

NEWSLETTER NO. 8 - AUTUMN - 1994

THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

The Vestry Hall Annexe – London Road – Mitcham –
Surrey CR4 3UD – Telephone: 081-648 0127



Museum open every Wednesday 1 – 4pm
and first Sunday of each month 2 – 5pm

The museum also welcomes schools and groups by appointment

ADMISSION: ADULTS 20p, CHILDREN & SENIOR CITIZENS: 10p

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Saturday 26th November at 2.00 p.m. - meet outside the Savacentre main entrance. for a Nelson Walk to coincide with the Museum's new exhibition "Nelson and his Merton Connections" a walk round the sites relating to Nelson is planned. This will include the Trafalgar Pub, the Victory Pub, the Nelson Gardens, St. Mary's Church Merton, the Nelson Hospital and the Emma Hamilton Public House. We hope to go inside St. Mary's Church to see Nelson's hatchment and pew. We may also partake of liquid refreshment in one of the many Nelson related hostelryes! Do join us on this historic walk.

TALK BY JOHN GREENWOOD, former printer at David Evans, Crayford

After the A.G.M. on the 29th September had been successfully concluded, there followed a short interval, during which an impressive variety of refreshments was served. Afterwards a talk was given by John Greenwood, a former block printer at the firm of David Evans of Crayford, Kent, on the history of textile printing.

The many attractive colour slides he showed amply demonstrated the development of this highly sophisticated craft, from its beginnings in the 17th century to the present day. The diversity of skills required, from the painstaking task of block-making to the equally exacting methods of hand-printing represented a unique example of collaboration between art and industry.

The decline of textile printing in the London area was largely a result of the industrial revolution. In the 19th century Lancashire mills were able to mass-produce printed textiles more quickly and more cheaply than ever before possible. There still remained, however, at the more exclusive end of the market, a demand for hand-printed silk fabrics such as produced by David Evans and Liberty & Co. John concluded his talk with a description of the life-cycle of the remarkable silk-worm. Without the existence of this mulberry-feeding moth caterpillar, there would obviously have been no silk industry in the first place - no golden road to Samarkand!

For those who, inspired by John's talk, wish to visit the David Evans Craft Centre of Silk, it is situated at Bourne Road, Crayford, Kent. Telephone: Crayford (0322) 559401.



OPENING OF THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM'S NELSON EXHIBITION

Friday, 21st October 1994, (Trafalgar Day) was chosen for the formal opening of the Museum's new exhibit "Nelson and his Merton Connections". Completion of months of work by Peter Harris had coincided precisely with the 189th anniversary of the battle in which England's greatest sailor gave his life to ensure his beloved country would not be invaded by the French, and Peter is to be congratulated on what is an impressive addition to the Museum's display.

The open ceremony was performed by European M.P. Anita Pollack, appropriately assisted by a party of four Sea Cadets from the T.S. Trafalgar, Wimbledon, under the command of Lieut. Ken Grogan. After complimenting the Trustees and Management Committee on the exhibit, a special section of which is devoted to the years 1801-5, when Lord Nelson lived at Merton Place with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, Ms. Pollack mentioned the Museum's hopes for the future, and the exciting prospect of new accommodation becoming available in the Ravensbury Mill, now undergoing refurbishment as part of a housing development scheme.

The toast "Lord Nelson : God Bless Him" proposed by Lieut. Grogan, and drunk in best East Anglian ale from a 200 year-old tankard inscribed "Success to Admiral Nelson", was echoed by the 30 or so assembled guests, who included the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Tony Colman, and Vice-Chair of the Leisure Services Department, Cllr. Brian White. Also present were representatives from the Council's Leisure and Environmental Departments, David Jenkins of the National Trust, John Hawks and Norman Fairey from Merton Abbey Mills, Norman Plaistow representing the Wimbledon Museum, Mrs. Margaret Cunningham, Hon. Sec. of The Wandle Group, and Friends and members of the Wandle Industrial Museum.

The occasion afforded those present (perhaps in some cases for the first time), the opportunity to glimpse other aspects of the Wandle's Industrial heritage featured in the Museum, and to appreciate the potential which exists, if space were available, for an even more impressive presentation of the "Merton Story".

E.N. Montague





**PROGRESS AT THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON'S HERITAGE CENTRE,
HONEYWOOD, BY CARSHALTON PONDS**

The London Borough of Sutton's Heritage Centre, in the historic house known as Honeywood, is now in its fourth year and we are working on Phase II of its development. The Centre was opened in December 1990, with a layout on the ground floor only, and since then work has proceeded on restoring and opening the first floor.

The most recently opened area is known as the Tudor Gallery, which deals with the important role this locality played in the Tudor period, and particularly with the relationship and conflict between Henry VIII, who built his magnificent Palace of Nonsuch between Cheam and Ewell in the 1530's and 1540's and his courtier, Sir Nicholas Carew, K.G. of Beddington Place (now Carew Manor) on the wandle, whom he beheaded in 1538, confiscating his lands to add to the lands of Nonsuch. It also deals with Sir Nicholas's son, Sir Francis Carew, famous gardener and uncle-in-law to Sir Walter Raleigh, who planted the first orangery in this country in the open ground at Beddington. The Tudor Gallery was opened last October and the displays include finds from the Nonsuch excavations in 1959/60.

Honeywood is intimately linked with the River wandle, since it stands on the western edge of the Carshalton Town Ponds, gathering place of the sources of the Carshalton wandle. Moreover, a stream from a series of springs is visible in two places in Honeywood's garden, and again in the front of the house, but culverted under the lawn and then under the house itself. This stream comes from Margaret's Pool, on the corner of Pound Street and West Street Carshalton. The Pool was the subject of a restoration by John Ruskin in the late 19th century. Another wandle stream flows along the northern flank of Honeywood and comes from the grounds of Carshalton House, whose lake was once a major wandle source. The springs above the Ponds are now seasonal or occasional only but have been flowing well this year (some still are).

The next room to be opened to the public is intended to be devoted to the River wandle and, among other things, will interpret within the Centre the late 19th century private electrical-power generating building in the Grove Park, just a few yards downstream from the Ponds, which stands on the site of Carshalton's Upper Corn Mill and was originally worked from the last of the Upper Mill's wheels, before going over to power from a turbine, probably around 1914.

The wheel is now restored, as is the building and the turbine and it is hoped to have the turbine working and the wheel turning again in the course of the next twelve months.

Attractions at Honeywood at present include a restored Edwardian Billiards Room, which incorporates an audio-visual display about the history of the Ponds area; an 'Early Settlement' room; a room with a semi-permanent display relating to the main themes of Sutton's history; an Art Gallery used sometimes for major temporary exhibitions; and a 'Childhood Room' with an unique collection of Edwardian toys and games treasured from a resident's childhood. There is also a shop selling local and relevant publications, and souvenirs; and a pair of tea rooms serving refreshments, snacks and light meals.

Honeywood has a core dating from the 17th century, with late-Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian additions. Sections of walls of the core house (it was built in chalk and flint) are exposed in various rooms, as, in one case, is a window in a now internal wall, discovered, still glazed, during restoration.

A garden restoration is now under way. A number of features remain, or are being re-exposed, from the late-Victorian/Edwardian period, including a small grotto, and the garden is being steered towards a restoration relating to that time, and emphasising the water features. Outdoor exhibits include a set of edge-runner mill-stones from the old Grove Snuff Mill (not the same as the Upper Mill) and some track from the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Iron Railway, continuation of the Surrey Iron Railway, first public railway in the world.

Doug Cluett
Heritage Consultant
London Borough of Sutton
18th June 1994

HERITAGE CENTRE, HONEYWOOD
Honeywood Walk, Carshalton (opposite The Greyhound Inn)

Wednesday to Friday 10.00am - 5.00pm
Saturday & Sunday 10.00am - 5.30pm
Bank Holiday Mondays 10.00am - 5.30pm

Buses: 127, 157, 408, 726
BR: Carshalton Station (few minutes walk)



'Leon' Bridge - Carshalton.
-an artist's impression.

THE RAVENSBURY MILL -The New home for the Wandle Industrial Museum.

Over the last three to four years there have been redevelopment proposals for Whiteley's on Morden Road in Morden, the former Ravensbury Mill. The first redevelopment proposals for this historic site were the retention of the original water mill structure and its conversion into business suites with the remainder of the site developed for the then ubiquitous high tech industrial units with car parking.

In granting planning permission Merton Council required not only that the mill building be sympathetically converted but that part of this structure be converted for a museum centered on the historic double water wheels. This museum was to be converted at the cost of the developer and handed over at a pepper corn rent to the Wandle Industrial Museum.

With the onset of the recession, the light industrial scheme was replaced by a residential scheme for flats and the Industrial Museum. This scheme was held on ice for some two years awaiting the revival of the housing market.

Early on in this process the eastern wing attached to the mill building which formed the main area for the Museum had been vandalised and burnt. Fortunately, the main building containing the water wheels has remained intact.

In June 1994, Fairclough Homes received planning permission for a revised residential and Museum scheme. This has a 3 strong "mainland" block with parking on the ground floor and 12 flats above. The mill building accommodates 2 flats and the Industrial Museum on the ground floor with 4 more flats contained in the upper floor of the mill building. The "island" block contains 16 flats on 2 and 3 floors.

The new buildings are designed in a "warehouse" style to be in keeping with the appearance and character of the original mill building. The mill pond and the other historic features in the setting of the mill are retained and will be restored to provide a unique water mill side residential enclave.

Demolition of the non-listed buildings was undertaken in August and a site meeting has been held with Fairclough Homes to discuss legal aspects of the construction and fitting out of the Museum. A further meeting on site with Faircloughs explored the mechanisms of the water wheels which control the mill ponds. In the meantime detailed drawings are being prepared for the Museum and these will be discussed with Museum members. Advice on the restoration of the wheels is being sought from Norman Fairey of Abbey Mills.

In late October we hope to have a set of drawings and the mill pond emptied so we can really begin the work of planning the Museum's new accommodation.

Faircloughs are planning to be finished by Christmas 1995.
More details next issue

John Foley. 7.10.94

SUTTON ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR

For the first time members decided to have a Museum Stand at this event held on Bank Holiday Monday, August 29th in Carshalton Park which contains the Grotto which was built round one of the sources of the Carshalton branch of the River Wandle. So this seemed an appropriate venue to publicise the Wandle Industrial Museum. The Fair, originally organised by the London Borough of Sutton is very large and attracts a diverse selection of environmental groups and craft stalls. Our stand attracted a lot of visitors who showed considerable interest in our project, including the Mayor of Sutton, and nearly £100 was raised from the sale of publications, snuff and lavender goods and Wandle maps. The weather was fine and warm and the continuous rock music played in the Hog Pit and the Music Tent made the event a pleasurable experience. We shall definitely repeat the experience next year.

NEW PROMOTIONAL EDUCATION LEAFLET

This new leaflet advertising our Museum and its services to schools has been planned by Sheila and enhanced with original drawings by volunteer artist John Viner. The leaflet which has been sent to all Merton Schools looks very attractive and it is hoped schools will respond to what we have on offer. We have already had enquiries from Garth High School, Pelham First School and Wimbledon High School. Sheila is putting together an Educational Folder at the Museum containing copies of appropriate worksheets, maps, colouring sheets, workshop plans of action and lists of resources for schools. We are also building up a collection of appropriate videos and visual material for school parties of all ages.

NEW PUBLICATIONS ON SALE IN THE MUSEUM SHOP

In conjunction with our new Nelson Exhibition, we are now selling copies of Paradise Merton by Philip Ratbone price £2.40 and a selection of post cards priced from 25p to 45p of Nelson, Lady Hamilton and the Battle of Trafalgar. The W.I.M. Education Pack "Nelson and Merton Place" is also on sale at 75p.

Local history notelets published by Merton Historical Society with drawings by Peter Harris are on sale at £1.00 for 6 notelets.

Whilst waiting for finance to be arranged for a reprint of the Wandle Trail Map, we have reduced the original map to A3 size and are selling it for 40p.

We are also selling "The Wandle Strategy" published by Wandle Heritage Ltd. for £2.00. - "The Wandle Trail" compendium book of the Watermeads, Ravensbury Park and Morden Hall Park, is now back on sale at £2.00.

With our usual stock of publications, snuff, lavender-goods, pens, pencils and Wandle pattern notebooks, we now have a really great selection of merchandise.

MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Saturday, December 10th

Peter Brunning of Kingston Upon Thames Archaeological Society will give an illustrated lecture entitled "A Vintage Wireless Collection" 2.30 p.m. at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre, Morden Hall Park.

Saturday, January 28th 1995

A representative from the Painshill Park Trust will give a slide lecture about the restoration work done to Painshill Park, Cobham, Surrey, 2.30 p.m. at the Snuff Mill, Morden Hall Park.

Welcome to Zubair Mahmood, our new volunteer helper to come to us from the Merton Volunteer Bureau. Zuby, as he wishes us to call him, is a student at Roehampton Institute studying Sociology with Geography.

William Morris Society

Kelmscott House
26 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London W6 9TA
Telephone: 081-741 3735

Saturday 26 November, 2.30pm

MORRIS: PIONEER OF GREEN SOCIALISM

A talk by Roger Simon, who works in trade union research and is deeply involved in the red-green movement. He has edited and introduced the writings of Gramsci to English speaking readers.

At Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall w6

Tickets £2 from the Society

Saturday 10 December, 7.30 to 11pm

YULETIDE PARTY

A buffet supper and seasonal entertainment.

At Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall w6

Tickets £6 from the Society

