



The Combe Dard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



April 2020

Mill Closure due to Corona virus pandemic

The COVID 19 Virus is affecting us all and for the first time the Mill has had to close for reasons not under our control. Now our joint efforts have to be to defeat this virus. To comply with Government guidance the directors have agreed the following actions:

1. The Mill is closed to visitors for the foreseeable future.
2. The AGM scheduled for the 24 April has been postponed. For legal reasons the directors have agreed 17 July as a possible date, though it may well be necessary to further defer it until September.
3. The regular Wednesday get togethers are suspended. Consequently there is no need for the majority of members to visit the Mill.
4. Some members are undertaking work at home on behalf of the Mill. Under Government guidelines, self-help of this kind is permissible but making special journeys to the Mill in connection with the work is not.
5. During this period of enforced closure a number of members living locally, when they are passing the site, are looking in at the Mill to check for any safety or security issues.

The directors thank members for their spontaneous offers of help. We will continue to review the situation in the context of Government guidance to see when these measures can be lifted. We like all members look forward to happier times. In the meantime look after yourselves and your loved ones, take care and act safely. Best wishes

Philip Hawtin

March STEM steaming event

The Board made the decision to carry on with our March event knowing that it might be the last for some time.

The weather was not very good and visitor numbers were only a third of what we usually expect for March.

Everyone put a lot of effort into this Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths themed event.

Derek Goddard produced a variety of hands-on activities that proved very popular. To show pneumatic power a stirrup pump was used to push air into a tall piston on the end of which were heavy weights. These weights provided a source of potential energy which could then be released by opening various valves to levitate a ping-pong ball, turn a spinning wind turbine or inflate an 'air wedge'. His next display showed the different amount of friction exhibited by various materials. A constant weight was placed on a block faced with the chosen friction material (leather, metal, Teflon, wood etc) and the block dragged over a flat steel strip. Water was poured into a container to provide the driving force and the amount of force needed to start the block moving as friction was



Derek with his vacuum demonstration



Derek's pneumatic demonstration

Photo Colin Morris

STEM continued ..



Tony T's Meccano crane

Bob Wheeler showed 3D printing and produced model cats for youngsters to take home. Quite a few visitors and members had never seen 3D printing before.



The Albion printing press and the printed souvenir sheet

Richard brought along his own Albion press and printed souvenir sheets commemorating our STEM event. Our Combe Mill logo was produced especially for the event.

Richard enjoyed his day with us and we hope to see more of him in the future.

Many members made the day a success even though we were very thin on the ground on the day. The small engines could not be run.

Such visitors as we did have thoroughly enjoyed the event. When we run STEM again we need to allow much more room for the STEM displays so that people have enough space to gather round.

overcome, was measured by the volume of water.

The different coefficients of friction were well contrasted in this demonstration.

Derek also demonstrated the influence of air pressure using his Guericke vacuum pump.

Tony Thurlby showed his Meccano crane and lots of K'Nex was laid out for children to work with.

Wendy Foster had liaised with Jules Potter (joint author of the teaching book *Science Through Stories* that features Combe Mill) to develop her story telling skills and she presented the story throughout the day about how Jack introduced power into the Mill .

Mervyn Merchant had made several wood puzzles on show in the Pattern Shop that caught visitors' imagination.



Bob W's printed beam engine model



Photo Colin Morris

Richard with his printing press

Philip Riley had invited Richard Lawrence from the Bodleian Bibliographical Press to demonstrate traditional letterpress printing.



K'Nex fairground models attracted lots of interest as usual

Waterwheel progress

Since the job of fitting the pit-gear teeth has been finished river levels have prevented any running of the wheel. Bob Wheeler has finished engraving and enamelling the numbered brass tags to be fitted to each tooth.

Can you spot the odd one out in the photograph? If you can then please email Bob at robert.wheeler757@ntlworld.com.

Bob is offering a bottle of wine as a prize for spotting his error to the winner whose name will be drawn from a hat once all replies have been received .



Numbered brass tags for the oak teeth



Bob also offers copies of his Spitfire model (left) that was on display at our STEM event if any reader would like one.

New forge blower a great success

Since reporting on progress last month, the new forge blower has been plumbed into the air feed to the tuyers and properly wired up. Some air leaks have been plugged to make full use of the air supply where it is needed.

A hole was made into the original cast iron air pipe and Charlie Rich had a hard time in doing so. The iron was about 12mm thick and the circular blade he first attempted to use was worn out before his expenses were even paid by the Treasurer! Finally the hole was made by chain drilling and the cutout piece can be seen in the photograph.



The really good news is that our blacksmiths all love the new set-up. It is quieter and delivers more air than before.

Refunds

TicketSource reports that it has now made automatic refunds to those affected by cancellation of our events.

Forthcoming events

Sunday 19 April 2020 - Combe Mill at War - CANCELLED

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

Sunday 10 May 2020 - MG Car Club Y-Register event - POSTPONED until 2021

Thursday 14 May - Board Meeting - TBA

Sunday 17 May - Barn Engines and Horticultural Machinery - CANCELLED

Saturday 13 June 2020 - Music and Beer Festival - CANCELLED

Sunday 21 June 2020 - Machinery in Steam - CANCELLED

Thursday 16 July - Board Meeting - TBA

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

Sunday 16 August 2020 - Model Engineering at the Mill - TBA

Sunday 20 September 2020 Country Crafts and Skills with Charlbury Morris - TBA

Thursday 8 October - Board Meeting - TBA

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

Sunday 29 November 2020 - Winter Market - TBA

Newcomen Society

In the light of current events it will be of interest to members that the Society has its own YouTube channel with 36 videos of presentations to the Society. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWTC7OIEZgmqmxG9UBqNrw>.

New welcome board

Terry Bailey and Charlie Rich put up our new welcome sign in time for our March steaming.

It does look good.

Many thanks to Robin Bowl and his son for making this for us.

Much appreciated.



Where to from here

A very limited number of volunteers have coordinated their tasks with Terry Bailey and will go the Mill as needed to cut grass and check around the Mill.

So let's keep in touch as best we can during this time of shutdown. Please feel to drop a line or email to let others know what you are doing to fill your spare time. The newsletter is a good place to let others know about your 'non-Mill' activities.

The newsletter will continue so please send in copy for the Editor to use.