



The Combe Dard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



March 2020

Gear teeth replaced

Millwright Karl Bettles has finished fitting the pit gear teeth. High river level prevents the wheel from being used at present. The next step is to re-engage the lay-shaft spur gear that engages with the pit gear and an attempt will be made to improve the vertical alignment of the two gears.

This job marks the completion of a major fundraising exercise that began in 2016 seeking 'tooth fairies' to sponsor a tooth for £20. At the time we had hoped they could be fitted using volunteer labour but we have all got older and a decision was made to pay for the fitting to be done and remove the pressure from those involved.

We all owe our thanks to Tony Thurlby who has supervised the work throughout on our behalf.

The photograph on the right is interesting because it shows, in one shot, the different techniques that were needed to get around the repairs to the gear wheel. From the top you can see:

- two full width teeth before wedges were fitted
- a cut down tooth wedged on one side
- three teeth with slots cut in them to pass around bolts which hold the iron wheel together
- six cut down teeth complete with wedges.



Section of refurbished pit gear



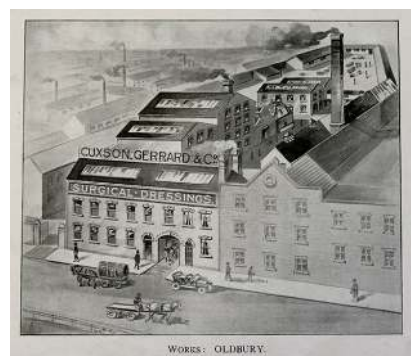
Photo Peter Trowles

Old First Aid box opened

The top photo shows the old wooden first aid box that for many years sat on top of the old tool cupboards in the forge.

Recently a suitable key was unearthed to open the box and expose the contents which were 'Sanoid' dressings that possibly date from the early 20th century. Sanoid is a product name of Cuxson, Gerrard & Co that still trades.

Needless to say, the box will become an object within our collection and NOT a new addition to our first aid provision.



WORKS: OLDBURY.

Leaflet distribution - thanks

A thank you to everyone who helped to put the 2020 inserts into our colour brochures and to pack and post them to our various destinations.

All together we sent out 3510 brochures to 63 locations where they will be displayed.

New blower for forge

Work has begun to install the new air blower for the forge. The blower can be seen in the photograph where it is now mounting on steel brackets in the gear room. A six inch hole has been drilled from the gear room into the forge to take the air ducting and cable conduit. The fan is now securely mounted and has been test run on temporary wiring. It is quieter than our existing blower.



Robin Bowl at work with the diamond cutter.

The cast iron pipe that takes air to the forge tuyler has been uncovered in the floor and plans are in hand to make a cut in it to connect with new air ducting.

The project involves the deployment of many skills and future newsletters will report progress.

The large team includes Robin Long, Robin Bowl, Bob Kitchener and Chas Rich with additional input from Peter Trowles and Richard Newman.

The cost of the project is part funded by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Combe Mill at War

On Wednesday 19 February Karen and Brett Wiles gave members a lunchtime presentation on their plans with us for the Combe Mill at War event on 19 April. Everyone was impressed by the variety of exhibitors lined up and we were encouraged to dress in 1940 attire if we felt comfortable in doing so. Some dress code tips were offered.



Permit for Mill members and volunteers

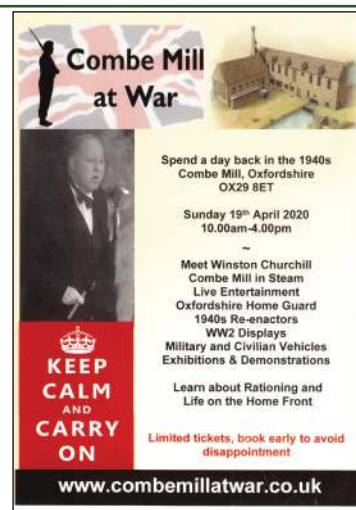
All members are encouraged to help run this event because it could be a major fund raiser for 2020. Managing visitor flow through the Mill and marshalling parking will be two vital tasks.

Blenheim has offered an area for overflow car parking and this is being followed up to put arrangements for marshalling and signage in place.

We have plenty of copies of the event poster so please take some and display in your local area.

Members and volunteers who will be present ALL DAY will be able to park in Barlows Woodyard provided they have obtained a Parking Permit in advance.

Finally be sure to have your membership card with you on the day to ensure you are admitted.



Lister Engine refurbished

Since joining us, Eric has busied himself refurbishing our Lister barn engine that was running badly last season.

He has cleaned up the cylinder bore and fitted new piston rings as well as giving the carburettor a thorough refurb. Not knowing much about such engines I am unable to report any more detail apart from saying that Eric and Richard Newman seemed pretty pleased with themselves after its test run the other Wednesday.

Thanks Eric

Also thanks for recently donating the tool press and Herbert drill/grinding machine that are now in the forge area.



Eric Kirk about to run the refurbished Lister

Tony Simmons

Well done and thanks to our new presenters

Now that Nick Russell has left and Peter Trowles now manages requests for talks, we are grateful to both Julie Stuart-Thompson and Clive Stayt who are two of our new presenters.

Talks about Combe Mill are proving very popular and bookings are already in the diary for 2021.

Julie recently spoke to the Chipping Norton Local History Society and the Cheney Community 50 Plus Club and brought back donations amounting to £95. Clive spoke to the Longworth and District History Society which donated a further £50.

We are grateful to you both for using your time and effort to generate income for us.

Money raising ideas wanted

We have been left with quite a few old hornbeam teeth from the pitgear. Some are in reasonable condition cosmetically. We are going to raise money for the Mill by selling some of these as souvenirs and are looking for good ideas on how they could be up-cycled into useful objects.

We need people to clean the teeth up and choose good specimens that can be worked on. If anyone has an idea and is prepared to put it into practice, please let one of your committee know before starting work.



Old teeth stacked in forge

Beam engine improvements

Our beam engine has for many years suffered from noise associated with the take-off gear/pulley driven by the flywheel.

Over the last few weeks Peter Hirst and Derek Goddard have tried to identify and eliminate the cause.

The wooden tooth gear which engages with the flywheel shares its shaft with the large power take-off pulley that once carried the belt to drive the sawmill.

Both gear and pulley have slots in their hubs and are fixed to the shaft with tapered wedges. The pulley wedge has been shimmed to stop sideways movement but access to the gear behind it is very limited and no work has yet been possible.



Take-off pulley with half bearing removed

Photo Peter Trowles

Removing items from the Mill

There was a case recently where we noticed that an item was missing from the tinkering area and no-one knew where it was. With the various group bookings and visitors coming to the Mill it is vital that nothing is taken away without following the formal procedure.

We have a standard **Object Exit From** on which we record when anything leave the Mill , who has taken it and why it has been removed.

In future will anyone needing to take out an item please follow this procedure. The person in control of this is Peter Trowles.

Speakers wishing to borrow the projector/screen please note.

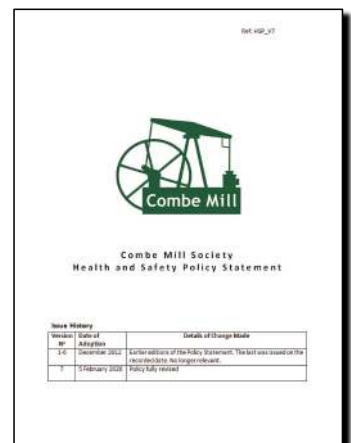
Tony Simmons

Health and Safety Policy

By the time you read this a copy of our revised Health and Safety Policy should be in your hands.

The policy is a re-write of its predecessor and therefore it was not possible to highlight the changes.

Please take note of its key points - they are designed to keep us all and our visitors safe when at the Mill and within its grounds.



Improving the visitor experience in the engine room

Steve Page recently acquired a surplus overhead projector and donated it to the Mill. Peter Trowles with help from various others, has mounted the projector from the ceiling above the Cornish Boiler.



Projector facing screen

Although only supporting a VGA input, it is able to project video and slides onto a retractable screen mounted on the wall opposite.

The intention is to augment the live presentations given to visitors by Steve on steaming days on the history of the steam engine. In future it may be possible to run a looping presentation that visitors can watch as they do with our AV units.



Projector suspended from timber beam

Stewarding

Just a reminder to all stewards that our first Wednesday opening is on 18 March. If you have not been a steward before you are welcome to come along on that day for some training to see how we welcome visitors, take their money and record their attendance.

Over the page we publish to 2020 roster for your information. YOU are responsible to finding a replacement to swap with and to let our Roster Clerk (Doreen Turner) know of the new arrangement.

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. So far we have received **no request** for alterations and the list above is now FINAL.

Forthcoming events

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

Science, technology, engineering and maths - STEM

Much preparation work is going in to the preparation and planning of our first event of 2020, the topic of which is STEM.

Readers already know how many examples of STEM exist in the Mill but they are not always appreciated by our visitors unless we draw their attention to them. The March steaming event will change all that with attention being paid to getting our visitors engaged.

Wendy is working hard to get schools and teachers engaged with what we offer and also through using story telling as the vehicle to gain their interest.

Derek is working on several hands-on exhibits and encouraging other exhibitors to join in, including:

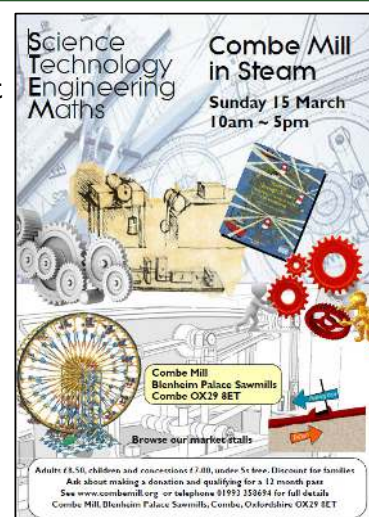
SCIENCE. Friction Board experiments, air pressure, vacuum and water power demonstrations.

TECHNOLOGY. Use a 19th C hand printing press (Phil Riley). 3D solid printing demonstration (Bob Wheeler) . Make models in wood, paper, metal, KNEX.

ENGINEERING. Victorian working machines. Pulleys, levers, cams.

MATHEMATICS. Puzzles (Mervyn Merchant), experiments, quizzes.

Sunday 15 March is going to be a good day.



Thank you

In the last newsletter I asked whether any member had a spare Anglepoise light for our new workshop. I am pleased to report that Mervyn M has provided one, for which we are very grateful, and this has been installed above the workbench in the shed. No excuses now for not being able to see what we are doing!

Terry Bailey