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# Combe Mill

## ACCESS STATEMENT

(Advice for preparing a risk assessment)

Issue 1	Published 28 January 2008	For issue
Issue 2	Revised 9 December 2008	Disabled toilet now available
Issue 3	Revised 22 March 2009	To reflect site development
Issue 4	Updated 7 July 2010	Re-validated
Issue 5	15 November 2012	Revised after conservation project
Issue 6	January 2014	Updated following review
Issue 7	July 2017	Clarification re wheelchair access
Issue 8	July 2019	Reviewed and revised

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## Arriving on site

There is parking for visitors' cars down the slope in Combe Yard. We can accommodate one coach. There may be other traffic visiting / delivering to the other businesses on the same site.

Tickets are on sale from the Ticket Office or from inside the Tea Room

There is a unisex Access Toilet with baby changing facilities at ground level next to the Tea Room accessed from outside.

Please wear sensible sturdy shoes especially if you intend to try your hand at making something in the forge.

For those bringing an organised school or community group to the Mill for outdoor learning please read the section on **Outdoor Learning**.

Volunteers on duty will be wearing green Polo shirts bearing the Mill logo or green boiler-suits so that you will know who to ask for information or assistance.

## General Safety Awareness

Combe Mill is an industrial building that contains machinery some of which is working. The floors on the ground floor are stone that have been patched with concrete and this is uneven in places reflecting the evolution of the building and the work done in it over the generations.

Combe Mill Society takes the matter of safety very seriously but we do not compromise the integrity of the historic structure by destroying history in order to remove all risk hazards.

Therefore visitors need to avoid tripping hazards and should not cross safety barriers to touch moving parts.

Children should be accompanied by an adult at all times.

We encourage visitors to handle the exhibits on display and to try their hand, under skilled supervision, at making objects in the forge and on the wood turning lathe. We provide visitors with appropriate protective equipment for the tasks but you take part entirely at your own risk.

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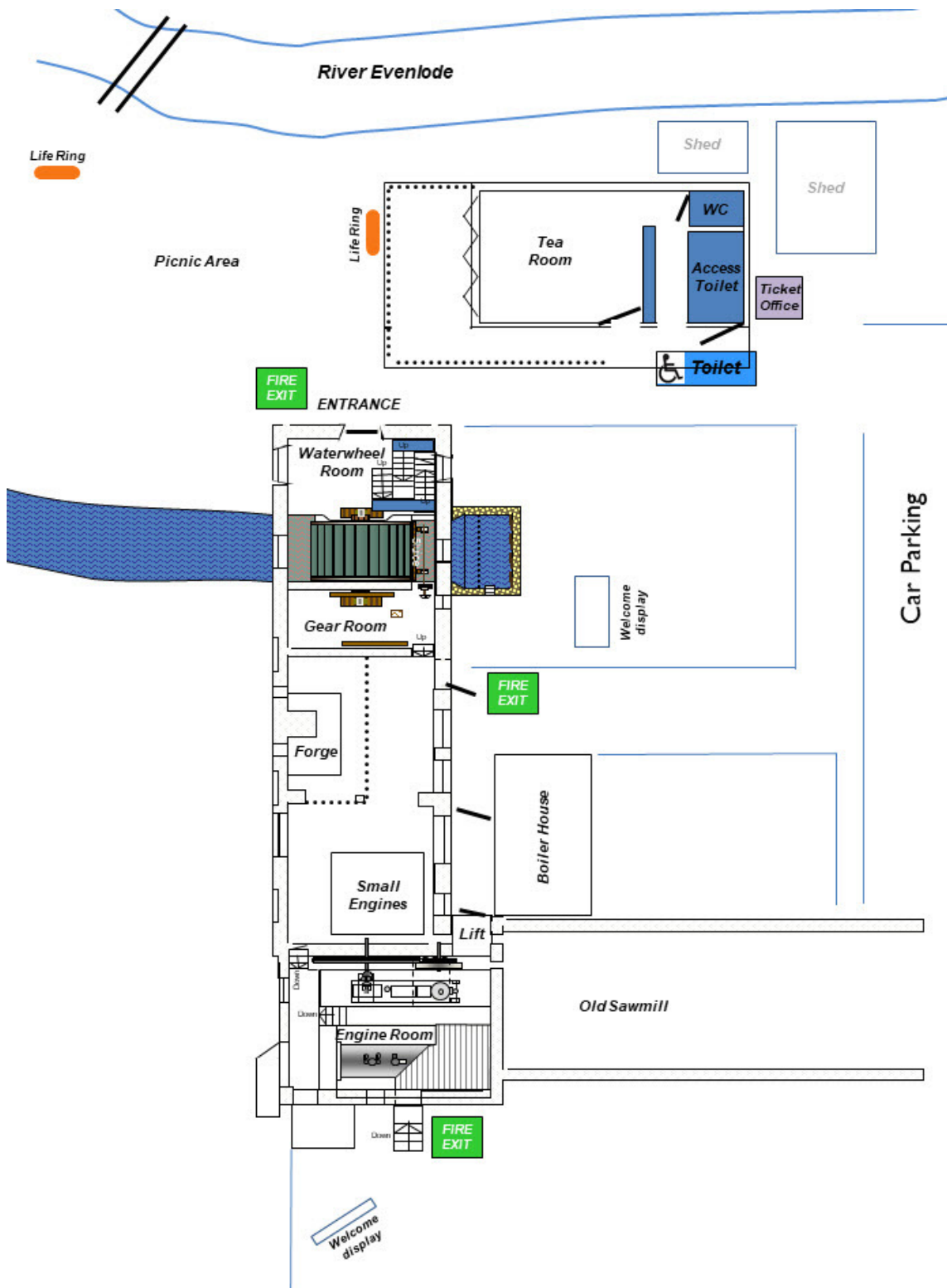


Figure 1 Combe Mill Ground Floor Plan

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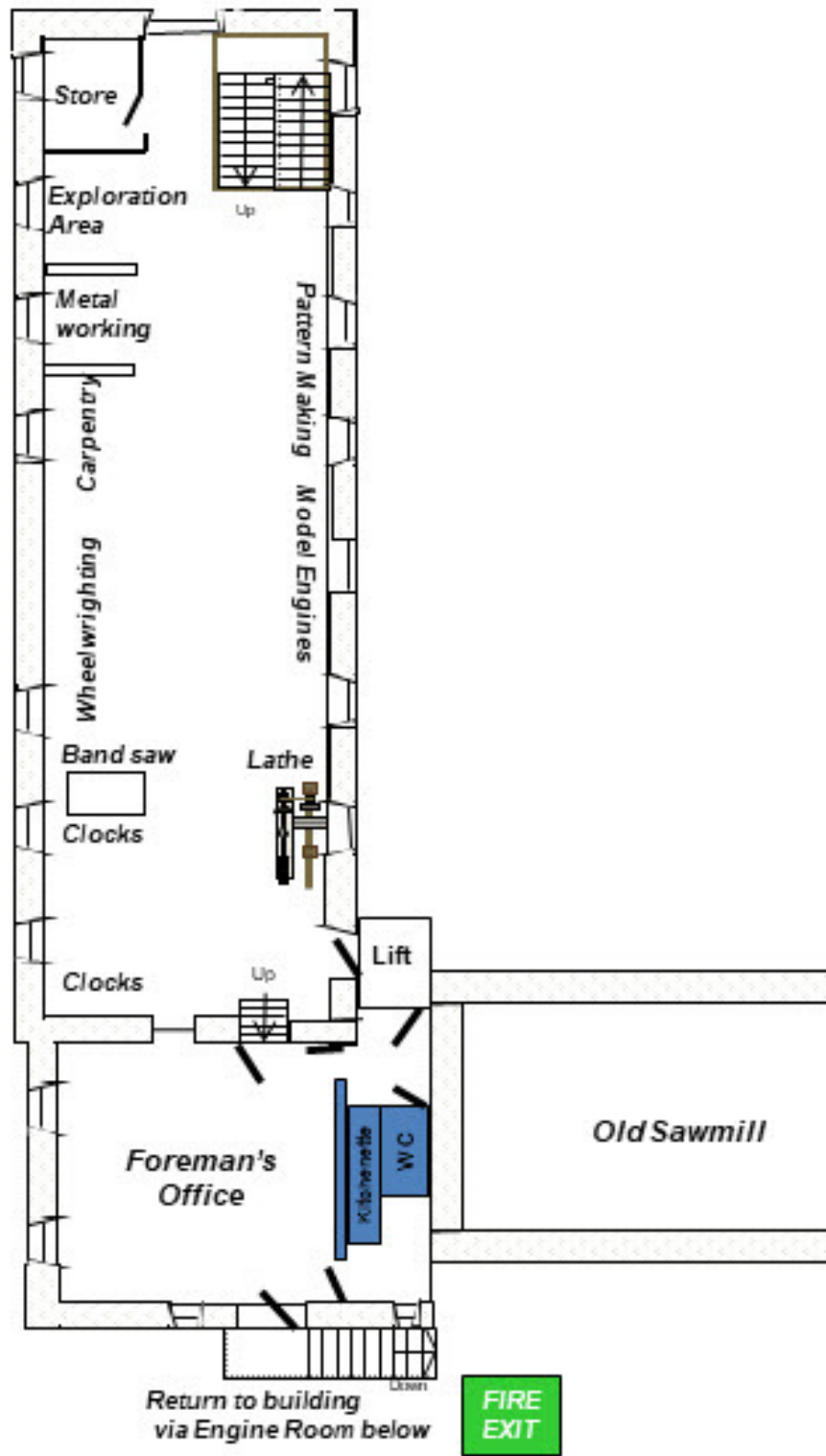


Figure 2 Combe Mill Upper Floor Plan

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## Car Parking Facilities

Supervised car parking is available on Sunday Steaming Events and we can cater for about 150 cars at any one time.

There is adequate parking for the occasional visitor to our Wednesday and Sunday Open Days – non-steaming days. However, we encourage groups of visitors to come by minibus or coach because parking is limited. There is space to park and turn round a standard coach.

The car parking surface is tarmac and gravel as is the walk to the front of the mill building.

## Entering the Mill

You enter the building after walking on a gravel path past the Tea Room and down a slope then into the Waterwheel Room. The floor here is particularly uneven and you should take care.

You can watch the waterwheel turn from a viewing platform as you go up the staircase when you can also examine the Time Line giving an overview of the history of the Mill and then reach the upstairs Pattern Shop.

Disabled visitors can gain access to the Pattern Shop by taking the lift that is reached along a short corridor between the Boiler House and the Forge.

## Upper Floor

### *Pattern Shop*

The Pattern Shop contains the displays of artefacts, tool collections and historic clocks.

The Pattern Shop has a wood planked floor which has a few uneven areas where machinery was once installed.

### *Foreman's Office*

The Foreman's Office is reached from the far end of the Pattern Shop, by means of external stairs at the front of the mill building, or by taking the lift.

The original wood floor is slightly uneven.

If the Office is in use for a meeting or group visit, refreshments may be obtained from the kitchenette revealed behind sliding doors. Children may also wash their hands here.

Off this room is the lobby for the lift and a toilet with hand wash facilities.

You leave the Foreman's Office and descend the outside steps to re-enter the building through the Engine Room.

## Ground Floor

### *Engine Room*

You enter the Engine Room from ground level down two steps usually covered by a wooden wheelchair ramp and are directly on top of the Cornish boiler which is no longer in service.

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Wheelchair access is possible – just ask for assistance. A wheelchair ramp is normally in place and wheelchairs may be brought onto this platform.

Once you enter the Engine Room you see the steam beam engine from a viewing platform from which you can descend to see the Cornish boiler before proceeding into the forge area.

You are protected from touching the moving parts of the beam engine by safety barriers. Potentially hot steam and condensate pipes are thermally lagged.

If you are above average height there are a couple of places where you might need to stoop.

There is a low step towards the front of the viewing platform and you then leave it down a short flight of steps to get down to the lower level of the Cornish boiler.

The route from the Engine Room to the Forge/Workshop is unsuitable for wheelchairs and we recommend that disabled visitors re-enter the workshop area from the yard.

### ***Workshop and Forge***

After seeing the beam engine and the Cornish boiler, you get to the workshop and forge through a narrow doorway and down two steps.

The floor in the workshop is uneven and you should take care to avoid tripping.

In the workshop are several working steam engines and you should not go behind the barriers.

At the forge you may try your hand, under supervision, at making a poker. We supply suitable protective wear for this. Please do not enter the area behind the safety barrier without being invited by a supervising volunteer.

Moving belts in the workshop are fitted with safety guards.

### ***Gear Room***

Before leaving the forge, you can go into the small Gear Room and see the pit-wheel gearing that once connected the waterwheel to the line shafting. There is a step down into this viewing area.

You can then leave the workshop through the rear door which leads to the rear yard, Tea Room and the picnic area.

### **Rear Yard**

You reach the rear yard and riverside through the rear door of the forge on level ground. The yard immediately outside the mill is laid to brick pavers and gravel paths which lead past the Tea Room/ Access Toilet onto the grass of the riverside picnic area.

We particularly ask parents with young children to keep their children in view while in the picnic area, since it borders on the river Evenlode.

### ***Head Race***

The water in the head race in front of the waterwheel is often deep. The area is fenced and the gates are padlocked. Children must not climb on the fence or enter the enclosure.

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## ***Boiler House***

Outside in the corner of the mill building, where it meets the old sawmill, is located a wood clad building that houses our oil-fired steam raising boiler. You are not allowed to enter this building as part of the usual visit. However, if you have a particular technical query please speak to one of our volunteers.

## ***Lift***

There is a corridor between the Boiler House and the rear wall of the Mill by which the lift is reached. This is a platform lift and accommodates one wheelchair and accompanying person. Users must keep clear of the doors which open and close automatically.

## **Tea Room**

You can buy refreshments on steaming event and open days inside our riverside Tea Room which contains seating for 12-16 with an outside deck area for a further 12-16 people. You might prefer to consume food sitting in the grass picnic area.

## **Grounds and Gardens**

### ***Picnic Area***

This is next to the River Evenlode which after rainfall can flow fast and as it bends around the Mill area it is very deep. The river banks are fenced off. Life rings are put out during visits and are located near the footbridge over the river and on the Tea Room railings.

## **Additional Information**

At points around the Mill are audio/visual display panels that provide more information about the machinery and history of the Mill.

There is a children's trail for Millie the mill cat at nine locations around the building.

Teachers and group leaders intending to visit the mill are welcome to make a pre-visit at no cost so that they can prepare necessary risk assessments.

## **Fire and Smoke Alarms**

The Mill is equipped with a fire and smoke alarm system that will sound in the event of an emergency. Instructions for visitors on what to do in the event of a fire are posted at the exits.

## **Fire Exits**

Fire exits on the ground floor are the engine room entrance door or the workshop door to the rear yard. The waterwheel room has its own fire exit.



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The fire exits from the pattern shop are down the staircase and out via the waterwheel door to the rear yard or through the Foreman's Office and down the outside stairs.

All exits are marked on the floor plans – Figures 1 and 2.

## **Disability Provisions**

A hearing aid loop exists in the Foreman's Office.

## **Wheelchair Access**

The platform lift to the upper floors will accommodate a standard wheelchair and one other person. We have a chair that can be used by visitors if their vehicle is too large to fit the lift.

Users should take care when moving over gravel areas to avoid 'dig-ins'.

Wheelchair access to the Engine Room is down a short slope through the door at the front of the Mill. Please ask a volunteer for assistance unless you are accompanied by a fit companion who can help you.

## **Outdoor learning**

### ***Outdoor area***

For those taking part in supervised outdoor activities we draw attention to the following:

When visiting, children and staff need to be aware that the ground areas are rough dirt paths often with no defined path.

It can get muddy in wet weather, especially at the pond so we recommend Wellington boots or suitable waterproof boots.

We advise that the children bring with them a water proof jacket and wear warm, old, robust clothes.

There will be stinging nettles in various places, overhanging trees and insects so children may wish to bring sting relief and insect repellent.

In the event of an accident a first aid kit and mobile phone are carried by Mill Personnel with each group of children.

Volunteers on duty will be wearing green Polo shirts bearing the Mill logo or green boiler-suits so that you will know who to ask for information or assistance.

### ***Meadow***

The children will cross a small footbridge into a flat area of commercial forestry and meadow where the path is rough, uneven and across long grass.

### ***The Forest Trail***

There is dog's mercury under some of the trees in the forest – this can be harmful if eaten.

Early on in the Trail the path becomes very steep and passes through dense commercial forest. There may be a lot of cut, rough wood on the ground and the path is rough underfoot.

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All parts of the Trail can become muddy and slippery if wet but this steep area can become particularly slippery after and during rain.

## ***Pond Dipping***

Access to the pond is controlled at all times during the visit.

Pupils are supervised at all times: adult to child ration determined by age, recommended 1:4 for KS2.

**Children with cuts on their hands must have them covered with waterproof plasters or wear suitable gloves, they must avoid ingestion of water and all children must wash their hands after the activity especially before eating. There is a small risk of leptospirosis (Weil's disease). Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms after contact with fresh water should see their doctor immediately.**

Edges that are open for access for pond dipping are gently sloping and well defined.

A protective barrier fence and platform is provided for the steeper slope.

The pond is checked before the activity to ensure it is shallow enough for a wading rescue. No access is allowed during flood conditions.

## **Contact Information**

Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills Combe, Long Hanborough WITNEY, Oxfordshire, OX29 8ET.

OS Grid reference SP 41650 15050 Landranger map 164

Email: [events@combemill.org](mailto:events@combemill.org) Website: <http://www.combemill.org>

There is a telephone at the mill (01993 358694) and mobile phone reception can sometimes be poor but depends on your service provider.

**Nearest A&E:** John Radcliffe Hospital (9.0 miles): Headley Way, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 9DU Tel: 01865 741166

**Local Minor Injuries Centre:** Witney Community Hospital, Welch Way, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 6JJ Tel: 01993 209458

**Local Surgery:** 56 Churchill Way, Long Hanborough, Witney, OX29 8JL Tel 01993 881330

Local public transport numbers: Stagecoach 01865 772250

Local accessible taxi numbers:

01993 709188

01993 891888

07447 170770

07767 685257

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