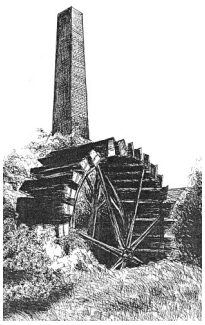
WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



BULLETIN



WIM visit to Emery Walker's House: see Operations Team Report

ISSUE 131 SUMMER 2026

Contents

Operations Team and Archives Report	1
Woodland acquired for Community Benefit	3
The Wandle Through Fresh Eyes	6
The Bayeux Tapestry	8
Lines Bros.	9
Dates for the Diary	9

WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

PRESIDENT
Harry Galley

TRUSTEES
Chair: Fr David Pennells, Nicholas Hart, John Harding, John Hawks.

OPERATIONS TEAM
Alison Cousins, John Sheridan, Roger Steele, Michael Taylor.

Editorial

Please accept my apologies for this edition of the Bulletin being a little late. In fact, after a summer of heatwaves it now feels very much like autumn as we release our summer edition.

We report in this edition on a remarkably generous acquisition for community benefit of an area of woodland adjacent to Poulter Park that used to belong to J S Deed & Sons, leather dressers. We were shown some indentures recording historical land sales and we have reproduced the land plans in this edition. I hope you find them to be of interest.

The visit to Emery Walker's House was a highlight of the summer for those members, volunteers and guests who attended. Do look out for future museum outings.

John Sheridan

Cover picture: Auriel Glanville.
Photos:
Page 1: 1) Nicola Tsioupra, 2) Auriel Glanville.
Page 2: 1) & 2) Nagat, South River Artist, 3) Mick Taylor.
Page 3: WIM archive.
Pages 4-6: Ed John.
Page 7: Elena Cobez.
Page 8: public domain.
Page 9: London Borough of Merton.

Operations Team Report

The long-awaited results of our Accreditation renewal were received and we are duly certified for the next five years. There are the inevitable few adjustments to be made which we are already addressing. We understand that the next Accreditation requirements will be of a different nature and we can only hope that a more stable software system will support that version.



One of John Sheridan's Wandsworth walks getting underway

Our talks rate seems to be at an average of two a week at the moment and this is partly due to Mick Taylor adding new titles to his repertoire and also giving a series of talks at Deen City Farm to help them raise much-needed funds after the recent challenging weather. John Sheridan's Industrial Heritage walks for the Wandsworth Heritage Festival in June were also advertised by the London Festival of Architecture which followed up with an appreciation of the museum's support.

We had a wonderful visit to Emery Walker's House in Hammersmith in July on a very hot day but enjoyed some respite in the garden overlooking the Thames. It had taken some time to organise but was a real treat.



Merton Council demolished the ancient and redundant sanitary fittings in the euphemistically named 'storeroom' in the museum, enabling us to install new racks and at last achieve some sense of order. They also adjusted the front door so that we now have full double door opening enabling better access for larger electric wheelchairs.

Roman Yastremskyi, a Sunday volunteer, has done a great job painting the doors in a vibrant "Wandle" blue.





We have no actual new acquisitions but photographs of a Potter and Moore beaker from her personal collection were kindly sent in by Nagat Abououf, a mudlarker and self-styled South River **A**rtist, and we need to find a good home for a series of watercolours of Mitcham pubs, for which we sadly have no room.

Events we have supported over the summer include the Poulter Park summer fete and the annual Community on the Green gathering in July and in August we attended the 75th birthday celebrations of the Merton Historical Society at the Merton Priory Chapter House. We had a very profitable stall at the Discovery Day in the Civic Centre, when John Sheridan delivered a local industrial heritage walk and Alison Cousins gave a talk on lavender. We were narrowly pipped at the post in our attempt to retain our title at the Mitcham Cricket Green and Community Heritage quiz on September 4th but had a great evening supporting a good local cause. We will take part in the Mary Tate Founders Day on September 13th, and our New Year lunch will be on January 6th and the AGM on November 19th.



Jackie Godfrey (left) and Jan Wright man the WIM stall at the Community on the Green event.

Work to refresh the Surrey Iron Railway display is now complete with the addition of the new wall timeline transfers. Volunteer Keith Davis redecorated the whole area prior to the upgrade.

Gordon McKie is currently working on an article documenting Surrey watermills, and a summer holiday volunteer Matthew Knight has been helping evaluate Peter McGow's additional notes on all the mills. Douglas Powley is also due to join us in early September starting as a regular Sunday volunteer. Roger Steele visits Eric and Jean Shaw to whom we send our very best wishes.

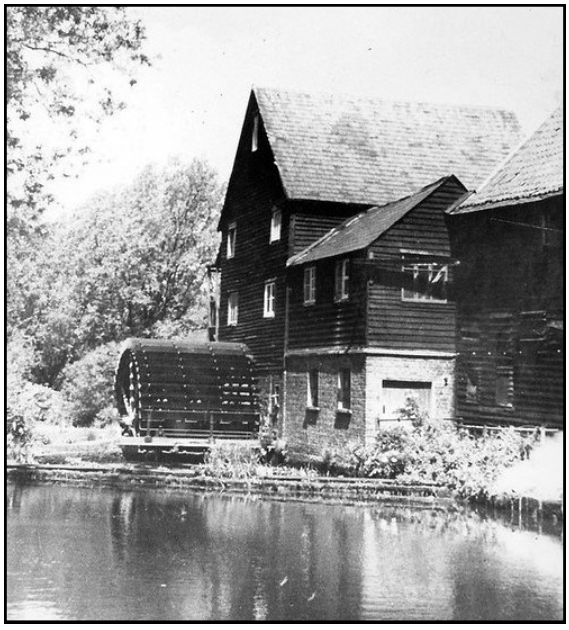
Our accounts are in the process of being audited in preparation for the AGM in November.

Alison Cousins

Woodland acquired for Community Benefit

While discussing our involvement in the Poulter Park Summer Fete, Babs Guthrie and Isobel Harris of the Friends of Poulter Park and Revesby Wood mentioned to us that an area of riverside woodland on the west bank of the Wandle had been purchased for the benefit of the community by a company owned by Ed and Helen John. Ed subsequently told us that:

> 'We have covenanted to retain it as woodland indefinitely.
> We very much hope the work with the wonderful Friends will be the start of a renaissance of botanic and animal wildlife for Poulter Park Wood and that we will be able to create a wildlife refuge and corridor which flows with the National Trust land upstream and the other riparian woodlands downstream.
>
> It might be interesting eventually to have a board for the Wandle Trail explaining that the "vole race" was once an Industrial channel for a tannery.'

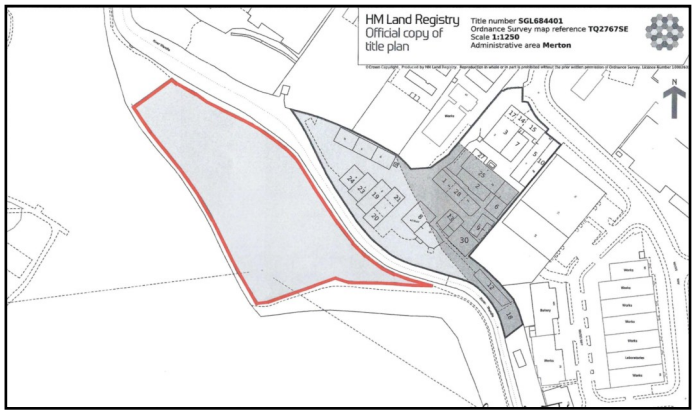


In the recent transaction the woodland was 'carved out' of a larger former site, the Eagle Works, which was occupied by the premium leather dressers and merchants J S Deed & Sons for about 100 years until the 1980s. The remainder of the former Eagle Works site has been retained by the owners of the Eagle Trading Estate in the Willow Lane industrial area.

Deeds Mill in 1963.

Ed sent us some copies of indentures recording his transaction as well as sales early in the 20th century. The old indentures record sales of land freeholds to J S Deed & Sons by the then landowners, W F J Simpson and Sir Frederick Fowke, between 1914 and 1918. J S Deed & Sons were already renting the land from these landowners. A large part of the indentures was occupied by details of Fowke and Simpson family settlements and mortgages dating from the 19th century, which were paid off and discharged as part of the transactions. A reminder of an age when bequests and marriage settlements enabled a rentier class to take a share of the profits of agriculture and industry, and perhaps an instance of the decline of that class.

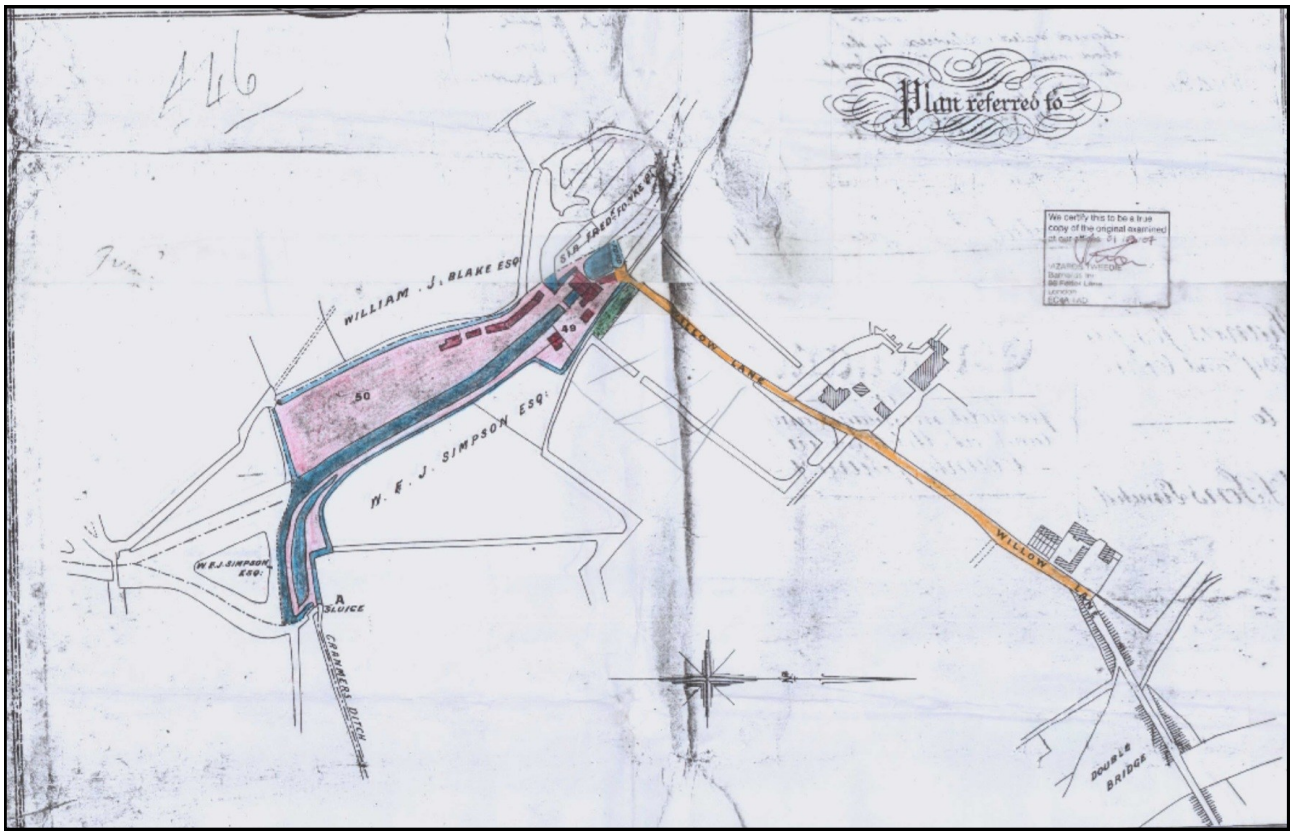
The indentures contain plans which are reproduced here, together with commentary.



The area of woodland edged in red, conveyed in July 2026 to Street and Mountford Limited, co-owned by Ed John and Helen John, for a consideration of £60,000 plus VAT.

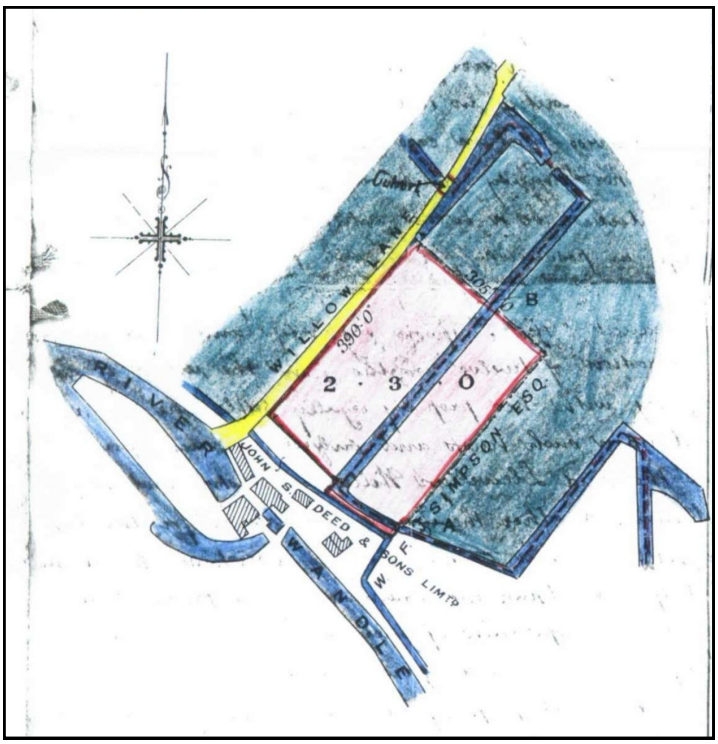


The area edged in red was conveyed on 29 September 1914 from Sir Frederick Fowke to J S Deed & Sons. This area was in Carshalton parish. Most of the land corresponds with the woodland sold in 2026, and a smaller part on the riverside was the site of a mill, formerly a copper/corn mill, already rented by J S Deed & Sons. The indenture contains provisions relating to the protection of the water supply to the Mitcham mills downstream, of which Fowkes was the landlord. The indenture also refers to an agreement of 1748 for the mill to have access to Wandle water for 12 hours a day, between midnight and noon. This corroborates a similar statement in Peter McGow's notes on the mill he called Mitcham Mill, Carshalton. The water supply was shared with the former logwood mill on the east (Mitcham parish) bank of the river.



The areas edged in pink, blue and green on this plan were conveyed from W F J Simpson to J S Deed & Sons on 24 June 1914. The pink area lay between the original channel of the Wandle and the wider artificial channel created in 1703 by Richard Bond of the logwood mill. The pink area contained the part of the Eagle works that had been the site of the logwood mill on the eastern side of the original channel. The indenture lists the works site in exhaustive detail: houses, outhouses, buildings, barns, stables, coach houses, cottages, gardens, lands, pastures, fences, hedges, ditches, waterwheels and fly or other wheels attached thereto and gear for working the same, waterways, fisheries, dams, gates, gears and appurtenances thereto.

Each coloured area was subject to different provisions relating to drainage, sewage, rights of way, maintenance and unimpeded flow of the river, designed to protect the neighbouring landowners and their tenants. One provision forbade pollution except that arising from leather working, which was of course itself highly polluting. Another required J S Deed & Sons to pay one third of the cost of keeping Willow Lane in good repair and suitable for the traffic thereon. Willow Lane is accordingly marked on the plan, from the ford to the island then in the middle of the Wandle to the two railways bridges converging on nearby Mitcham Junction station. Willow Lane now takes a different route around the modern industrial estate.



The rectangular parcel of land shaded pink and edged in red on this plan was conveyed from W F J Simpson to J S Deed & Sons on 2 August 1918. Deeds were allowed to alter the course of the river but not to interrupt the flow to the vendor's land. The vendor likewise was not allowed to interrupt the flow through the purchaser's land. The vendor retained the right to use Willow Lane and to drain his land over or through the lane. The indenture preserved the rights of Simpson's tenants on the land shaded blue to pass along the lane and to drain their land. Simpson and his tenants also asserted their right to maintain the culvert which is visible on the plan under Willow Lane. Mitcham urban district council's right to maintain a nine-inch sewer under Willow Lane was protected.

John Sheridan

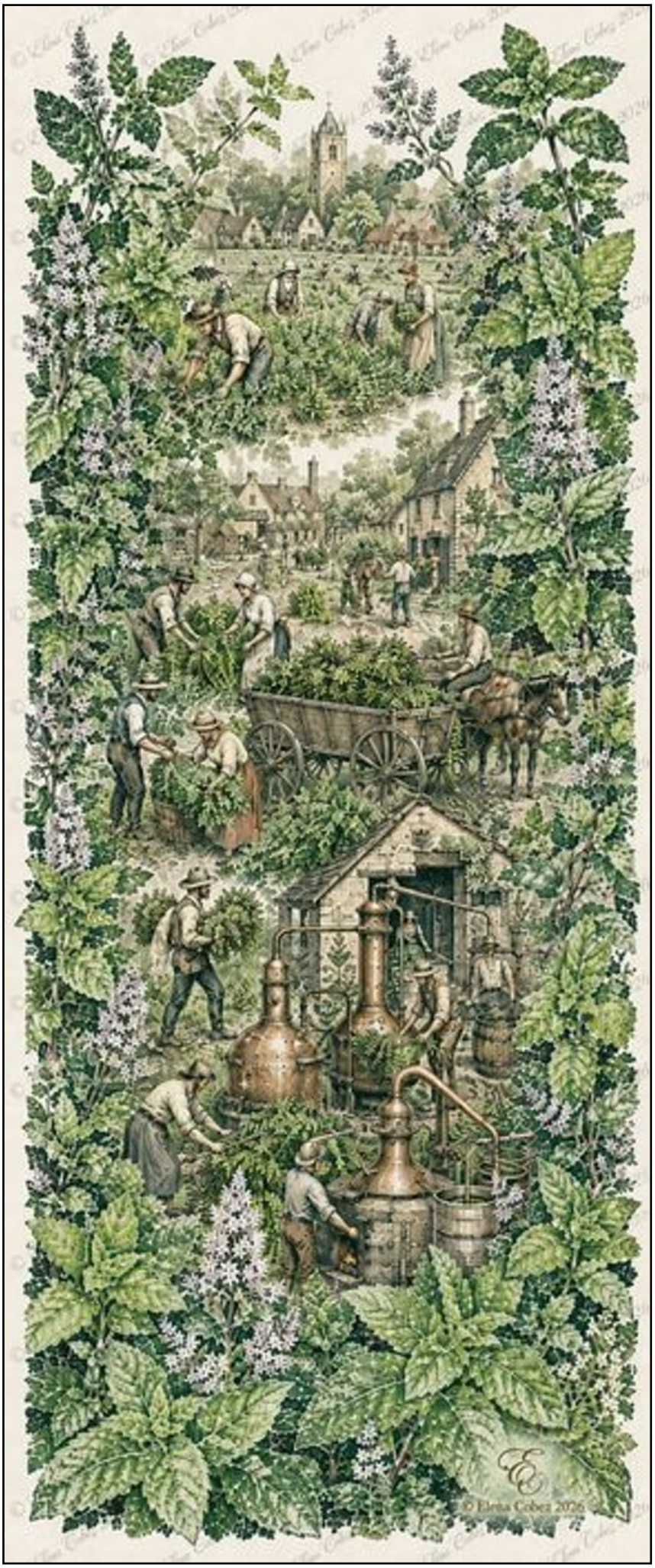
The Wandle through fresh eyes

A recent enquiry came to us from Italy for any information on Black Mitcham Mint. It was from Elena Cobez who produces a very niche journal called Materia Viva. Its byline indicates that it gathers cultural and sensory notes of aromatic raw materials, sharing both knowledge and meaning.

It is a non-profit making concern with some private support and Elena has kindly given us permission to retain a PDF of her peppermint article. It may be consulted but we shall restrict its copying.

The descriptions in the English edition are quite unique and are intended as a flowing narrative reflecting the aromatic sensations rather than being strictly botanical.

She is clearly developing an affinity with our dear Wandle as an article on William Morris and his connection to it is under way, and she plans to do one later on lavender (who wouldn't).



What blew us away however were the illustrations – Elena says they are generated to be evocative rather than descriptive and they certainly present considerable artistic freedom which we loved. She has evolved a wonderful style over their creation. The example shown is from the forthcoming Wandle article and we are very grateful to Elena for permission to reproduce it here.

Alison Cousins

The Bayeux Tapestry

The original Bayeux Tapestry is now on display in the British Museum until July 2027, but did you know that a full-size replica is housed permanently in the Reading Museum in Berkshire? It was the idea of Elizabeth Wardle, who founded the Leek Embroidery Society in 1885 to create it.

Elizabeth was the husband of Thomas Wardle, the textile dyer who collaborated with William Morris until 1881 when Morris acquired his Merton Abbey works. Morris had the facilities there to make vegetable dyes himself using techniques he had learned during his visits to Wardle's dye works in Leek, Staffs.

Elizabeth's brother George Young Wardle* was an artist and designer who worked for Morris from the 1860s. He later became the manager of Morris's business and managed its expansion in the 1880s. He might have introduced Morris to his brother-in-law Thomas when Morris wanted to hone his knowledge of vegetable dyeing.

The replica Bayeux Tapestry differs from the original in the absence of penises from the five naked men and from several horses. This was the work of prudish staff at the South Kensington Museum (later rebranded as the V&A) who doctored photographs from which the ladies of the Leek Embroidery Society worked.

John Sheridan



*Wardle was Elizabeth's maiden name as well as her married name. Thomas was a distant relation.

Extract from the original tapestry

Lines Bros

Sarah Gould, Service Manager (Heritage & Local Studies), Environment, Civic Pride & Climate Dept, London Borough of Merton, reproduced this old advertisement as a slide to illustrate her talk about Lines Bros at the Merton Heritage Discovery Day on Saturday 22 August.

The firm established their factory at Colliers Wood in 1924 and it grew to become the largest toy factory in the world, at 750,000 square feet and over 4,000 workers. They had to call in the Official Receiver in 1971 and the group was broken up and sold off.

John Sheridan



Dates for the Diary

Friday 25 September: Merton Historical Society workshop, 2.30pm, Wandle Industrial Museum. All welcome.

Thursday 1 October: talk by John Sheridan: Surrey Iron Railway, 10.30am, Redhill Library.

Friday 6 November: Merton Historical Society workshop, 2.30pm, Wandle Industrial Museum. All welcome.

Saturday 12 to Sunday 27 September: Wandle Fortnight. For activities see https://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk/wandle-fortnight.html

Friday 18 September: industrial heritage walk from Colliers Wood to Earlsfield, 11.00am. To book, email John.sheridan08@gmail.com

Thursday 19 November: WIM AGM, 7.30pm, Mitcham Vestry Hall.

Wednesday 6 January: New Year lunch, 1.00pm, Toby Carvery Park Place, Mitcham. Details to follow.

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS
IN THE WANDLE VALLEY

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

Accreditation Mentor: Emma Harper, Charles Dickens Museum Service.
Museum Adviser: Yvette Shepherd, The London Museum.

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

Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.

~~~~~~~~~~

OPEN: Every Wednesday 1 ~ 4 pm;
Every Sunday 2 ~ 5 pm.
(The Museum is closed Bank Holiday weekends)

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

~~~~~~~~~~

Free Admission. Donations welcome.

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 office@wandle.org

You can find us on: