



MUSEUM

**NEWSLETTER**

Issue 79

August 2012

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## 1 NEWSDESK

### *Visits to the Museum*

Visitors to the Museum during the Spring / Summer period have been good and I am pleased to report that the Sunday openings have proved popular.

In May a group of Archaeologists visited the Museum and in June The Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society enjoyed a guided tour and Printing Demonstration.

## ***Outreach***

After a rather wet weekend at the May Fair we were pleased to have better weather for the National Trust Green Day Out on July 1st and the Wimbledon Village Fair in June.

We were also pleased to participate in the Olympic

Celebration at The Hub in Mitcham on 28th July organised by Siobhain Mc Donagh Mitcham and Morden M.P. The Printing

Team have also been out at about representing the Museum at the Archaeology Weekend at The Chapter House. Some members and volunteers also enjoyed celebrating the Olympic Torch Relay as it passed through



**Figure 2 Wimbledon Village Fair**



**Figure 1: Meg and Alison at the Green Day Out**

Mitcham behind the Museum. (See article by Mick Taylor)

## ***Events/Dates for your Diary.***

Once again we had a successful and enjoyable opening of our new Exhibition 'The River Wandle and its Links with

the World' in June opened by the Mayor of Merton Cllr David Williams. A group of us enjoyed a visit to see the exhibition about the Hogsmill River at Kingston Museum. Unfortunately the July Volunteers lunch had to be cancelled because of the sad deaths in quick succession of Nicholas' mother, and of Margaret Stanners- see separate appreciation.

The next **Volunteers Lunch Party** will be on Wednesday September 26th. On this occasion we will be having it as a Fund Raising event. There will be competitions, a raffle, and an opportunity to buy some cakes and goodies baked by Mary. Members will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of their wine and refreshments.

It is hoped to make this a fun event to raise money for your Museum. Any other ideas, suggestions and contribution people might have will

be gratefully received. In order to enjoy all these activities doors will be open from 11.30am. We hope to see you there!

**The Annual General Meeting** is now booked for Thursday October 25th at Raynes Park Library Hall at 7.30pm Speaker Claire Longworth of the De Morgan Centre will give an illustrated talk on 'An Introduction to William and Evelyn de Morgan'. Put this date in your diary- invitations will be sent out nearer the time.

We do hope to see you at some of our events in the near future.

Sheila Harris August 2012.



**Figure 3 The Mayor, Cllr David Williams, cutting the cake at the Summer opening**

## 2. Museum Update

### *Curators Report*

I attended the meeting of the West London Museums Group held at Fulham Palace. The palace has had a Lottery Grant to improve its facilities especially their education suite. They now have large airy rooms and an excellent working space. To help with more funding areas of the building have been let to businesses. This has meant that there is now no parking in the palace area. I had to park in Bishops Avenue, at some cost!

The museum itself has been allocated one parking space. I did not have time to visit more of the palace then, but I think future visits will be by public transport.

Meg Thomas

### *Archivists' Report*

Two significant new books published this year were added recently. The first is from the Carshalton and District Archaeological Society, written by Beverley Shew, entitled Times Remembered, Times Past : a History of Beddington and Bandon. Its presentation is refreshingly different – chapters are arranged in alphabetical order by subject. The index is excellent with the important entries clearly identified. It has already been used to answer several queries from museum visitors, as up to now we have had very little in book form about that area.

The second is River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide, by Bob Steele with Derek Coleman, published by Culverhouse Books. It is extensively illustrated, especially in the Trail Guide section, where some older Ordnance Survey maps have been used to help identify historic locations along the river. There is a separate names index from the main index, and the whole work is very comprehensive. We have found it invaluable as an index to illustrations and for pulling together all the latest water management issues.

However, it would have benefitted from more judicious editing, and in the case of the paperback version, much better binding.

We have also received some photos and reminiscences from Jim Goddard, who worked at Liberty's during part of WW2 until 1973.

Alison & Jacqui.

## ***Other News***

### **Margaret Stanners Remembered**



**Figure 4 Margaret Stanners on her 80th birthday at the Museum**

I first met Margaret in March 1994 when she first came to the Museum as a Volunteer Typist. She had recently retired from work at Smith Meters in Rowan Road Mitcham, where she worked with her partner Roger Steele who later became the museum Volunteer Treasurer.

We didn't have 'interviews' for volunteer posts in those days - just an informal chat. Margaret and I found we had many things in common. I had lived in Mitcham myself and knew Roger's two sons from my days teaching at S.S. Peter and Paul Primary School by Cricket Green. Margaret agreed to start as soon as possible and brought along her own typewriter, chair and footstool.



**Figure 5 Margaret at her retirement party in 1999**

She worked in the Museum on Wednesdays with me, my late husband Peter and Marguerite our original archivist. We all got on like a house on fire and worked together as a team.

Margaret stayed with us until 1999 when she retired from the museum, but remained a loyal volunteer

helping at Fetes and Fairs and attending Volunteer Lunches, A.G.Ms and group visits and outings

Above all Margaret was a great lady, polite, discreet and caring of others, and who never spoke ill of other people. She was very family orientated and her three daughters were her life, as were Roger's two sons.

In 2008 we celebrated her 80th birthday at our annual Christmas Party.



**Figure 6 Happier times - Margaret with Roger and a group from the Museum at Wimbledon Theatre for a night out**

During the last year she became unwell, but never complained and still came to our volunteer lunches when she could. She died on 9th July 2012.

Ten Museum members attended her funeral on 24th July at which her three daughters spoke highly of their Mother's love and dedication to the family.

Our thoughts are with Roger and all the family at this sad time. Margaret will be remembered and be much missed by everyone at the Museum

Sheila Harris, 8/8/12

## **Ravensbury and WVLP bid.**

Last Newsletter we were happy to report that the end appeared in sight in our long running battle to be at Ravensbury Mill, with both the end July litigation deadline fast approaching, and the extra impetus of the Wandle Valley Landscape Partnership HLF bid participation to allow us to hit the ground running once we had the lease.

The ongoing development of the Wandle Valley Regional Park, and its coming need for premises from which its permanent officer could work was also looking an extremely good fit for us.

Sadly, the end of July has come and gone, and there has been no news. We must assume that this silence betokens a failure of the parties to the litigation to agree terms, and a return to the courtroom to resolve matters.

If we are not able to demonstrate the certainty that a lease is coming our way, we will have to be dropped from the WVLP bid, despite the best efforts of Stephen Crabtree, its project officer, to keep our participation alive.

In its most recent form, the bid would have funded the restoration of the wheels, and the expenses of the environmental research and subsequent application to the Environment Agency to allow the wheels to work again.

Time is, unfortunately, running out fast and, once again, our first meeting of the Management committee following the summer break will have to concentrate on plans for the coming year based in Vestry Hall alone.

Nicholas Hart

## Summer Opening



**Figure 7 Meg Thomas opening the exhibition with our Chair and the Mayor in attendance.**

As mentioned in Newsdesk, the Summer Opening was a great success again. Our thanks as always to Meg and her team who thought up and mounted the exhibition, and to Mary and her team who organised the catering to the high standards that have now become

expected of us.

A remarkable indication of our Summer Opening's place in the

Merton calendar was the presence of no less than 6 former Mayors of Merton (Cllrs Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Nick Draper, Ian Munn, Sheila Knight, Geraldine Stanford and John Dahoney) as well as the current Mayor, Cllr David Williams.

It is extraordinarily encouraging to see this level of support and interest, and long may it continue.

## Kidsfest

Hot off the press, our last outdoor event of the summer was a blockprinting outreach at Kidsfest at Merton Abbey Mills on August bank holiday Monday.



**Figure 8 Cllr David Williams, mayor of Merton, makes an impression!**

and will encourage them to come back for more at future events so they can complete the set.

A busy day saw last year's record of 150 prints far exceeded – some 240 prints were made and with each print one of our leaflets was distributed.

240 children in five and a half hours of non stop working meant one child was being seen every 90 seconds or so – some production line!

## **WIM and the Olympics**

### Olympic Fever

The museum showed its colours during the Olympic period. The Olympic Torch Relay passed through Merton on Monday 23rd July coming down Bishopsford Road, along London Road and around the Lower Green where the museum is situated. As a result we decided to open up the back of the museum and offer soft drinks to the many spectators who had gathered on the green. Given the level of response we had on one of the hottest days of the year it was well worth the effort.

With Mary still suffering from a damaged knee, this was run by the formidable team of Alison and Michael, using the new protocol which allows children to take their prints away immediately.

The new small V&A blocks continue to make these events even more colourful and enjoyable for children,



**Figure 9 Our stall at the back of the Museum for the torch relay**

Helen and her friend Gloria along with Alison and Meg did a great job keeping our customers happy. As you may expect we also had calls from people to use our toilet! This we gratefully did and most gave us a donation for its use. We also took the

chance to advertise the museum handing out flyers and telling people about the museum.

The Lower Green was a change over point for the Torch. The two people involved at our change over point were Huizhen 'Daisy' Chen (aged 25) a charity worker and Shaun White (aged 14) who is a wheelchair London Youth Games Participant. Peter Cousins and I took advantage of the ladies working on the stall to take a number of photographs. Some have now been given to the Merton Historical Society to be added to the Surrey Archives.



**Figure 10 The Torch Relay team and the essential cold drinks!**

The Olympic Fever continued on Saturday 28th July when we had a stall at the Olympic Day and Community Fair organised by Siobhain McDonagh the MP for Mitcham and Morden. Meg helped get the materials, displays and games we planned to use there and back. Bart and I manned the stall on the day. There was many mind games going on with our Trout Game

but we did end up with a winner – Philip Wood from Tooting. We also had a display of photos from different parts of the River Wandle and invited people to work out where they had been taken. For a donation we would give people the answers.

We made a number of new contacts and there was a lot of interest from people wanting to know more about the museum. I also had a long chat with a gentleman who was a block printer at the Liberty Print Works. One story he told me was of a special job he had one day which turned out

to be a dress for Princess Margaret. Alison has his details and hopefully will be following up with him to capture some more stories.



**Figure 11 Bart and our stall at the Hub**

I am sure everyone will have their own memories of this year's Olympics. These two events will certainly be amongst mine.

Michael Taylor

## **Merton Priory**

The removal of the excess sand from outside the Chapter House evidences that the s106 money is starting to have an effect. However the original plan to spend a small amount of it on installing some basic amenities on the site (kitchen, WC's etc.) has now been put on hold as it has become apparent that the Chapter House could benefit by forming part of the WVLP bid itself. This has led to a much grander first step being proposed, and some of you will have seen the plans at the last open weekend. For those who would like more detail, do please come on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in September when it is open again for London Open House.

We still do not know how this will pan out and legal considerations are once again confusing the issue, and we wish them well.

## General

Following on from Michael's article above, many of you will know that I was a volunteer Gamesmaker during the Olympics, putting in 8 days as part of the brand protection team mainly at the Volleyball zone in Earls Court, but with one day at the tennis in Wimbledon .

Brand protection's main purpose was to ensure that the Olympic brands were not being abused by ticket touts and street traders around the venues, and, in the venues, to ensure that the commercial brands who had paid the most had due prominence for their products.

Although this meant I was characterised by my sons as a Stasi operative, the job varied between jolly along the odd Polish entrepreneur selling scarves and banners in the streets outside, ensuring the concessions inside weren't advertising the wrong products, and, most of the time, going round the venue with my roll of sticky tape covering over signs in the loos which advertised the various fittings.

I am told this was a valuable contribution, and I hope so! One day I took a pedometer with me, and each trip around the two exhibition halls at Earls Court counted as a mile, and the route around the venue to the station and back as another mile. Five to 6 miles a day was average, and it was just as well the shoes they provided were up to the job!



**Figure 12 Nicholas in Gamesmaker uniform at Earls Court**

A word about the army – the troops who had been brought in at the last moment to run the security were highly impressive in their quiet efficiency and lack of complaint. We forget how young many of them are, and what they have already seen on active service. They were at Earls Court in large numbers, but, instead of their presence feeling oppressive and threatening they were able to become just part of the scenery and I heard not one complaint about them. Far from being overawed, two of our more motherly gamesmakers even expressed the wish to take some of the younger soldiers home so they could be looked after properly.

Nicholas Hart

## Mitcham Watch-House

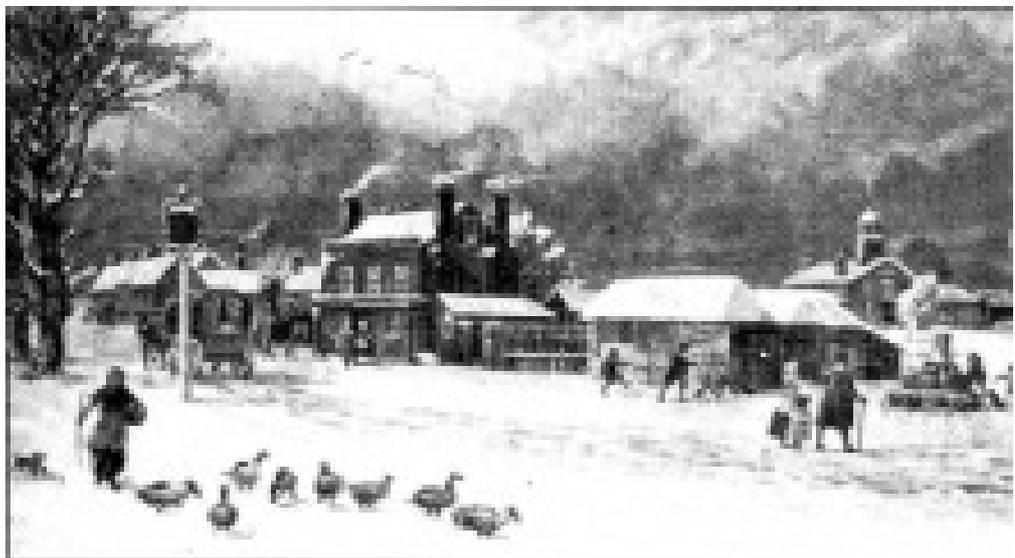
One Wednesday afternoon a gentleman visitor to the museum remarked that he could remember the old gaol that stood on the site the museum now occupies. It is

very unlikely that he does remember it as it was pulled down when the Vestry Hall was built.

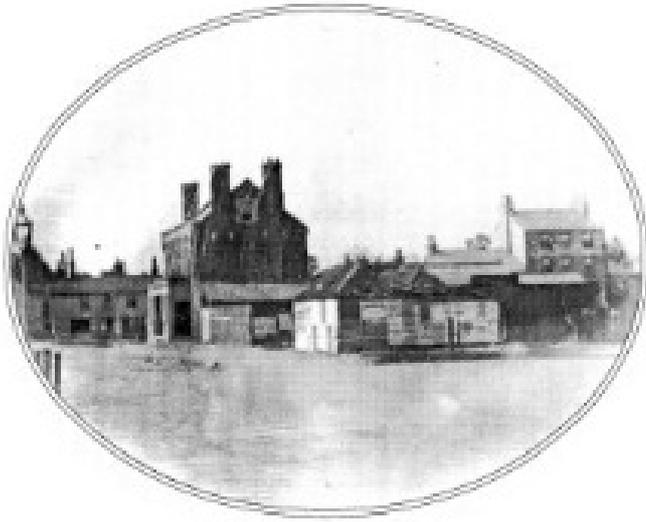
Either that or he had aged very

well! The Vestry Hall was completed in

1887. This did however beg the question about the history of the gaol. For the answer over to Eric Montague and his book 'Lower Green West, Mitcham.



**Figure 13 An early 19th Century artist's impression.  
Merton Library Service.**



**Figure 14 An early photograph of Lower Green West, showing the Cricketers and the Cage or Lock - Up. Tom Francis Collection, reproduced by kind permission of Merton Library Service.**

The following are the highlights of what you will find in Eric's book.

The decision was made by the local parish in March 1765 for the erection of a 'watch-house' which could be used as a lock-up or temporary gaol. This followed a vestry meeting at the King's Head public house now the Burn Bullock. Permission had to be obtained from the dean and chapter of Canterbury. The building was not to exceed 12 feet by 20. It took eight months for the go ahead to be given with a sum of 1d to be paid yearly to Canterbury.



**Figure 15 Another image from the Tom Francis Collection**

The single-storey rectangular building was built of red brick and tile and is likely to have been devoid of windows. It may have had space for a constable or watchman but there are no details available of the interior. The building became known as the 'Cage'. It was pulled down when the Vestry Hall was built.

In the front of the 'Cage' stood the village stocks. It is not known when they were erected but they played their part in local law enforcement until the early 1800's.

Michael Taylor



A full colour version of this newsletter is available online at [www.wandle.org](http://www.wandle.org). If any subscriber is happy to receive the newsletter by email, could you please send a request to [office@wandle.org](mailto:office@wandle.org). This helps us to reduce our costs.

The Wandle Industrial Museum, the Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3UD. Tel: 020-8648-0127

**Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.**

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OPEN: Every Wednesday 1 ~ 4 pm;  
Every Sunday 2 ~ 5 pm.

(The Museum may be closed some Bank Holiday weekends)

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

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Admission: Adults 50p, Children & Senior Citizens 20p

The Wandle Industrial Museum would like to point out that the views of contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Museum. We would be happy to give the right to reply to anyone who finds the content contentious.

All contributions and news items gratefully received and appreciated - please feel free to let us know at any time - telephone or write or email to [ndhart@wandle.org](mailto:ndhart@wandle.org)