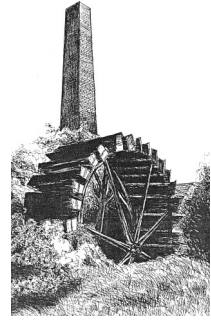


# WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



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# BULLETIN

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# Contents

Operations Team Report	3
The Botanical City	4
New Accreditation Mentor	5
New Shop Items	6
Some Wandle Memories	8
Under the Radar?	10
Dates for the Diary	11

## WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

### PRESIDENT

Harry Galley

### TRUSTEES

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

### OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

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

# Editorial

Another lockdown and another museum bulletin. While it is a frustrating time we all need to keep safe and well. I hope you are all able to do this? Hopefully this latest issue of our bulletin will fill some of your time. Enjoy the read and if you have any comments then we are still open via e-mail or the telephone to answer any questions you may have.

Best wishes,  
***Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)***

### ***Cover Picture:***

This is a picture of the remains of the Roman Baths under the A1 and The Chapter House under the A24. See page 5.

## **Operations Team Report**

Open / Shut / Open / Shut – it's beginning to feel as if we are watching a cat flap. We closed on the 16th December for the Christmas/New Year period. Our plan to reopen on the 13th January disappeared with the latest lockdown.

So no actual get-together for our volunteers but we did manage to catch up on Zoom ( what else ? ) and thank them. And of course no New Year lunch at the carvery in Park Place either.

After much debate it was decided to hold a very limited online AGM with only the Trustees, the Operations Team, our new Accreditation Mentor Emma Harper and one volunteer partaking. With no guest speaker and only business to discuss it was very straightforward. All other members had been sent the relevant paperwork to give them the opportunity to contribute had they wished. We officially welcomed Emma and recorded our thanks to Chris Taft, our retiring Mentor. A presentation pack of Wimbledon Brewery's finest ales had been dispatched to him as well as giving him Life Membership status.

As in the previous lockdowns the building is being checked regularly to comply with insurance requirements and because they are a "bubble" our resident musicians are still able to practice together.

Again, Mick Taylor is determined that boredom does not set in for us at home, and the quiz repertoire has been expanded. This has included creating a few jigsaws from our photo collection on to Jigsaw Planet. A great idea but in some cases addiction has set in. Less said about that the better.

In early December the museum was "tagged" with meaningless graffiti but hats off to Merton Council, they came promptly and painted over the offending lettering.

The metadata for all the Youngs pubs photos is now complete and lists compiled by area and pub name. It was sad to note how many had already closed – and who knows how many will have survived the last year. One photo – the former Bull in Church Road received a lot of hits from Instagram.

Alison Cousins

**The Botanical City: a busy person's guide to the wondrous plants you can find, eat and grow in the city**, was published by Hoxton Mini Press in 2020.

No, this isn't yet another trendy book on veganism in East London, but a scholarly work by two authors working with the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

It is based on the eighteenth century work **Flora Londinensis** published by William Curtis, between 1775 and 1798, two copies of which are in the library at Kew.

The local interest for us is that many of the detailed hand-coloured copper plate drawings were done for Mr Curtis by William Kilburn, when he first came to London. There are many botanical comments by Curtis on some of the plates, but no indication which were actually by Kilburn. But as all of them are of high quality it is easy to understand how Kilburn's skill was transferable to textile printing.

This is for the Marsh Marigold



As very few copies of the book were originally produced it is wonderful to see these colour plates come to light. It was not a commercial success despite having such benefactors as Sir Joseph Banks, several members of the aristocracy, and a certain Captain Gossip !

It originally contained details of around 430 plants in the Greater London area but this book contains only an extract.

The modern authors have added further information for each plant and arranged them by categories such as those you can eat, those of use in healing and those that can kill you.

Alison Cousins

## **Welcome to our New Accreditation Mentor**



The museum is pleased to announce that Emma Harper has taken over from Chris Taft as our Accreditation Mentor (previously titled Curatorial Advisor).

Chris Taft of the Postal Museum stood down after many years. We acknowledge his wisdom and assistance and thank him for the contribution he has made to the development of this Museum. We are enormously grateful to him, equally, for recommending Emma Harper to be his replacement.

Emma is currently the curator for Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service. In her role Emma has responsibility for the Mill Green Mill, which includes a working waterwheel, and Welwyn Roman Baths. The baths are ingeniously preserved in a steel vault under the A1(M) motorway at its junction with the A1000. This gives a synergy with the Chapter House of Merton Priory which is hidden away under Merantun Way, Colliers Wood.

Emma is very involved with the wider museum and heritage network and brings with her knowledge, skills and experience that will greatly help the museum.

Her appointment was formally announced at our AGM in November 2020.

## New Shop Items

We may have been closed for a large period of the last 12 months but this hasn't stopped us from looking to expand our shop range.

Our latest item are these soft glasses cases.. Made by our volunteer Eva Moody they use the Liberty Hera pattern.



They are available from the museum at a cost of £8 each. We are grateful for the work Eva has done on our behalf. She has her own online shop Twisting Needle (<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Twistingneedle>) where she sells a range of handmade items.

We have produced a range of coasters showing scenes from aspects of the heritage and history of the River Wandle. These are available at £2.50 each or five for £10.



As well as the coasters we have added to our range of fridge magnets. Three new designs are available as shown below. These are available at £2.00 each.



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We are also pleased to say that we are able to supply floral lavender water that has been produced locally using lavender grown in Carshalton. Distilled by the people of the charity of Carshalton Lavender we are sure they will add a lovely fragrance to your bedding or else where. A 250ml bottle costs £5.00.



To order please visit our website and complete the order form. If you are unable to do this then please contact the museum to place your order.

## Some Wandle Memories

Paula Bailey, who works at Carshalton Lavender, while visiting the museum told us about a prize she had won at school. It turned out to be in March 1976 a few years before the museum was formed. Mitcham Building Society ran a history competition and her school - Western Middle School - won first prize for their work on the Surrey Iron Railway. Paula is, in her words, “ the innocent looking one on the left. Long hair and a fringe.”



WESTERN Middle School came out top in the Mitcham Building Society's history competition—and earned themselves £50. Their display on the old iron railway just pipped Alpha school's contribution of an historical classroom. And to make the presentation, along came the Mayor of Merton, Coun Norman Healey, who is seen here handing over the cheque to 13-year-old Lisa Trouliotis. In the picture, too, are teacher Veronica Deshayes and, on the right, Mr Barry Field, director of the Mitcham Building Society. The Society opened its competition to all middle schools and gave them the theme "Old Mitcham". Unfortunately entries were restricted because of staff difficulties at the schools. but there were no problems at Western and over 50 pupils set about the task of making models and drawings of the iron railway that used to run down through Surrey. It comprised models, paintings, and posters which had been made over the past three or four months. And the money: that's going to be spent on what the entrants want. "We're giving them a free hand to say how they think the money could best be spent for the school's benefit," said headmaster Mr A. Poole. "A suggestion box has been put up to let them express their views on what would be best to buy for them and future pupils."

Each week the museum posts three photographs from our archive on Instagram and Facebook. At times these get comments, and bring back memories. Here are just a couple we have received:

### Carolyn Doswell

My house! Spent many happy hours catching leeches in a jam jar from the garden wall. Not so pleasant when the river flooded and came into the house.

This is a picture of the manager of Chuters Mill house.





## Chapter House Graves

### Bertie Morris

We went in there as kids when they were uncovering the graves, and they showed us a few. On one of them the skull was badly smashed, the archaeologist told us it was obvious that he had been murdered.... All very exciting when you were a little toe rag aged about ten 😄 This was earlier than 1987 but it was the excavations where the Abbey train station was, they were found when the tracks were being removed, I would say late 60's?



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## Takeitupwearitout

You may well wonder what this is about? It is the Instagram name of a lady who visited the museum one Sunday. One of the pages on her online blog (<http://takeitupwearitout.blogspot.com/>) is titled *The Wandle Wardrobe - a tale of textile waste from my local river*.

Over the last few months, possibly as part of her daily exercise, she has gathered up material and clothes that she has found along the banks of the River Wandle. In some cases she has been able to wash and clean the clothes and give them to her local charity shop. With other pieces she has developed works of art. Hence the name “Wandle Wardrobe”. Her efforts certainly put a new meaning to the word *recycling*!

The museum has approached her about allowing us to have one of her art works to display. We hope to be able to follow this up once restrictions are relaxed.

## **Under the Radar ?**

If you thought that government activities have been concentrated on Covid-19 and Brexit, you would be mistaken.

In December, proposed new Permitted Development Rights ( PDRs) were introduced to allow certain buildings in newly-created planning Class E within town centres e.g. offices, restaurants and shops, to be converted into housing with minimal planning permission and a reduction in consultation times. Schools and hospitals could also be extended on existing sites. Effectively this reduces the ability of Councils and certainly local communities, to control the location and type of such development. In effect it is a developers' dream.

While the museum would not normally have commented on such proposals and fully understands the pressing need for more affordable local housing I personally feel that in the long-term this could affect the locality in several ways. The government may feel that footfall could increase in town centres thus developed, but commercial outlets are the key to economic success and if residents will need to travel further to shop or work they will not do so on foot and so local traffic will increase with resultant additional pollution. The experience of the current pandemic is that local shopping has thrived. However, new residents might provide potential new visitors for us as might expansion to local schools.

Mitcham is already earmarked for various new residential schemes and we have the Cricket Green Community and Heritage to thank for their assiduous analyses of such proposals and they will no doubt have some thoughts on these PDRs.

One section not as yet fleshed out in the documentation is in Annex A Part 11 which deals with Heritage and Demolition. We might need to get our radar on to that.

The consultation period ends on January 28<sup>th</sup> so this bulletin may not appear in time. But here is the link in case.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure>

This analysis is purely my own and not necessarily the general opinion of museum management.

**Alison Cousins**



## Dates for the Diary

This a rather blank page. Hopefully as things improve we can start to tell you about forthcoming events such as;

- Merton Heritage Discovery Day,
- Our new exhibition. Something sadly we haven't been able to put on for the last two years.
- Mitcham Heritage Day.

We also hope to return to being able to give face-to-face talks rather than online presentations and do the walks programme that was planned for last year then cancelled due to the pandemic.



A picture from the opening of our new exhibition in June 2005.  
This exhibition was to celebrate the life of Lord Nelson during his time  
living in Merton.



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

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 is closed 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 [office@wandle.org](mailto:office@wandle.org)

You can find us on:

