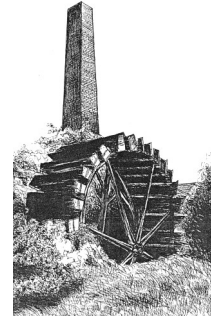


WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



BULLETIN



Contents

Operations Team Report	1
Frank Kitz Blue Plaque	3
Aerated Bread Company	4
Volunteer Focus	6
A Bit of Praise	7
Dates for the Diary	8
Remembering Mary Hart	
An Unusual Visitor	9

WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

PRESIDENT

Harry Galley

TRUSTEES

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

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

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

Editorial

Welcome to our Spring edition of our quarterly bulletin. A bit later than normal because the museum has become very busy since the easing down on Covid restrictions. Not that Covid has disappeared as you will learn in the Operations Team Report.

Each issue tries to bring you a bit of everything and this issue is no different. Please enjoy it and as always do let us have your feedback and comments

Best wishes,
Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)

Cover Picture:

Alex, miller, at Mill Green Museum tells our volunteer John Sheridan and Father David how the mill produces its flour. Read about our recent visit in the Operations Report.

Photo: Michael R Taylor

Photographs on Pages 2 and 3 by Auriel Glanville.

Operations Team Report

Our whiteboards are packed with talks planned for well into next year to an ever-growing variety of organisations and we are now delivering most of these “face to face”.

We have two new volunteers – Graeme Roy also volunteers at the Croydon Airport Visitor Centre and Karen Ellis-Rees was a librarian at the University of the Arts – London College of Fashion. Sadly, we had to say farewell to Fiona McKelvie who has relocated to her native Northern Ireland and bought a converted mill from which to run her business. We wish her all the best and she assures us that she will keep in touch.

In March Alison visited the Dovecot Gallery in Edinburgh to see “Morris & Co – the Art of Wallpaper” exhibition. Designs pre-dating Morris were also included one such being for the 1851 Great Exhibition which involved 60 blocks! We now have in stock the accompanying book by Mary Schoeser, who also curated the displays.

We were also offered Mary Hart’s wonderful collection of books on textiles, fashion, and of course the art of block printing, and we are immensely grateful to Nicholas Hart for this donation.

In April we had a joint meeting with the Trustees to sign off the latest Forward Plan for the next Accreditation, and to discuss plans for future events.

With the closure of what had been the Ram Inn / SlyBeast Brewing (at the former Brewery Tap in Wandsworth) we were offered a massive framed blueprint of the original brewery layout. We hope to be able to display it in the office once plans to lend the historic doorway to Merton Priory are completed.

On May 5th, knowing that the Vestry Hall was a Polling Station we gave out flyers to voters with a “don’t waste your day” message with the aim of attracting those who would not normally pass near the museum. It was a successful idea, with considerable interest.

Mick, Roger and Alison visited The Museums and Heritage Show at Olympia on May 12th. We chatted to some possible suppliers but abandoned plans to attend any talks as the noise levels were distracting.

School visits were less successful as two cancelled – and one of these just failed to turn up at all giving no good reason. This was frustrating as volunteers are busy enough this year without time being wasted. However, we did have a visit from The London Acorn School.

On May 19th the team and volunteers had a super day out to visit Mill Green Museum and Mill at Hatfield, which is curated by our Museum Accreditation Mentor Emma Harper. We had a detailed description of the workings of the flour mill by the resident “miller” and were impressed by the working waterwheel.



The volunteers gather outside Mill Green Museum during our outing to celebrate Volunteers Week 2022.

The museum was invited to send a representative to the inaugural meeting of the Vanguard Way Association. Our volunteer Chris Tanner attended the meeting on 28th May in Croydon.

We are currently occupying a “pop-up” shop in a corner unit of the Southside shopping centre in Wandsworth, having been invited to share this with a couple of other charities. It is not regularly staffed however and it may not provide the level of advertising for the museum we would have hoped for.

On Friday June 3rd, as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations we had a stall at Mitcham’s tea party event beside the Cricket Green. We made good sales for the museum but being conveniently beside the cake stall, were also able to contribute handsomely to the main charity.

Our volunteer John Sheridan has resumed his series of Wandle walks

which are bookable directly through him at john.sheridan08@gmail.com until September.



Siobhain McDonagh, MP for Mitcham & Morden paid a visit to our stall at the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tea Party on the Cricket Green

We have had no new exhibition since 2019 so it was wonderful to resume this practice. This year it took the form of a tribute to the work of Peter McGow, who sadly died early last year. Peter's sister Jean attended and was able to meet the team and Trustees. In 2005 Peter had donated his "notes" on the mills of the Wandle (i.e. 2 full ring binders) to the museum and this wonderful resource has been the bedrock of all our research and to which we send all our enquirers on the subject as a first port of call. Peter's house had been crammed full of books, maps, historic documents etc. and we tried to portray the variety of his interests and research which also included a vast amount of research on The Surrey Iron Railway. The Deputy Mayor Councillor Agatha Akyigyina officially opened the exhibition. Sadly, two members had contracted Covid just days before this and were unable to attend which put a bit of a damper on proceedings.

Alison Cousins

Frank Kitz Blue Plaque



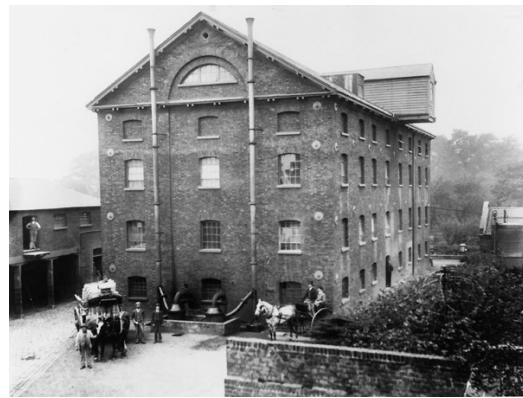
On the 14th April a blue plaque to honour Frank Kitz was unveiled in front of members his family at Wandle Bank, Colliers Wood . Geoff Simmons of Summerstown182 was the driving force behind the plaque. A friend and colleague of William Morris he worked at the Morris Works on Merton High Street. A champion of workers' rights more can be found on Geoff's website: <https://summerstown182.wordpress.com/>

Aerated Bread Company

Records held at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) throw light on the period when the Aerated Bread Company (ABC) operated the Upper and Middle Mills, Wandsworth.

In 1864 the ABC leased the mills from James Watney at a rent of £850 pa. According to Peter McGow they were already on site in 1862. The ABC was established in 1862 as a bakery using a new method of forcing carbon dioxide into dough under pressure, rather than through kneading and fermentation. ABC bread was marketed particularly to hospitals as nutritional, easily digested and untouched by human hand.

This picture from our archive is of the Upper Mill, Building A, as it looked in 1895.



The LMA records contain some interesting insights:

- Oversight of the mills entailed considerable effort. The company approved cheques for all expenditure other than from petty cash, and regularly examined petty cash records and engineering reports.
- A stocktake in 1870 recorded numerous types of wheat and grades of flour on site, including fine Pollard, coarse middle, tailswheat, American, Revetts, Saxonka, Talavera, Red English and White's Mixture. These were stored in sacks, in grinding, in bins, and in transit. Storage locations were a granary in Bell Lane, a barge alongside the granary, the middle mill, and the "waterside" and "steamside" upper mill buildings. Other property included anthracitic coal for the steam engine, tallow, oats, five two-horse wagons, one single horse wagon, 13 horses, timber for repairs, and spare sacks. All buildings were in good condition and machinery in good working order.
- In July 1870 4 pairs of stones out of 7 were working at the middle mill, 4 out of 8 at the upper mill waterside, and 6 out of 6 at the upper mill steamside. A director expressed concern that a new decorticating machine did not give value for money when the mills

were not working at full capacity, and questioned whether ABC as a bakery company should also be in the milling business, rather than buying flour on the market.

- By 1873 Wandsworth expenses amounted to more than £1000 a week, major items being wheat and wages.
- In October 1873 Mr James Childs bid to take over the company. By January 1874 he was chairman and managing director. On 30 April the board agreed to dispose of the lease of the mills to George Pimm and his business partner Seth Taylor. Presumably Taylor put up the £3250 cost of transferring the lease.



A picture from our archive showing a clock used by Pimm & Co, Wandsworth.

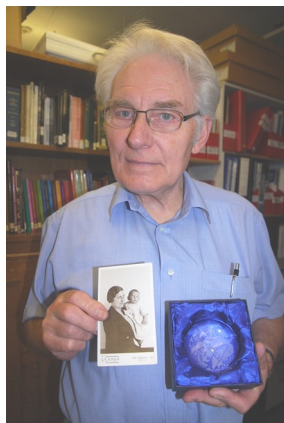
ABC diversified into tea rooms, which proved popular, particularly with respectable women who would not be seen in public houses unaccompanied by men. At its peak in 1923, ABC had 150 branch shops in London and 250 tea shops. Allied Bakeries acquired ABC in 1955 and continued to trade under the ABC name until 1982. Most mass-produced wrapped, sliced bread is now made by the mechanised “Chorleywood Bread Process” of dough production to make a soft, fluffy loaf.

Pimm’s company went on to manufacture another innovative product, Wando bread, but that is another story.

John Sheridan

Reference: (LMA catalogue references ACC/2910/001 and ACC/2910/002.)

Volunteer Focus



I'm Eric Shaw and I first became involved with the museum when it was at Hartfield Crescent, Wimbledon. This was after Kevin Leyden and Tony De Seife visited Frys Metals at Tandem Works to see the then works director regarding sponsorship. I was "delegated" to attend committee meetings at the museum as Frys representative.

The museum left Hartfield Crescent and moved to a site in Hartfield Road, Wimbledon where there was no room for the edge runners as there was at the Crescent. They were dismantled and stored at the basement down a ramp at the side of the building. When the museum left that site, Ray Leyden (using his skills as a negotiator) arranged the loan of a fork lift truck, at no charge, on condition that we had a competent truck driver, me!

Frys lent a lorry with a crane on it and a driver. The edge runners were raised up the ramp on to the lorry and taken to the school where Harry Galley was headmaster and stacked against a wall in the playground. The subsequent history of the edge runners doesn't concern this story, but it has been mentioned in a previous newsletter.

Still involved with the museum until April 1992 after which I was unable to attend for sometime due to a car accident resulting from a brain haemorrhage. Apparently, I was in a coma for five days. In hospital I was taught to walk again, although, I wasn't physically injured. However, I lost my sense of taste and smell (now partially returned). The two worst events for me were that I couldn't remember the names of the people that I'd worked with, and that I had lost an audio tape that I had recorded pre-war 78 records of my father's featuring George Formby.

Much has happened in the thirty years since, both to the museum and me. I've got a CD now with George Formby on it!

A Bit of Praise

The museum has received some worthy praise recently. We thought that we would like to share some of it with you.

The London Acorn School

We were mentioned in their school newsletter.

“Last week Class Three, Four and Five had an amazing trip to the Wandle Industrial Museum.

This trip was fascinating and we learnt a lot about the history of the Wandle river. Including its significance to Wandsworth, what industries were founded along the river and many other interesting facts relative to the rich history of this river.

We were given our own private presentation by the volunteers of the Wandle Industrial Museum, two very passionate gentleman that were happy to answer all our questions and excited to share their enthusiasm for this important natural watercourse”

Chris Van Hayden Tours

Chris included us in his regular blog.

“Local Heritage Champions This week I visited the Wandle Industrial Museum. This is a small but resourceful museum run by a devoted group of volunteers, which have championed the heritage of the Wandle Valley, local industry and the broader social history linked to the river.”

“For anyone interested in learning more about the River Wandle, I’d recommend visiting the museum or attending any of the walks they organise along various stretches of the river covering different themes.”

A Mum Says “Thank You”

Andre Holmes visited the museum with his Grandmother. Later we got the following from his Mum Holly.

“Good Afternoon Mick I wanted to send a quick email to let you no that Andre got A* grade for his history project and we wanted to say a big thank you to you and your colleagues. Andre really enjoyed learning about the Wandle and very excited about his future in history. Again thank you Holly Holmes Andres mum.

Is it an A* to the museum and all our volunteers?



Dates for the Diary

2nd July 2022

Croydon Green Days

Croydon Central Library, Katherine Street

11am-4pm

Discover more about Croydon's green spaces and local wildlife and nature groups at this Open Day. Find out how you can become a volunteer and take part in activities.

9th/10th July 2022

Wandle Art Festival

Lower Green West, Mitcham

12-5pm

It is hoped to hold a second art festival after the success of last year. With art and craft displays, live music, dance and poetry along with other stalls so something for everyone.

16th July 2022

Wandle Discovery Day

10am-3pm

Free activities along the Wandle trail from Merton Abbey Mills to Poulter Park. Includes a guided heritage walk at 11am from Merton Hall Snuff Mills to Merton Abbey Mills by John Sheridan Book via john at john.sheridan08@gmail.com

Full details: <https://www.southeastriverstrust.org/WANDLEDAY/>

20th August 2022

Merton Discovery Day

This is the date for the annual Merton Heritage event organised by Sarah Gould. Full details when available.

Wandle Heritage Walks

Sun 21st August 2022 Earlsfield to Merton Abbey Mills

Thurs 22nd September 2022 Mitcham Tram to Morden Hall Park

Both start at 11am. Booking john.sheridan08@gmail.com

Mitcham Heritage Day and start of Wandle Fortnight

11th September 2022

Full details to follow once known.

Remembering Mary Hart

Ray Leyden remembers Mary Hart who passed away last year in a poem he has written.

Sweet Memories

The babbling river flowing by
Casts a spell, a sweet memory of you
Reflection of a face I see
Wandle fabric on her knee
Oh sweet memory

The mists of time swirling by
Look up, a smile that lightens up the day
Much brighter than the morning sun
Brings much cheer to everyone
Oh Sweet Memory

Printing block in your hand
A class of children sit all around
Telling a story I hear you say
A printed cloth for you today
Oh sweet memory

Time to share a time gone by
A memory that we all hold dear
Work and toil from the past
A legacy that will ever last
Oh sweet memory

An Unusual Visitor



How many museum can say they have had a Macaw Parrot as a visitor. This was the case recently when Alison was there with fellow volunteers Jan and Karen. At least it didn't leave a deposit behind!

Macaws are native to Central and South America and formerly the Caribbean.



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

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.

~~~~~

Free Admission. Donations welcome.

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

You can find us on:

