

**U3A Bikers**  
**Beddington Park and the River Wandle**  
**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The hot spell of weather continued, but with the forecast of some high cloud cover and a gentle breeze the temperature was expected to be a little lower than yesterday.

We all carried a good quantity of water as we met at Hackbridge Station, served by City Thameslink from Herne Hill, Tulse Hill and Streatham.

A group of nine, we had a short stretch of a busy road to negotiate to reach the entrance to Beddington Park.

On splendid, quiet paths we rode around the park to the Pavilion café for what was a (very) early coffee stop; this would have pleased a particular member of the Group! Iced coffee was available.



We continued our clockwise ride around the park, crossing a bridge over the River Wandle (here in a water course), pausing to admire the Grade II\* listed dovecote, built between 1707 and 1727 in Pigeon House Meadow on the site of one dating from Tudor times.

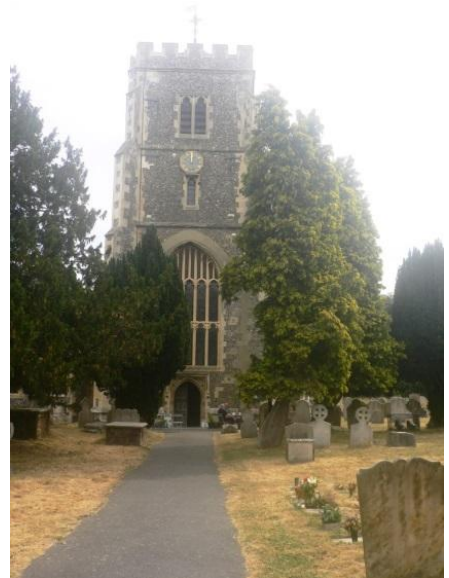


Carew  
Manor



was the former manor house of the Carew family, lost to money lenders and bad debts by Charles Carew in the 1850s. It was once a medieval moated house, then the home to the Royal Female Orphanage from 1762 until 1968. It now houses the council offices and Carew Manor School.

St Mary's Church is a Grade II\* listed 14th-century flint parish church and occupies a prominent position in the park.



Immediately opposite was the flower garden which we walked through before resuming the ride on the path around the park.

The Wandle continued to flow through the park and debouched into a pool with a little waterfall, but from there it was not possible to follow its route.

An easily-missed exit from the park near the West car park led us to Lakeside, along intriguingly-named Butter Hill, and to Mill Lane, and so to Riverbank Way. It was here that we re-joined the Wandle and followed the river for a couple of miles as it meandered down beside a trail dappled in sunlight filtering through the trees.



Crossing Morden Road, we arrived at the entrance to Morden Hall Park, near the Surrey Arms Pub and made our way over the Wandle, flowing over a weir, and on to the NT Garden Centre and Café.

Seated comfortably at a table, we tucked into packed lunches..... and remembered to drink plenty of water.

A couple of options for the return journey were discussed; to return to Hackbridge by the outward route, or to continue on down the Wandle.

Given the temperature was not as high as forecast, we agreed on the latter, continuing on, leaving the park, crossing the tracks of the tramway which runs to Wimbledon, and past Deen City Farm.

As we approached Colliers Wood we passed the second of two water-mills seen today (the first was at Morden Hall); formerly derelict without its paddles.

This water-mill has been restored and can sometimes be seen turning.



Here too was the Merton Abbey Works of William Morris which were established in 1881, in a building previously used for calico printing since 1752.

At this site, marked by a blue plaque, were produced carpets, tapestries, printed fabrics, and stained glass, in the patterns well-known to us today. The works continued after Morris's death (1896) and finally closed in 1940.

We passed the large retail stores at Colliers Wood and crossed Merton High Street.

After a false start (we did not have Peter with us to guide us!) we picked up the route past Wandle Meadow Nature Park, on to the Wandle Trail, beneath a low bridge carrying Thameslink trains round the Sutton loop, and so arrived at busy Garratt Lane.

Earlsfield Road presented us with a steady climb up to Heathfield Road and past HMP Wandsworth, across the A214 Trinity Road at the County Arms pub and so on to Wandsworth Common, Clapham Common, and home.

## Comment

Beddington Park was a new destination for the Group, discovered by Jane and Joe when on a ride with the Southwark Cycle Group. Further research identified Hackbridge Railway Station as a good starting point and gave easy access to the upper part of the River Wandle, not previously visited by the Group. This part of the river shows the benefit of several extensive clean-up operations and it now flows between banks with reed beds, with weeds and algae flourishing. Brown trout, chub, roach and dace thrive here too.

**Distance covered:** 25 miles

**Riders:** Chris; Jane & Joe; Jan, David & Irene, Dilwen, Martin D, John

**Acknowledgement:** source material from Wikipedia and Onthetudortrail

*Ride leaders: Joe & Jane Antos; John Clements*

*Report by John Clements, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

## Notes

***The River Wandle** is a tributary of the River Thames. With a total length of about 9 miles, the river passes through the London Boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton, to meet the Thames at Wandsworth. A short headwater - the Caterham Bourne - is in Surrey, the historic county of the river's catchment. Other tributaries of the Wandle include the River Wrythe and the Norbury Brook. The name Wandle is thought to derive from a back-formation of Wandsworth (Old English "Wendlesworth" meaning "Wendle's Settlement"). The Wandle Trail follows the course of the river from Croydon to Wandsworth.*

*For many centuries the River Wandle rose from a spring beside the Brighton Road.*

***Carew Manor** The Domesday Book mentions two Beddington estates and these were united by Nicholas Carew to form Carew Manor in 1381. Beddington Park originated as a deer park in the 14th century for the Carew family. The Manor of Beddington continued to be owned by the Carew family until Sir Nicholas Carew was executed for treason in March 1539. His lands were seized and returned to the Crown but his son, Sir Francis Carew, was later restored to his inheritance under Mary I.*

*This has an important place in Tudor history; Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn visited here and the grounds resonate with the memories of other great Tudor personalities. In May 1536, Jane Seymour took up temporary residence at Beddington Park and Henry visited Jane discreetly under the cover of darkness. According to local legend, Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh used to take walks in the park. In about 1591 Sir Walter Raleigh secretly, and without royal permission, married one of Queen Elizabeth I's maids of honour, Elizabeth Throckmorton of Carew Manor. Raleigh spent time in the Tower of London for this and Elizabeth was expelled from the court. A popular story is that when Raleigh was beheaded by James I in 1618, Elizabeth claimed his embalmed head and kept it in a bag for the rest of her life. Some even say that Raleigh's embalmed head is buried on the grounds!*

*The River Wandle runs through the park, culminating in the lake in the Grange Garden.*