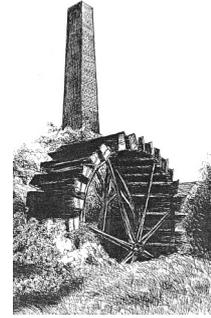


WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



BULLETIN



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WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

PRESIDENT

Harry Galley

TRUSTEES

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

OPERATIONS TEAM

Alison Cousins, Eric Shaw,
Roger Steele, and Michael
Taylor.

Editorial

Another year is getting near to ending. After what proved to have been a busy year at the museum we would like to thank all our volunteers and those who have supported our work.

Recently we lost our broadband and telephone connections at the museum. Someone had cut through the cable! It did prove that these days just how much we rely on technology. Our thanks must go to the efforts of a BT engineer who wouldn't give up until he had us back up and running.

We hope you enjoy this new issue of our bulletin and wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)

Cover Picture:

The artist Portia Dadley is pictured with Cllr Edward Foley at the unveiling of the final two window panels as part of the museum *Improving the View* project.

The window panels show sections of the William Morris pattern 'Wandle'. They were planned and painted by Portia and Dominic Fagan.

Photos:

P1 and P2 Mick Taylor

P3 John Sheridan

P5 Courtesy of Ray Leyden

P7 and P8 (top) Ray Leyden

P8 (bottom) John Hawks

P7 Mitcham Junction Station from
Museum Archive

Operations Team Report

For Mitcham Heritage Day in September we had over a 100 visitors. For the first time we hosted a workshop on paper conservation by Katarina Kelsey, an accredited conservator who gave her time generously. That morning, Councillor Ed Foley also unveiled the remaining two “Change the View” panels over our windows on the Vestry Hall side. The total Morris interpretation for the Wandle is very impressive.

In October we were the location for a meeting of the South East London Museums Group which is chaired by Yvette Shepherd of the Docklands branch of the Museum of London who is our Museum Advisor. It was a disappointing turnout but the visitors were able to have an extensive tour of the museum. Useful experience and knowledge was shared by those who did attend.

We have given nine talks in the last three months including one to a local dementia hub which called for a very specific method of presentation and which was much appreciated. This experience will enable us to enrich our inclusion aims for our Accreditation renewal.

We also added a new snuff tin to our collection, kindly donated by an Edinburgh shop when we went to top up our snuff samples. It is from Fribourg and Treyer and a note on the lid indicates that one of their blends was a favourite of James Robertson Justice. If his resultant sneezes were as powerful as his booming voice, most people would have had to take cover.



With some local concerns regarding the positioning and possible security of the parish marker on Mitcham Bridge we recently met up with Councillor Caroline Charles who has promised to see if she could extract some guidance from the Council as to how this might be better displayed. Needless to say we had some firm ideas on this subject.

On November 17th we held our AGM, sadly this year without our chair of Trustees Father David Pennells, who was recovering from a recent operation. We all wished him well but we were in the more than capable hands of John Hawks and were also able to welcome John Harding, the newest recruit to the Trustees. Our Accreditation Mentor, Emma Harper

was also present, nobly making the journey from Hertfordshire.

Following the required business we enjoyed a talk from Elly Platt on her “Wandle Wardrobe” – a collection of pre-loved textiles found along the Wandle Trail during lockdown and displayed on themed panels which she called “quilts”. Issues of sustainability relating to the clothing industry were clearly her passion, and, using a comparison with the pollution of the Wandle in the mid nineteenth century, she indicated how pollution from textile dyeing in some developing countries was creating equally drastic conditions.



Elly is pictured with the Mayor of Merton Cllr Joan Henry and one of her quilts.

Alison Cousins

New Museum Definition

In August 2022 the International Council of Museums announced a new definition of a museum. The Wandle Industrial Museum believes this defines us as a museum and is happy to adopt it.

The definition is:

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”

WIM Guided Heritage Walks 2022

John Sheridan reviews the heritage walks that he lead during the year.



As part of the museum's outreach activities, I conducted five guided industrial heritage walks on the Wandle trail this year. They were: Colliers Wood to Earlsfield on 26 May; Earlsfield to the mouth of the Wandle on 8 June; Morden Hall Park to Merton Abbey Mills on 16 July; Earlsfield to Merton Abbey Mills on 21 August; and Mitcham tram station to Morden Hall Park on 22 September. The walks were illustrated by A3 images mainly from the museum's archive of old mills, maps, and more.

The 8 June walk was part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, the 16 July walk was part of London Rivers Week, and the 22 September walk was part of the Wandle Fortnight.

The Wandsworth Heritage Festival's theme was sport. Participants on 8 June reminisced about the King George's Park lido (1938-93) and the nearby greyhound stadium (1933-66). One person said he used the lido once as a youth, and found the water too cold to repeat the experience. A photo (courtesy of Wandsworth Heritage Service, Young's archive) of Barbara Windsor awarding a prize to a bemused winner of a Young's Brewery licensees' darts competition caused some amusement. Mick Taylor also took part in the festival, delivering a talk at Earlsfield Library on sport in the industries of the River Wandle.

At the end of the Mitcham to Morden Hall Park walk, the National Trust team based in the stable yard kindly allowed us to see the

Archimedes screw turbine in the area normally inaccessible to the public behind the former snuff mills. The screw is positioned in a channel through which Wandle water descends, and is turned by the weight of the water against the blades, generating electricity for the stable yard buildings. Installed in 2012, it was the first hydroelectric turbine in London.

Themes across all the walks included the topography of the Wandle valley and the reasons for the growth and decline of industry; and in particular the techniques, innovations, notable personalities and politics of calico printing. It is interesting to reflect that ground that is now solid was once water meadow, used as bleaching grounds and later for watercress cultivation before reclamation for modern industries and housing.

The most popular walks were the 8 June Wandsworth walk and the 16 July Morden Hall Park to Merton Abbey Mills walk, each with about 20 participants. The 16 July walk ended with visits to the Merton Abbey Mills wheelhouse and the Merton Priory Chapter House. The other walks had between 5 and 10 participants, disappointing in terms of numbers but enough for interesting discussions in which everyone could take part. We also had enquiries from local University of the Third Age and Walk and Talk groups, which might lead to customized walks for them in the future.

Feedback from participants was good. Most were local, and middle aged or older. Comments were along the lines of “It was interesting to find out more about the history of my locality” and “I enjoyed hearing about and seeing some illustrations of the industrial history of the Wandle.” There was no charge but a few donations to the museum were received.

Next year we expect again to contribute to events organised by bodies such as the Wandle Forum, the South East Rivers Trust and the London boroughs on the Wandle, as well as arranging walks on our own account. We will review both routes and publicity. We would like to think it is possible to tap more effectively into potential interest across different age groups in, for example, the Mitcham Bridge mills, the 1908 strike of the women and girls at the Corruganza works in Summerstown, and the wider local history and character of the Wandle valley.

John Sheridan

Julie Mountain (Leyden) 1943 - 2022)

In September the museum lost a long term supporter in Julie Mountain. Her first husband was Kevin Leyden one of the founders of the museum. Ray Leyden, Kevin's brother, caught up with her second husband Keith. The following is a result of their conversation.



Left to right : Keith Mountain, Julie
and Ray Leyden

Keith reported by email to the Museum, "It is with great sadness that I must tell you that my wife Julie Mountain (Leyden) passed away on Saturday 17th September." Keith later popped into the Museum and told a moving story of how he met up with Julie in November 2004. They met through mutual friends at a Church fundraising event in East Sheen. A Jazz Group provided the music and Keith spotted Julie from across the dance floor and thought she was gorgeous and at the first opportunity he swung his jacket to one side and said to Julie, "Let's Dance" Within no time at all Keith had swept her off her feet and in the heat of the moment she couldn't stop laughing. She later confessed to Keith, "You made me laugh for the very first time" since her former husband Kevin Leyden, Founder member of the Museum had suddenly passed away. She said also she suffered further stress as she had only been retired for 4 weeks.

Keith was taken by her poise and elegance, she was confident, very direct but quietly spoken and he was immediately smitten by her regional accent. Like any man who's fascinated by a women he

quickly dived into her past picking out the threads in her life. She was born in Carsington, Derbyshire, an estate village but her parents who lived a farming existence separated after becoming homeless and at the age of 6-8 years old she was brought up by her Grand- parents. Her Grand- father lived up a hill in a little cottage with no electricity or running water looking after chickens. This new existence helped to create Julie's independence. Keith said Julie later went to a Grammar School and her ability was exceptional in Maths and she enjoyed sport, mainly tennis and badminton. After school she joined British Rail, Midland Region and later Post Office Telephones which was later rebranded as BT. She became highly skilled in computer programming in the infancy of computers and when she emigrated to Australia on a £10 ticket she was highly sought after by prospective employers. Aussies would refer to her as a £10 Pom which she found amusing.

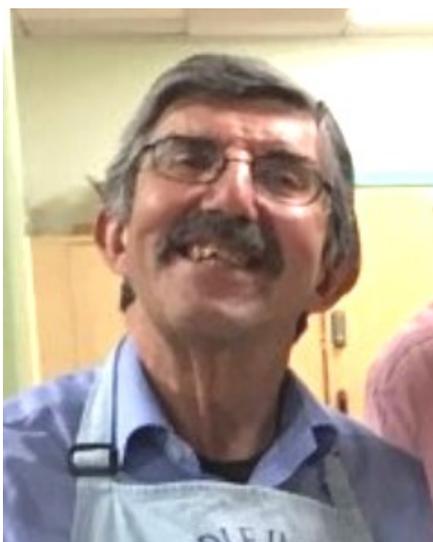
Keith said in their early relationship Julie was living in Shrewsbury and she would travel down to London for weekends to see each other. They later purchased a lovely end of terraced house in Carshalton, Surrey in 2007 where they would meet their friends in the nearby Hope pub which was a good old fashioned pub. They later got married in 2018 and the reception was of course held in the Hope Pub. Keith said that Julie enriched his life by introducing him to the Wandle Industrial Museum and as a Sculptor and Painter they both enjoyed the Arts & Crafts and the Industrial history of the River Wandle. They both had a passion for walking and would travel all over the UK to discover the living history and the wild landscape of our Country. Keith said that more recently Julie was diagnosed with cancer and was due to be treated any day at the Royal Marsden Hospital. However before the treatment could be started she was unexpectedly rushed to a local hospital and was found to be suffering from pneumonia. Despite the hospital doing everything they could she slipped away with Keith holding her hand. It was a comfort to Keith that they held hands to the very end.

Ray Leyden

NB: One wish at Julie's funeral was that the museum receive donations in her memory. We are grateful to Keith and all those who have donated.

Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go to our former Admin Officer Sheila Harris who is currently in St Georges Hospital with a broken thigh. She is in Keate Ward, St James Wing.

Volunteer Focus



My name is Roger Steele and I have been Treasurer of the Museum for 20 years. I moved to Merton in 1957, and have lived in Mitcham since 1968.

For my first 4 years here I was still at school, so every morning I had to catch the train from Mitcham Junction Station, standing on the platform alongside hundreds of boxes of watercress and salad from Mizen's heading for Covent Garden market.



Mitcham Junction Station in 1983

A few weeks after finishing school I went straight into the Research and Development department at Smith Meters in Rowan Road only to find that the rest of the staff were starting the following week, so for 5 days I had ten offices, three laboratories, two Drawing offices and a workshop to myself. This obviously did not put me off as I stayed there for 40 years, studying part time and evenings while going through all the stages from lab assistant, development engineer, Head of Laboratories and Quality Manager. Luckily my involvement with the technical side of the business gave me the opportunity to work overseas on various projects in India, China, USA and Egypt, as well as many short trips to Europe.

After retirement I taught - part time - at the Adult Education College in Raynes Park for a few years before finally settling down in the Wandle Industrial Museum.

More To Morden



Merton Local Studies and Heritage Centre as part of its “There’s More To Morden” project held a photographic competition. Our volunteer Ray Leyden was commended for his photograph shown here.

A exhibition of a selection of the photographs submitted for the competition is on display on the first floor of Morden Library until 1st December.

All the pictures received for the competition are being added to the Merton Memories website:
<https://photoarchive.merton.gov.uk/>

New Museum Uniform?



At the Merton Discovery Day in August John Hawks noticed that the museum volunteers had adopted what appeared to be a new uniform. It was more a case, maybe, of great minds thinking alike.



Dates for the Diary

Christmas and New Year Opening

Last day of opening : Sunday 18th December 2022

Reopening: Sunday 15th January 2023

Volunteer Christmas Get Together

All volunteers are invited to join us at the museum on Wednesday 14th December for mince pies and drinks from midday.

New Year Lunch

Wednesday 11th January 2023

We will once again be returning to Park Place, Mitcham for our traditional lunch. Members, volunteers and their guests are all welcome. Cost is £15 per head. If you would like to attend please email Treasurer@wandle.org or telephone the museum.

Payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer to:

Sort Code: 16-32-45 and Account No: 12263437

Please include your name as reference.

Visit to Brixton Windmill



We are planning a visit to Brixton Windmill in April or May 2023. All members and volunteers are welcome to attend. The windmill has links to the River Wandle as the Ashby family operated mills for a time in Carshalton and at Mitcham Bridge.

We need to have an idea of numbers. If you are interested in joining a tour of the windmill please email office@wandle.org or telephone the museum.

Melanie's Autumn/Winter Walks 2022/2023

Date	Meeting place/time	
Sat 3 Dec	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Wandle Trail - walk to Carshalton Ponds and Honeywood Museum (Frost Fair - 1 to 6 pm) 3-4 miles, linear.
Sat 14 Jan	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Wandle Trail - walk to Carshalton Ponds. 3-4 miles, linear.
Sat 11 Feb	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Mitcham Common - explore the hills and ponds of the Common. 3-4 miles, circular.



Accreditation Mentor: Emma Harper Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service.
Museum Advisor: Yvette Shepherd, Museum of London (Docklands).

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 is closed Bank Holiday weekends)

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

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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:

