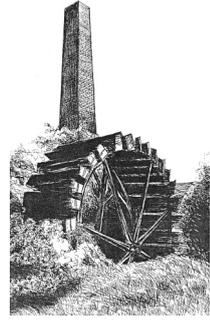


**WANDLE
INDUSTRIAL
MUSEUM**



BULLETIN



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WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM Founded in 1983

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Harry Galley

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Alison Cousins
Eric Shaw
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Editorial

The weeks since our last issue of the Museum Bulletin have certainly been busy. Whilst we have continued our work with schools on keeping alive the heritage of the Wandle Valley we have been busy giving a vast number of talks as well as walks along the river.

There have been some exciting projects taking place with the Living Wandle Partnership which we have been happy to support. So watch out for some on the outcome from these.

The museum wouldn't exist if it wasn't for our volunteers and we were glad to treat them to ice cream and cakes at Morden Hall Park in June as part of Volunteers Week. See the picture below of our happy group.



In the meanwhile we hope you enjoy this bumper issue of the Bulletin and the rest of the summer.

Best wishes,
Mick Taylor

Cover Picture:

The family of Walter Frank Wright pictured in the garden of 13 Merton High Street. See Page 12 for the story of Walter.

New Exhibition Display – *‘Brewing Along the Wandle’*



On Saturday the 10th June we were delighted to welcome Marsie Skeete, the new Mayor of Merton, to officially open our new exhibition, *‘Brewing Along the Wandle’*. The theme of the exhibition is a development of an earlier display at the museum that focused on one specific brewer, Young & Co. The display now takes a broader view of the history of this significant local industry, by looking at the development of a number of different breweries in the Wandle Valley area as a whole.

Research for the exhibition began almost a year ago with us briefly looking at the history of the brewing process - we discovered that in 1700 domestic brewing across the country made up more than half of all beer produced, and that more than two thirds of publicans brewed their own beer. This national story was slightly different in London, where big ‘common’ or wholesale brewers were beginning to emerge, buying up pubs and developing the concept of ‘tied’ houses. The eighteenth century then saw economies of scale making mass production more and more profitable, and by 1800 fewer than half of publicans were brewing their own beer in England. Seeing the competition between the big London brewers, smaller rivals in the Home Counties started buying up local pubs, one could say in self-defense, and this is where we explored our local connection.

Along the Wandle there would have been many brewers making use of the river and other sources of water, but evidence indicates a significant concentration at Croydon, Mitcham and Wandsworth - this is probably more a reflection of the market for their beer than the source of their water. Further research discovered that between 1850 and 1913 over seventy brewers produced beer in the area, ranging from individuals brewing in pubs or shops, to larger common or wholesale brewers.

As well as highlighting the nationally significant Young & Co., our new display now introduces a selection of additional local breweries from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, including: *Crowley’s* who brewed at Waddon from 1600 before acquiring their Croydon High Street

brewery in 1800; *Nalder & Collyer*, based on Surrey Street, Croydon, who were eventually taken over in 1919 by the City of London Brewery for an estimated one million pounds! And, local to our museum home in Mitcham, *Thunder & Little*, who joined forces in 1898 with Edward Boniface of *Cheam Brewery*, to form the *Mitcham & Cheam Brewery Co. Ltd.* At their peak, these breweries were significant for not only providing popular refreshment, but for also providing places of work.



Advert for Page & Overton's



Mitcham Brewery, London Road, Mitcham

To round the display off, we decided to bring the story up to date by taking a brief look at the brewing industry today. Since the above were brewing, the industry has gone through a cycle of dominance with large multinational companies swallowing up smaller breweries. But in the last few years the industry as a whole has seen the re-emergence a large number of smaller operations brewing commercially. Known as craft or micro brewing, this phenomenon is proving hugely popular to consumers across generations (of legal drinking age of course!) The Wandle Valley area is holding its own in this contemporary market, with a number of successful businesses now micro-brewing in the area. Particular favourites of the museum team include: *Sambrooks* of Battersea, who make the popular *Wandle* and *Junction* ales; plus, with their unique branding, *By the Horns*, Summerstown, who produce *Wolfie Smith*, *Sour to the People* and *Mayor of Garret*; and finally, *Wimbledon Brewery*, which opened in Colliers Wood in 2015 and produces brews such as *Common Pale Ale* and *Quartermaine IPA*.

To accompany the exhibition, we have also been working on a map which plots the various breweries, old and new, across the Wandle Valley – check our website and Facebook pages for further details and links.

Cheers!

Siobhan Kneale,
Curator

Special Recognition for our late Chairman the Rev Doctor Andrew Wakefield

We were delighted to read of the proposed posthumous award of the Freedom of the Borough to the late Rev. Andrew Wakefield, DD. As our Chair for almost 20 years we were always grateful for the benign influence he spread across the borough, and the respect with which he was regarded can not be better illustrated than that at our Summer Opening in 2015 he was able to welcome the then current Mayor, 8 previous Mayors and the Leader of the Council to what he liked to describe as the 'traditional opening of the Merton Summer Season' before they all went on to the opening of the Mitcham Carnival. He will be much missed."

Nicholas Hart

The following is part of an article that appeared in the Local Guardian of 19th July:



Merton Council has agreed to hold a special meeting that will award the Freedom of the Borough to Reverend Doctor Andrew Wakefield, who sadly died last year. The Standards and General Purposes Committee agreed to recommend the late Reverend at the end of last month, in recognition of the substantial contribution he made to the borough. The special meeting of the council will be held later this year. Council documents describe Reverend Doctor Andrew Wakefield, who is believed to have died of a heart attack in October, as "exceptional". Freedom of the Borough is a high honour awarded in exceptional circumstances where the prospective recipient is an individual or organisation of distinction and has rendered eminent services to the borough.

Operations Team Report

Our outreach programme of walks and talks is gradually overtaking the number of school visits. However, class groups are larger – we had a total of 117 children and 14 adults from Furzedown and Hazlemere schools last term.

Mick has provided walks and talks to diverse groups such as Merton Macular, Bromley Adult Education, John Innes Society, Merton Historical Society, and West Barnes Library for a total of 162 people. Alison gave talks at Trellis House and Norbury Library to 32 people. John Hawks has joined our team of speakers and also given a talk at Trellis House, to 15 residents.

We were out in strength for the Discovery Day on May 13th at Morden Library – Siobhan and Steve on our stand, and Mick and Roger on the children’s activities. John and Alison were on adjacent stands and chipped in when needed. It was another very successful event for all concerned.

Visitors to the museum included groups from Norwood U3A, Mapping the Mills volunteers, and (unexpectedly) Rethink Mental Health. We also took part for the first time in the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, welcoming 10 participants to the museum and a brief block printing session, with Mick giving a talk on the Wandle mills to them at a later date.

Siobhan and Alison went to the Museums and Heritage Show at Olympia in May and both came away with some good ideas. Siobhan also attended a conference on “Layers of London” – a project to link uploaded historical materials from London boroughs. She has identified a new initiative in Collier’s Wood which may fit the bill. Alison continues to support the South & East London Museums Network. At the latest meeting at Orleans House, there was a useful marketing exercise on identifying our audiences.

The new exhibition was officially opened on June 10th and more information is given on page 3.

Alison Cousins

Wandle Walks

Over the past couple of years the museum has been asked to lead walks along the Wandle. A group from Bromley Adult Education had a particular interest in the rivers of London. The Wandle is one of the few rivers remaining above ground. Paul Talling the author of *'London's Lost Rivers'* is often asked why the Wandle is not included in his book and as he replies "the Wandle is not lost". The group wanted to know how the course of the river had changed. Walking from Morden Hall Park to Merton Abbey Mills you certainly get a feel for how the water levels have dropped and new channels have been created. These of course include Rucker's Cut created in the 1800s. How the course of water around Merton Abbey Mills and the former Priory has changed is a story on its own.

Some of you may be aware of the current Living Wandle Partnership project *'Mapping the Mills'*. The project is being lead by The Building Exploratory and the volunteers involved were taken on a walk from Colliers Wood tube station to Mitcham Tram Stop. The link between the two sites is the Surrey Iron Railway. Walking along Merton High Street and then picking up the Wandle by Sainsbury's/M&S we walked from there pass Deen City Farm, into Morden Hall Park and Ravensbury Park. A walk planned for around two hours took over three. It is amazing over that short distance just how much history there is.

There is a guide available from the museum, and available for you to download from our website, that can help you enjoy the heritage and history of the Wandle. Compiled by Alison and Peter Cousins it highlights some of the key sites along the route of the river. The map can be found at: <http://www.wandle.org/thewandle/thewandletrail.html>
A hardcopy of the map is available from the museum at the cost of £1.50.

A walk also took place for the Merton Historical Society. Below Norma Cox, a member of the museum and MHS gives her account of the walk.

Mick Taylor

A Walk along the Wandle. By Norma Cox.

On Thursday 8th June 'Election Day,' Mick Taylor of the Wandle Industrial Museum led a group of fifteen members of Merton Historical Society on a Wandle walk. The walk started at the Mitcham Tram

stop which was not far from the river Wandle and was a good place to meet. Here the route taken by the Surrey Iron Railway was pointed out, for it "Came over the fields from Mitcham" before taking-up its route at Mitcham Junction, along the route used by today's Croydon Tramlink. (*Ed Note: The tram line follows the route of the Surrey Iron Railway from Mitcham Tram Stop to Wandle Park Tram Stop*) The group walked up Tram Path and headed south along the London Road past Mitcham Fire-station, which was built on the site of the Surrey Brewery. The group walked on to a gated site close to the river Wandle. At this site there were two large mill-like buildings. One was the former Grove Mill, now flats and the other also a block of flats built to look like a mill building, the latter was on the site of the former Crown Mill. Close to the mills were the Fisheries Cottages. The site was very quiet without any traffic noise from the road only the gentle rush of the river Wandle. As the group left the site, the building Wandle Grove was seen on the right. The party went out of the site and on to Mitcham bridge but they were unable to see the view of the 'mills' and Fisheries cottages as they were hidden by the leaves on the riverside trees Views of the mills and the Fisheries cottages as seen from Mitcham bridge in the early 1900's can be viewed on Merton's photo archive website (1). The group walked on to the Watermeads, which was adjacent to the east side of Mitcham bridge. Today the Watermeads is a nature reserve, which belongs to the National Trust. In the early nineteenth century there were two mills here and in the early part of the twentieth century there were meadows and trees (2). Access at present to the Watermeads is not possible. Calico bleaching was carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries at Bennetts Hole which is close to the Watermeads (2) The road on the other side of Mitcham bridge is called Bishopsford Road, here the party crossed the road and walked a few meters north in order to reach the entrance to Ravensbury Park. The party crossed back over the river Wandle via a new wooden bridge, which had been built right beside the Mitcham road bridge. In the 18th and 19th century carts would ford the river here, this allowed the cart-wheels to get wet and swell so as to keep their rims tight (1). It was difficult to see the river Wandle here as it was hidden by the wooden bridge. Merton's photo archive website (1) has photographs of the ford at Mitcham bridge taken in the early 20th century, the ford was once called 'The Splash'. From the wooden bridge the group walked along

walked along the western track in Ravensbury Park right beside the south bank of the river Wandle and crossed over to the north bank via a footbridge. The river Wandle flowed through the gardens of the park land where there were once two mansions Mitcham Grove and Ravensbury Manor, the latter was built twice on two different sites within the park (2). There were several giant London plane trees in the park. The group crossed onto a second larger foot-bridge in order to view the site of the once Ravensbury Print Works, which was on the north bank of the Wandle . The group walked on to Ravensbury Mill where the river Wandle had become wider and deeper. On the grass area beside the river there were two mill stones (*Ed Note: These are Edge Runners used in snuff production*) which belonged to the Wandle Industrial Museum. The mill stones used to be on display in the museum when the premises were in Hartfield Crescent SW19. Today the Wandle at Ravensbury Mill is very noisy and powerful because of the head of water falling over the



weir (*see picture*). The powerful force of water would have easily driven the Ravensbury Mill when it was a snuff mill. At Ravensbury Mill the famous ‘Mitcham Shag’ was manufactured (2) The group walked out of Ravensbury Park and along Morden Road in order to view the mill from the road. From there the group crossed over into Morden Hall

Park and took the western path along a channel of the Wandle, which had split into two channels in Morden Hall Park, through the grass meadows and up to the Rose garden where several volunteer gardeners were at work. The group viewed a former snuff mill with its new paddles and the stable block and courtyard. There were more mill stones resting on the grass area here. From this busy area of Morden Hall Park the walk now led to the Wetlands and the new board-walk. The board walk allowed visitors to venture right to the Wetlands heart and made it easier to view the vegetation and the wild-life. From the Wetlands, the group walked north and crossed over the Croydon Tram line, on to a track which looked like a countryside track, lined with hedgerow and trees. The track went pass Deen City farm, also screened by trees and hedgerow and led on to a tarmac road which was a vehicle access road to

the farm. The river Wandle flowed on the eastern side of the track. The group walked on to Phipps Bridge where the two channels of the Wandle were seen to join together under the bridge. One of the party asked about the Folly at Everetts cottages in Phipps Bridge Road. The party walked on towards Merton Abbey Mills Craft centre, unaware of the houses and factories that were either side of the track and river, for the tall hedge-row had created an efficient screen giving the impression of being in the countryside. At the Abbey Mills craft site, one of the party Mr David Luff, pointed out Liberty's print works where he used to work. The group also saw the Colour House. The walk had now finished although some of the party went on to view part of an old wall of Merton Abbey. A short walk along a branch of the Wandle led up to Merton High Street beside the Savacentre.

References.

(1)www.photoarchive.merton.gov.uk.

(2)Steel, Bob & Coleman, Derek. River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide. 2012. Culverhouse Books.

Photograph of the weir on the Wandle at Ravensbury Mill. Norma Cox July 2017.

South East Region Industrial Archaeology Conference 2017

Worthing College, 22nd April 2017

Hosted by Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society (SIAS)

Sir Freddie Sowrey, retiring president of SIAS welcomed delegates and pointed out that Sussex was predominantly a rural county with much archaeology of agriculture which later developed an iron industry. More recently the Battle of Britain took place and left behind wartime archaeology. They now look forward to 'future' archaeology from the information, education and entertainment industries.

In addition to the Sussex Mills report below, the full programme contained talks from Professor Marilyn Palmer MBE, President of the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) on *Industrial Archaeology and the archaeological community: fifty years on*, Alan H. J. Green, of SIAS on *The architecture of T. H. Myers for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway*, Paul Snelling, of the Letter Box Study Group on *The development of the British roadside letter box*, David Jones of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society on

The Brighton 'Atlantic' locomotive reconstruction, and John Blackwell, Chairman of SIAS on 50 years of SIAS.

50 years of Sussex mills – Peter Hill of the Sussex Mill Group

It's all owed to volunteers, especially Frank Gregory, who got very upset about the decay of Sussex mills. The Sussex Mills Group was formed in December 1988. There were 900 mills in Sussex, over nine categories. Most have now gone. Frank Gregory demonstrated flour making to children: he wore a traditional Sussex smock (acquired from a scarecrow) Some mills have been resurrected, like Old Six Sweeps, just south of Lewes, the only six- sailed post mill. It was lost in 1916, but reconstructed in October 2016 after an archaeological dig found the pads still in the ground. It now powers an underground house. Watermills are also included e.g. Sheffield Mill at Sheffield Park, Mickleham Priory Mill and Ifield Mill, Crawley. There is a mill to pump water to Petworth and Petworth House: Nutley Mill is a very rare open trestle mill of the earliest type. Rottingdean Mill is well known. Five mills are still marked on Admiralty charts. They are visible from sea and are used as navigation aids. Other well-known mills are West Blatchington, Stonecross and Batemans. Mills are still being rebuilt, often from very little.

Peter Cousins

For the purposes of this Bulletin only the Mill Group report has been included, as there is not enough space for everything. For those wishing to read all the reports please contact me.

Last Chance to See – Pottery Lessons at the Wheelhouse

News has come from the Wheelhouse at Merton Abbey Mills. After many years of providing pottery lessons at the Wheelhouse, Steve Llewellyn will no longer be doing so from 27 November this year. Anyone who has not had the good fortune to benefit from one of his lessons should take the opportunity before it is too late. Steve and Claire will be continuing to open the Wheelhouse at weekends as they have been since the mid 1990's, so we are not losing them - for the time being at least. The future use of the Wheelhouse is open to some debate at present, with the end of LB Merton's lease. The hope is that they and Office Estates will come to some accommodation that allows us to enjoy this iconic resource under the friendly oversight of Steve and Claire for many years to come.



Nicholas Hart

Walter Henry Wright – An Employee of Morris & Co

At the museum one Wednesday Siobhan came upon a photograph of a family group within our collection. The picture in question was of the Wright family and is one of the photographs from the museum that appear on the Merton Memories website and is our cover picture for this issue of the bulletin. So who were this family?

Walter Henry Wright was born in 1869 in Tolleshurst Darcy, Essex to Arthur, an agriculture labourer and Ellen Wright. By 1889 Walter was working as a postman and living in Wimbledon. On 17th August that year he married Jane Elizabeth Drawbridge at Christ Church, New Malden. Walter and Jane are pictured sitting in the centre of the picture. Their son Percy Walter, standing behind them in the picture, was born on 24th March 1890. I will leave you to work out the dates.

By 1891 the family are recorded as living at 69 Palmeston Road, South Wimbledon. On the census of that year Walter has changed jobs and is now working at the Morris & Co Works as a '*glass painters and glaziers labourer*'. Their daughter Florence Annie was born at Palmeston Road on 1st April 1896. She is the young girl in the photograph. Walter was shown on the birth certificate as a '*glass painter*'. Walter has certainly moved from a labourer to a painter. I don't know if we will ever know what brought about this change from being a postman.

In the 1901 census the family are living at 62 Nelson Road and Walter is recorded as a stained glass artist a big step up from being a labourer. In September that year their son Edward Albert was born. He is the young boy in the photograph. He may well have been known as Albert rather than Edward as we record him as Albert in the information the museum holds on the photo. In the baptismal record for Edward Albert on 13th November 1901 Walter is listed simple as an artist.

From 1905 the family had moved into 13 High Street, Merton. This is next door to the listed address in the Kelly's directory of '*Morris & Co. Decorations Ltd. Glass painters & Manufacturers, 11 High Street*'. By the 1911 census Walter is recorded as a '*glass cutter in the leaded light*

window maker workshop'. When the Morris Works closed in 1940 they moved away. Walter lived until 1948 and Jane, who may also have been called Jenny, died a year later.

My thanks to David Saxby from the Museum of London for sharing the information he has on the family.

Mick Taylor

The Weaver's Apprentice

Following Dave Saxby's fascinating article on the influence of two Merton weavers from the William Morris works on the development of the Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh, I visited The Weaver's Apprentice which was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of their deaths. The displays included familiar photos of the Morris Works, showing John Glassbrook and Gordon Berry at work and many of the personal photos from Glassbrook's life.

Dominating one wall was a tapestry done at Merton – *The Chase* – woven by Glassbrook, Berry, and two others around 1908, which was illustrated in Dave's article. The inclusion of this piece confused several visitors who assumed it had been done at The Dovecot but of course this was a major finished work which demonstrated the skill of the Merton apprentices and why they were chosen to train others.

The first main tapestry undertaken at the original studios was *Lord of the Hunt* on which Glassbrook and Berry worked and oversaw the work of new local trainees. Sadly only photographic evidence of this was on display but it was still quite moving to see the detail of the tribute to Glassbrook and Berry on the decorative border of the finished work. They had only got as far as completing the right hand side of the tapestry before enlisting and were both anxious to return from the war to finish it. We know this was not to be, but it is to their credit that the apprentices they had trained so well were able to continue to such a high standard. One such boy was Richard Gordon whose sample of floral designs, borders, and geometric shapes is the only surviving apprentice piece, from 1913 -14. He is pictured at the bottom right of the group in Dave's article. The variety of samples are those still used today to test the apprentices. The work of Ben Hymers, a current apprentice illustrated this showing

the development of his interpretation of the design for *Penelope* and there was a video of his training in which he paid tribute to the first master weavers.

The present Dovecot Gallery and Studios are situated in a former public baths and on certain days the viewing gallery is open to the public where one can appreciate the scale of the tapestries in progress by being two floors above. A recent BBC programme on the work of Chris Ofili who commissioned the present-day weavers to undertake a work for the Clothmakers Company proved that this still took five of them three years to complete. My eye caught a comment in the visitors' book asking why there were no female tapestry workers back then. There are now more women than men !

Alison Cousins

NB: See our Spring 2017 for the link with the Morris & Co.

Museum Snippets



Wandle Songs: We have had an enquiry regarding folk songs connected to the Wandle, and possibly sung by the workers . We have referred the gentleman to the usual national sources and archives, but wonder whether there would have been such songs of a specific nature.

There are several poems depicting the river, but it is more likely that songs of the day would be simply the well-known ones passed down. Also, many of the occupations were so noisy that any singing would be drowned !

Can anyone enlighten us ?



Book Donation: We received another generous book donation from Mary Hart—"Liberty Style" by Martin Wood, published by Francis Lincoln, 2017.

Share Your Memories: If you've got a story or memory to share about any of the local industries in the Wandle Valley area, please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you.



Instagram: The museum is now on this photo sharing app. So follow us on Wandle_wim.



Dates for the Diary

From 16th August until 5th September 2017

Discovering the Source of the River Wandle Exhibition

Morden Library, Local Studies Centre

9th September 2017

Mitcham Heritage Day

Lots going on around the Cricket Green and elsewhere. Visit <https://mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk/2017/07/28/mitcham-heritage-day-saturday-9-september-2017/>

Or pick-up a leaflet from the museum

11th September 2017 from 11:00

A talk from John Hawks on “Merton Priory”

Ashburton Library, Shirley Rd, Croydon CR9 7AL

16th/17th September 2017

Merton Priory Chapter House Open

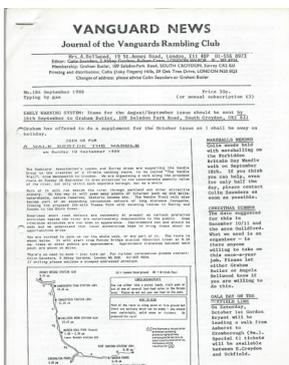
Merantun Way, London SW19 2RE

Block Printing Demonstrations and a rare opportunity to see this historic site.

16th November 2017

Museum Annual General Meeting

Vestry Hall, London Road, Mitcham CR4 3UD



September 2018 sees the thirtieth anniversary of the first Wandle Walk. The walk took place on the 18th September was covered by the Vanguard Rambling Club News Journal (*pictured here*). The museum would like to celebrate the occasions next year. Do you have any stories of walking the Wandle. If so please share them with us.

If you know a group who would like a talk, walk or printing demonstration then please put them in contact with us.



Museum Mentor: Chris Taft, British Postal Museum and Archive.
Museum Advisor: Yvette Shepherd, Museum of London (Docklands).

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

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Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.



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.



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 office@wandle.org

You can find us on:

