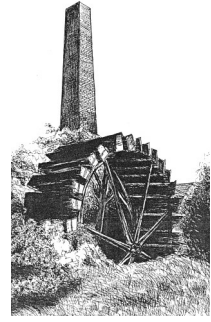


# WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



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# BULLETIN

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## 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

We are pleased to bring you the third edition of our bulletin since the country went into lockdown in March and the ongoing restrictions we face with the pandemic situation. I hope that all of you have been able to stay safe and well.

At the museum we have missed giving our talks and running workshops with schools. As you will see in the Operations Team report on page 3 we successfully delivered some talks during Mitcham Heritage Day.

Three of our talks are now available via the museum You Tube channel and we hope to add more as well as an online version of our textile workshop.

No one knows what will happen in the next few months? The museum will remain open to visitors in a Covid-19 secure environment until we are told otherwise. Feel free to call in and see us and do keep safe and well.

Best wishes,

***Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)***

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

Go to Page 9 to find out the story behind this picture.

## Operations Team Report

We re-opened on Wednesday August 5<sup>th</sup>, and some visitors could not even wait until 1pm and turned up in the morning.

The team felt that we had met all the criteria required by national museum guidelines in as much as they applied to our building layout and collections. We compiled an updated Risk Assessment document which was presented to the manager at Vestry Hall representing Merton Council. In addition to the cleaning regime, information collecting for Test and Trace, distancing instructions, and clear one-way system, we removed all handleable and interactive objects and set up a quarantine strategy for any reference books and shop merchandise that had been handled for browsing.

Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup> saw us take part in the annual Mitcham Heritage Day – usually we are busy all day and with few other groups taking part this year we felt that with some lateral thinking we could still put on a display. Mick Taylor is our man to think outside the box and we therefore gambled weather wise on removing a few of our display boards to prop them up against the fence and also have a few of our shop items at the front door. We also offered a series of talks outside the back door complete with the projector and screen set-up. The rain held off but as it got a bit windy the screen developed a mind of its own during my talk. Seating being on the Lower Green meant that we were highly visible from the road and some passing interest.



A series of pictures from the Mitcham Heritage Day. Over the day we had just over 60 visitors. While numbers were down from previous years it still proved a successful event.

Sadly we couldn't do much for the postponed Discovery Day on September 26<sup>th</sup> which was not only affected by the inability to have all groups inside the library as usual but planned live online talks were made impossible by last-minute IT work by the Council. So dear old Zoom came to the rescue yet again and my planned talk on "Art and Literature of the River Wandle" was made available in advance. Talks already done by Mick and myself on "People and Families" and "Lavender" are also on the YouTube link from the museum website.

Alison had a Zoom meeting as part of the South and East Museums Network, led by the Museum of London on September 28<sup>th</sup>. It was clear that we were luckier than most museums in the region in our ability to re-open, and other members were impressed by our recent initiatives.

John Branford joined us as a new volunteer back in the spring but didn't get the chance to help in front of house until we re-opened. We also have a new Sunday volunteer, Eva Moody, and a folk-singing duo, Joe Hilary and Lena Golubowska who are already using the museum for rehearsals, are also considering joining us.

Our retail area is undergoing a bit of an update with new lavender products and additional images on our fridge magnets and a new line of coasters is also planned. Fiona McKelvie has made us a new table covering in Morris's Golden Lily fabric, to match the stools ( as reported in our Spring Bulletin ).

We have recently completed the annual museum survey for the Museum of London, which this year asked us to focus on how Covid-19 had affected us. It also made us realise the extent of our social media following.

We are currently trying to arrange an AGM in some format which will be announced in due course.

## **Alison Cousins**

*Editor Note:* The Golden Lily pattern was designed around 1870, and was produced by Morris & Co. between 1880-1917 as a hand-printed woodblock wall paper. It is likely that Morris designed the broad lines of this pattern, and it was finished by John Henry Dearle.



## MOTHER NATURE HAS HER WAY

Merton Priory, for 500 years one of England's most important monasteries, disappeared completely in Henry VIII's "Dissolution". Only its foundations were left, which soon became buried and forgotten, but after the complete excavation in 1986-90 the remains of its Chapter House were preserved under Merantun Way.

Merton Priory Trust proudly unveiled their new museum there in 2018, and although this has been closed this year because of the pandemic, exciting plans are well advanced to create a venue there for youth theatre and community events. As part of this, the area within the remains will be discreetly paved to provide a performance and audience space.

But you don't mess with Mother Nature! Foundations being foundations, the Chapter House remains are below ground level, and water is never far away. After a wet few days at the start of October, this was the rather unwelcome sight that met my eyes!



However, disappointment soon gave way to relief - the old lady had done us a big favour by wagging her finger at us in good time, before the plans were finalised and the work started. Now my fellow-trustees and I have a much better idea what to do and how to do it, thanks to her serendipitous intervention. Covid permitting, we hope to re-open the Chapter House museum by Easter 2021, and launch "Anima Una", the youth theatre project, later in the year.

*John Hawks*

## Brewing Success

In November, as part of the redevelopment of the former Young's Brewery site, Duncan Sambrook of Sambrook's Brewery will open his brewery along with a taproom and museum. Having started brewing in Yelverton Road, Wandsworth in 2008 Duncan has raised £1.5 million to develop the complex that he will now call home.

The museum will have much of the old equipment from Young's including the enormous copper vessels where the malt and hops were boiled. These vessels were more than likely supplied by the Pontifex brothers who operated Wimbledon Mill. Also on show will be the large beam engines that provided the power for the entire brewing process.



This is a model of the beam engine made by Eric Shaw and on display at our museum.

Brewing at Wandsworth can be traced back to 1533 and is likely the oldest continuous brewing site in Britain. The oldest family brewery is said to be Shepherd Neame in Faversham, Kent which dates from 1698. Brewing at the Ram Brewery didn't stop when Young's closed in 2006. John Hatch ran a nano-brewery, the Phoenix, which we visited in December 2017 and enjoyed a pint of the 'not for sale' beer. John was located in the old stable block. It is planned that he will move into the new museum which he will run and from where he will conduct tours.

So who is Duncan Sambrook? Until his love of beer took over Duncan worked for Deloitte in the City of London. Having gained work experience at Otter and Stonehenge breweries he found himself meeting David Welsh who had founded the Ringwood Brewery in Hampshire in 1978 along with Peter Austin. Peter is known throughout the world as the father of microbrewing. As Duncan himself says "Ringwood was my

model.” His best selling beer the excellently named Wandle Ale is based on Ringwood Best. This flagship brew celebrates the River Wandle. One of the contracts Duncan has with other companies includes Brands Reunited. They own the trademarks and recipes for Watneys. How many of us remember the Watney Party Seven (*pictured below*) and Watney Red Barrel .



The Watney name is one that has an association with the River Wandle and the Wandle Valley. Generations of the Watney family had worked a large number of the mills along the Wandle from Croydon to Wandsworth. At one time the Lower, Middle and Upper Mills were all in the hands of a Watney. It wasn't until 1850 that they got involved in brewing when John Watney had a distillery at Wandsworth.

It is intended that the museum set up by Sambrook's will tell the story of brewing in London. Currently there are a129 breweries in London. Including Sambrook's there are a further five along the Wandle Valley: By The Horns at Summerstown, Wimbledon Brewery in Colliers Wood, Signal Brewery at Beddington, Volden Brewery in Croydon and the SlyBeast Brewery in Wandsworth.

We have featured the SlyBeast Brewery in our past copies of the bulletin (*see Summer 2020*). They are located in The Ram Inn on the corner of the old Young's brewery site. They also operate two other pubs in Wandsworth 'The Old Sergeant' and 'Pig and Whistle'. While

Sambrook's celebrate the River Wandle with their Wandle Ale the SlyBeast Brewery has the Beam Engine, 1533 and 4ft2. The first two celebrate brewing on the Wandsworth Brewery site and the other the Surrey Iron Railway. Brewing is certainly alive along the Wandle Valley. Don't forget to visit the museum to see our "Brewing Along The Wandle" exhibition which tells the history of brewing from Croydon to Wandsworth. For now we wish Duncan success with his enterprise and look forward to visiting the museum next year.

*Mick Taylor*



David Welsh and Duncan Sambrook  
Teacher and Student

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## The Sandwich Bridge

The news has been filled recently with the ongoing situation with Hammersmith Bridge and possible issues with other bridges crossing the Thames. The River Wandle has its share of bridges and it is good to report on one that has been refurbished.

Dyer & Butler, on behalf of Network Rail, has completed the refurbishment of the wheel timber bridge over the Wandle in Wandsworth Town. Known as 'The Sandwich Bridge' due to its unique three-layer design, the bridge is comprised of a base layer of eight longitudinal timbers, with 20 traverse beams for the middle layer and eight longitudinal timbers for the top layer. A low-level glass reinforced plastic walkway has also been installed to enable easier inspection of the wheel timber system.



Thanks to Peter Cousins for highlighting the bridge.



## The Story Behind Our Cover Picture

This picture on the front cover of this issue of the bulletin was shared on our Instagram social media feed. We were asked by one of those who viewed it if it was possible to get a print of the painting. Our records showed that it is a photograph of an original painting that is hanging on the wall of Wimbledon resident Ann Bremner. The painting has an interesting association. Dave Saxby of MOLA wrote an article in the Spring 2016 issue of the *The William Morris Society Magazine* about the tapestry weavers trained and employed by William Morris at Merton Abbey. The painting is by William Harold Knight who was Morris's second tapestry apprentice in 1881.



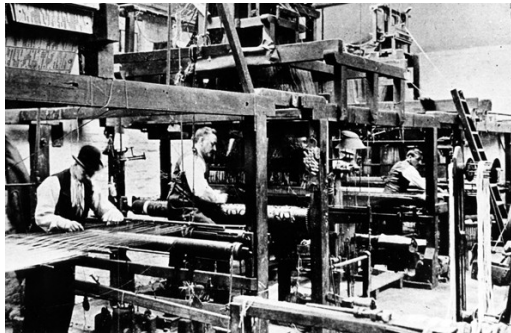
A picture of the Apprentice Boys' House in our model of the Morris Works.

The painting was found in the ruins of the apprentice boys' house on the Morris Works site. The house had been occupied by the Wright family from 1905 until the Morris Works closed in May 1940. In October 1940 the house was destroyed by German bombing. Searching the rubble the painting was found by a worker from the Board Mills. The finder was the Grandfather of Ann Bremner. You do wonder why a member of the Wright family didn't take the painting with them when they left the house. Maybe they didn't like it or was it hidden away by Knight? We will never know.

## Technology

Like many people during the lockdown period and the weeks after I have been having a bit of a sort out. I found a small book printed by Collins in 1983 called *Basic Facts Computers*. Looking through the book I found an item under **Jacquard**. It read as follows:

“Joseph Jacquard (France 1752-1834). He used punched cards to store machine operating instructions. His automatic weaving loom was controlled by the punched holes in the cards.” Punch cards were still being used into the 1980s.



This picture shows a Jacquard loom being used in the Morris Works. I wonder what Morris would have made of today's technology driven world?

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## Farewell

The museum was sad to learn of the passing of Betty Emberson. She was a supporter of the museum and volunteer with us for a number of years. Our condolences go to her family.

Betty is pictured third from right in this picture taken during a museum outing to Little Holland House, Carshalton in April 2005.



We also learnt of the passing of Bob Steele. He leaves behind a legacy with us as the co-author of the book *River Wandle Companion* published in 2011.



## Dates for the Diary

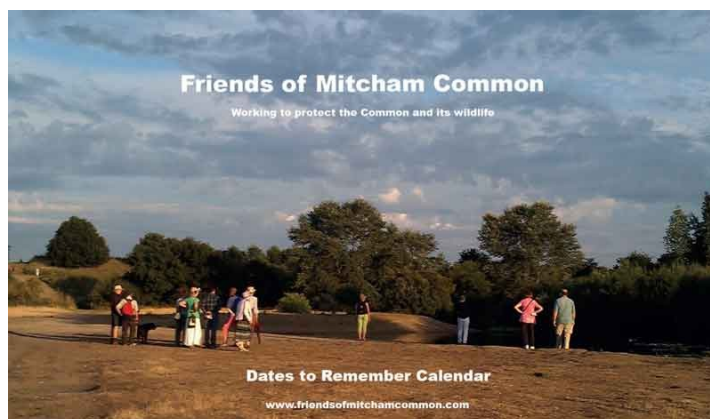
I am sure you won't be surprised given the current, and changing situation, with the Covid-19 restrictions that there are no dates to give you.

A date you would normally be given at this time of year is for our Annual General Meeting. All being well it would usually be held in November. We are required to have an AGM within 15 months of the last one. That took place in November 2019. As indicated in our Operations Team Report we are looking at options and would like to thank those who have responded to our recent survey. Once we have more news for you about the AGM you will be notified.

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## New Shop Items

A calendar produced by the Friends of Mitcham Common is available from the museum at a cost of £10.



The quizzes and word searches produced and distributed during lockdown are now available as A5 booklet format. The quiz booklet is available at £5 and there two word search booklets available at £2.50 each.

If you wish to purchase a calendar or any of the booklets please send a cheque to the museum adding £1.25 for postage stating which item you require.



Accreditation Mentor: Chris Taft, British Postal Museum and Archive.  
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.**



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.



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:

