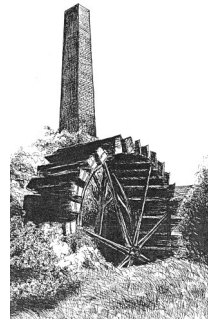


# WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



# BULLETIN



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## WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

PRESIDENT  
Harry Galley

TRUSTEES  
Nicholas Hart, John Hawks,  
and Fr David Pennells

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
Alison Cousins, Eric Shaw,  
Roger Steele, and Michael  
Taylor

# Editorial

Another year and another edition of the bulletin. Unhappily, as you may already know, the museum is currently closed to visitors. You can find more about the reasons for this on page 5. That doesn't mean that we are not busy. We recently took a booking for a talk in September 2020! So we are certainly in demand.

As always we are looking to improve things and have invested in some new furniture. Alison has started to pull together a new talk and John Sherdian, who worked on the *Mapping the Mills* project, has joined us as a volunteer to help develop our walks programme. Rest assured that we will keep the flag flying for the heritage of the River Wandle.

Enjoy this copy of the bulletin and as always please do let us have your comments.

Best wishes,  
***Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)***

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

In 2015 Peter Cousins started to digitise the museum photographic collection. He has now started to scan the large number of negatives we have. Amongst them was this picture of Kate Norris and Tony de Seife with the museum's stained glass window.

## Operations Team Report

The year kicked off with our Annual New Year Lunch at Park Place, Mitcham on the 9th January. John Hawks (*pictured here*) gave thanks to all our members and volunteers for their continued support of the museum.



Since then our projector has been off on its jaunts again across South London – West Barnes, Shirley, Beddington, Croydon and Tooting, supporting our talks to library groups, East Surrey Family History Society, Croydon U3A, Tooting Historical Society, and the Beddington Park Project.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February we had a meeting with two members of the team working on the Canons Community Project to share workshop ideas, and on March 20<sup>th</sup> Roger and Mick went to their Open Evening.

We did print workshops for Benedict School (Mitcham) and Poplar Primary School (Morden ) with one pupil in Poplar being the first (we think) to recognise the pomegranate in one of Morris’s designs.

We also met up with John Sheridan, whom we hope can organise some Wandle walks for us. John has joined our volunteer team and will use his experience from the *Mapping the Mills* project.

The designs for the art works on the boarded windows are due for review on April 10<sup>th</sup> and will be on display during Discovery Day at Morden Library on May 11<sup>th</sup>. We also decided to have some planting around the building and to repaint the doors.

Our plans for refurbishing the office area also progressed with the purchase of new folding tables, and 3 large white bookcases. However, in the midst of assembling these, “the best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men “ definitely went “a-gley”. Had it been mice that had been involved the results might not have been so devastating. Mick Taylor will give you the whole story.

**Alison Cousins**

## Jacqui Tucker : a tribute

Jacqui Tucker passed away on March 5<sup>th</sup>. She had joined the museum in 2005 and initially worked as Honorary Archivist. She could cut through unnecessary paperwork like butter and so got the records quickly updated. Working again with Meg Thomas as she had at Wimbledon House School, her experience was invaluable in the museum's successful bid for the new Accreditation in 2008. She also generously gave us some redundant equipment from the school.



Jacqui was keen to get her teeth into major projects. The model of the William Morris Works was looking as tired as the original building had been and Jacqui restored the model garden and refurbished the millpond. An attention to miniature detail that we all admired and none of us possessed. When we heard about the model dolls she had as a child, it all made sense.



Jacqui is pictured with our former Curator Meg Thomas looking at the museum model

She also compiled an index of the mill owners mentioned in Peter McGow's *Mills of the River Wandle* as she felt that so many queries could be answered by a "direct hit" within these volumes. Later on, when she had moved to her bungalow, she offered to transfer this index to a database as her "homework". She was no "silver surfer" – she had reached platinum level. She loved getting her teeth into a research project and took on many of the enquiries that were sent in to the museum.

When the digitization of our historic photographs started, Jacqui and I took on the task of cataloguing each one, often without any clue as to the location, date, or even what the subject of the picture was. One stretch of the River Wandle looks very much like another if there are no clues. I got sidetracked into other things but Jacqui ploughed through stoically,

applying her usual concentration and methodical mind. This dedication is proving invaluable to the current outworker.

It was always a joy to hear a bit more of Jacqui's rich life on Sunday afternoons when we were on duty together. Not until details were revealed at her funeral did we learn more of what she had achieved and experienced during her long and clearly very happy life and we saw photos of her frequently enjoying family holidays. Every week we would also get an update as to the exploits and successes of the family, especially the grandchildren, of whom she was immensely proud.

We didn't actually get a chance to give her a retirement present as we were expecting her to pop up again to see if she could help once she was truly settled in her bungalow. We really thought that she was indestructible and we shall miss her very much.

**Alison Cousins**

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## **An Attack of the Squirrels!**

As I am sure many of you know the museum has suffered over the years from squirrels entering our loft space. They get in under the corrugated roofing. This is despite it being sealed by foam that the squirrels either pull out or becomes loose in the wind. Terry at the Vestry Hall said recently that he saw a piece of the foam blowing down the road!

A number of times the council staff at the Vestry Hall have arranged for a pest control firm to come in and install traps to catch and kill the squirrels. This may sound harsh but it is illegal to catch squirrels and move them to another location. We had also installed an electric deterrent that for some months was working. It seems the squirrels got used to it. Many of you who have visited the museum have seen us bang the loft hatch with a broom whenever we have heard the patter of tiny feet on the ceiling.

Things with the squirrels came to a head during March. One of our ring mains kept tripping out and had to be reset. This went on for about a month. Towards the end of March, on the advice of the council staff at the Vestry Hall, Roger and I started to test some of the equipment we

had connected to this ring main. After I got a shock twice from an extension lead we had that we tested in two different sockets on the ring main it was time to call in the experts. Carol Warren, the Vestry Hall Manager, arranged for an electrician to come and check the wiring. Testing the sockets he concluded that the live and negative wires appeared to be reversed. We found this a bit odd? He asked if we had done any work and that a nail or screw had pierced the cable. The answer to that was a simple no. Looking at the fuse box it was clear that all the wiring to each part of the building enters the loft before returning inside the building. So the electrician went into the loft to check the wiring. As I stood under the loft hatch I could hear him say – “I don’t believe it”, “Oh no”, “What the heck” and a few other words. The squirrels have chewed through every cable within the loft. Making a call to his boss he was advised that the electricity had to be cut off from the fuse box. There was a danger of the wires shorting and causing a fire. We certainly didn’t want that. This means that currently the museum has no lighting and no heating.



This shows the type of damage a squirrel causes to wiring.

Therefore it is not possible for us to welcome visitors so we are unable to open to the public on a Wednesday or Sunday until the problem is fixed.

The issue is with Merton Council to make a decision on the way forward. The Ops Team and Trustees are meeting almost weekly to try and come up with solutions to enable us to reopen either back in the building or elsewhere within the Vestry Hall. Our target is to be back up and running by the opening of our new exhibition in mid-June. All our outreach work – talks, walks and print workshops – are continuing with the workshops taking place offsite. So whilst we are closed to visitors our other work continues and volunteers will still be at the museum on a Wednesday as normal.

We will keep members and volunteers up to date with developments via our website, Facebook and by e-mail.

I am sure you may ask the question “Why do squirrels attack wiring?”. Well it isn’t to eat it. Since squirrels are primarily herbivorous, they

need a set of very strong teeth in order to be able to feed on hard grains. For this reason, they chew on electrical wires so that they can strengthen their teeth. This is why both young and old squirrels chew on the wires without an end to the behaviour. Mind you we would like them to chew on something else and not our wires!

**Mick Taylor**

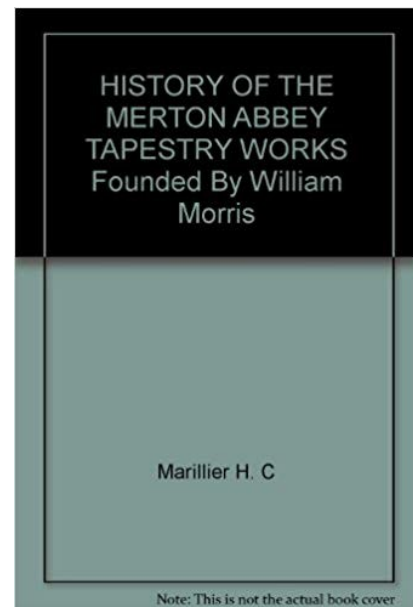
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## **New Books in Stock**

**History of the Merton Abbey Tapestry Works : founded by William Morris.**

H.C. Marillier, Constable & Co., 1927

This book was part of a donation to us from the late Mrs. Joanna Bazley ( mother of Harriet who used to work at the museum ) It includes a history of the works and illustrates all the tapestries but the real value is in the chronological list. This gives details of the designer, i.e. when not Morris himself, and also who the weavers for each piece were. John Glassbrook, for example, first appears in 1901, working on “The Pilgrim in the Garden / Heart of the Rose”. Additional remarks include who the purchasers were, whether individuals or an institution, whether individual panels were repeated, and often what inspired the designs.



The book is available for viewing in our archive.

**The Ghost Carp : or Moby Dick in Waders.**

Parts 1 and 2 of a planned 4 part graphic novel by Jane Porter, self-published , 2018 – 19.

It is due for completion in August 2019 to coincide with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Herman Melville. The story is loosely based on that of Moby Dick but set in a modern urban river, specifically a



Image from Etsy.com-  
see below.

South London chalk stream along which used to be snuff mills, calico printing works, brewing etc. Ring any bells? It all revolves around a dark tale passed down the ages by local anglers of a huge fierce white river creature which attacks wildlife. It also contains a wonderful description of the amazing items that are retrieved from the river and how a “Wandle Alphabet” can be created from them.

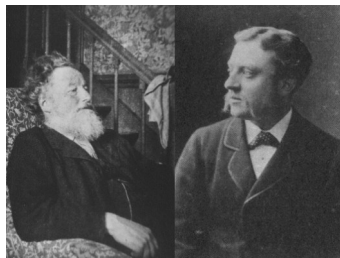
Jane Porter is a long-standing Wandle supporter and local artist.

The books are available to view in our archive. They may also be purchased from Etsy.com at a cost of £4 each plus delivery.

More information about Jane and her other work can be found at:  
[www.janeporter.co.uk/](http://www.janeporter.co.uk/)

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## Did Arthur Liberty and William Morris Meet?



John Hawks, our Trustee, gives his view on this question:

A propos Morris and Liberty, of course they wouldn't have met at Merton - Arthur didn't come there till after William died - but I've seen in one of Mary Hart's learned books on Liberty that Morris (among so many other luminaries) was a customer of Liberty's first shop, so it's surely possible they met there.



## A Visit to the Edward Burne-Jones Exhibition at the Tate Britain

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February I managed to catch the last day of the *Edward Burne-Jones Pre-Raphaelite Visionary* exhibition at Tate Britain. His work was displayed over seven rooms taking you through from his early apprentice days to his days as the main figure designer for Morris & Co. It was there, with Morris & Co, that some 660 of his designs were produced as stained glass windows.

Drawing was fundamental to Burne-Jones's practice. These in some way reflected his feelings and his life. They included self portraits and images of his friend William Morris. All of these were drawn in a fun and grotesque manner.



A self portrait drawing.



A drawing of William Morris.

There was a drawing at the start of the exhibition – “Going to the Battle”. No bigger than 10x8 inches it included a high level of detail in the picture. This included minute windmills, hay stacks, churches, viaducts, trees and people to the detail of the dresses the ladies in the foreground were wearing. None of the later work shown in the exhibition appeared to include this type of minute detail. This could be due his commercial undertakings for Morris & Co and the need to fulfil commissions.



Going To The Battle.

Rooms were given to two of his major works – The *Perseus* Series and The *Briar Rose*. The *Perseus* Series recounts the story of the Greek hero's quest for Medusa. This series had come about as a commission in 1875 for future Prime Minister Arthur Balfour. He wanted to have paintings for the drawing room of his London home. He left the choice of subject to Burne-Jones.

The plan was to have a set of ten subjects yet by 1885 only four were worked to a finish. There was also to be four relief panels on oak and only one of these was finished. Exploring the rooms I got the impression that unfinished work seemed to be one of Burne-Jones faults. Whether this over ambition with the size of painting or the choice of subject I am not clear. Did he become bored with what he was doing? The one group of work that Burne-Jones did always appear to finish were his portraits. Some were commissioned work and many of his family and friends. Familiar faces appearing in many of his paintings.

He did complete the *Briar Rose* paintings, this being a series of four based on the story of Sleeping Beauty. This was a non-commissioned work that ended in the ownership of the financier and MP, Alexander Henderson and installed in his home at Buscot Park, Oxfordshire. William Morris had provided verses that appeared beneath the framework of the four paintings.

Overall I am glad I was able to catch the exhibition before it closed.

**Mick Taylor**

## River Wandle Clean Up



The South East Rivers Trust organise regular clean ups along the River Wandle. They are on the look out for volunteers to help them keep the River Wandle clean and tidy. If you fancy the task then drop an e-mail to [jess@southeastriverstrust.org](mailto:jess@southeastriverstrust.org)

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## A Returning Visitor

As Alison reported this year we have had visits to the museum from Year 1 and Year 3 children from Benedict School, Mitcham. The children took part in a print workshop where they took away a piece of work that they printed themselves using the traditional method of block printing.

One of the Year One teachers Claire Marshall, who is the schools Arts Team Leader, had herself visited the museum as a pupil at the school. When she visited we were using the full size blocks as shown in this picture of the late Peter Harris. It is always nice when people revisit us.



## A Look Back on Last Year's Wandle Celebration Walks

The following report appeared in the *South East Walker* December 2018.



The walk led by Peter Rogers relaxes by the Wandle at Hackbridge.

We had good rambling weather for the 30 year anniversary Wandle Walks in September. Due to a tendon injury Colin Saunders, who led the original walk in 1988, had to enlist the help of Ian Fairweather as leader. The walkers were a mixture of people from the LDWA, Ramblers and the Vanguards Rambling Club. They worked out that the actual distance from Charing Cross to Croydon was 18.5 miles rather than the 17 they had estimated. Colin managed to dip in and out of the walk with the help of public transport and managed 13 miles. All went well from Charing Cross to Wandsworth where the walk came to a halt due to an unfortunate accident involving a fall. An ambulance was duly called as stitches were needed but in the meantime the person concerned was well looked after by a GP and a nurse who happened to be in the group. The delay resulted in having to take the lunch break at Merton Abbey Mills instead of Morden Hall Park, but nobody seemed to mind.

Melanie Nunzet's walk included a visit to the Wandle Industrial Museum which is where the Wandle Trail map originated. Walkers enjoyed exploring some of the alleyways and green spaces of Mitcham. These included looking at a community orchard and reading a sombering warning on a tombstone in the churchyard of Mitcham Parish Church which told the story of three young children "who were POISONED by eating fungous Vegetables mistaken for champignons on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 1808". Refreshments at the museum were much appreciated and a bonus was an interesting talk about the Wandle and its chequered history by Roger Steele, Museum Volunteer.

Peter Rogers walked from Wandle Park to Carshalton where more people joined in to carry on to Morden Hall Park. Very few of the group were from the immediate area and for most it was the first time they had seen the Wandle. They commented on how attractive the walk was as it wound its way through a large number of green spaces in suburban London and how accessible the river was to walkers. The numbers were boosted by two more en route who were planning to walk to Colliers Wood along the Wandle Trail but who were walking the wrong way! Some then joined Joan's walk (see below) but for others the lure of ice cream was too strong.

Sue Bailey who led the walk from Wandle Park in Croydon to Mitcham Junction said she was surprised at how many people said they'd never been along that route before. Sue had intended to walk along the permissive footpath from Beddington Park to Mitcham Common but this was closed in February this year because of laying hotwater pipes from the Viridor incinerator site to the new housing development at Hackbridge. This work was due to be completed in July but there is still no news as to when the path will reopen and birdwatchers, local residents and Ramblers are justifiably upset about this.

Sue's group met up with Ian and his walkers who were going in the other direction at Hackbridge and of course recognised each other from the distinctive Get Active Wandle Valley T-shirts which all the leaders wore. (In the photo of her walk you can see the gazebo of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust who kindly provided us with the T-shirts and bags.)

Joan Wood's walk from Morden Hall Park to Earlsfield over-ran somewhat as people were very interested in what they were passing and there was a lot for Joan to tell them about, i.e. the relatively new board-walk in Morden Hall Park, Bunce's Meadow, the Folly near Phipps Bridge and Merton Priory, to name just a few.



Walkers on 'The Whole Thing Plus' walk at Merton Abbey Mills.

For the last walk of the day George Fletcher waited patiently in the garden of the aptly named 'Wandle' pub with his group, conveniently situated opposite Earlsfield Station, where they could keep an eye out for Joan's group to arrive. They then walked the final stretch and ended up at the Spit at Wandsworth where the Wandle joins the Thames.

And we didn't quite break the record of the 200+ walkers that Colin led in 1988 but between the six walks we did get to 106!

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## Visit to Emery Walker House, Hammersmith

The museum is considering a group visit to Emery Walker House in Hammersmith. This delightful Arts and Crafts house has recently been refurbished. Decorated with Morris fabrics and wallpaper, it should certainly have been on our list of places before now.

The house is available for private tours for 8 people at a cost of around £12 a head. Before we make any booking we would like to know who would be interested in joining a tour. This is open to all museum Members, volunteers and guests. It is expected that the tour will take place on a week day possibly a Thursday.

If you are interested then please e-mail the museum at [office@wandle.org](mailto:office@wandle.org) with the subject line "Emery Walker House Tour". Please let us know by the 30th April 2019. For those without e-mail please complete the form below. Do not call the museum as we do not currently have an answer phone due to the problem with our electrics.

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I would like to join the Emery Walker House Tour and bring \_\_\_ other with me.

Name:

Telephone No:

Return to Wandle Industrial Museum, Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3UD



# Dates for the Diary

## **Merton Heritage Discovery Day**

11th May 2019 12:30pm until 4:30pm

Morden Library and Heritage Centre

This annual event will have over 25 stall holders, a series of talks and activities for everyone to take in. The museum will be there with a stall and printing and stained glass colouring activities.

## **Secret Rivers**

24th May until 27th October 2019

Museum of London Docklands

This exhibition traces the rivers of London, some of which are now hidden under our streets. It should include information about the Wandle from the people who have shared its beauty and past.

## **Merton Abbey Mills 30th Birthday**

Celebrating their 30th anniversary of being a craft centre there will be activities and fun for everyone available. The museum will there with our block printing.

## **Brewing in the Wandle Valley**

18th June 2019 at 10:30am

West Barnes Library, Motspur Park

This is a talk from Alison Cousins where she will talk about the long history of brewing along the Wandle. The talk is open to all.

## **Mitcham Community Day**

14th September 2019 10am until 4:30pm

A chance to learn about the area around the Cricket Green, Mitcham. Includes behind tours of the Vestry Hall and more. The museum will be open all day and we will also have an exhibition from Merton Heritage Centre.



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](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:

