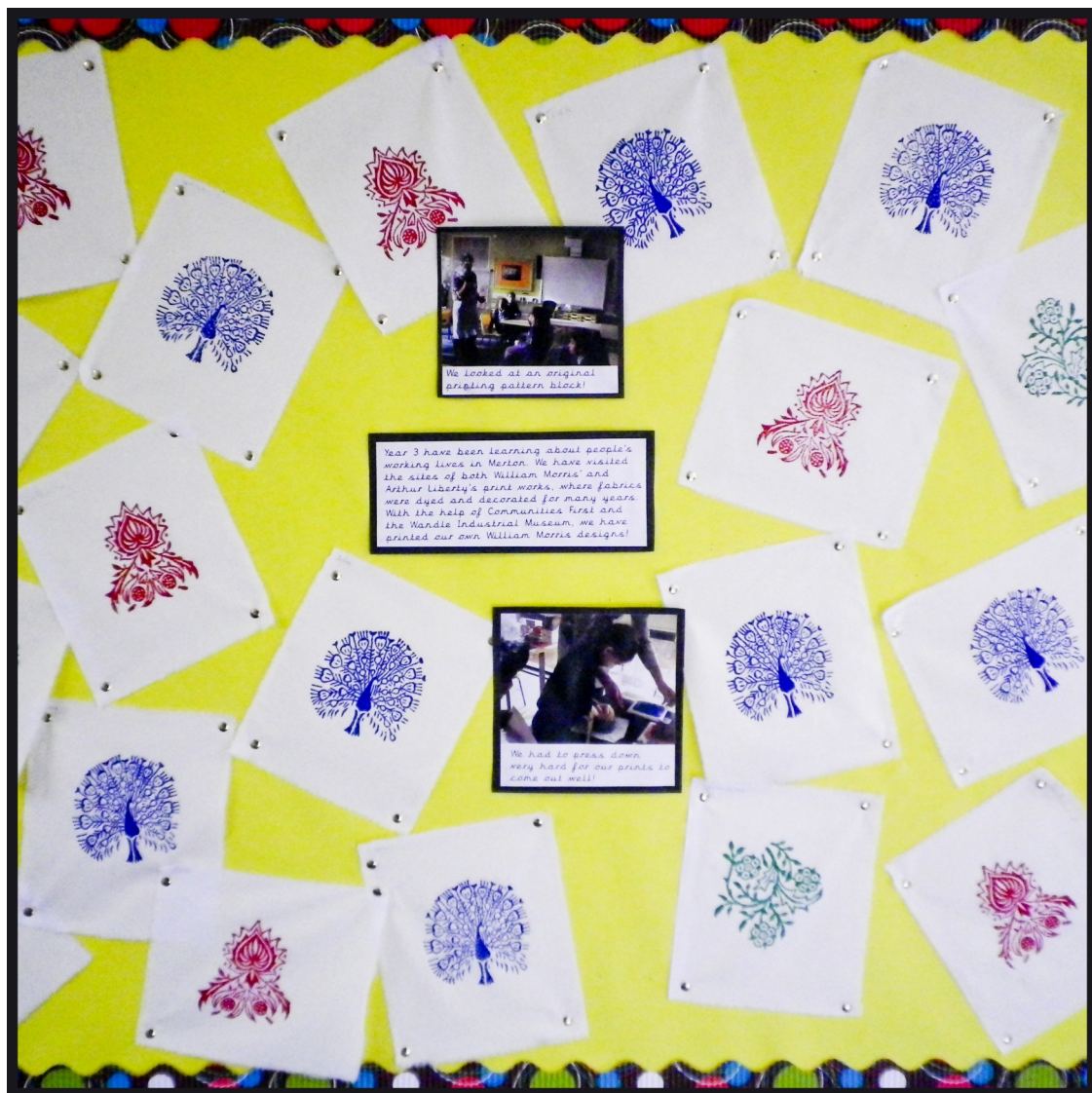




WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

BULLETIN



We looked at an original printing pattern block!

Year 3 have been learning about people's working lives in Merton. We have visited the sites of both William Morris' and Arthur Liberty's print works, where fabrics were dyed and decorated for many years. With the help of Communities First and the Wandle Industrial Museum, we have printed our own William Morris designs!



We had to press down very hard for our prints to come out well!

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**WANDLE INDUSTRIAL
MUSEUM**
Founded in 1983

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TRUSTEES
Chairman: Rev. Andrew
Wakefield
Secretary: Nicholas Hart

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Alison Cousins
Eric Shaw
Roger Steele
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GUEST EDITOR
Michael Taylor

Editorial

Welcome to the latest addition of the Wandle Industrial Museum Bulletin.

It has been a busy time at the museum in the last few weeks. And it is unlikely to quieten down! You can catch up with some of what has been happening in this edition of the bulletin.

We are continuing to rework the display at the museum. Over the summer we will be making additions and improvements to our relief map of the Wandle Valley. There is also our annual exhibition, which opens the second Saturday of June, to plan for.

All this work is taking place without a curator or an administrator. Not that we are not trying hard to replace them as you will read.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the bulletin and please do let us have your comments and suggestions for future editions.

Best wishes,
Mick Taylor

Stop Press

As we went to press we have heard that Merton Council have confirmed our grant for the next three years.

Cover Picture:

The children of Merton Abbey School have put the prints they made during our recent visit on display.

Latest News

A lot of time during the last few weeks has been spent working on the renewal of the museum's accreditation. This has concentrated our minds and resulted in several revisions of our policies. We are now waiting to hear that our renewal has been successful. Our thanks must be given to Alison Cousins for leading on our application.

With perfect timing our annual grant application appeared with very little notice at the same time as the accreditation deadline. Well done to Roger Steele and Nicholas Hart for making sure we hit the deadline.

Acquisitions

We have been sent some more photos of the water wheel at the Liberty Mills taken in the 1970s, and noted an excellent article by Dave Saxby in the Spring 2016 William Morris Society Magazine on the San Graal tapestry weavers who were trained at Merton Abbey.

Whilst the museum has limited space we are always happy to consider items for our archives. These days we live in a digital age but it is still important that we retain hard copies.

Local Liaisons

We have been talking to Michael Norman Smith, a local writer, about the possibility of narrative events for our school groups.

Talks have been held with Louise Crothall of the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership in respect of developing different media for our Wandle Trail map.

Discussions have taken place with the YMCA in support of their Lottery application for a Young Roots Project for 12-18 year olds to understand and develop their knowledge of heritage around the Merton and Merton Abbey area.

Support is being given for an educational initiative led by David Gill of Wandle Trust who is preparing several online workbooks dealing with the area and its heritage.

A couple of us also attended “Heritage Connections” which Communities First held in the Vestry Hall in December at which Keith Penney of Merton Historical Society gave an excellent presentation of industrial buildings using some of Eric Montague’s photos.

Annual Events

We tested a new venue for our **AGM** in November – the Merton Tenants’ and Residents Federation meeting room in London Road, Mitcham. Our speaker following the business meeting was Roger Wates of the furniture store E & A Wates Ltd. of Streatham, who gave a fascinating illustrated history of the firm and brought it bang up to date with a link to their summer Liberty promotion.



Our popular **New Year Lunch** for members and volunteers at Park Place carvery was well attended – thanks to Roger Steele for organising this so well.

Members Outing

Our thanks to Sheila Harris who took a small group to the Fashion and Textile Museum to see the Liberty in Fashion exhibition.

Harry Gallery, our president, is pictured here standing next to one of the displays.

A number of the items shown may well have been printed at the Liberty Print Works at Merton Abbey.



Corfield Sigg Ltd. (Corfields)

I have inherited a set of Crown Merton saucepans from my mother. I have no idea whether these were a wedding present or already in her mother-in-law's house. The most interesting are two semicircular saucepans which fit on a large hotplate.

An undated leaflet in Morden Library describes the Crown Merton brand as “offering the crown jewels of the kitchen” and was supported by a Good Housekeeping Institute guarantee. They developed a range specifically for electric hotplates and had a ¼” thick machine-ground base for maximum efficiency with handles insulated with heat-resisting Bakelite. The claim was that with ordinary care (whatever that means) Crown Merton is everlasting. No prices were given in this leaflet as the prices of raw materials were at that time subject to fluctuations.

Recently I noticed that a large metal colander was also manufactured by the same company, Corfield Sigg Ltd., but had a slightly different brand name. The company was located in Station Road, Merton Abbey, SW19, and the factory was called Trafalgar Works. This item depicts Nelson's Column and delights in the name of “Corfalgar” (poor old Nelson – now linked with soggy vegetables !!) Unlike him, and indeed the company, it is still going strong.



Its price is given as 4/7d in 1949. It is made from 9" gauge high grade aluminium and described as being polished on the outside, with steel loop handles.

There was also a Super Merton heavy gauge hotel ware range, advertised as suitable for all types of cookers and a Stainless Plus range, described in detail by the Design Council, due to its innovative design. The utensils featured shorter and almost horizontal handles, a design made possible by more compact heat sources. The designer was George Fejer and also introduced concave lids to encourage condensation to gather in the centre and not drop down the edge.

In 1964 a new "Stainless Plus" range was introduced called Duranel, which was stainless steel bonded to aluminium sheet. The aluminium was on the outside to disseminate the heat evenly and the stainless steel within for easier cleaning and to help resist pitting. The handles were made from phenolic plastic. This later appeared on the Design Index.

Alison Cousins

Walking the Wandle Trail

It always surprises me when I lead a walk and people say "Oh, I've heard that there's a Wandle Trail but I've never had the chance to walk along it, I don't know where it is, etc. etc." Well, the Wandsworth and Sutton Rambler groups have been leading walks along the Wandle for twelve years now. It all started in June 2004 with the Wandle Valley Festival which was a weekend event of walks, talks and many other Wandle related activities, organised by Vicki Carroll. These took place in the four boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth, which are all linked by the river. We should probably go further back and thank certain individuals at the Wandle Industrial Museum who were responsible for creating the first map of the Wandle Trail (but perhaps this should be a story for a future newsletter?).

In 2004 we had just moved to Mitcham from Wandsworth and so I went on that first Wandle Trail walk with my young daughter and her friend. We walked just half of it from Morden Hall Park to Waddon Ponds and they were very pleased to win first prize for a children's quiz which wasn't surprising as they were the only children on the walk. The following year I decided to walk the other half from Wandsworth to Morden Hall Park. On the walk I met such friendly people (including many Ramblers) that I decided to join the Sutton & Wandle Valley Ramblers' Group and start leading walks along the Wandle myself.

Most of my walks are up and down the Wandle or over Mitcham Common and I suppose that over the years I have led between 70 and 80 walks, however that is not counting the Friday Beddington Park walk which has been going since October 2004 and now attracts from 30-50 walkers every week.



Irrigation Bridge campaign walk Good Friday 2012

What I like about the Ramblers is that the large numbers of walkers can help with campaigning. On Good Friday 2012 I led 60 walkers over Irrigation Bridge by Bedzed, Hackbridge, which was threatened with closure by Network Rail due to high maintenance costs. Our protest walk did not stop the closure unfortunately but we had a lovely walk and received some good publicity for our cause. Now four years later Network Rail have just announced the planned demolition in May this year of this bridge and Hundred Acre Bridge, even though the demolition will reputedly cost them more than the maintenance! As my walk on good Friday this year takes us along the path from Beddington Park to Mitcham Common there will be an excellent photo opportunity for “disgruntled arm-waving walkers” at Hundred Acre Bridge which is just before the golf course and Mitcham Common Golf Club. These two bridges form an important link between Beddington Farmlands and the river Wandle and will be essential when works begin on the extensive green space which will form the heart of the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

This year's Wandle walk is on Saturday 4 June and there is something for everyone. You can walk the whole length of 12 miles from Wandsworth to Croydon or vice versa. If you would like a shorter walk you can join in or leave the walks at different places and there are good links to public transport all along the route.

Although the paths and the signposting have improved greatly over the last twelve years there is still an atmosphere of great tranquillity along the river and the peaceful sound of the flowing water will make you feel that you are very far away from the nearby industrial areas.

Melanie Nunzet

Under Attack!

1. THAT SCUI RUS

It seems that my comment at the Volunteers meeting on 13 May last year that our squirrel infestation appears to have been solved, was incorrect.

On entry into the museum office one Wednesday in January this year I found a squirrel running around, up the windows and on the furniture trying to get away.

Before I realised what was happening and how it had gained access, it had disappeared.

When Roger Steele arrived, shortly after me, I told him what had happened and he too looked around to find it. All he found were several “deposits” which he cleared up and various disturbed items, Meg’s radio and CD player being one and the small sheaf of corn being another.

The only access that we could find was from either the air vent behind the boiler in the kitchen, or from a gap in the far left corner where two cut off pipes come through the ceiling. Roger subsequently got a large packet of wire wool and Charles MacDonald stuffed the gap in the ceiling with in. We found no other access, but to identify any other area where access may have been gained, we have decided to close all doors as we leave the museum. Therefore if we find any other “evidence” we’ll know in which room to search for an access point.

Rumours that I am mounting a 24 internal guard with an air rifle are unfounded.

Eric Shaw



Our resident squirrels had got into the back office and the kitchen and had a good old chewing session. Nothing seriously damaged – who knew that lever arch files were so delicious !

2. Vandalism

Since sometime in early February we have had several panes in the museum windows broken. Not by squirrels, but we think by youngsters, though nobody has been seen during the act. The Vestry Hall has had most of the windows boarded up except for the three in the middle of the building facing the Green. These we propose to get covered by some form of netting or perforated metal so that light can still get in from outside but that the windows will be protected from any damage.



We might now get a further problem with graffiti on the boarded up windows, but we hope that might not arise if the boards are decorated by ourselves, assuming that we are not breaking any bylaws as we are in a conservation area.

However all will not be lost. If necessary I'm sure that some of our members will come forward to repaint the boards if the problem should arise. They will have to be repainted to maintain them in any case.

Eric Shaw

Since Eric wrote his article on the broken windows further windows have been broken as can be seen here. We are currently waiting to hear what plans the council have to repair the damaged panes and if removal shutters will be provided.



Schools, Groups and Talks

Schools: Several classes from St. Benedict and Lonesome Schools visited us and we went along to the newly expanded Merton Abbey School for two full day sessions. It is some time since we linked up with this excellent school and this was thanks to an initiative by Communities First. See our cover photograph.

Groups: We love having small groups who come from all around Greater London for whom we can do a very special presentation. Three groups came from Exploring London and a very large one from Bromley Adult Education. They were given a talk, took part in a block printing session and were given a tour of the museum.

Talks: Eric Shaw gave a presentation to a group at Croydon Library about the Surrey Iron Railway in January.

Alison Cousins and Mick Taylor attended a workshop run by the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership aimed at representatives from social housing and community groups. This was held at Tooting & Mitcham's football ground. Alison and Mick talked about and demonstrated the art of block printing.

Roger Steele went along to a Local Contributors meeting connected to an HLF project at the Canons and found that he was the main source of information for many of the questions about the area. No surprise there. As a result he ended up giving an impromptu talk about the history of the area.

The museum already has bookings for talks in the New Year.

Volunteers

There are roles that are still to be filled at the museum. Meg Thomas, who was our curator, is still to be replaced along with the Admin role.

To try and encourage people to join us as volunteers we have now linked up with Sutton Volunteer Services Centre. The museum has worked with Merton Volunteer Services Centre for a number of years. We have also approached and are now advertising roles at the museum with some of the London Universities. In addition we have been talking with the South West London & St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust about giving opportunities for people to get back into work. This is the unit who supplied us with Charles MacDonald who joined us last year.



Charles can be seen here working on the revised Merton Priory display.

Mick Taylor attended a session at Sutton Voluntary Centre on induction and training for volunteers and Alison Cousins attended the last meeting of the S. & E. London Museums Network where they looked in detail at Croydon Museum's volunteer scheme.

Dates for the Diary

30th April, 1st May and 2nd May 2016
Morden Hall Country Show, Morden Hall Park

Saturday 28th May 2016
Merton Heritage Discovery Day at the Civic Centre 12:30—4:30pm

Sunday 17th July 2016
Morden Fun Day, Morden Park 10am-5pm



Museum 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. If any subscriber is happy to receive the newsletter by email, could you please send a request to office@wandle.org. This helps us to reduce our costs.

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Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.

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OPEN: Every Wednesday 1 ~ 4 pm;  
Every Sunday 2 ~ 5 pm.  
(The Museum may be closed some 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