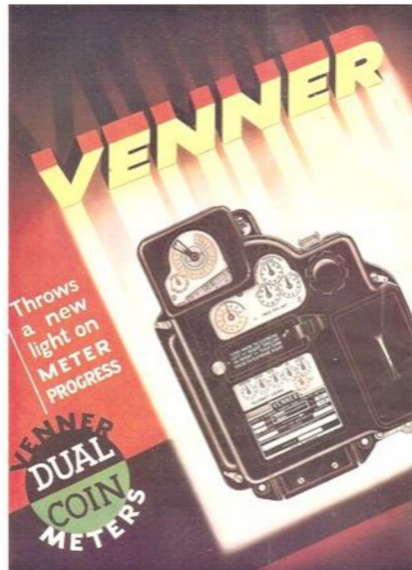




Please
read
the
notices
on
page 2

Rapsons, Duophone,
Decca and Venners
Industrial History in
New Malden, page 3

A Venner Meter
Advertisement
- from Robin Gill



How Did We Manage Before Refrigerators? page 9 -
Entrance to an ice house in Byfleet

Contents

- 2 Notices & SIHG Meetings
- 1, 3 Rapsons, Duophone, Decca and Venners in New Malden *by Norma Cox*
- 6 The Industries of the Wandle *by Bob Bryson*
- 1, 9 How Did We Manage Before Refrigerators? (part 2) *by Peter Tarplee*
- 13 SIHG Accounts for the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
- 15 SIHG Chairman's Report for the year ending 31 March 2020
- 15 Surrey Industrial History Group Officers

SIHG Newsletter No 227 August 2020

Programme Co-ordinator Bob Bryson: meetings@sihg.org.uk.

SIHG Membership Renewal

If you have not yet paid, please send a cheque payable to
'Surrey Archaeological Society',
to Surrey Archaeological Society (SIHG), Hackhurst Lane, Abinger Hammer, Surrey RH5 6SE

Please help to keep our Group going by renewing your subscription as usual.

We are not charging for the programme on online meetings, but SIHG still has to pay the lecturers.

Our Newsletter is also still being produced and distributed.

AGM and Conservation Award

Our AGM and conservation award presentation have been deferred.

However a copy of the Chairman's report and the accounts are enclosed in the centre of the Newsletter.

If members have any questions they can email the Chairman.

As a group of the Surrey Archaeological Society our accounts are incorporated into theirs and SyAS will be holding an AGM of some kind (live or virtual) in November where members will have the opportunity to attend and ask questions if they wish.

Online Meetings

Since the last Newsletter was printed the SIHG Committee have decided that SIHG will not hold face-to-face lectures during the remainder of 2020.

We are however investigating holding virtual lectures using Zoom during this period. Those members who regularly attended our lectures in either Guildford or Leatherhead should have already received a number of emails from me on this subject.

Members who have not heard from me but may be interested in attending these (free) virtual lectures should let me have their email address and phone number so I can ensure they are kept up-to-date with our programme.

Bob Bryson, meetings@sihg.org.uk

Consult our website www.sihg.org.uk

for updates on online talks and reopening dates of museums and other places of interest.

Other (free!) Online Lectures

Numbers of other organisations currently offer free **Zoom** lectures and you may wish to try **Surrey History Meetup** which holds talks many of you may find interesting,

<https://www.meetup.com/Surrey-History-Meetup/>

You do however need a computer connected to WiFi, ideally with a camera and microphone.

You then need to download Zoom, join the group and then register for each talk you wish to attend.

Rapsons, Duophone, Decca and Venners: Industrial History in New Malden

by *Norma Cox*

Introduction

Burlington Road New Malden is largely in the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames Surrey. This ordinary-looking road has an exceptional amount of industrial history with the earliest industry in the road being Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks built in 1876 on 14 acres of Blagdon Farmland (1). The site of the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks stretched between Blagdon Road and Burlington Road. Burlington Road itself was only half built in the years 1914-20 as seen on the 1914-20 O/S County Series Surrey map 1:10,560 (2). By 1935 Burlington Road was completed and it ran from the Fountain New Malden eastwards to its cross-roads with the Kingston Bypass at Shannon Corner and on to its junction with West Barnes Lane in the London Borough of Merton. Merton was not created until 1965 and before that date the east end of Burlington Road was in Wimbledon which was also in Surrey. This article looks at four factories in New Malden starting with Rapson's. Only two factory sites were involved as three of the factories used the one factory site consecutively.

Rapson Tyre and Car-Jack Works

An early industry in Burlington Road was Rapson's Tyre Works which started in January 1922; the factory was located on the south side of Burlington Road to the east of Albert Road. There is a large car-park there today with small retail units at the edge of the car-park. Frederick Lionel Rapson came from Ryde the Isle of Wight. He was a driver during WWI and was injured. He was sent in 1915 to Arrowe Hall Military Hospital where he was a patient as he suffered from fits. There he met Miss Schintz who ran the hospital and she sought him out to be a Red Cross volunteer to entertain injured soldiers. Rapson became Miss Schintz's personal secretary and chauffeur and he would maintain her fleet of cars and his address in 1916 was The Garage, Chidwell Hall, which was Miss Schintz's home. In 1917 he had invented various car accessories such as dipping head-lights and automatic car-jacks. The vehicles of Miss Schintz were fitted with 'his own' high endurance tyres and his tyres frequently featured at Brooklands and other racing venues. In 1919 he created Rapson Automobile Patents Ltd Company (3). In the summer of 1920 Rapson announced that he was testing his new spark plugs. Also in 1920 Rapson worked on adjustable shock-absorber-less suspensions, to complement his tyres which had been

adopted along with the Rapson clip-on jacks, for HRH Prince of Wales new car. Fig 1 shows a Rapson advert acknowledging 'by Royal Appointment to the King and by appointment to HRH Prince of Wales'. Rapson's products were in use on the Rolls Royce and Daimler cars of the Royalty. Rapson set up Rapson Tyre and Jack Company in New Malden to manufacture and distribute them. Fig 2 shows an advert from June 1923 for Rapson tyres. Rapson said that Rapson Tyres were used on the Prime Minister's Rolls Royce Limousine Registration number R 2094 which had run for more than 10,000 miles without any trouble (4). Prime Minister Lloyd George had written to Rapson to inform him that he was pleased with the tyres and in another letter the PM's secretary had commented that the puncture problem had been solved. Rapson tested the durability of his tyres in further track engagements. He was a member of Brooklands ARC and had acquired a special Lanchester, an imposing outer-circuit car, with a door to the cockpit, a toolbox on the side and head-lamps for after-dark running. Rapson got top driver J G Parry-Thomas to drive in his trials. In 1924 it was claimed that over fifty world-records were broken using Rapson tyres. Rapson lived at 'Hurtwood' Holmsbury St Mary near Dorking and he also had a farm near Eastbourne (4). He hadn't any working capital and depended on Miss Schintz for funds. For a while his tyres sold well but demand outstripped production and as early as October 1922 the company was in difficulty. In 1923 Rapson Tyre Co (of Europe) was formed but it failed from the beginning. The New Malden factory closed in 1925. In 1925 Rapson had to rest due to ill-health which was probably a burnout. The manufacture of his tyres was taken over by North British Rubber Co. By 1926 Rapson acquired the manufacture and distribution rights in Australasia through Rapson Tyre and Rubber Company (Australia) Ltd in Tasmania. In 1928 Rapson and his son Freddie broke a non-stop motoring distance of 50,000 miles at the Miramis track near Marseilles. The Australasian business collapsed in 1930 (5). It was said that Rapson lost interest after the death of Parry-Thomas in 1927 at Pendine Sands. Rapson died in Eastbourne when he was 43 years old. Eventually the Rapson company was wound up in June 1931.



Fig 1 Rapson advert showing by Royal Appointment from Robin Gill see Note 11



Fig 2 Rapson Tyre advert - from www.gracesguide.co.uk/Rapson_Tyre_and_Jack_Co

Duophone

The Rapson factory in New Malden was then taken over by Duophone. The factory had a 75,000 sq ft area. The Duophone record label was named after a record player with a double sound-box made by Duophone Syndicate Ltd which had offices at 63 Victoria Street London. Duophone entered the record market in August 1925 but they had been manufacturing their special gramophone for some time. In September 1926 the Duophone Syndicate was now based at 18 Savile Row London W1 and the Syndicate produced a revolutionary unbreakable record in the New Malden factory. This record consisted of bonded layered paper coated with a thin layer of a rubberised plastic. In 1927 Duophone relaunched their unbreakable records with a new label. In August 1928 they gained control of British Brunswick Ltd and moved offices to 15-19 Cavendish Place W1. In 1929 Duophone started using their

new records mostly recorded by Brunswick in America. In 1929 Edward Lewis who had founded Decca Records formed a syndicate called The Malden Holding Company which bought Duophone (6).

The factory in Burlington Road New Malden changed again. First it had been Rapson's Tyre and Jack Company then the Duophone Record Company now it became Decca.

Decca

The New Malden Decca factory was to become the only Decca pressing plant in Great Britain. It became a major employer in the New Malden and Kingston Upon Thames area employing hundreds of people. The peak number of records pressed was 60,000 a day. Decca UK, which had split from its sister label Stateside in 1939, originally focused on jazz records and received rapid acclaim for their sound quality. The Decca Company pushed innovations like the 'Decca Tree' which was a new method of recording orchestral or group music from 1954 and LPs with pressings at New Malden. In 1962 Dick Rowe at Decca Records famously rejected the Beatles for the Decca record label. He would go on to sign the Rolling Stones, Englebert Humperdink, Tom Jones and the Bachelors, some of whom visited the factory. Prince Philip and Princess Margaret also came to the New Malden factory. In 1980 Edward Lewis died. Decca Records was sold to PolyGram, and the New Malden plant closed in 1980 (7). The Decca factory Burlington Road is shown in Fig 3. It

was replaced by retail outlets. The Kingston Bypass survives in the photograph foreground as the A3 (8).

Venners

About half way along Burlington Road it was crossed by the Kingston Bypass and the cross-roads were called Shannon Corner, named after the Shannon Typewriter Company, an Office Equipment factory which was located at the cross-roads. There was also a large factory building to the north of the Shannon factory on the Kingston By-pass as seen from the 1935 O/S County Series Surrey 1:2,500 map. The Kingston Bypass was also called Malden Way from Shannon Corner travelling south to Tolworth. The name Beverley Way is not seen on the 1935 O/S map (9). The O/S Plan 1954-55 1:2,500 showed that this large factory building was called an Electrical Time Switch Works and this part of the Kingston Bypass, north of Shannon Corner



Fig 3 Decca Ltd from <https://photoarchive.merton.gov.uk> see Note 8
Kind permission of Local Studies, London Borough of Merton

He also said “Mr Tauchart was the Managing Director throughout WW2 and into the 60s until it was sold to the American Group AMF”. In addition he recalled “Venner expanded into Parking Meters, Scientific Instruments, Andre-Yardley batteries and Electronics”. He said “Production moved to Bristol but Venners didn’t keep up with technology and the business shrunk to a small unit”. He also said “Venners Time Switches had a large work force in the 1940s and 1950s; many from the St Helier estate travelled to work by the numbers 157 and 32 buses”. Another man (T B) said his friend worked on the first parking meters, fitting them in London. He commented “Such a shame that all those industries seem to disappear - now we seem to get everything from abroad”.

Another man (S B) said “I worked for Venner Electronics in the lab for three years until the coming of North Sea Gas in 1971”. He also said that “He worked ‘upstairs’ in the Specials Department”. He remembered “Designing an interface for Seismograph Services Ltd, between a computer tape reader and an x-y pen plotter but they needed a stand-alone system to free up computer times”. He said “AMF decided after careful costing that the Specials were losing money so they finished; exciting times though”. The man (M R) commented “The original Venner building was demolished to develop the new A3 road network at Shannon Corner”.

was now called Beverley Way (10). The Electrical Time Switch Works was called Venners and is shown in Fig 4. Today the Venners site is occupied by the Big Yellow Storage, Beverley Way New Malden (11).

Venners was founded in 1906 and by the end of the 1930s it was based on Malden Way New Malden. The company specialised in precision electrical apparatus such as time switches and synchronous motors and clocks. In the early 1950s Venners also produced parking meters and beacons for Zebra crossings. Between the years 1954-1959 25,000 parking-meters were sold to the commonwealth and Europe, with installation beginning in Britain in 1958 (12). The parking-meters were designed by Sir Kenneth Grange. The tariff rates of the parking meters were 6d per hour or a penalty of £2 for failing to purchase a ticket or for parking more than a four hour maximum period (13). Another innovation by Venners was a silver-zinc accumulator and also transmitting equipment for safety at sea (14). Venners also made gas and electric meters (15). Fig 5 shows a Venners meter, see page 1 and Note 11.

Conclusion

This article shows that these two factory sites in New Malden provided a wealth of industrial and social history. Starting with the 1920s and Rapson’s Tyre and Jack Company, the factory was at the heart of the new motorcar era with the excitement and glamour of Brooklands. The factory then changed to

Memories of the Venners workers

The social history of many of the people who lived on the St Helier Estate which lies between Carshalton and Morden, has been recorded and these memories include comments made by people who had worked at Venners (16). One man (M R) who was seven and a half years old at the outbreak of WW2, had later worked for Venners Time Switches before his two years conscription into the RAF. On completing his conscription he returned to Venners Time Switches later known as Venners Electronics. He commented that “Frank Venner probably was the start of Venner Time Switches on the Kingston By-Pass”.

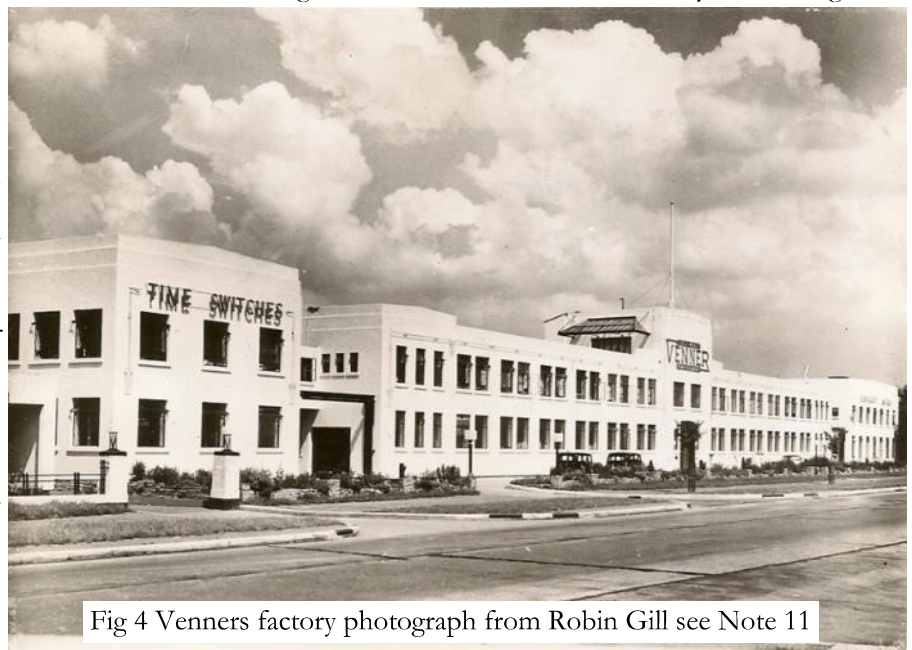


Fig 4 Venners factory photograph from Robin Gill see Note 11

records and the beginnings of popular music with Duophone Records. Finally it was owned by Decca Records in the era of the pop-groups. The second factory site was home to Venners Time Switches who produced the first parking-meter in Great Britain.

References and Endnotes

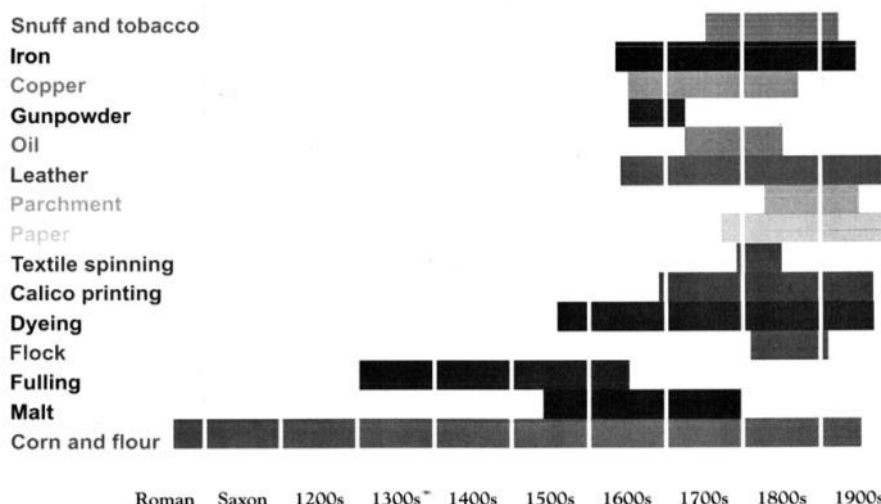
- 1 Cox, Norma. 2020. *SIHG Newsletter* Surrey Industrial History Group; Potteries, Brickworks and Potters of Kingston upon Thames and Environs; February pp 8-13
- 2 www.old-maps.co.uk - use postal code of B & Q which is KT3 4PT for quick access
- 3 www.johnnathersuch.com/op-website/rapson.htm
- 4 www.motorsportmagazine.com > Issues > February1970
- 5 Collapse of Rapson Tyre and Rubber Company and Rapson’s death (Australia) see Note 3
- 6 www.gracesguide.co.uk/Duophone
- 7 www.kingstonrpm.org/decca-records
- 8 <https://photoarchive.merton.gov.uk/collections/work-and-industry/28627-decca-ltd-burlington-road>
- 9 1935 O/S County Series Surrey 1:2,500 map. See Note 2
- 10 1954-55 O/S Plan 1:2,500. See Note 2
- 11 Personal communication from Robin Gill, Historian Maldens and Coombe Heritage February 2020
- 12 www.ourmanorpark.org.uk/the-park/history
- 13 www.telegraph.co.uk/cars/features/paradise-lost-celebrating-60-years-parking-meter-machine
- 14 Two more Venners innovations. See Note 12
- 15 Personal communication from Robin Gill. See Note 11.
- 16 www.heliermemories.org.uk (search for Growing up on the estate)

The Industries of the Wandle

by Bob Bryson

Timeline of Industries along the River Wandle

Considering the industrial significance of this ten mile river I am surprised that there have not been more articles in the Newsletter about the industries along the Wandle valley; especially as at one time the area was all part of Surrey. There is in fact a great deal of information about the subject on-line and at the Wandle Industrial Museum, which is well worth a visit. The river Wandle is a tributary of the Thames and flows from Croydon and Carshalton to join the Thames at Wandsworth. The river falls some 125 ft over its length making it an ideal location for watermills since before the Norman Conquest.



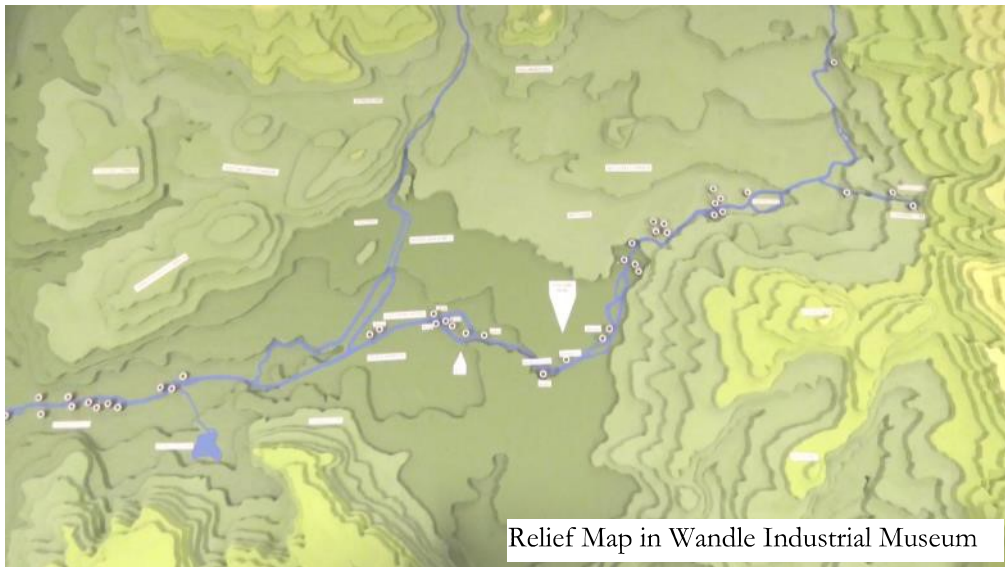
I was reminded of all this when an original manuscript entitled “The Industries of the Wandle Valley, an introductory study by A F Tullett” was recently handed into the Surrey Archaeological Society, who passed it on to me. The information it contains can probably be confirmed in the Museum. The manuscript, which is presumably unpublished, is undated

but appears to have been written between 1968 & 1970. What makes it particularly interesting is that the author, having located many of the old mill sites, goes on to describe what can be seen at the various sites at the time of writing. As the manuscript is now some 50 years old considerable more industry existed then than can be seen today. As I intend to pass the manuscript on to the Wandle Museum, I am sure it will make an interesting project for someone to compare the fifty or more sites as described in 1968 with the current day.



Connolly Leather Factory - Hand Antique Department t Wimbledon

I note, for example, that the manuscript describes two adjacent sites as being currently occupied by New Merton Board Mills Ltd and the Shirley & Warbey Box Co. Ltd. These were large factories making cardboard boxes in Colliers Wood employing about 500 people. At the South East Region Industrial Archaeology Conference in 2014 Meg Thomas, from the Museum, gave a talk



established along the river by 1789. Two further industries to be established were bleaching and calico printing. Bleaching fields were established on the river bank to dry natural calico treated with lime. Arthur Liberty and William Morris both established printing works using block printing techniques. Liberty used Littler's print works at Merton Abbey from the late 1870s, and in 1881 William Morris opened his model factory at Merton Abbey, just down stream from the Liberty site. The

on the industries along the river. She stated that the last paper mill on the river closed in 1980, and, as you may have guessed, the site is now a large Sainsbury's store.

Why the Wandle valley should become such a hive of industry is down to a number of factors as well as the availability of water power. In the days before the Industrial Revolution London was the major manufacturing area in the country with many small workshops behind shop fronts as well as larger premises like bell foundries and ship yards. Having your business situation on the Wandle close to the capital, but beyond the jurisdiction of the capital's guilds, made it easy to trade with such a large market without having to comply with their rules.

I don't intend to describe any of the sites in detail as this would take too long and I don't know the area very well myself. As I said earlier, a great deal has been written elsewhere about the many mills along the river starting with the 13 corn mills recorded in the Domesday survey. It is however interesting to note the number of different types of mill that eventually crowded the river. According to the document passed to me; until the end of the 17th century flour making was the principal industry of the area with 9 mills recorded in 1779 and 14 in 1850. The author states that there were modern rolling mills at Waddon, Beddington and at Wandsworth but these ceased operation about 1950.

Another use of water power was for the fulling of cloth and making felt, the earliest dating from 1303. Felt making continued in Mitcham until 1914. Interestingly Huguenot refugees established a factory at Wandsworth for the production of felt hats and achieved fame as the sole suppliers of hats to the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. One of the felt mills became one of only two factories in England to produce felt cloth to cover piano hammers.

The third industry to arrive from 1571 onwards was the manufacture of dye stuff, with the introduction of mills to grind Brazil wood and logwood to produce a red dye. The last of seven such sites was

works site was large enough for him to be able to carry out weaving, dyeing, cotton-printing, tapestry and stained glass production. Liberty's took over the whole site in 1904 and the mill continued printing Liberty fabrics until 1977.

By the mid 18th century the Wandle valley had acquired the characteristics of an industrial area with the addition of five copper mills and five iron mills. Leather, parchment and paper mills were also established around this time. Connolly at Colliers Wood was well known for producing the leather for the interior of Rolls Royce cars. There were also oil mills to produce oil cake for animal feed and linseed oil as well as flock mills used mainly to manufacture the filling for mattresses.

One very individual industry associated with the river is that of snuff manufacture and the study given to me lists no fewer than nine mills in the upper

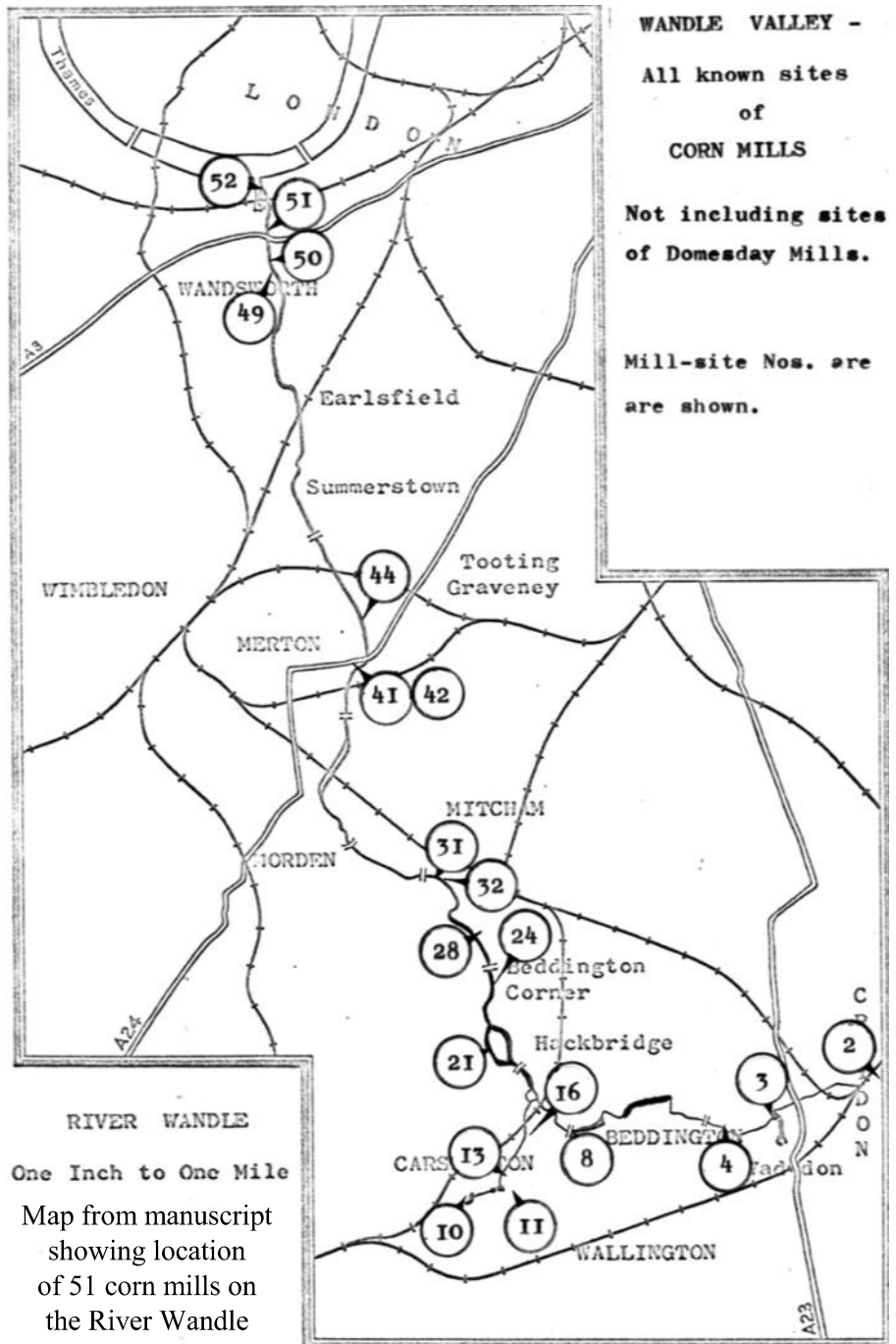


Original William de Morgan (1839-1917) Dodo tile in Wandle Industrial Museum

section of the river associated with tobacco or snuff. According to the National Trust, who now owns the site, the prosperity of Morden Hall estate in the 18th and 19th centuries depended on its snuff mills. The western snuff mill now houses a small museum of the industry.

The snuff produced along the Wandle was often flavoured with herbs like peppermint and lavender, which was grown nearby. The lavender crop was distilled into lavender oil or sold in bunches in the London markets. The importance of the lavender industry to Mitcham was recognised by the inclusion of lavender spikes in the former borough coat of arms. One firm, Potter and Moore founded in 1749 still manufacture fragrances today, but in Peterborough, no longer in Mitcham.

Such was the importance of trade along the Wandle valley that in 1799 a proposal was made to construct a canal from the Thames at Wandsworth to Croyden; however such a proposal was impractical as it would have interfered with the very mills whose trade it was intended to support. The alternative, a horse drawn railway, was selected and this opened in 1803. This was the first public iron railway in the world with a spur to many of the mill sites. The Surrey Iron Railway closed in 1846, just at a time when the mainline steam hauled railway system was being developed.



Sources

- The Industries of the Wandle Valley, an introductory study, unpublished A F Tullett circa 1968
- Watermills of the London Countryside, Reid Kenneth 1989
- Industries of the Wandle, Wandle Industrial Museum www.wandle.org/thewandle/industries.html
- Mills on the Wandle, Peter McGow www.wandle.org/mills/millsindex.html
- Wandle Industrial Museum, Vestry Hall Annex, London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3UD; www.wandle.org, 020 8648 0127



Along the River Wandle, Photo: Jan Spencer

How Did We Manage Before Refrigerators? (Part 2) by Peter Tarplee

Ice houses may also be seen at many other properties which are open to the public, for example: Painshill Park, Cobham Park, Morden Hall, High Elms in Farnborough (Kent), Marble Hill House, Ham House, Kew Gardens, Scotney Castle and, of course, Home Park, Hampton Court. Randalls Park in Leatherhead used to have an ice house but when I tried to find it a few years ago I was told by the crematorium company who now own the site that they demolished the ice house because 'young people used to smoke in it'.

Ice houses were traditionally filled with ice from local ponds or rivers but there were potential problems with this. Firstly, the unclean nature of the water and secondly, the uncertainties of the English weather meant that a number of winters could occur without any significant amount of ice being available. A new source of clean ice was becoming popular, and it became even more so as the railway network in Britain developed making distribution from ports much easier. This was imported ice, first of all from the New England lakes in America and later from Europe.

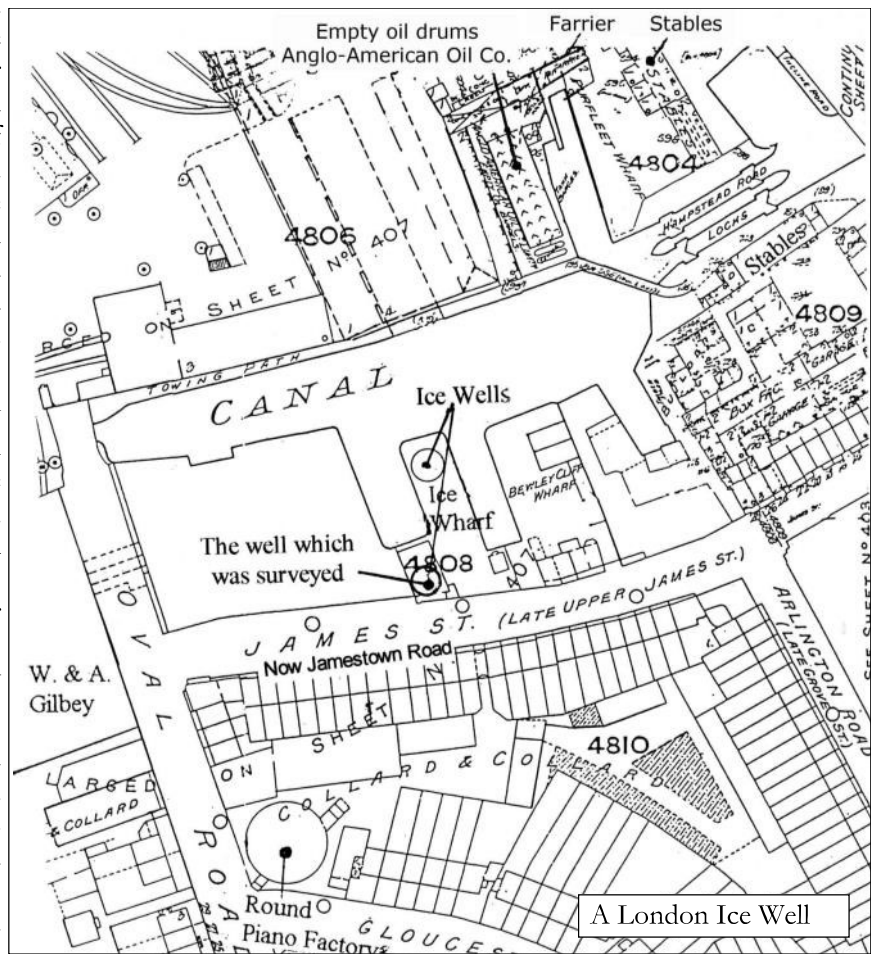
North Americans were the first to really use ice in large quantities; ice was essential to them - they made ice cream, had ice boxes for keeping butter and milk fresh, served iced drinks in hotels and bars. All the ice they used in the early days was natural, cut from rivers and lakes in winter and stored in huge ice houses before being transported to populated areas by horse-drawn wagons or by ship.

Large quantities were exported from America in the holds of sailing vessels, and that is how the Wenham Lake ice came to Britain. However, the first region to benefit from New England ice exports was the West Indies. By the 1830s Boston ice was being sold to the British community in Calcutta, a journey of 16,000 miles taking 4-5 months. This 'frozen water trade', as it was known, was the idea of Frederick Tudor. He had been bankrupt; jailed for debt; had endured a mental breakdown; and fathered 6 children after the age of 50. He died in 1864, aged 80, a very wealthy man with a large country estate.

When he started, Tudor sent ice to Martinique and Havana, but he lost money on his first few trips and spent two years in a debtors' prison. Then he built ice houses in Cuba to receive the ice which had been shipped from New England. Later he made a lot of money exporting ice to

India; and although he lost a third of this cargo from melting he was still able to sell the ice at half the cost of the artificially frozen ice used in Calcutta by the few families that could afford it.

The frozen water trade used no refrigeration, all the ice was harvested from frozen lakes and rivers. The ice was carried in the holds of sailing ships, insulated with sawdust obtained from the timber mills of Maine. This trade continued long after Tudor's death and right up until 1907 New York obtained its ice from the Hudson river or by ship from the Kennebec river in Maine. Butter and crisp apples were often exported with the ice.



A London Ice Well

Until they took out ice, the ships traveling from the USA to India often went in ballast, in order to return with silks, muslins and cotton goods as well as jute, saltpetre and linseed.

When Edward Everett was the American ambassador in London he was enthusiastically told by an eastern prince of the great benefits bestowed upon the East Indies by his native Massachusetts. The ambassador wondered whether these benefits had come from missionaries, or from the schools system, or what had caused this excessive effusion. Upon asking details of these benefits, he was told it was from the great quantities of ice

which regularly came from Boston. This illustrates the wide influence of the frozen water trade at that time.

When the ice in North America had frozen to a depth of 18 inches and would take the weight of hundreds of men and horses, it was harvested. The horses had spikes on their shoes and the men had cork soles to get a grip on the ice whilst their legs were wrapped in layers of cloth. The snow was cleared, the ice was marked out by horse-drawn cutters then the blocks were prized free with large chisels. The ice was then run down wooden channels to be stored in wooden ice houses with sawdust between the blocks for insulation. There were also ice warehouses in city centres for storing the ice before delivery to customers.

By 1879 8,000,000 tons of ice was harvested annually, of which 6,000,000 tons reached the consumer; the rest melted during shipment and storage.

Even after artificial refrigeration became available New York continued to use all natural ice for many years. The ice suppliers would buy up sections of the Kennebec river shoreline to erect more and larger ice warehouses. Eventually it was the pollution of the rivers, and hence of the ice, which made everyone turn to refrigerated ice.

However, from the early 20th Century, except in very remote areas, the natural ice trade in America declined. The city ice houses were burnt down and the ice man and ice wagon were no more seen on the streets.

A smaller industry had operated in Europe in the 16th century when ice and snow from the Alps was brought down mountain tracks on donkeys to towns in Mediterranean countries. In 1785 Alexander Dalrymple of the British East India Company happened to tell George Dempster (a Scottish MP) of the Chinese practice of fishermen carrying ice on their boats to preserve the fish. This led to Scottish fishermen sending fish down to England packed in ice. Fish could now be transported from Scotland to England all the year round and not just in the winter. Scottish fishing boats would collect ice from icebergs in the Greenland Sea. By 1838 a regular steamboat service brought Scottish salmon to Billingsgate, packed in ice.

As with so many other luxuries, the first people to use imported ice in Britain were the royal family. Queen Victoria had a supply of ice from Massachusetts delivered regularly by the Wenham Lake Ice Company. In the 1840s this company had a shop and ice store in the Strand with a window containing a 2ft cube of ice on display, sometimes with a fish frozen in it. The use of imported ice increased and so no longer did the large estates

have to rely on ice (dirty ice) from ponds and lakes but rather they had imported ice delivered to be used in their ice boxes or to make ice cream.

From 1850 the Norwegians had copied the Americans and they started to export ice and so Britain began to import ice from Norway. Lake Oppegaard near Oslo was even re-named 'Wenham Lake' so that 'Wenham Lake ice' was still available, such was its reputation. It had been said that no dinner party in London was considered complete without ice from Wenham Lake.

An early London ice merchant was William Leftwich who operated around 1820. He imported ice from Norway via Limehouse Basin and the Regent's Canal which he stored in an ice well near Cumberland Market. This well was 82ft. deep and 34ft. across with a capacity of 1,500tons. Later Leftwich built two more ice wells near the Regent's Canal at Hampstead Road Locks and details of these may be seen at 34 Jamestown Road, near Hampstead Road locks. Another Leftwich ice house came to light in 2015. It is near Regent's Park behind properties in Park Crescent and Portland Place and was built in the 1780s and was taken over by Leftwich in order to store ice which he imported from Norway. The chamber is 7.5m diameter by 9.5m deep and is one of the largest built at the time. Leftwich's company developed into the North Pole Ice Company who operated until after World War II from an ice-making factory under the railway arches in Brad Street, Waterloo. Many will remember their bright yellow lorries delivering ice to local shops.

Another very prominent ice merchant who operated in London was Carlo Gatti. He was born in 1817 in Italian-speaking Switzerland. This was a very poor area from which many people emigrated to newly industrialized Europe. Gatti walked the 600 miles to Paris where his father had established a chestnut business, selling roast chestnuts to the poor and marron glacé to the not-so-poor. Carlo did not want to continue selling chestnuts and in 1847 he arrived in England with his new wife and settled in Saffron Hill in the Italian quarter of Holborn. He ran a coffee stall where he specialized in selling a kind of waffle sprinkled with sugar in summer and selling roast chestnuts in the winter.

After a couple of years he joined up with Battista Bolla and together they opened a cafe-restaurant in Holborn Hill. Bolla was a chocolatier, or chocolate maker, and their chocolate received an honorable mention at the 1851 exhibition even though it was made in a rusty machine which Gatti had found in Paris.

Gatti also established a stand in Hungerford Market where he sold pastries and ices in pastry

shells. This was about 40 years before cornets were used. Before the invention of the cone, ice cream was either licked out of a small glass or dish (a penny lick) or taken away wrapped in paper. The customer would lick the ice cream off the dish and return the dish to the vendor who would wash it and use it for the next customer. Hundreds of Italians sold ice cream at this time, known as hokey-pokey men after their invitation to taste a little, *'ecco un poco'*.

Gatti continued to make his fortune; first, Hungerford Market burned down and with the insurance money Gatti, with his family, opened a music hall. Then in 1862, the South Eastern Railway required the site to build Charing Cross station and he received generous compensation. He held the ice contract for the Regent's Canal and he stored ice in wells which he built along the canal from where he delivered the ice by horse and cart. Two of these ice wells, built in 1857-8 and 1862-3, survive in what is now the London Canal Museum and hence are open to the public. (You can explore these ice wells by web cam, see reference). The wells are circular, about 10 metres diameter, were 13 metres deep, with a capacity of up to 750 tons of ice. The blocks of ice weighed about 3cwt each.

Gatti also sold ice to the hokey-pokey men and by 1858 he claimed to have produced up to 10,000 penny ices a day; he was the first mass manufacturer of what had previously been an aristocratic delicacy. Gatti began to build more ice wells and import more ice from Norway to these wells, mainly on the canals. The ice was imported to the Regent's Canal Dock in Limehouse and taken to his stores at Kensal Green, Haggerston Basin, Hackney, Shoreditch, Islington and Kings Cross. He soon became the largest ice merchant in London with 60 vans and carts. Carlo, in fact, returned to Switzerland in 1871 to be with his second wife, who was only 23; he died in 1878.

In 1901 the Gatti company amalgamated with two other ice suppliers to form the United Carlo Gatti, Stevenson and Slaters Company. This firm ran successfully until 1981. Slaters were well-known caterers. The united company had large ice wells holding 2,000-3,000 tons. There were carts on the ground floor and horses were stabled upstairs. They had



75 rounds in London and their yellow and black wagons were seen until the 1950s.

Quoting from a newspaper article of September 1906 published during a heat wave, entitled "93 in the Shade":-

The two businesses which are really booming are the ice and mineral water trades. All day long, from all parts of the metropolis, the wholesale dealers are receiving telegrams and telephone messages ordering ice to be sent 'at once'. The combine known as the United Carlo Gatti, Stevenson and Slaters Ltd sent out yesterday between 900 and 1,000 tons of ice from their various depots. Some of the ice was brought to England as long ago as February and March of this year and had been stored for emergency. Of the ice sent out yesterday about 800 tons was imported from Norway.

Gatti's ice men were often Italian and up until World War 2 they could earn £3 per week; their carts carried 2 tons of ice and they could sell 2 or 3 loads a day.

The Gatti family diversified into many activities in London:-

Restaurants

The Adelphi and Vaudeville theatres

Music halls in Villiers Street, the Strand and Westminster Bridge Road

Sir John Gatti formed the Charing Cross and Strand Electricity Supply Co. in 1889 which very shortly was providing the City and Westminster with electricity. This company remained involved in electricity supply until nationalization of the industry in 1948.

In fact the company continued to diversify until it was bought up in 1981. They had an ice well at Ransome's Dock in Battersea, but once refrigeration plant was readily available they built an ice



factory in the 1920s in Parkgate Road

Incidentally, an American fur and leather merchant, Clarence Birdseye, was spending a winter in Labrador when he noticed that the flesh of fish and reindeer froze very quickly in the sub-zero arctic temperatures.

Albury Park Ice House

The Eskimos would return months later and find their catch as fresh as the day it was killed. Birdseye took 8 years to patent a process for the quick freezing of food and, in 1924, the first goods treated in this way, initially peas, appeared on the market. The first pre-cooked frozen foods appeared in 1939 and fish fingers came in 1955.

By 1922 ice cream had become very popular and Thomas Wall, a sausage manufacturer in Acton, was worried that fewer sausages would be sold in the summer and so he began to make the first blocks of wrapped ice cream.

So natural ice is now neither imported nor used for food preservation. Most domestic ice houses have either been destroyed or are used as a dumping place for rubbish. I did, however, see one, at Puttenham Priory, where the circular brick-built well had been fitted with an iron spiral staircase and the walls been equipped with wine racks so that the building was used as a wine cellar.

Most commercial ice houses have either been demolished or redeveloped but a few remain such as those at the London Canal Museum in New Wharf Road near Kings Cross used by the Gatti company and the recently discovered ice well used by William Leftwich. Also, as I've indicated, many ice houses from stately homes still survive and can to be visited.

The last surviving ice factory with its machinery still intact, is at Grimsby. The Grimsby Ice Factory, built to serve the fishing industry, began in 1900 and closed in 1990, could produce 1,200 tons of ice a day and was responsible for the great expansion of the fishing port at Grimsby. The works has

been listed GradeII* but, as yet, no future use has been found for it.

References and Further Reading

Beaman, S and Roaf, S: *The Ice Houses of Britain*

Loudon, John Caudius:
An Encyclopedia of Gardening

Weightman, Gavin: *The Frozen Water Trade*

Seaburg, Carl and Paterson Stanley:
The Ice King, Frederick Tudor and his Circle

Furnival, Jane: *Suck don't Blow*

Buxbaum, Tim: *Icehouses*

Ellis, Monica: *Ice and Icehouses Through the Ages*

Gatti ice wells web cams:
<http://canal-museum.co.uk:75/local/viewer/Ice4.htm>

For information about some of the surviving ice houses in Surrey refer to the appropriate Borough or District Guide to Industrial History published by the Surrey Industrial History Group



Along the River Wandle, see page 6
Photos: Jan Spencer



SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP
 A Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society
 Registered Charity No. 272098

Income and Expenditure Account for the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

2018/19	Income	2019/20	(+/-)
£	£	£	£
948	Members' Subscriptions	990	42
103	Gift aid	167	64
2,380	Income from Leatherhead lectures	2,430	50
1,145	Income from Guildford Lectures	1,050	-95
1,154	COIF Fixed Interest Fund Dividends	928	-226
0	COIF Investment gain in value	121	121
0	Donation	0	0
5,730	TOTAL Income	5,686	-44
100	Books	189	89
	5,875		
2018/19	Expenditure		
1,032	Newsletter- Printing and Distribution	1,268	236
170	Other costs- Stationery, Postage etc.	0	-170
117	COIF Investment loss in value	0	-117
45	Subscriptions to other Societies	45	0
3,050	Lecture expenses Leatherhead	2,395	-655
1,212	Lecture expenses Guildford	1,073	-139
0	Room Hire for Committee Meetings	80	80
322	Donation	0	-322
453	AGM Expenses	250	-203
0	Miscellaneous	0	0
6,401	TOTAL Expenditure	5,111	-1,290
-671	Surplus to Accumulated Fund		575
-571	(including books)		764

SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP
 A Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society
 Registered Charity No. 272098

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

2018/19	2019/20	change	
£	£	£ on year	
23,677	Accumulated Fund at end of Financial Year	23,006	-671
-671	Excess (-Deficit) of income over Expenditure	575	1,246
23,006	Value Excluding Publications	23,581	575
16,336	Publications Fund at end of Financial Year	16,525	189
39,342	TOTAL VALUE OF GROUP	40,106	764

Represented by:

<u>Current Assets</u>			
31	Petty Cash	6	-25
10,861	Bank Current Account	11,835	974
28,450	COIF Fixed Interest Investment Account	28,571	121
39,342	Total Current Assets	40,412	1,070
0	<u>Current Creditors</u>	0	0
0	<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
	Pre paid subscriptions	36	36
	Pre paid lecture fees	270	270
0	Total Current Liabilities	306	306
39,342	TOTAL VALUE OF GROUP	40,106	764

SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP Charity No. 272098		
PUBLICATIONS FUND Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020		
2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2019/20 £
16,336	Balance at start of Financial Year	16,336
9,214	Surpluses on out of Print Publications and Unspecified Funding	9,214
1,725	Accumulated Interest	1,725
Net Surpluses on Current Publications		
455	<i>Abinger Observatory</i>	
1,262	<i>Chilworth Guide</i>	
1,504	<i>Damnable Inventions</i>	
726	<i>Epsom & Ewell</i>	
1,541	<i>Mole Valley</i>	
173	<i>Reigate & Banstead</i>	
780	<i>Spelthorne</i>	
415	<i>Surrey & the Motor</i>	
1,966	<i>Surrey IA</i>	
238	<i>Surrey Roads</i>	
675	<i>Tandridge</i>	
405	<i>Waverly 2nd Ed</i>	
114	<i>Woking</i>	
16	<i>Misc</i>	
10,153	TOTAL SURPLUSES	10,270
Net Deficits on Current Publications		
15	<i>Premier Cooler</i>	
2,973	<i>25 years of Conservation Awards</i>	
50	<i>Elmbridge</i>	
144	<i>Raby Papers</i>	
674	<i>Simmons Diaries</i>	
714	<i>Surrey Heath</i>	
55	<i>Thames Ditton Statue Foundry</i>	
27	<i>Wey Navigations</i>	
4,724	TOTAL DEFICITS	4,652
	<i>Postage charged</i>	0
	<i>Postage cost</i>	0
	<i>32 Printing cost</i>	0
	<i>Gain for year</i>	189
16,336	Balance at end of financial year	16,525

SURREY INDUSTRIAL HISTORY GROUP	
A Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society	
Registered Charity No. 272098	
PUBLICATIONS FUND Income & Expenditure	
Income from Sales of Books published in Previous Years for the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	£
25 Years of Conservation Awards	17
Abinger Observatory	18
Chilworth Guide 4th Ed	4
Damnable Inventions	11
Elmbridge	10
Epsom & Ewell	10
Mole Valley	
Premier Cooler	15
Raby Papers	16
Reigate & Banstead	20
Simmons Diaries	
Spelthorne	22
Surrey & the Motor	10
Surrey Heath	15
Surrey IA	
Surrey Roads	
Tandridge	
Thame Ditton Statue Foundry	5
Waverly 2nd Ed	
Wey Navigations	
Woking	
Misc	16
TOTAL	189
New Publications	0
INCOME FOR YEAR	189
General Expenditure relating to sales	0
Printing	0
EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR	0
<i>Gain for year</i>	189

**Surrey Industrial History Group
Surrey Archaeological Society
Chairman’s Report for the year ending 31 March 2020
*Robert Bryson***

This is my fifteenth annual report as Chairman of the Surrey Industrial History Group. The year started with the South East Region Industrial Archaeology Conference. This year the event was hosted by Kent Archaeology Society and held at Dartford Grammar School on 13th April 2019.

Our AGM was held on 28th July at Brooklands Museum, when we presented the 2019 Conservation Award to Alex Patterson and Julian Temple for work carried out to restore the large Bellman Hanger that was leaking and in poor condition. The grade II listed hanger was moved and re-clad and together with a new building to the rear of the hanger now forms the Brooklands Aircraft Factory exhibit.

The 44th series of Industrial Archaeology Lectures held in Guildford commenced on 8th October with a lecture on Sopwith through the Great War given by Chris Farara of the Hawker Association and concluded on 3rd March with a talk entitled Sentinels of the Sea - The Amazing History of Light Houses given by Mark Lewis, who is a member of the Association of Light-house Keepers.

The Thursday morning weekly lectures at the Institute in Leatherhead were organised by Malcolm Tagg who organized the speakers. John Bourne, assisted by Michael Herbert, chaired the meetings. The talks, held over both the autumn and spring terms, commenced on 3rd October with a talk by David Hassard on the National Aircraft Factory No2. The last lecture in the series was held on 12th March when John Partington spoke to the Leatherhead group about Royal Naval Hydrographic Surveying. We were due to have a final meeting on 19th March, when it was planned that Members of the group would give a series of short talks. However in the light of the then looming Corona virus crisis this meeting was cancelled

Paid up membership of the group at the last count was 93, made up of 80 ordinary members, 6 Associate and 7 Institutional; five up on last year.

Our Newsletter and website www.sihg.org.uk continue to be the best source for up to date information on group activity and I would like to thank all the members of SIHG, especially my fellow committee members, who have supported the work of the group throughout the year.

The deadline for **submitting copy** for the next Newsletter is
20 October 2020
*Submissions are accepted by email to news@sihg.org.uk,
on a memory stick or even in typescript.
Anything related to IA will be considered.*
*Please note that our Web address will be upgraded in the near future
to be recognized as secure:
<https://www.sihg.org.uk>*

The SIHG Newsletter is now issued quarterly, covering:

<i>February</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>November</i>
<i>March</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>December</i>
<i>April</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>January</i>

SIHG is a group of the Surrey Archaeological Society,
Registered Charity No 272098
Hackhurst Lane Abinger Hammer Surrey RH5 6SE 01306 731275

Surrey Industrial History Group Officers

Chairman & Lectures Organiser: **Robert Bryson** meetings@sihg.org.uk
 Secretary: **Hugh Anscombe** info@sihg.org.uk
 Treasurer & Sales: (vacant) Acting Treasurer: **Robert Bryson** treasurer@sihg.org.uk
 Vice Chairman & Membership Secretary: **Pam Taylor** membership@sihg.org.uk
 Newsletter Editor: **Jan Spencer** news@sihg.org.uk

Published by Surrey Industrial History Group,
printed by YesPrint 3 Leafy Oak Workshops Cobbetts Lane Yateley GU17 9LW
© SIHG 2020 ISSN 1355-8188