



The Combe Yard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



September 2022



We are very proud to have received the Engineering Heritage Award from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. The award was presented on 21 August 2022 during our recent steaming event by the chairman of the award committee John Wood MBE, who was accompanied by his wife Jill.

Our chairman Steve Foster made introductory remarks and welcomed our guests before handing over to John Wood.



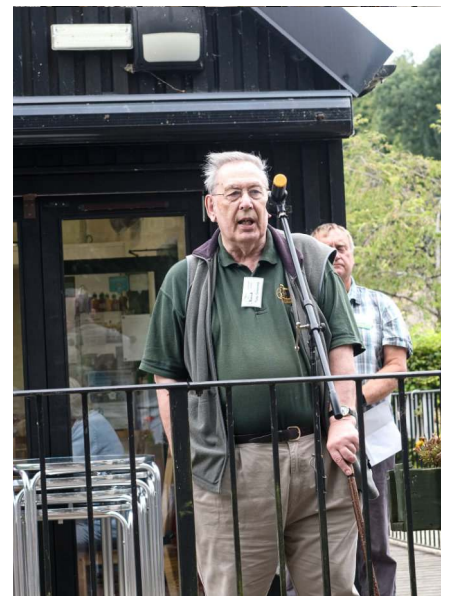
Mr Wood spoke about the history of the award which had run for 38 years. Combe Mill had made a particular impression on the awards committee because of the fact that all machinery remained in its original location, remained in working order and is well maintained and demonstrated by the society's

professional and enthusiastic volunteers. It is seen as a rare gem.

The award to Combe Mill was award number 132 to have been made.

Tony Simmons spoke about the history of the mill and wondered how surprised its original Saxon occupants would have been to learn of its future powered by steam and electricity. He emphasised the contribution of generations of volunteers whose efforts and knowledge have brought the mill to its current position of a working industrial museum.

Tony and John then unveiled the award plaque which was temporarily mounted on an easel.



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Finally chairman Steve thanked the IMechE for the award and those individuals and organisations who supported us.

Combe Mill Society trustees then gathered for a photo opportunity to mark the occasion.

Following the presentation guests were free to tour the mill and refreshments were served in the picnic area.



Colin Morris was our professional photographer for the event and Bob Wheeler and chair of the Woodstock Filmmakers, Nigel Batts recorded the event. We look forward to viewing the finished film.

Tony Simmons had been interviewed on BBC Oxford on Staurday 6 August to talk about the award.



(Photos by Colin J Morris photography)

Tony Simmons

Models and Collection steaming event

The presentation of the IMechE award took place during the afternoon of our August steaming event which was well attended by over 120 visitors.

Our August event was organised by Ron and Ann Winfield and mostly comprised exhibitors from the Witney Model and Collectors Club.

Derek Goddard displayed his marvellous scale model hydraulic powered winding engine and dockside loading crane.

We do not have a detailed report of the event and the photos below have kindly been provided by Steve Holborough who was one of the exhibitors.



Tony Simmons

Message from Ann and Ron

We would like to thank everyone who exhibited, volunteered or attended Sunday's Models and Collections Steaming Day. The day was a tremendous success with many exhibitors already asking to come back next year. A special thank you also to those who stayed behind to help pack up.

Ann and Ron

Summer BBQ - message from Steve

Our volunteer barbeque on 20 August was well attended and proved a very pleasant evening. It was lovely to welcome twenty five members old and new along with their partners.

Thanks to all who came, especially to Andy and Linda for barbequing for us!

Steve Foster

Wild Wednesdays

Throughout August Wendy Foster organised childrens' activities in the picnic area which involved an animal footprints trail and other activities provided by the Everyone's Evenlode team.

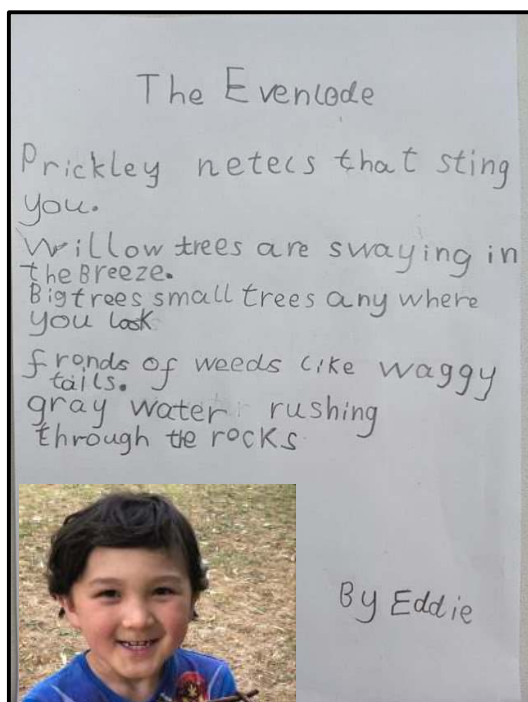
The planned pond dipping had to be changed to river dipping because the pond had dried up owing to the drought.

Activities were led by Rowan Wynne-Jones and Ben of Ben's Bushcraft helped children made willow bird feeders.



These Wednesdays proved extremely popular with visitors and children and they also had the chance to explore the mill and follow the Millie trail.

One visitor, Eddie, was inspired to write a poem.



Wild Wednesdays have brought in many families over the summer holidays. Activities have included a wildlife trail in the nature area, making Bee Ponds, making Bird feeders by weaving willow and river dipping. Thanks to Rowan and Ben from the Evenlode River project who have helped to run the activities.

The tea room has had a busy summer, especially on Wednesdays with a roaring trade in family lunches, gingerbread men and cream teas. Thanks to Nigel Evans and Peter Trowle's wife, Julia who stood in when Wendy and Steve were away.

Wendy

New signs for river bridge

Now that the footpath across Julie's meadow has been designated a permitted way by Blenheim we have changed the signs on either approach to the bridge.



We need to unlock the gate over the bridge whenever the mill is open and the new sign invites people to use the footpath.

Arriving from the field, visitors now see a notice welcoming them to the mill and advising when we are officially open.



Tony Simmons

New alarm for lift

We have realised for some time that the wireless alarm bell in the lift that sounded in the Foremans' Office was no longer suitable since stewards are not located there to hear it.

A couple of recent incidents with visitors prompted action and we now have a new system that sounds both in the Foreman's Office and in the Tea Room.

So if anyone hears a prolonged 'ringing' from either of these locations, go straight to the lift to offer assistance.



Tony Simmons

September pre-steaming briefing

We are arranging a pre-steaming briefing on Wed 7 September at 3.00pm for September's Crafts & Skills Event. This is a trial exercise, the thinking is that volunteers will know what is planned for the forthcoming event.

Margaret Gruber

Waterwheel hiccup

A few weeks ago the waterwheel came to a halt. It was discovered that one of the elm strips that line the stone breast to reduce the gap to the buckets, had become loose. Volunteers quickly took out the piece and the wheel seems to have resumed normal working.



Tony Simmons

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 7 September - Briefing at Mill for Crafts and Skills Steaming Event preparations

Thursday 8 September - 1.15pm - Carterton U3A History Group

Sunday 18 September - Crafts and Skills - Steaming Event - organiser MARGARET GRUBER

Saturday 24 September - from noon Joe Curryer's annual open day - *well worth a visit*

Wednesday 5 October - Briefing at Mill for Wood Craft Steaming Event preparations - details t.b.a

Monday 10 October - Board Meeting 7pm ZOOM

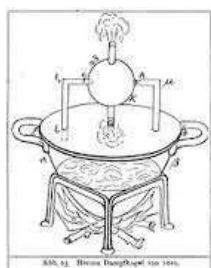
Sunday 16 October - Wood Crafts - Steaming Event - organiser DAVID KNIGHT

Wednesday 26 October - Final Non-steaming Open Day Wednesday

Sunday 04 December - Christmas Market - not in steam

Other snippets

Bob Wheeler's extensive display of hot air and steam models has recently been



enhanced by the addition of a model he has made of Hero of Alexandria's aeolipile or 'wind ball'. Thought to be the first working steam engine we use this example when demonstrating the development of the steam engine to children. The new model is powered by compressed air.



To encourage new volunteers to do wood turning, Tony Thurlby has donated a lathe which he has set up in the carpentry area of the Pattern Shop. It is being used by Mike Stockbridge who is planning to produce items for sale on our retail stall.



Tony Simmons

Stewards roster for 2022

These are the assigned duties for this season. Please arrange your own swaps.

Date	Steward	School Hol
September		
Wed 07 Sept	Colin Boyles	
Wed 14 Sept	Bob Wheeler	
Wed 21 Sept	Clive Stayt	
Wed 28 Sept	Colin Boyles	

Date	Steward	School Hol
October		
Wed 05 Oct	Julie Stuart-T	
Wed 12 Oct	Tony Simmons	
Wed 19 Oct	Colin Morris	
Wed 26 Oct	Keith Johnson	