

## **Operations Team Report for WIM AGM 2017**

This has been a busy year for the team covering increased demands and dealing with conflicting interests.

### **AGM 2016**

This was held in the Training Room of the Vestry Hall and chaired for the first time by John Hawks, who also paid a moving tribute to our former chair, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Wakefield, who had died so suddenly in October 2016. John then concluded the meeting by giving a superb talk on "The Ghost Railways of Merton".

### **Outreach – Talks and Walks**

This past year has seen a marked increase in external activities. We gave talks to a variety of organisations, including Merton Historical Society, Merton Vision, Sanctuary Housing (Trellis House ) Purley Probus, the John Innes Society, Banstead U3A, Merton Heritage Service, the Turf Project, Royal Free Hospital Fellowship and at various libraries of Wandsworth, Sutton, and Croydon. Our talks covered subjects such as The Mills of the River Wandle, William Morris, the Surrey Iron Railway, Lavender, Merton Priory, Brewing in the Wandle Valley and The Calico People. The total audiences numbered around 450. This activity is becoming an important source of income for us and we are grateful to John Hawks for joining our team of speakers.

Walks were arranged for Bromley Adult Education, the Merton Historical Society, and as part of the Mapping the Mills Project. All were led by Mick Taylor.

### **Outreach - Schools**

We hosted or visited 5 schools and 7 classes giving a total of 271 pupils and 27 teachers and assistants. Block printing sessions are given to all by Roger Steele, Mick Taylor, and Alison Cousins.

### **Visitors**

Rethink Mental Health Group, Friends of Wandle Park, the Squad (club for people with learning disabilities), and Norwood U3A, were our main group visitors.

### **Open Days**

We were again open all day to support Mitcham Heritage Day and this year did likewise for the Wandsworth Heritage Festival.

### **Liaison with Other "Wandle" Groups**

We have maintained a close link with the Living Wandle Partnership and offer help and advice for a number of their projects. These include the Mapping the Mills Project, which we are closely involved in. We continue to have a good working relationship with the Merton Historical Society and the Merton Local Studies and Heritage Centre.

### **Volunteers**

We welcomed Steven Purvey as our new Administrator, Jacqui Godrey as a new Sunday volunteer, and as a Marketing / Publicity Assistant, Kavi Amalakumar. Sadly Sheila Knight, a long-standing Sunday volunteer, passed away in October.

We organised a walk in the Morden Hall Park wetlands to thank our volunteers, and having chosen one of the hottest days of the year, plied them with ice-cream. The annual New Year lunch at Park Place was again a great success.

We are still experiencing problems in finding cover for Sunday opening.

### **Exhibitions**

The display relating to Young's Brewery was replaced by a wider coverage and converted into " Brewing Along the Wandle Valley ",by Siobhan Kneale, our exhibitions curator. We were delighted to welcome Councillor Marsie Skeete as the new Mayor, to open it officially.

Martin Roberts completed the refurbishment of the model of the William Morris works and we held an official unveiling of the repainted Wandle Valley relief map with the honour falling to Joyce Bellamy whose generosity had provided for this work.

Eric Shaw continues to turn his hand at a variety of projects including the framing of an artwork donated to us by the Turf project and this joins the River and Cloth exhibit on the front exterior of the building while we are open.

### **Out and About**

We again took part in the annual Discovery Day at the Heritage Centre within Morden Library. This year our display gave details of all the talks we offer, which could have accounted for the increased uptake.

Siobhan Kneale and Alison Cousins attended the Museums and Heritage Show at Olympia, We also continue to support the South East London Museums Network organised by our Museum Development Officer Yvette Shepherd.

### **Behind the Scenes**

Bianca Harrisskit, a Sunday volunteer, is working on an audio app. of the Wandle Trail which will supply extra text to that of the print version. Martin Roberts is preparing a teaching support packs to support our work with schools, starting with William Morris and Liberty. The museum has engaged the Social Media world and we now have Instagram and Twitter accounts.

### **The Building**

Redecoration of the outside of the building has resumed thanks to the mild autumn weather and we are currently looking into a grant to get some decoration on to the panels which currently protect the windows. The condition of the ceiling in the office section caused some concern earlier in the year, but this seems to have settled of late.

### **Meetings**

The Operations Team hold regular formal meetings and meet a minimum of twice a year with our Trustees. We also went to the British Postal Museum to meet with our Museum Mentor, Chris Taft.