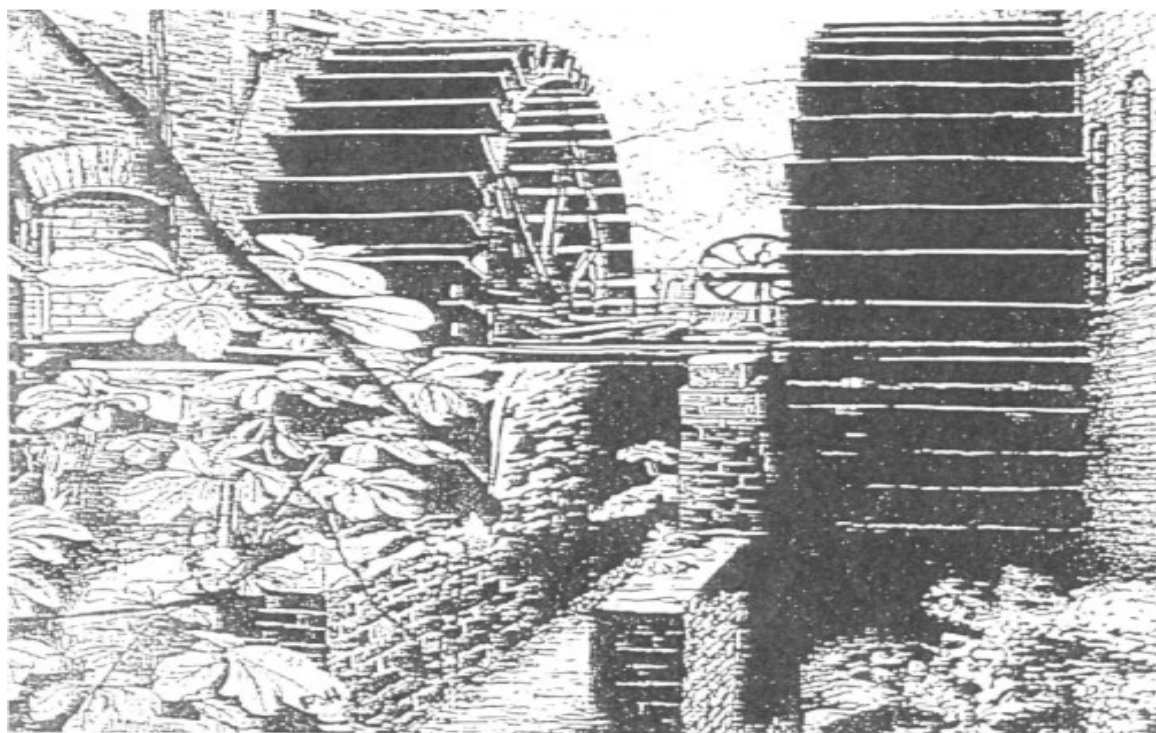


NewsLetter #20 - Autumn 1997

---

## THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

The Vestry Hall Annexe • London Road • Mitcham • Surrey  
CR4 3UD • Telephone: 0181-648 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

## **NEWSDESK**

**MUSEUM VISITS** We are pleased to report three school workshops since the last Newsletter. S.S.Peter & Paul First School enjoyed participating in two class Workshop sessions at the Museum and we visited Garfield School in Wimbledon for an on site Textile Printing Workshop in October.

**FUND-RAISING EVENTS** We were happy to participate in the Merton Festival "Island in the Sun" day at Fair Green in July and again at The Merton Green Fair in September. We were blessed with fine weather at both these events and raised over £150 for the Museum. Special thanks to all Museum members and volunteers who supported us on these days. Great interest was shown in the book "Old Mitcham" edited by Eric Montague and showing a collection of the famous Tom Francis photographs taken at the turn of the century.

This book usually retails at £11.95 but is on special offer at £4.95 at present. Copies are available from the Museum Shop.

**STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE** During August we were pleased to welcome Lucilla Macdonald, a classics studies student from Reading University on a work experience placement with us. Lucilla hopes to work in a Museum when she finishes her degree course. During her time with us she worked alongside our Archivist Marguerite Lee-Delisle with the task of documentation and also started to compile a Visitor Survey for the Museum which is in the process of being revised and is eventually to be handed to visitors to the Museum to fill in. Lucilla also helped to represent some of the labelling of certain Museum Displays to make them more child friendly for our school visits. This work experience proved very successful and we hope to keep in touch with Lucilla in the future.

**VOLUNTEERS** We are pleased to welcome new volunteer Harriet Bazley who responded to our request for help in the Merton Volunteer Bureau Newsletter. Harriet will be helping Marguerite with the documentation of the archives.

### **MEMBERS EVENTS**

**PAST** Annual General Meeting at the Colour House Theatre. This was a very successful meeting which was well attended - see article on separate page.

**PRESENT** Annual Christmas Party to be held again this year at the Vestry Hall Meeting Room, on Tuesday 9th December at 7.30 p.m. Invitations are included with this Newsletter and we hope to see you there.

**FUTURE** A joint meeting with Merton Historical Society at The Snuff Mill Environmental Centre, in Morden Hall Park on Saturday February 21st at 2.30 p.m. An illustrated lecture "Surrey Watermills" by Derek Stidder. Please support this extra event.

**WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP** Subscriptions for 1997-8 are now due and a reply slip is included with this Newsletter for your convenience.

S. Harris  
October 1997

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This year the Annual General Meeting of the Wandle Industrial Museum was held in the Colour House Theatre at Abbey Mills. Perhaps the most appropriate venue to date. Harry Galley chaired the meeting and there were about thirty Members present. The Annual Report showed again a very full diary of the valuable work the Museum does with local schools and other groups. Peter Harris is the main stay of these activities aided by Sheila Harris. Harry spoke about progress of the Lottery Bid, it has been submitted and all we can do now is wait with bated breath for the Lottery Committee to come to a decision, one that is in our favour we hope.

Harry then thanked the Members of the Committees for their years work and for their willingness to serve another year! The work done by the Volunteers was appreciated as was that of Sheila Harris our Administrator responsible for the day to day running of the Museum. We were pleased to welcome two residents of the flats at Ravensbury as Committee Members and we hope that this will be the beginning of a good working relationship with the other tenants.

This brought the first part of the meeting to an end and we broke for refreshments. After the break we welcomed David Sharp, Vice President of the Ramblers Association. He led us on a fascinating journey along the Thames Path. We began at Trewsbury Mead, where a simple stone marks the beginning of the Thames, along its path through Lechdale, Abingdon, Henley-on-Thames, past Royal Windsor, Richmond and finally to the Thames Barrier. Pausing on the way to look at interesting old bridges, pretty cottages, inviting inns, historical churches and flower bedded locks. At the end of the talk we were all ready to set off along the path at once, but sanity prevailed and we contented ourselves with buying his informative book, "The Thames Path". As it was obvious that this was not an afternoon stroll David recommended Sitwell's "National Trail Companion", or the "Ramblers Yearbook and Accommodation Guide" for places to stay along the way. David added that the Ramblers Association were now turning their attention to part of the Thames beyond the Barrier. On this happy note the meeting ended.

Meg Thomas, 27/10/97

## **THE VISION MEETING**

The meeting which took place on Monday, 30th June 1997 at 7.00 p.m. in the ground floor meeting room of the main Vestry Hall was essentially to develop a Delivery Plan for the Ravensbury Mill Project and to seek support from the wider membership of the Museum.

Introduction Ray Leyden as Chair of the Ravensbury Mill Sub-Committee, welcomed everyone to the first Vision Meeting to be held by the Museum. A special welcome was given to our Speaker Simon Lace, who is our Curatorial Advisor appointed by the Museums and Galleries Commission and is also Curator of the Museum of Richmond.

Purpose of the Meeting to discuss the future planning of Ravensbury Mill We have submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Board to fund a high quality opening display. The next phase of the project will be to produce a Delivery Plan to deliver the project when we secure funding. It is the intention of the meeting to reach the wider membership of the Museum. To plan the way forward on how we may prioritise our activities and to seek the advice and the support to achieve the goal.

## Related articles

Kev Notes of Talk by Simon Lace, Curator of Museum of Richmond

Responsible for new opening display at Museum of Richmond. Worked in partnership with L.A. but had to be self-reliant for initial 2 year period before funding was established.

- Strategy established to win wider support in the local community.
- Attracted people in the public eye (i.e. David Dimbleby) and established 300 friends of the Museum which was a key to their future success.
- Attract Patrons who are active in fund-raising
- Organise fund-raising events, such as coffee mornings
- Once the new Museum was opened it went quiet. Something to guard against.

The opening of the new Museum is only the beginning

- Establish Collection Management System
- Create temporary exhibitions which will help to increase repeat visits
- Create Marketing Plan. Visitors projections must be realistic
- How to fund, how to keep funding.
- Offer high professional services
- In 5-10 years who is going to be running the operation?
- Professional help to run it. Professional Curator
- First impressions count with new exhibition. It has to be the best.
- After opening it took three years to resurrect the interest
- Created ambitious temporary display. New Spencer Gould exhibition highly successful. Took on loan 18 exhibits general, 12 from public 5 from national.
- They have doubled the visitor figures over the past 2 years.
- Have managed 124 schools visitors with only 2 people.
- Income generated by school visits, community wide body, members, grants, fund-raising.
- Disabled access, better lighting, temporary exhibitions, education increase visitors figures.

## NEW VENTURES IN MORDEN HALL PARK

The park is situated in the London Borough of Merton and belongs to the National Trust. It is an oasis of green space in an otherwise built up area. The park has the river Wandle running through it with various tributaries. We hold regular events and you will find a copy of our events calendar in this Newsletter. We are very busy restoring our rose beds where we will be planting over 800 roses. We are also having a large tree planting scheme which will start this Autumn and carry on into the the new year. The Snuff Mill Environmental Centre runs a Nature Club for children on one Saturday morning every month (details 0181 543 0372); it can also be used for talks by groups at a small charge. The centre is used during the week for educational visits by local schools. If you are a teacher please contact Suzanne Lucas on 0181 542 4232. If you are interested in being a National Trust volunteer at the park or need further information, please contact our office on 0181 648 1845.

## Morden Hall Park Guided Walks & Events

### Walks

Sunday 16th November 1997      An opportunity to see the varied habitats in this peaceful season, including a look at some of the winter projects being undertaken such as our tree planting programme.

Sunday, 14th December 1997      A stroll around areas of horticultural interest looking at noteworthy plants during the dormant season.

Sunday 18th January 1998      A walk highlighting the Park's gardening projects including the Rose Garden restoration.

Sunday, 1st March 1998      Discover the history of Morden Hall Park by looking at the Mills, houses, waterways and meadows at this unique property. For all the above walks meet at 2pm by the car park bridge

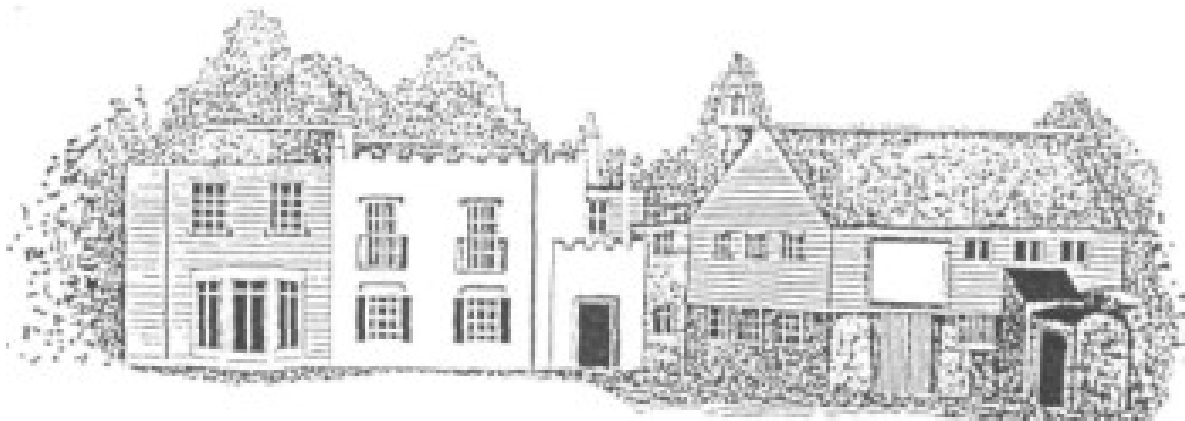
### Events

Saturday. 29th & Sunday, 30th November 1997 - Tree Planting in the Park  
Help is needed to start this major tree planting project.

Tuesday. 16th December 1997 - Meet the Staff Over Mulled Wine & Mince Pies  
Join us for a look at the year's work at the property. Tickets £4.

Monday. 22nd December 1997 - Making Natural Christmas Decorations at the Snuff Mill  
For 5-9 year olds. Book in advance on 0181 542 4232. For information pick up a leaflet or phone 0181 648 1845

Johanna Bailey Admin Assistant 27.10.97



"COME INTO MY CHAMBER...."

"There's no such thing as a free lunch," is conventional wisdom.

The Merton Chamber of Commerce lunches, however, get pretty close to it for me, thanks to the Museum paying for them.

So how did I get the onerous duty of representing the Museum at Chamber meetings? Well, the Fund-raising Sub-committee decided we should join, and it happened to be my turn to take responsibility for something. I guess that's the way the cookie crumbles.

I didn't actually realise at the time that most of the regular meetings are lunches. They are held at the training restaurant at Merton College, which means a high standard of cuisine at very reasonable prices (if you haven't been there already, I advise you to do so. A telephone call to the College will tell you when the restaurant's open to the public). There follows a brief talk on some subject of general interest.

The really useful time, however, is that spent before the dinner - in the bar. People are pretty abstemious - after all, most have to return to work and practically all are driving. The important thing is the networking. That means meeting other people, establishing your existence in their minds and finding out how they can be useful to you. Generally this usefulness takes the form of advice and expertise - informal help with ways of tackling any problem the Museum happens to have, for example. There is also the function of raising the profile of the Museum among the local business community, which may pay dividends the next time we are looking for sponsorship for some project.

Joining the Chamber has also given us access to useful seminars and training sessions. A breakfast seminar on the internet springs to mind ("no such thing as a free breakfast"?). More recently, I have been to a valuable training session on Health and Safety legislation.

But why should you - the members of the Museum - be particularly interested that we have joined the Chamber? Well, there are two ways that you can benefit directly. Firstly, from time to time the Chamber organises special theatre evenings at Wimbledon Theatre or the Polka Theatre, usually with a chance to meet cast members. Secondly, some firms who are members of the Chamber offer goods or services at special rates to other members. Sheila at the Museum can give you details of both these benefits.

Meanwhile, pass the menu, please.

Stephen Ashcroft



## THE VANGUARD WAY

The Vanguard Way (VW) continues where the Wandle Trail leaves off- or at least it will do in the near future when the Wandle Trail is extended to East Croydon Station (as allowed for in Croydon's UDP). The VW has been around for quite a long time - it was opened in 1981 - and is fairly well known to regular walkers. The fact that it is not better known is partly due to the lack of waymarks. but that is about to change.

The route was established by the London-based Vanguards Rambling Club, one of whose members suggested that it would be a good idea to link East Croydon Station (the departure point for many ramblers on their weekend jaunts into the countryside) with the Berwick Inn (next to Berwick Station in East Sussex, between Lewes and Eastbourne). The reason for proposing this rather obscure terminus was its popularity with club members as a location for carousing at the end of a day's walk. Other members pointed out that this was probably rather too obscure for general appeal and it was agreed that walkers would prefer to finish by the sea, with the result that Seaford became the final destination. This provided the route's strapline, "from the suburbs to the sea", and a distance of 62 miles.

The walking is very attractive. The route leaves East Croydon Station through the subway into Altyre Road, then follows the Fairfield Path and quiet residential roads through the southern outskirts via Lloyd Park, Coombe Wood, Littleheath Wood and Selsdon Wood. It is then nearly all on rights of way or country lanes, with hardly any main roads, across the North Downs, Greensand Ridge, The Weald, Ashdown Forest and South Downs. There are no towns to go through between Croydon and Seaford, the only other major settlements being the large villages of Forest Row and Alfristou. The route can be walked in full in five or six days, and with eleven rail stations within reach there is ample opportunity to do it in separate trips.

During the 1980s and early 90s, with most of the club members fully employed, they (well, alright, "we" - since I am a member) were never able to find the vast amounts of spare time needed to carry out surveying for waymarking. Several false starts were made, but it is only recently that this work has been completed, egged on by the redoubtable Debbie Court. Croydon's PACE Officer (Promoting Access in Croydon for Everyone). With good cooperation between club members and the councils of Croydon, Surrey, Kent and East Sussex, waymarks have now been acquired and are about to be installed even as this article is being written - completion is scheduled for early Spring 1998.

This opportunity has been taken to extend the VW to Newhaven (new total 66 miles), so that it can easily be used by visitors from mainland Europe. One of their first sights will be the breathtaking view of the Seven Sisters from Seaford Head - one of the wonders of Southern England. This also makes the VW and the Wandle Trail candidates for inclusion in an "E-route" for walkers from Paris to London, now being seriously discussed. (Four members of the Vanguards walked from London to Paris by this means in 1990.)

There has been a guidebook to the VW ever since it opened, but we have also taken the opportunity to bring out a new and much unproved third edition this year. It contains a detailed route description, a gazetteer to places of interest, an exhaustive list of places offering accommodation and refreshment, and other useful information - including the story of how the Vanguards got their name. For this you will have to buy the book\* - I will only say now that it involved a bottle of Drambuie!

Colin Saunders

*"The Vanguard Way" by Colin Saunders - £2.95 plus 45p post and packing from: Vanguards Rambling Club,  
109 Selsdon Park Road, Croydon, CR2*



### **FORTHCOMING DEMONSTRATIONS OF HAND BLOCK PRINTING AT DAVID EVANS & COMPANY. 1998.**

David Evans & Company are the only surviving textile printers of the early entrepreneurs who first began to establish themselves along the tributaries of the River Thames from the latter end of the 17th century onwards. The company was originally established in 1843, although other printers operated on the same site from about 1764.

David Evans business was originally founded on the production of high quality hand block printed silk fabrics for the very exclusive end of the market, and the production of classic Paisley designs for shawls, squares, cravats, neckties, and handkerchiefs for the fashionable snuff takers of the period. The company takes great pride in its rich and colourful industrial heritage, in what is a unique and historic traditional craft based industry, and also in the fact that they were able to retain the method of hand block printing for the production of exclusive printed silks for almost 140 years, at their historic Crayford printworks site.

Hand block printing was the most distinctive and skilled art form of all the textile printing methods, and there is still tremendous interest in the techniques which it employed, allied to the classic skills of the textile block makers. Having progressively monitored public reaction and interest in the traditional method of block printing, David Evans & Company's industrial tourism sector have decided to proceed with a series of one-day block printing demonstrations, as an experimental promotion. Initially there will be four demonstration days during the course of 1998.

These will take place on the first Saturday of each quarter.



**DURING 1998 BLOCK PRINTING DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BE  
PRESENTED IN THE CRAFT CENTRE ON THE FOLLOWING DATES.**

**SATURDAYS:**

JANUARY 3rd / APRIL 4th / JULY 4th / OCTOBER 3rd

**MORNING SESSION.** 10am. -- 1pm.

**AFTERNOON SESSION.** 1-30pm - - 3-30pm

WE ADVISE YOU TO PRE-BOOK FOR THESE SPECIAL DEMONSTRATIONS DAYS .  
ON 01322-559401.

David Evans & Company are proud to be able to proclaim that they are the only commercial textile printers in the United Kingdom, with an on-site 'working' Craft-Centre-Museum which is able to offer members of the general public, and textile students, the rare opportunity to study and observe the periodic re-creation of this unique process. Your demonstrator on each occasion will be Mr. John Greenwood who for 20 years was a professional hand block printer, both in the North of England, and at David Evans & Company. In addition to presenting you with an authoritative introduction to the many fascinating practical aspects of the process, Mr. Greenwood who is now a lecturer in the history of printed textiles, will additionally explain both the technical, and historical aspects of the craft

We hope that you may be able to support David Evans & Company in this experimental venture, thus enabling us to proceed with further demonstrations in the future, and perhaps make them a more regular event within the Craft Centre Of Silk.