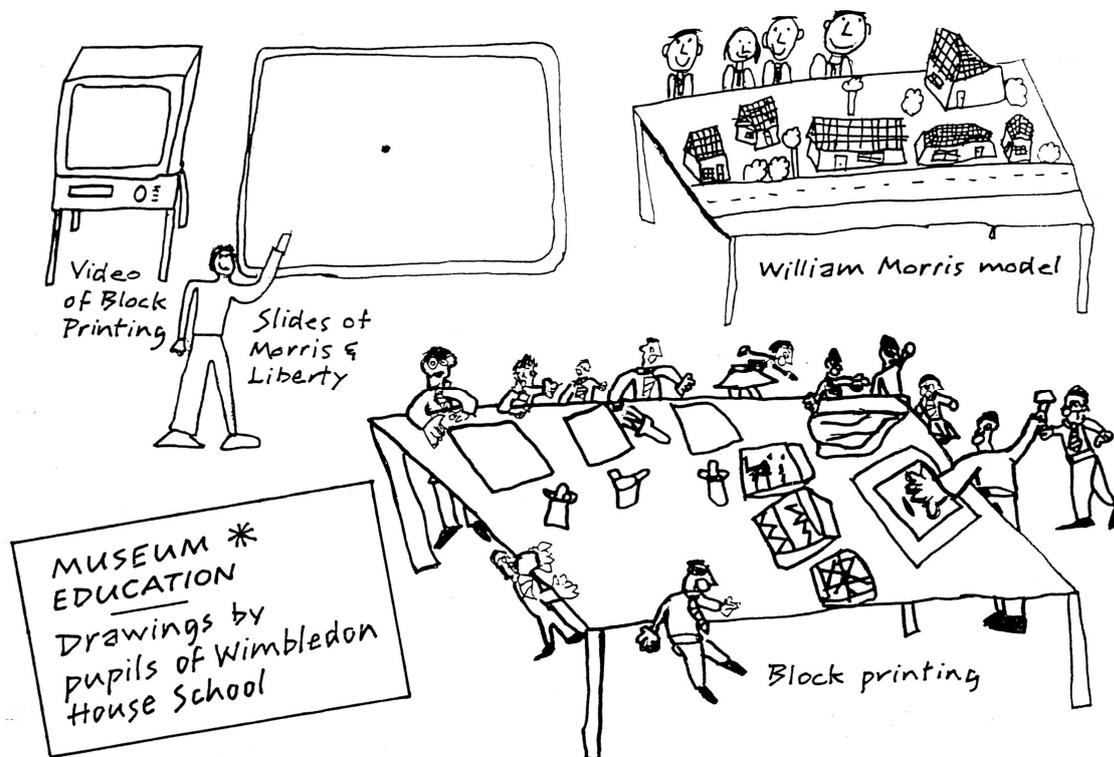


NEWSLETTER NO.17 – WINTER – 1997

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# THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

The Vestry Hall Annexe – London Road – Mitcham  
Surrey CR4 3UD – Telephone : 0181-648 0127



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

The museum also welcomes schools and groups by appointment

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ADMISSION : ADULTS 20p CHILDREN & SENIOR CITIZENS 10p

## **Museum Newsdesk**

We are pleased to report on two school visits and workshops at the 'Museum in December' from new members Wimbledon House School. We also presented a textile workshop at Pelham First School.

The William Morris Mobile Exhibition went out for its final appearance during the Centenary Year, to Ham Library as part of their William Morris Centenary celebrations. We have enjoyed participating in local events during the 1996 celebrations and the mobile exhibition has successfully promoted our Museum.

## **Members Events**

**Past.** On Thursday, December 5th 1996, 30 members and friends enjoyed our first Museum Christmas Party in the Vestry Hall. We were very pleased to welcome the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Cllr. John Cole and Mrs. Betty Cole, who stayed with us for most of the evening and were introduced to all the Volunteers who help the Museum in so many different ways. Host for the evening was the Reverend Andrew Wakefield, Chairman of the Members Sub-Committee of the Museum. The mulled wine which everyone so enjoyed was personally prepared and served to Members by Andrew and helped to get everyone into a festive mood. This event was a great success and it is to be hoped it can be repeated next year. Later in the evening some people stayed to watch the video "Topsy" on the Life of William Morris, which featured the Museum model of the William Morris Workshops.

**Present.** A visit to see the new Wandsworth Museum is planned for Saturday, March 22nd at 2.00 pm. We have been promised an introductory talk by the Deputy Curator, Sue Barber. As plans are in hand for our Museum exhibition to be redesigned and built for the Ravensbury Mill site, it will be interesting to hear about how their plans were developed.

For those interested, some people may like to meet in "The Brewery Tap" in Wandsworth High Street at 1.00 p.m. The Museum is at "The Courthouse", 11 Garratt Lane, S.W.18. Entrance is free.

Savacentre Fund Raising Day This took place at very short notice on Saturday, January 4th on a very cold winter's day. We had a stall, an exhibition about our move to Ravensbury Mill and collecting boxes on the Lower Concourse of the Savacentre. Altogether £240 was raised for Museum funds which was very good. Many thanks to all those Volunteers who braved the snow showers to help in what was a very draughty spot.

## **Anpeal for Members Newsletter Editor**

At the last Members Sub-Committee Meeting it was felt that an Editor for the Newsletter was needed. If any Member would like to take up this request please telephone me at the Museum 0181 648 0127.

## **Wandle Industrial Museum Membership**

Thanks to all those Members who responded so promptly by sending in their Annual Subscriptions for 1996-7. I enclose a renewal form for Members who have not yet renewed their Membership. Prompt payment would be very much appreciated.

Sheila Harris  
8/1/1997

## REGISTRATION REPORT

Since our provisional registration with the Museums and Galleries Commission in February 1995, we have been working towards full registration.

The recently received Report from our Curatorial Adviser states that we have made excellent progress, and that he is impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone.

"The largely unpaid volunteers have demonstrated a high degree of professional conduct and a growing awareness of the high standards expected of Museum professionals."

This is particularly important in the light of the review of Museum policy "Treasures in Trust" published by the Department of National Heritage. Its purpose is to raise standards in Museums and Galleries, including among other things proposals for improvements in the care of collections and the quality of service to the public.

Museums are encouraged to become registered and this will be an important factor in considering public funding. Reading through the summary of recommendations it is clear that we have already put many of these into practice and it is very helpful to know that we are proceeding along the right lines.

Each year the Museum has to send in the Annual Information Return to the Museums and Galleries Commission, providing updated information as to the state of the Museum's collection. In December 1996, we were able to notify them that our current state of Documentation was going according to plan. The accessioning of the Museum's artifacts was now completed and we were now in the process of sorting and cataloguing the Museum's collections of photographs. We also notified them of our Grant from the South Eastern Museums Service towards the cost of the design consultants outline presentation for the new opening display at Ravensbury Mill. This Grant together with the matched funding from A & J Bull of Mitcham enabled us to pay the costs for this professional design.

All this information together with our very positive Curatorial Adviser's Report will stand us in good stead for the eventual full registration of the Museum.

Marguerite Lee Delisle  
16.1.97

## MUSEUM EDUCATION

At the request of the Members Sub-Committee, we are pleased to report on the Education Services that the Museum provides for schools, groups and individuals.

Schools. We send out leaflets and information to all Merton Schools twice a year and have found that our textile Workshops are the most popular particularly with First and Middle Schools especially if we can be of help with the National Curriculum in History or Geography.

A workshop lasts about two hours and is carefully planned so that the children are actively involved in various learning experiences and are never bored. It starts in the Meeting Room at the Vestry Hall, where a full class of 30-35 children can sit and watch a video showing the process of block printing as practiced by Morris and Liberty when they were at Merton. Older children then see a set of slides showing the Morris and Liberty sites past and present. All children then experience handling of relevant objects such as original printing blocks and tools, Liberty silk scarves, silk moth, cocoons and thread, and Morris designed textiles. This part of the programme takes about 40 minutes.

We then move over to the Museum where we have the Printing Workshop and Tour of the Museum here the class is divided into two groups and do both activities.

Printing Activity. The children participate in a printing exercise using original Liberty blocks and tools and have a choice from four different patterned blocks and three block printing colours. They bring their own material to print on and it should be dry enough to take away by the end of the session They really enjoy this activity. Aprons and overalls are provided by the Museum and are a necessity!

While this printing is going on the other group have a short tour of the Museum exhibits and then attempt to fill in a worksheet. There is a choice of two worksheets and teachers choose one appropriate to the age and ability of the child. The tour starts with the three dimensional map of the River Wandle and includes a look at the model of Merton Priory, the collection of snuff and tobacco artifacts, the model of the Morris Merton Abbey workshops and the model of the Liberty Works at Merton Abbey Mills. Other exhibits which might be included would be Mitcham Lavender, Nelson at Merton, or the Surrey Iron Railway. The large table model of the Morris Workshops is usually a very popular exhibit. The demonstration of the taking of "a pinch of snuff" is also very intriguing to children - but we don't allow them to have a pinch themselves! Most children bring some money with them to spend in the Museum Shop where we have a selection of pens, pencils, postcards, cut outs and colouring cards from 10p to 40p.

Many schools send us letters, drawings and writing after their visits and we have reproduced some of these for your interest. See also the front cover design. We actively encourage all teachers to visit the Museum to discuss their requirements with us so that the Workshop or visit can be adapted to the children's needs and abilities. We can also arrange to visit schools to do a printing workshop on school premises.

Adult Groups and Individuals. Most adult groups request a guided tour of the Museum and its exhibits and this lasts up to an hour and can be arranged subject to availability of staff.

We get several requests from individuals for private study, requesting the use of materials from our archives. This facility has to be arranged through our Volunteer Archivist, Marguerite Lee-Delisle who will find the relevant files and usually be on hand to help with queries.

We also receive many requests for illustrated lectures and guided walks on the River Wandle to adult and community groups. We are happy to give this valuable service on behalf of the Museum.

The Museums and Galleries Commission urges every Museum to recognise Education as one of its core functions, and stresses that each Museum must have a Policy of "Education for All".

The Department of National Heritage in its recent publication "Treasures in Trust" urges Curators to make increased opportunities for the educational use of their Museums. In our own small way, we at the Wandle Industrial Museum are trying to do just that.

Peter and Sheila Hams  
11.01.1997



**SNUFF**

***Sniff, Snuff***

***It's Wonderful Stuf***

***The Houses are Filled***

***With the Glorious Snuff***

***It was made in a Mill***

***And Crushed, Crushed,***

***Crushed,***

***For all the People to Sniff***

***The Snuff***

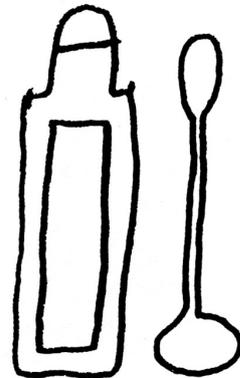
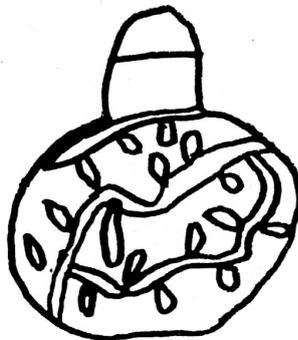
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***Christopher Andrewartha***

***(10 years of age)***

***Wimbledon House School***

***Written after a Schools Visit to the Museum***



## WANDLE PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

In 1995 the Environment Agency and the London Borough of Merton initiated a project to restore the existing concrete lined Wandle Park channel to a natural state. At present the channel is only fed by surface water run off from nearby streets. It is extremely polluted as well as being visually unappealing. The proposed scheme will reconnect the channel with the River Wandle so that there is a constant flow through of water, and put in a large reed bed to filter out pollutants. The result will be a clean stream, attractive to both people and wildlife.

In 1996 Groundwork in London was successful in securing funds from the Single Regeneration Budget which enabled the aims of the project to be extended to include improvements to the whole park.

In order to ensure that landscape improvements are appropriate to local needs and that there is a strong sense of local ownership of the project, a full consultation has been carried out with local residents and interest groups. A relatively new method of consultation known as 'Planning for Real' has been used. Children from All Saints First School and Garfield First School made a giant scale model of the park into which local residents were invited to pin flags to indicate which type of improvements they would like to see and where they would like to see them.

The 'Planning for Real' public consultation sessions were very well attended by over 160 local residents who had many ideas for what they would like to see in the park. Groundworks landscape architects have used these ideas to draw up an initial sketch design for the park.

### The sketch design for the Wandle Park Improvement Project



This sketch has been on public display and will be further amended to take on board the extra comments we have received. The next stage will be to prepare detailed proposals for the scheme.

Construction of the stream and reed bed will commence this summer, with the main landscaping works to be completed by the end of 1998. Again it is hoped that local residents will be keen to get involved in the planting of trees and shrubs.

If you are interested to find out more about this project or have any specific comments please contact Steve Griffin at Groundwork Merton Tel: 0181 9475750.

## THE WANDLE TRAIL IN 1996

The following are my personal impressions (mostly gained during a walk along the whole route on 1st December 1996) of developments along the Wandle Trail during 1996, proceeding downstream through the four London Boroughs. *Italic text indicates what, in my opinion, still needs to be done to qualify for the London Walking Forum's Seal of Approval.* WT = Wandle Trail.

### Croydon

Croydon Council and Surrey County Council have appointed a PACE (Promoting Access in Croydon for Everyone) Officer whose remit includes extending the WT from Waddon Ponds to East Croydon via Wandle Park, however it is unlikely that funds will be available for this during the current financial year.

Still needed for Seal of Approval: signage when extended to East Croydon; information boards; contribution to suitable literature.

### Sutton

The controlled crossing at the foot of I-lilliers Lane is now functioning. Upper Mill in The Grove Park still lies derelict following a fire a couple of years ago- restoration is unlikely to be completed until 1998. A new riverside shared use path through the former BP Chemicals site between The Grove and Butter Hill is ready for use, but will not be opened until surrounding building work has been completed in the near future; it will cut out the walk along Mill Lane involving two road crossings. WT signs (including waterwheel logo) have been installed at 15 points along the northern half of Sutton's section from the east end of Mill Lane to Bennett's Hole by the Merton border.

The informal crossing of a side stream at the north end of Culver's Island is no longer possible as the various bits of wood and metal have been removed, however a bridge is to be installed in this area soon. A channel has been cut here to turn the northern tip into an island nature reserve. An approach road to the new Watgardens residential development on the former Mullards/Phillips site provides a pleasant walk along the east bank for about 300 metres, but is unfortunately completely separate from the WT; apparently residents object to a bridge which would connect it to the Trail on the west bank north of Culver's Island as they fear this would lead to vandalism by children from the estate opposite. Fly-tipping in the river north of Culver's Avenue has been reported to the Council. The shared use path south of Ivfiddleton Road has a new combined kissing gate and device preventing motorbike access.

Still needed for Seal of Approval: signage of southern section; improvement to facilities for crossing London Road / Manor Road North; information boards; contribution to suitable literature.

### Merton

Toilets in Ravensbury Park have been refurbished and re-opened. The Wandle Industrial Museum will not now move into Ravensbury Mill until 1997. New signs in Morden Hall Park (already vandalised!) unfortunately do not include a mention of the WT (but the National Trust has agreed to add the WT logo on appropriate fingers, subject to space being available). The Beefeater pub-restaurant in Morden Hall is now open — no direct access from the park, but easily accessible by going round past the NT cafeteria. Toilets in Wandle Park (Colliers Wood) are still closed due to vandalism. There is a considerable amount of interference with signs and information boards north of Colliers Wood, either turned to point the wrong way or daubed with paint. The misleading double bike sign

More overleaf

Merton *continued*

across the north end of the Mead Path (as reported last year and as featured in South Eastern Rambler) is still there. Merton Council have plans for several WT improvements - hopefully some of these can be reported on this time next year.

Still needed for Seal of Approval: improved crossing facilities at London Road Mitcham and Morden Road; controlled crossing at Plough Lane; signs in Morden Hall Park and at Plough Lane; more information boards; contribution to suitable literature.

### **Wandsworth**

There is still no prospect of a solution in the near future to the Earlsfield Gap problem; the Council is trying to reach an agreement with the landowner. A public footway over the river has been incorporated into a new building on the site of the former Kenco coffee factory (west end of Duntshill Road), but this is as yet not connected to other parts of the Trail. There has been some interference with WT signs in the Garratt Lane / King George's Park area (incorrectly aligned). The Parks Department has agreed to incorporate the WT waterwheel logo on signs in King George's Park. At the north end of King George's Park, the WT route is called Cherry Tree Walk which is misleading - the addition of the WT logo here should resolve that.

The skew bridge at the north end of The Causeway has been removed; the WT route now runs on an improved surface via a previously existing bridge belonging to the London Electricity Board. Feathers Wharf will be put back on the market during 1997, but until it is sold and redeveloped, the north end of the WT (also part of the Thames Path National Trail) is still inaccessible.

*Still needed for Seal of Approval: gaps in signage to be filled; a solution to the Earlsfield Gap problem; contribution to suitable literature. An improvement to the route through Wandsworth Town Centre would be most welcome, but is likely only as part of a major redevelopment.*

### **General**

The London Walking Forum's Millennium Bid was rejected, but with encouragement to try again when improvements have been made (a second bid was submitted in November). If successful, some improvements to the Wandle Trail should result.

The Wandle Industrial Museum's updated re-print of its WT map/leaflet has been published and can be obtained from them for £2.20 (including post and packing) at Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3UD. The Wandle Group's new guidebook to the River Wandle is expected to be published during 1997 with funding from Thames Water Utilities.

There was no public post-Christmas walk along the Wandle Trail this year; I decided to do one along the London LOOP and Vanguard Way instead, but hope to return to the WT for this event in due course. There have still been no volunteers for the honorary post of Coordinator of the Wandle Trail Working Party; I continue to hold a watching brief. If anyone reading this report is interested in taking this on, please let me know (0181-686-0443).

Colin Saunders  
Acting Coordinator, Wandle Trail Working Party  
January 1997