



The Combe Dard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



June 2021

Summer has arrived and although we only had two visitors for our first open day Wednesdays, the half term Wednesday was a great success. We welcomed over twenty people and the retail stand set up for Ann and Margaret raised over forty pounds.

We now have a program of events for the rest of the year and everything to look forward to.

Open again

We have now been open to visitors for two Wednesdays in May and the half term June Wednesday and it's good to be back.

Wendy and Steve Foster now manage the Tea Room and are attracting a lot of business from members, visitors and neighbouring businesses. Wendy's cream teas are proving very popular.



Wendy preparing Blacksmiths lunches

We have rearranged storage so that the lift-up serving flap is back into use and a take away service is workable.

Tickets are being sold from the ticket office even though, to date, we have only seen two paying visitors. It was good that half term saw an increase in traffic.



Serving hatch in use again



Flowering displays

Julie Stuart-Thompson was pleased to arrange a donation of plants from Freeland Nurseries. Wendy and Steve have planted them out for us.



Pond dipping

We are fortunate to have a license from Blenheim to access Julie's Meadow and the attractive pond.

The photograph taken by Steve Page shows members of the Hanborough and Freeland Scouts enjoying some pond dipping.



Training begins

After a few false starts the training program for those operating with steam has got underway. Three streams are organised - raising steam, operating the beam engine and operating the small engines.

Sessions working with live steam will start on 9 June.

We owe thanks to Peter Trowles for struggling to arrange a mutually convenient program and to Richard Newman for his work as trainer.



First training session convenes

Good luck in your coming move

Charlie Rich has been a regular Wednesday volunteer for the last five years, but now he and Moira are moving back to the land of his birth. I'm sure that I can speak for all the Wednesday gang that Charlie's contribution to maintaining the mill has been immeasurable – you name it and he will have got involved; often providing the extra tools to get the job done. When we were putting up the new work shed, who was it that used his truck and winch to aid the removal of tree stumps, and who was the only 'idiot' that in damp weather climbed up onto the roof to help me in resolving the leak into the foreman's office WC. You guessed who.



Alan, Terry and Charlie

Charlie can turn his hand to almost anything and is always ready to help anyone, whether it is to do with the buildings or the grounds, and Richard has found Charlie invaluable on the work done in the boiler house. In addition to physically helping with on-going maintenance, Charlie was phenomenally successful with selling raffle tickets for the Christmas markets. His good humour and dry wit make him a pleasure to work with.



On behalf of his colleagues and especially from the maintenance team: Alan D; Terry M; Richard N and myself; thanks for everything you've done. I hope South Wales is ready for the whirlwind that is Charlie Rich.

Alan, Charlie and Mervyn

Terry Bailey

Getting ready for the re-opening

With the mill re-opening in June, volunteers have started a general tidy-up of the site. Charlie's swan-song has been to work with Alan and I in putting up post and rope fencing around the picnic lawn to stop children going too near to the river and stinging nettles; the latter now growing in profusion. We had a woven fence there before, but the floods earlier in the year swept over the picnic area and damaged much of it. The new fence is similar to that at the tail-race end of the site, but with stouter poles. As often the case, the tools needed to prepare the holes and bang in the posts were provided by Charlie.



New rope riverbank fencing

Work on the beam engine room has taken a back seat as Alan and I have been concentrating on the grounds and Freeland Nurseries have again kindly provided some flowering plants to brighten up the garden and troughs, for which we are most grateful. Wendy and Steve F have prepared the tearoom for our first customers and Margaret G has done a wonderful job cleaning down the outside of the tearoom of over a year's worth of dirt, dust and cobwebs. I must hold my hand up in that a lot of the dirt came about when I was pressure washing the patio.

Windows, doors, tables and chairs have been cleaned; signs have been re-instated and numerous other tasks completed, and Robin B was even let loose from forge duties to refurbish the head-race fencing with a good dosing of decking oil.



Richard N washing decking chairs

Mention of the forge reminds me that we have a new blacksmith coming

along on Wednesdays. He is Barnaby Lea, a degree student at Herefordshire College, who wants to hone his blacksmith skills over the summer. Bob K immediately set him to work on making a set of brackets to repair



Barnaby Lea assisting a blacksmith experience session

the information board in front of the head-race.

Talking of Bob K, another Bob, this time



Refurbished interpretation boards being erected by Terry B, Charlie R with guidance from Mervyn M and Robin R

Bob W has been sorting out the problems with our two drinks water heaters ready for re-opening. He discovered that the heater elements in both needed replacement but then found that the control boards had failed. To avoid interrupting tea room service, Bob and Peter H fitted a new board to the foreman's office heater but the team room is having to make use of our electric urns. A new control board is ready to be fitted to the tea room heater when a suitable time slot can be found,

As you can see, work never stops at the mill, but everyone is always ready to help each other out. If you would like to come along and help, I'm sure that we can always find something for you.

Terry Bailey

Forthcoming events

Wednesdays - Open Days - 10.30 until 16.30hrs

Monday 14 June - 18.00hrs ZOOM Board meeting

Sunday 27 June - Volunteering recruitment day - Members-only steaming event

Monday 05 July - 18:00hrs ZOOM Board meeting

Sunday 18 July - Steaming Event - Machinery in Steam

Sunday 15 August - Steaming Event - Models and Collections

Sunday 19 September - Steaming Event - Country Crafts

Sunday 17 October - Steaming Event - Wood Crafts

Rogues gallery

Tony Simmons has refurbished the photo gallery of volunteers.

They have started off in alphabetical order and contain a few silhouettes where photos are awaited.



Curryer's steamup day

We'll be holding our annual open afternoon/evening on Thursday July 8th this year. Due to the current situation it'll be a little less grand, but there'll still be plenty to see and to muck in with if you feel so inclined.

You all know the format, and as usual sunshine has been ordered for the day, so please feel free to come and share it with us (in a sensible socially acceptable manner!).

Officially it's from about 5pm, but I know some of you would like arrive earlier and make a day of it, so we'll be opening the gates about noon.

Cheers

Joe & Darren

IMPORTANT REMINDER

It is still very important to put your name in the signing-in book on arrival at the Mill every time you visit. The log book is located in the Tea Room.

WE CAN BE FINED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE