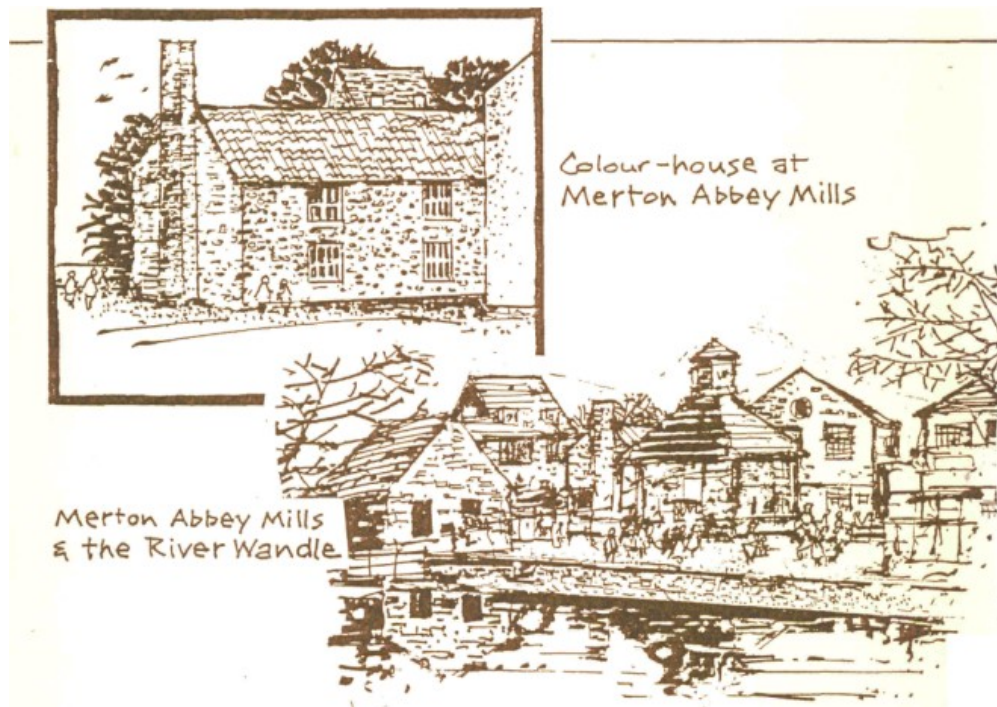


NewsLetter # 19 - Summer 1997

THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

The Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4
3UD. Telephone: 0181 642 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

MUSEUM NEWSDESK

MUSEUM VISITS We are pleased to report three school workshops since April; one from the Evelyn Day School in Tooting and two from Cricket Green School, Mitcham. We now have twelve schools who are full members of the Museum.

We were specially pleased to welcome forty-one visitors to the Museum on 24th May as part of the **MUSEUM'S WEEK "Magical History Tour"** during which members of the tour visited four local Museums in Merton. This tour proved to be a great success and it is hoped to be repeated next year.

Launch of "MUSEUMS IN MERTON WEEK" leaflet. This new brochure was launched at the Civic Centre during **MUSEUM'S WEEK** and should prove a popular and useful resource. A copy is included for all members of the Museum.

A follow up to **MUSEUM'S WEEK** was an interesting enquiry from a gentleman in Amhem, The Netherlands, who had read about the Museum in the Radio Times and got our address from the British Tourist Authority in Amsterdam. He is visiting London in the summer and hopes to pay us a visit. So the fame of the Wandle Industrial Museum is spreading!

Special Thanks to all Members who helped at the **National Trust Fair** A grand total of £337.57 was raised with shop takings and donations. Thank you also to those who helped at the **Mitcham Carnival** when £80 was raised on shop sales. Our stall was visited by the new Mayor of Merton, Cllr. Sheila Knight and the new M.P. for Mitcham and Morden, Siobhain McDonagh.

MEMBERS EVENTS

PAST Walk round Merton Park Conservation Area - see article on separate page.

PRESENT We are pleased to announce the Museums Annual General Meeting to be held on **Monday, September 15th** at **The Colour House Theatre** at Merton Abbey Mills at 7.30 p.m. The speaker will be David Sharp - Vice President of the Rambler's Association, who will give a slide lecture on "The Thames Path". Please note this date down in your diary. Special invitations will be sent out nearer the time.

FUTURE Due to the popularity of our **Museum Christmas Party**, plans are already afoot to repeat the party this year. More details in the next Newsletter.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Merton Green Fair this year has been scheduled for **Sunday, 14th September** from 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. at the London Road Playing Fields, Mitcham. We shall need help for this event and once again we enclose a reply postcard for your kind offers of help.

APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Archive Department is in need of a volunteer to assist in the documentation and preparation of exhibits. We are currently cataloguing our photographic collection, but there are many and varied jobs which also need to be completed.

Anyone who has an interest in local history and who is willing to be flexible and can work under direction and can spare one morning a week on Wednesdays should contact me at the Museum.

Marguerite Lee-Delisle 8.7.98

MEMBERSHIP We are pleased to welcome three new Members who are Ravensbury Mill residents who have responded to our recent appeal, for interested residents to join the Museum. We hope to meet them at the A.G.M. There are still some members who have not yet renewed their membership for 1996-7. It is important for our future move to Ravensbury Mill to sustain a strong Membership. I enclose a separate letter and renewal form for those people and hope they will respond.

Sheila Harris 14/6/97

RENUE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WANDLE VALLEY

The fast flowing waters of the Wandle once provided the 'fuel' for the industries which were historically so important to the Wandle Valley area. RENUE is a charity working to demonstrate how the power of the Wandle, together with other 'renewable' sources of energy, such as solar and wind power, can once again help meet the energy needs of the area.

The name RENUE encapsulates our purpose - Renewable Energy in the urban Environment. The RENUE vision is to bring into being a range of projects which, using the latest technology, will demonstrate the potential and practicality of renewable energy within the urban framework, in doing so RENUE will demonstrate realistic and exciting solutions to the environmental problems caused by conventional sources of energy such as nuclear, coal or gas fired electricity generation. The RENUE vision also provides a means to regenerate the urban environment and bring ecological improvement to the banks of the Wandle and beyond.

Some of RENUE's projects are already up and running. Others are for the future and contained in the RENUE Millennium initiative.

Existing Projects

From 1992 - 1993 RENUÉ partners assisted Merton Abbey Mills, in particular Norman Fairey, in the transformation of the historic wheelhouse, adapting the wheel to generate electricity. The wheelhouse subsequently housed the Merton Island Exhibition. Displays and a leaflet guided walk showed how 100 acres of the urban landscape around Abbey Mills could reap the benefits of renewable energy within the existing urban fabric. The exhibition was focused upon how the rich history of the area was dependent upon the power of the river and how the Wandle and other clean sources of energy could provide power once more. **Later in 1993 one of the schemes visualised in the exhibition was realised in Wandsworth. The Delta micro-hydro, a modern water powered turbine, was installed at the Wandle delta and now provides electricity to nearby St. Joseph's School. This project encapsulates the RENUÉ approach, combining practical renewable energy with the arts, education benefit and ecology.**

The Future - The RENUÉ Millennium initiative

Of over 1000 applicants, the RENUÉ Millennium initiative has been selected for the final stages of appraisal for Millennium Commission funding. This autumn we hope to start work on a range of projects. The purpose of the project as a whole will be to educate, inspire and inform, but more than this each individual scheme will incorporate working practical examples of renewable energy. As such the initiative will in itself begin to reduce our community's dependence upon fossil fuels and our impact on the global environment. The initiatives innovative renewable energy schemes include:

- **Two Renewable Energy Resource Centres** (the former lodge at Wandle Park and a new building near the heart of Wandsworth Town)
- **The UK's first Solar Pub** (The Jolly Gardeners, Earlsfield)
- **The Merton Abbey Solar Powered Shop**(Merton Abbey Mills)
- **Ecological Regeneration and Biomass Production, at the Wandle Delta** (using Osier Willow as a bio-fuel and ecological crop)
- **The Renewable Energy Roadshow** (a renewable energy exhibition vehicle)

A quick look at the map shows how these projects are threaded along the Wandle. We see the river as the thread linking the projects together and the river's history and future potential as the inspiration for much of our educational work, particularly in schools.

Burning fossil fuels to produce electricity produces enormous quantities of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the gas acknowledged by the world's governments to be the major cause of global warming. Nuclear power also has serious environmental disadvantages. By contrast the hydro-power of the Wandle, together with the other renewables are clean and green - and will never run out.

Robert Gross 26.6.97.

PAST MEMBERS EVENT

Tour of Merton Park Conservation Area

Judy Goodman, of the John Innes Society and Wandle Industrial Museum Member, led a small group of Museum Members on a walk around Merton Park Conservation Area.

We began our walk in John Innes Park, whose beauty has been recently revealed to us due to the removal of the holly hedge which was diseased. The park was originally the garden of John Innes¹ house and is virtually the same as when he lived there. It is an intriguing park full of twisting paths that bring you out into very different and fascinating areas. One, almost secret, small field houses the band stand, sadly not secret enough to prevent the addition of graffiti.

The house in which John Innes lived is now part of Rutlish School. Along side the park is a house that John Innes was never able to purchase, I wonder if he minded, as it is in the middle of his own estate. The house is now in private ownership again but was at one time offices of Merton Council.

We moved out of the park into Mostyn Road to begin our look at the houses that were built as part of John Innes¹ plan for a Garden Suburb. His dream was to develop an estate where business-men could live in the "country" and yet have easy access to their City offices and where they could live the life of country gentlemen. The picture of rural life is a little hard for us to imagine now when we stand in Kingston Road and watch the traffic swirl by. Still in the relative quiet of Mostyn Road we looked at the many houses designed by John Innes' first architect Henry Quartermain. Although there are many details that Quartermain liked to use frequently, such as pointed bay windows and balconies, most of his houses seem to have their own particular presence.

We spent more than an hour walking around roads between Church Lane, Dorset Road and Kingswood Road and the Leather Bottle. While we walked Judy Goodman gave us a most interesting commentary on the houses and on the gradual development of the area over the last hundred years, first under John Innes and Quartermain and then, after Quartermain's sudden death, under John Brocklesby.

We looked at one or two houses that had been built before the area was designated a conservation area and compared them with the three new houses that have recently been built at the Kingston Road end of Dorset Road. The architect of the new houses has incorporated some of Quartermain's favoured details, and once the newness has mellowed they will look very much part of their surroundings.

At the end of our walk we enjoyed a pleasant glass of wine in the Leather Bottle.

Meg Thomas

THE THAMES PATH - A RIVERSIDE TRAIL

The Thames Path meanders for 180 miles (288 kms) from the river's source near Kemble in Gloucestershire, through peaceful water meadows, past historic towns and villages, into the City of London, and ending at the Thames Barrier at Woolwich. Between Teddington Lock and the Greenwich foot tunnel in London, it follows both banks of the river.

This Countryside Commission National Trail is unique: it is the only long distance route that follows a river throughout its length, passing through major towns and cities and well served by public transport. Its course through a rich and changing landscape gives walkers much to see:

- Cotswold Thames; clear water flowing past lush water meadows bordered by willows, wild flowers and water fowl, with only the occasional lock or settlement.
- Oxford Thames; the dreaming spires of Oxford, historic bridges and towns of Abingdon and Wallingford.
- Chiltern Thames; the wooded Chiltern hills providing a backdrop to the riverside activities of Henley and Marlow.
- Royal Thames; past Windsor Castle, Runnymede and the palaces of Hampton Court and Kew.
- London Thames; from leafy Richmond and Kew, through the heart of the City, past restored warehouses and working wharves in Docklands.

By following the river, the path provides level walking along a route that is easy to follow. It offers both the challenge of a continuous walk for a number of days through a variety of rural and urban settings, as well as many opportunities for day walks or short strolls.

In summer most stretches can be covered in lightweight walking shoes. In winter or when wet, Wellingtons or walking boots are needed. At no time are you far from habitation, so even the inexperienced walker can have confidence. But take care when walking close to water. Some low-lying areas are at risk from flooding after heavy rain, so watch out for warnings and waymarked alternative routes.

It is easy to reach the trail, Kemble is just over an hour by train from Paddington and there are numerous rail links, buses and river boats providing transport to places along the path. The many towns and villages along the Thames Path provide a variety of refreshments and accommodation to suit all tastes.

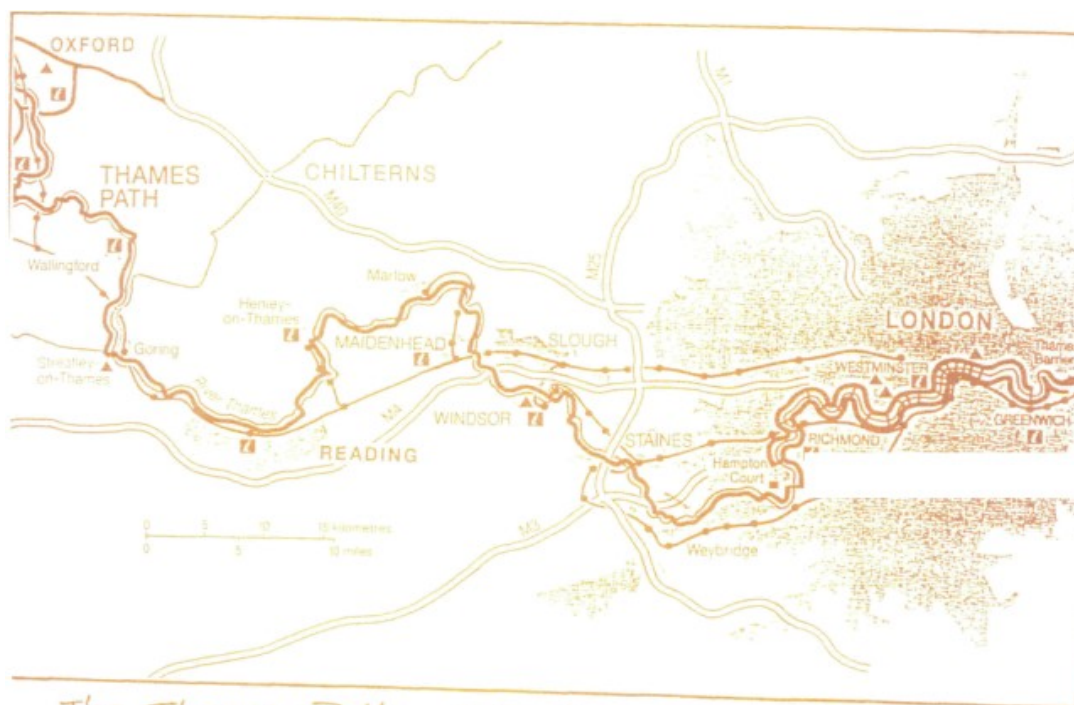
How it came about The River Thames has been an important highway for centuries. Since Saxon times goods have been transported along the Thames by barge. Before mechanical power arrived, these barges were drawn by men or horses from the bankside. Owing to natural obstacles and uncooperative landowners, the towpath had to cross the river many times. Ferries took men and horses to the other side, but these closed down as commercial trade changed to other means of transport.

The remaining towpath, from Putney in West London to Lechlade, provided a natural long distance route, and since the 1920s the idea of creating public access along the length of the Thames has been supported by many organisations. Increasing demand by the public for recreation and access to the countryside has made the Thames Path a reality.

Now walkers can trace the course of the historic river from the infant Isis, rising in a Gloucestershire Held, to Old Father Thames of London.

The Wandle Trail Links up to the Thames Path The Thames Path also links up with other paths, such as the Wandle Trail, the Ridgeway, Kennel and Avon Canal towpath, Lee Valley Path, London's Green Chain Walks and many circular walks.

Make a Date to Learn More If you would like to know more about the Thames Path why not join a special Slide Lecture Presentation by David Sharp, Vice President of the Ramblers Association at our Annual General Meeting on Monday, 15th September at the Colour House Theatre.



The Thames Path ~ Oxford to Greenwich section