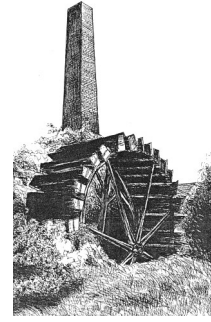


WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



BULLETIN



AGM guest speaker Dr Jack Hogan of the South East Rivers Trust

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WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

PRESIDENT

Harry Galley

TRUSTEES

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

OPERATIONS TEAM

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

Editorial

This edition of the Bulletin contains reports on outings by Jackie Godfrey, Peter Cousins and myself. Jackie attended an event at the Cinema Museum in Kennington; they deserve our support in their efforts to acquire their impressive former workhouse building. Peter joined a tour of the Sambrooks Brewery Heritage Centre led by master brewer John Hatch; it is good to see that the old Young's Brewery beam engines could soon be on show. I attended the SERIAC conference in Chichester and heard some interesting talks. There was a suggestion that these conferences might take place biennially—if volunteers can be found to organise them.

This edition also contains new research findings by Mick Taylor on the origins of the Coles Shop at Merton Abbey Mills. A tale of twists and turns and more questions than answers! Congratulations to Mick on his lifetime achievement award (page 13).

Finally, please note the invitation on page 12 to the New Year lunch—and the request for payment in advance.

John Sheridan

Cover Picture: John Sheridan

Photos:

Page 3: John Sheridan

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Operations team report

On November 7th we attended a Civic Reception to celebrate the refurbishment and renaming of the Public Hall in the Vestry Hall to Whitford Hall. We were pleased to be able to provide Julie Noel with a selection of books on Mitcham history from which she selected the new name. The event was commemorated by the unveiling of a framed copy of the original Grant of Arms to Mitcham. It was mentioned that the charters of all three former boroughs had been “mislaid” by the Council for several years.

We were concerned to hear of the financial problems being faced by Deen City Farm and have suggested a way forward to ensure some regular ongoing income for them by offering to give talks at their premises. One of our founders, Harry Galley, was also involved with the establishment of the farm.

Mick Taylor was eventually able to get back into the regular presentation of talks. One was as the final one to the Unison branch of retirees at Collier’s Wood which has now been wound up.

Garry Brooks is a contact for a couple of groups for whom we give regular talks and he has offered the services of a few FE students who are starting a project on website design. We have contributed our individual preferences and suggestions as to how we would like to see our own web pages develop.

We have held several workshops for schools at the museum but a new innovation took place at the Chapter House of Merton Priory when three joint presentations with John Hawks were done for Honeywell School from Clapham.

It is upsetting to now be told that Joseth Fernandez Moreno, a delightfully enthusiastic and bright young woman has been refused permanent residency by the Home Office and that we have had no opportunity to say farewell and thank her. She was a real breath of fresh air and had so much to offer the museum but we shall stay in touch.

Acquisitions from Judy Goodman's donations are gradually being catalogued and include a file on William Morris's younger brother Edgar and a very detailed collection of Vestry details and poor rates of the Merton Abbey area compiled by John Wallace. We also purchased copies of the new book from the Merton Historical Society on *The Physic Gardens of Mitcham*, by Irene Burroughs.

We have added to our selection of greeting cards for sale in the shop area. The Moroccan goat skin which featured in our latest exhibition is now depicted in a remarkable VR presentation of the 1851 Great Exhibition where of course it had been originally part of the leather industries area.

We have been approached by a museum in Bexhill who offered us custodianship of a model of SS Wandle – a collier built in Scotland in 1932 to work for the Wandsworth and District Gas Co. Judging by the photographs, it is in excellent condition. But at around 5ft in length we just cannot find the space to display it without major reorganization. We approached the London Museum in the hope that a possible shared responsibility could be considered but have been told that in view of their current reorganization they cannot help. Anyone got a nice big garage ??????

Alison Cousins

Annual General Meeting

The museum's AGM took place on Thursday 14 November at Mitcham Vestry Hall. The meeting heard reports from the Chair, from Alison Cousins on behalf of the Operations Team, and from Roger Steele as Treasurer. The museum's work with schools and the wider community had progressed steadily, despite absences for health reasons of key volunteers and the death of Chris Tanner. The trustees and members of the Operations Team will remain in place for the coming year. Emma Harper, our accreditation mentor, attended by Zoom.

The guest speaker was Dr Jack Hogan of the South East Rivers Trust. He described the work that had been undertaken, within the framework of the multi-agency Wandle Catchment Plan, to return the river to a more natural flow providing a greater benefit in biodiversity and a primary defence against flooding. He showed us many visual examples of successes in this approach. He set out a longer term vision to allow the

river to return to its original low-lying channel in Watermeads, Ravensbury Park and Morden Hall Park rather than the man-made channels created in the past by millers who needed to maximise the head of water for their waterwheels.

Our guest Cllr Brenda Fraser, Deputy Mayor of Merton, and Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Sports and Heritage and a member of the museum, were present. They took a lively interest in proceedings and were complimentary about the museum's work. Also in the photo (right), in the background behind the councillors are Mick Taylor (left) and Nicholas Hart.



John Sheridan

South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference (SERIAC) 2024

This conference in Chichester on 12 October 2024 featured talks on:

The railway network serving Chichester (Allan H J Green)

The railway arrived from Shoreham in the east in 1846, and was extended to Havant and Portsmouth the following year. The growth of the wider local network was delayed by the “Battle of Havant” between rival railway companies. In 1881 the opening of the Chichester and Midhurst railway permitted travel northwards. A large marshalling yard was laid out for freight. Electrification in 1936 provided a brief respite from the inevitable decline which was caused by improvements in roads and unprofitable railways going out of business.

Two examples of closures in the 1930s: (1) In 1897 a Col. Stephens opened a tramway between Selsey and Chichester: this was notoriously unreliable. It included a half bascule bridge over the Chichester Canal. The bridge was raised and lowered by means of hand winches on either side, which had to be turned in perfect unison or the bridge would jam in the up or the down position or anywhere in-between. (2) Singleton station had four platforms and extensive buildings. It was busy for one week a year for the Goodwood races, with six trains per day at other times.

Portsmouth Dockyard (Dr Philip MacDougall)

Portsmouth has the advantage of a defensible harbour entrance. King Richard I built the first dockyard there for his fleet of galleys. King John enlarged it, and Henry VII built a timber dry dock to repair his warships. The dockyard was used for both building and maintaining warships. It was not the only naval dockyard. It competed with Deptford, Woolwich and Chatham. It grew in importance from the 1680s, when France replaced the Netherlands as the main enemy. Chatham was given the ironclad naval shipbuilding function in the 19th century and temporarily overtook Portsmouth. Deptford and Woolwich went out of use because of silting in the Thames. But Portsmouth was greatly extended in the 1880s by convicts on hard labour sentences, and from 1906 became the site of the construction and maintenance of the British Dreadnought battleship fleet. It is now the home base of the QE class carriers.

Portsmouth was the site of an innovative shore-based industry that kept the navy afloat. Naval rope had to be replaced every three years, and the Ropery manufactured rope from Russian hemp in lengths of up to 1170 feet. A 74 gun ship required some 900 wooden pulley blocks, and the engineer Marc Isambard Brunel (1769-1849) (father of Isambard Kingdom Brunel) devised an early system of mass production in his Block Mill. Brunel also established a sawmill for the navy. Portsmouth is now the home of Nelson's 104 gun "HMS Victory", built in Chatham and launched in 1765.



Marc Brunel. Portrait in oils by Samuel Drummond at the National Portrait Gallery, London, c1836.

Technological industry in the UK (Alan Burkitt-Gray)

In 1963 Harold Wilson promised "a new Britain forged in the white heat of a technological revolution". Legacy technology companies included Plessey, Racal, Ferranti, Standard Telephones and Cables (STC), Rediffusion, Ferguson, EMI, Marconi, English Electric, Bush, Pye, Morris and Rover. Wilson's government took power in 1964 and set about reorganising some of these companies as divisions of three new creations, GEC, ICL and British Leyland, which were incorporated in 1968. It was

hoped that these would be the future of British mass and high-tech manufacturing. They were industrial powerhouses for a generation or so but ultimately broke up for a number of reasons. Someone hinted at a Thatcherite industrial policy of selling off the family silver, but there were also failures of strategic vision, failures to achieve economies of scale and competitiveness, failures of management and of industrial relations, and changes to global supply chains and capital flows which had the effect of incentivising efficiency.

Bursledon Brickworks (Jim Beckett)

The Bursledon Brickworks Museum in Hampshire is the only British museum solely dedicated to the story of brick. It occupies the site of a brickworks that closed in 1974, having been established in the 1860s, and contains the Victorian steam-operated machinery that was in use until the works closed. Artefacts include a pug mill, rollers and extruder machinery.

The Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. The museum is run by volunteers and employs a few part-time staff including a conservation manager and a schools officer. Start-up costs were funded by a Lottery grant, and running costs are funded by ticket (£6-8) and shop sales. In the past year the museum has received grants totalling £368,000 from English Heritage, Hampshire County Council and Garfield Weston to repair the kiln roof. The museum has the advantage of an extensive site with a cafe (run by a separate organisation), an art project, a large car park and space for venue hire, traction engine displays and craft stalls.

<https://thebrickworksmuseum.org/>



The Brickworks Museum

The industrial archaeology of Southern England (Dr Geoffrey Mead)

A wide range of industry has existed for millennia in the south of England and has shaped the landscape. Flint mining was underway 6,000 years ago leaving lasting traces; the Wealden iron industry dates from the medieval period giving rise to furnace ponds; there have been mills of many types which have affected the flow of rivers. At later dates the construction of steam locomotives, vehicles and aircraft, the defence industry and the diverse industries of Greater London have all affected the landscape and the growth of settlements. Some industries have been spin-offs, such as Hailsham being known as a “string town” as a spin-off from hop growing. Industry has affected land prices and land use: the internal combustion engine made horses and hayfields redundant, but incentivised the utilisation of cheap green field sites for industry. Industries may be primary (farming, mineral extraction), secondary (manufacturing) or tertiary (transportation, retail, other services), the balance between the three changing over time. For example, Brighton has become dominated by the public sector, with the main employers being the NHS, local government and higher education. Landscapes contain both continuity and change.

John Sheridan

AFC Wimbledon stadium

After heavy rain overnight on 22/23 September, a corner of the AFC Wimbledon football pitch was transformed into a bizarre series of sandy ridges and dunes like bunkers on a golf course. There was also flooding in the stands, affecting the players’ dressing rooms, the lifts and other facilities. The club's managing director was quoted in the press as saying that the nearby River Wandle had burst its banks.

However, there were no reports of flooding at the domestic and commercial properties – including a large National Grid substation - between the stadium and the Wandle. The Wandle Meadow Nature Park was flooded on 23 September, but that was some distance upstream of the stadium, and the main channel of the Wandle in the nature park was contained within its banks – in other words the flooding appeared to be surface water in the meadow.

The pitch comprises a thin layer of turf on a bed of shingle, stone and sand. The nature of the damage to the pitch suggested that water had

churned upwards from below. The club said some days after the flooding that repairs were underway and included the resealing of an underground “attenuation water tank”. Such a tank could have collected both surface water and ground water, the pressure causing it to burst and the water to surge upwards. Surface water could have come from the volume of rainwater falling on the ground and soaking into the pitch. Ground water might have come from a raised water table in the vicinity of the Wandle and an underground stream draining into the Wandle from a spring in the grounds of Springfield Hospital, Tooting.



Dr Jack Hogan of the South East Rivers Trust made the interesting suggestion at our AGM that the natural channel of the Wandle at the lowest point of its valley was through the middle of the football pitch: that would give rise to a raised water table. The actual channel, a couple of hundred yards to the west, would have been rerouted in the distant past slightly higher up the valley side by millers in search of a good head of water for their waterwheels.

The flooding in the stand could have been a separate phenomenon caused by rainwater cascading from the stadium roof onto the walkway around the back of the stand. If the drains were overwhelmed, the water could have got into the stand whose floor level is slightly lower than the walkway. The stadium has been open long enough for the gutters to have become blocked if not properly maintained.

Whatever the cause or causes, those who know the area well, and who remember the greyhound stadium that used to occupy the site, are well aware of its susceptibility to flooding. If readers can throw any further light on the episode, please let us know and we will publish an update in

the next edition of the Bulletin. The pitch was repaired and Wimbledon were able to play there on 12 October, beating Carlisle 4-0.

John Sheridan

Cinema Museum

Off to the Cinema Museum to see archive footage of means of transport – the type of event organised by Greater London Industrial and Archaeological Society (GLIAS). We were privileged to see Amanda Huntley who had selected the films shown, explaining the difficulties of preserving old films depending on the material used initially.

Preservation and copying material for future use has been Amanda's life's work – she heads up Amanda Huntley Archives – they can provide clips for use by way of insertion into, for example, documentaries. The collection is well indexed.

Some in the audience remembered Amanda's father who had given film shows at Fairfield Halls. A biography of John Huntley tells how he went to work at Denham Studios as a tea boy in the studio of Alex Korda who attracted much film talent. John went back to Denham after military service during WW2, films were his life's work. He did not remain at Denham, however, he went on to work for the British Film Institute.

Among the films we saw was footage of the Last Tram in London, which travelled from Woolwich to New Cross on 5 th July 1952, the driver was Mr Albert Fuller. Barges and canals footage revealed London's less attractive water side homes showing the use of horses to pull barges, it all seemed very tranquil. We were shown treatment of water at a sewerage plant – they appeared to do a splendid job in the past - what's gone wrong since? Some films were obviously examples of public services (propaganda) but very worthwhile and informative.

The programme of events at the museum had included an evening with Paul Merton, showing films that drew him into comedy 'Silent Clowns' – a sell out for the museum.

Equally good as the film show was the venue – the chapel and former master's house of Lambeth Workhouse (right) – the very same workhouse to which Charlie Chaplin was



admitted. Charlie also spend time at Hanwell and Central London District school. His older half brother Sydney left for a life at sea (many young men did the same) aboard training ship Exmouth. Charlie's mother ended her days in an asylum, Cane Hill. A more sensational inmate (yes they were called inmates in workhouses) was the first woman murdered by Jack the Ripper, Mary Ann Nichols – she had discharged herself from the workhouse.

The Cinema Museum is a charitable organisation founded by Ronald Grant and Martin Humphries from their own private collection of cinema history and memorabilia. The museum was at Raleigh Hall Brixton but since 1998 has been based at 2 Dugard Way, near Elephant and Castle. There is a campaign running, the aim is to buy the freehold of the site – a project worth supporting. <http://www.cinemamuseum.org.uk/>

Jackie Godfrey

Coles Mystery

One of the buildings at Merton Abbey Mills is known as the “Coles Shop”. A building built in the early 1890's by the Littler family was used for block printing and was called the ‘New Shop’. The later building got its name ‘Coles’ after the works of the company of Arthur Coles & Co at Hackbridge closed down. Some equipment was purchased from Coles and the tag on the keys for the building where the equipment was located at the Liberty Print Works was labelled ‘Coles’.

Ordnance Survey maps from 1894-6 and 1913 show a building with a different footprint, located where the current Coles Shop is. Liberty on taking over the site in 1904 undertook a rebuilding programme and it is very likely that the ‘New Shop’ was replaced by what is now the ‘Coles Shop’.

The 1910/11 Kelly directory lists “Coles, Arthur, Wandle Calico Print Works, Merton Abbey from Merton Abbey Station”. Liberty & Co, Silk Printers, and some other businesses were also listed in the directory.

In fact, we believe that an Arthur Coles Print Works was operating from Merton Abbey shortly after 1900. Was Coles running his business from the building then known as the New Shop? If so, he was there when Liberty took over the Littler Factory in 1904.

We know that Coles acquired the premises of a former snuff mill in Hackbridge in 1912. If he was also using the New Shop, had he outgrown it, or was this the year Liberty took over and rebuilt the building?

However, Coles didn't leave Merton Abbey until 1919. Was he operating on two sites between 1912 and 1919? Or did he vacate his Liberty site in 1912 but continue to pay for it? If Coles was operating at Merton, was he using the services of Littler/Liberty for the dyes, washing, crofting etc required for his textiles? There are more questions than answers.

Having taken premises at Hackbridge in 1912 Coles remained there until the Second World War. A rather odd company to move into the site after Coles left was Copes Football Pools. What we do know is that Arthur Coles & Company had been based at Merton Abbey and that when they closed at Hackbridge some of their equipment returned to be used at the Liberty Print Works. Now for the twist!

There never was an Arthur Coles who was a calico printer. His name was in fact George Henry Bowman and he was born in 1871. When he married Emily Tuffin in 1896 the certificate showed him as a 'silk printer'. They were married at All Saint's Church, Earlsfield.

With his father Frederick, George Henry ran the company of 'Bowman & Coles' in Garratt Lane, Tooting. The company was dissolved in 1900. He may have taken the name Coles from the company name when he moved to Merton Abbey. The question is, to which I have not to date found the answer, who was the Coles of Bowman & Coles and what role did he play in installing George Henry at the Merton Abbey site?

By the 1901 census George is a silk printer and employer living at 58 Streatham Hill. He must have had a good income as he employed a servant. It is unlikely that the reference to "employer" is because of the servant and more likely that he employees at his print works.

In the 1911 census he is living at 156 Worple Road, Wimbledon with his wife and four children and his wife's father, aged 80. The household also listed two nurses, one of them a Certified Hospital Nurse. They may have been there to look after Emily's father. George was still shown as an employer and a Calico Printer. Jumping to the 1939 register George is now living in Truro, Cornwall and his occupation 'Managing Director – Calico Printing - Retired. George died in 1942.

I will continue to look into George Henry Bowman and where the name Coles came from along with the mystery of the location of Arthur Coles Print Works at Merton Abbey. An update will be provided if any more information is found.

Mick Taylor

Sambrooks Brewery Heritage Centre

A temptation too good to miss, especially as John Hatch was leading this tour, which was organised by the Battersea Society.

I arrived early, despite transport chaos, and spent some time photographing the exterior of the site, which still retains many of the original Young's Brewery buildings in Wandsworth. Stone sleepers from the Surrey Iron Railway, which used to be set into the brewery wall, are inset in the ground nearby on Garratt Lane near Mapleton Road, and the cast iron plaque commemorating the railway has been mounted on the wall of an archway leading from Ram Street into the development.

We started with a tasting session and a quick run through the history and varieties of beer. Then we progressed through the Heritage Centre, which has been created in part of the old brewery. Climbing past an array of beer bottles and a case of medals awarded for Young's beers, we reached the gleaming coppers (right), used for boiling the wort (malt extract with hops) until replaced in the 1970s.

We also passed the infamous portrait of John Young (familiar to those of us who were on the visit to John Hatch's temporary, 'home made', brewery in the stable block after Young's sold the site). We

could not see very much of the old brewery, but there are plenty of smaller brewery artifacts on display. John Hatch is hopeful that the locally built beam engines (by Wentworth of Wandsworth) in the basement will be open for viewing in 2025. Some of us older members (me) remember seeing them in action on a visit in 1976. They will now be powered by an electric motor, not steam. To round off a perfect visit, we were given a token for a free pint in the taproom afterwards.

<https://www.sambrooksbrewery.co.uk>



Peter Cousins

Invitation to the Wandle Industrial Museum New Year Lunch 2025 For Members and Volunteers

Dear Member/Volunteer,

You are invited to attend our New Year Lunch on Wednesday 8th January 2024 from 12:00 at Park Place, Commonsides West, Mitcham CR4 4HB. Guests are welcome.

Cost is £20 per head for three courses. Wine with the meal will be provided by the museum.

We would be grateful for payment in advance. This may be done by cash, cheque, made payable to the museum and sent to the museum, or by bank transfer:

Sort Code 16-32-45 and Account No: 12263437.

To confirm your place please reply by e-mail treasurer@wandle.org or telephone 020 8648 0127 giving the name(s) of those who will be attending and the method of payment used.

We look forward to seeing you.





Eric Leppard Lifetime Achievement Award 2024, given to Mick Taylor for his contributions to the Wandle Industrial Museum and the Merton Library and Heritage Service. Roger Steele received a similar award.



Dates for the Diary

21 January: West Barnes Library talk by Mick Taylor at 10.30am. “The Wandle and its Water”.

1 February: Talk at Deen City Farm by Mick Taylor at 11.00am. “Deen City Farm Site and Surrounding Area”. Details to be added to the museum’s website and social media.

6 February: Surrey Industrial History Group, Zoom talk by Alison Cousins at 7.15pm. “Brewing in the Wandle Valley”. Details to follow, check at https://www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk/content/sihg_upcoming_events

18 February: West Barnes Library talk by Alison Cousins at 10.30am. “William Kilburn—calico printer and botanical illustrator” (tbc)



Accreditation Mentor: Emma Harper Charles Dickens 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.

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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.

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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:

