



The Combe Yard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



February 2020

This issue of our newsletter contains the stewards' roster for those who have kindly volunteered their time to welcome visitors to the Mill. Please check your dates carefully since a few changes have been necessary since the draft issue.

Combe Mill at War

The format of our April Event this year is 'different' from our usual steaming events. Although we are operating all indoor and tea room activities as usual, we are not having any market stalls, tombola or our other regular exhibitors.

Instead we will be welcoming many exhibitors, re-enactors, promenaders, singers and demonstrators in the 1940s theme who will be showing our visitors what life on the home front would have been like.

Steve McTigue is coming as Churchill and Stefan Dicks as Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke - both highly esteemed re-enactors. Two lady 1940 singers are entertaining. The Oxford Home Guard will be on parade. Many exhibitors will bring displays of living history and military vehicles. The list is long and will be explained more fully at our briefing on 17 February.



A key point to understand is that everyone on the day is volunteering their time to help us raise funds for Combe Mill. We will have exhibits valued at many thousands of pounds to look at and admire on the day. Let's give our organisers all our support for this new venture.

We hope for more than our normal attendance and have decided to adopt a one-way route through the Mill for visitors and the Foreman's Office will house an exhibition of typical wartime Y-station secret technology display. The waterwheel room will also house an exhibitor.

Because some of the exhibitor vehicles will take up car park space, we plan to maximise the available space for visitor parking by asking all exhibitors and society members to park where directed in the Barlow's Woodyard area. Barlows have agreed to work with us on use of this space. Regular members will be given a parking permit to get into the yard and parking will be close. Vehicles will not be expected to leave until the end of the event.

The 1940s side of the arrangements are being managed by Brett and Karen Wiles who are working with Julie Stuart-Thompson to bring the event together. To get us all 'in the mood' and further explain how the day will run, Brett and Karen have agreed to give us a lunchtime talk on Wednesday 19 February in the Foreman's Office at 12 noon. To make this 1940s day seem plausible to our visitors - many of who will be photographers - we need to remove/hide any 'modern' materials such as plastic bags and brightly coloured welding masks, for instance.

A good impression would also be achieved if we only wore the Combe Mill green attire and did not wear baseball caps. Flat caps are perfect!



Leaflet stuffing - thanks

We have made good progress in putting together the dozens of packs of leaflets advertising our 2020 program. Our list of recipients was drastically edited to ensure that our leaflets only reached places that we know will display them. Letters were sent to those removed from the list asking if they would like to receive leaflets and many replies were received and are being fulfilled.

Thank you to everyone who has put the inserts into leaflets and taken batches home to make up packs ready for posting.



New sheds update

Last year a small group of Wednesday volunteers completed the assembly and fitting out of our second storage shed. This is now in use and has allowed us to move into it, several large items previously stored in inappropriate locations. This is more convenient for the workers and also out-of-sight for our visitors. For example:

- i) The lawnmower was previously stored in the boiler house, a nuisance when maintaining the boiler.
- ii) The ladders were stored in the pit wheel room, very awkward to move in and out, and unsightly for the visitors.
- iii) The barbeque was under the stairs in the waterwheel room, again unsightly for the visitors.
- iv) The freezer was upstairs in the footman's bathroom, inconvenient for the tearoom staff and blocking up our indoor storage area.

In addition, other items previously stored in our original shed have been transferred to the new shed in order to allow us to undertake phase two of the project, which will provide a better workshop area to help with the maintenance at the mill. To date, having gained the extra space, we are in the process of kitting out the original shed and building a new workbench, using in part materials donated by Tony S. Bob W has already donated a Record bench vice which Charlie R has refurbished, and now we are asking whether any member has an unwanted wall-mounted Anglepoise light for use over the workbench.

Terry Bailey

2020 Subscriptions

Many thanks to those members and friends who have paid their subscription for this year, and a gentle reminder to those who have yet to join us, that their fees are now due. Details of payment options were given in the last newsletter. Remember, the mill needs your support.

Terry Bailey

Hand made house numbers

PYE Homes have now placed orders for over sixty house number digits for the Woodstock East development. We delivered the second batch at the end of January and our team of blacksmiths now have made all the required jigs and are able to produce the numbers each week between doing their other project tasks.

On that topic, you should be aware of the new items that the blacksmiths now have for sale which are made from recycled materials such as old iron nails.

Thanks guys.

Steward Roster - 2020 Season

Wed 18 March	Philip Hawtin/ Tony Simmons
Wed 25 March	Philip Riley / Colin Morris
Wed 01 April	Peter Hirst (10.30 - 13.30) / Doreen Turner (13.30 - 16.30)
Sun 05 April	Peter Trowles/ Philip Hawtin
Wed 08 April	John Sylvester /Ian Goldring
Wed 15 April	Colin Morris
Wed 22 April	Julie Stuart-Thompson / Martin Catt
Sun 03 May	Philip Hawtin / Clive Brimson/ Rob Bates
Wed 06 May	Peter Trowles / Clive Stayt
Wed 13 May	Brian Layt-Williams/ Geoff Sadler
Wed 20 May	Terry Bailey / David Knight
Wed 27 May	Tony Simmons / Erik Kirk
Wed 03 June	Gordon Lord / Ian Goldring
Sun 07 June	Derek Goddard / Julie Stuart-Thompson
Wed 10 June	Brian Layt-Williams / Colin Morris
Wed 17 June	Terry Bailey / Geoff Sadler
Wed 24 June	Derek Goddard / Clive Stayt
Wed 01 July	Gordon Lord / David Knight
Sun 05 July	Steve Page // Rob Bates / Doreen Turner
Wed 08 July	Peter Hirst / Eric Kirk
Wed 15 July	Richard Newman / Ian Goldring
Wed 22 July	Gordon Lord
Wed 29 July	John Sylvester
Sun 02 Aug	Rob Bates / Brian Layt-Williams
Wed 05 Aug	Peter Hirst / Doreen Turner / Eric Kirk
Wed 12 Aug	Philip Riley / David Knight
Wed 19 Aug	Tony Simmons / Martin Catt
Wed 26 Aug	Philip Riley
Wed 02 Sept	Peter Trowles
Sun 06 Sept	Steve Page / Philip Hawtin // Clive Brimson /
Wed 09 Sept	Terry Bailey
Wed 16 Sept	Tony Simmons / Wendy Foster
Wed 23 Sept	Derek Goddard
Wed 30 Sept	Richard Newman
Sun 04 Oct	Steve Page // Peter Hirst / Doreen Turner
Wed 07 Oct	Derek Goddard
Wed 14 Oct	John Sylvester
Wed 21 Oct	David Knight
Wed 28 Oct	Wendy Foster / Doreen Turner

Note: In preparing this roster we have taken account of requests made by stewards during the draft stage. It is now the responsibility of the steward to arrange any swaps to cover illness or unexpected absences.

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 19 February - 12noon Talk about the 1940s Combe Mill at War event

Thursday 05 March 2020 - 7.30pm Board Meeting

Sunday 15 March 2020- STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths - steaming event

Sunday 19 April 2020 - Combe Mill at War - the Home Front with re-enactors

Friday 24 April - 7.30pm Annual General Meeting - Foreman's Office

Sunday 10 May 2020 - MG Car Club Y-Register event

Sunday 17 May - Barn Engines and Horticultural Machinery - steaming event

Saturday 13 June 2020 - Music and Beer Festival - charity fund raiser - with Charlbury Morris

Sunday 21 June 2020 - Machinery in Steam

Sunday 19 July 2020 - Machinery in Steam and Oxford Ukulele Big Band

Sunday 16 August 2020 - Model Engineering at the Mill

Sunday 20 September 2020 Country Crafts and Skills with Charlbury Morris

Sunday 18 October 2020 - Wood Crafts at Combe with Morris Side

Sunday 29 November 2020 - Winter Market

Fitting pit gear teeth

Having accepted a lot of money from supporters to pay for new oak teeth for the pit gear we realised that they will expect to see them fitted and the wheel in use. Work has been slow during the last year due to adverse river levels and to fitness issues. We had hoped to identify a woodworking volunteer to work alongside Tony Thurlby to do this work but this has not been achieved.

We took the decision recently to ask Karl Bettles back to work on fitting the teeth and establish a work rate so we could determine costs. Karl worked alongside David Empringham on the original millwright job in 2018/19.

Karl began work with Tony T in late January and, all things being equal, we hope he will continue to complete the work.

Tony Simmons



Boiler burner re-commissioned

Weishaupt engineer Andrew visited recently to check and adjust the combustion settings on our oil-fired burner. Andrew can be seen in the photograph on his knees surrounded by test equipment. The burner and boiler are ready to work once our steaming season gets underway in March.

During his testing Andrew found that the oil burner nozzle requires replacement and when the nozzle is replaced, the burner settings will require adjustment while the boiler is operating at normal temperature for a period of time. Andrew might do this on Sunday 15 March.

Tony Simmons



Student placement

We welcome Emma Harris who is our placement this year from Oxford Brookes University where she is studying History & Anthropology. Emma is working with Peter Trowles in documenting our collection.
