with your help that we can really put our Museum on the map.

S. Harris.

Administrator

MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SUMMER PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Friday, 6th May

A walk round Morden Hall Park.

Meet - 7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. start by the bridge in the National Trust Car Park. Led by Mrs. Madeline Healey, a member of the W.I. Museum and of Merton Historical Society.

Saturday, 18th June

Visit to "Honeywood" Carshalton Heritage Centre.

Meet - 2.15 p.m. to 2.30 start. Tour to be led by Mr. Douglas Cluett, Sutton's Heritage Officer.

Saturday, 23rd July

Visit to Croydon Palace.

Meet - outside at 1.45 p.m. for 2.00 p.m. start.

Admission is £4.00 - Senior Citizens £3.00 to include refreshments.

Please telephone the Secretary on 081 540 6656 if you would like to go as numbers are restricted.

William Morris Society

Tuesday 3 May, all day

VISIT TO DITCHLING VILLAGE WHERE

ERIC GILL HAD HIS FIRST CRAFT COMMUNITY

In the morning we visit the Museum with its extensive Gill archive, with work by Frank Brangwyn, Ethel Mairet and Edward Johnston (the father of 20c calligraphy) whose half centenary exhibition will be on view. In the afternoon John Skelton, sculptor (nephew and last apprentice of Eric Gill) welcomes us to his workshop, talks (illustrated) on Gill and gives us tea.

All to meet at Hassocks Station 10—10.15am

(let us know if you are coming by car so you can help ferry the train arrivals the short 1 mile to Ditchling).

Tickets £9 (including admissions & tea) from the Society.

Pub or restaurant lunches are available in village.

Saturday 21 May, 2pm

THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY'S
39TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At Fulham Library Exhibition Hall, 598 Fulham Road SW6 (Bus 14, Underground: Parsons Green) round the corner from North End Lane (Road) where Burne-Jones lived. Afterwards Penelope Fitzgerald, the biographer of Burne-Jones, talks on Life at The Grange.

Admission Free (with Tea £1.50 payable on the day)

Friday to Sunday, 9 to 11 September

RUSKIN AND MORRIS
IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Accommodation in single bedrooms at Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside. Fee includes half board, local coach travel, entry to Brantwood (Ruskin's home). Visits include St Martins, Brampton and Jesus Christ Troutbeck (Morris windows), Broad Leys (Voysey), Windermere Steamboat Museum.

Strictly limited numbers, book early.

Tickets £90 from the Society