

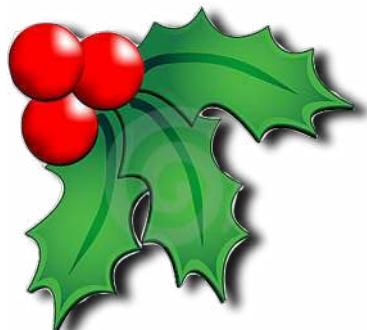


The Combe Yard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



December 2023



Additional photography by Bob Wheeler

Christmas Fayre

We ran our popular Christmas Fayre on Sunday 3 December. There was plenty of competition from other events that weekend and we did well to attract many visitors.

Visits to see Santa Claus and his helper Elves were popular and we thank Jason Gray for his part as Santa. Wendy Foster was in charge of decorating the Pattern Shop and Foreman's Office and was helped by many members in setting everything up on the previous Wednesday and Saturday.

Margaret Gruber handled the bookings for the many market stalls that attended. She and Ray Pitts worked extremely hard as usual in setting up the marquees, lighting, sound system and tables for the event. We do not underestimate the enormous effort the two of you make in putting on these events and thank you for it.

Phil Grist arranged for Blenheim to provide the Christmas Tree which was decorated to welcome visitors.

Our usual team – Andy and Linda Binks, Nic and Emily Speller – ran the BBQ selling the usual fare plus roast chestnuts and mulled wine. The Tea Room was staffed by Lorna Gale and Margaret Kahl. Both BBQ and Tea Room ran out of food by the end of the day.



Inflated cheer amongst the clocks



Tea light stands

Our carpenters and blacksmiths had worked hard to make seasonal items to sell in the Gift Shop. Tony Thurlby and Alan Burch both made wooden reindeer and the blacksmiths devised a new line in tea light holders using horseshoes as their base.

Ann Winfield ran her usual successful Tombola and also helped Margaret to create a prize hamper of donated items for raffle. Eileen Cleaver ran another raffle also made up of donated items. Gillian Oldfield helped Margaret with the Gift Shop.



Main market marquee



Alan Burch's reindeer



Tony Thurlby's reindeer



Peter Trowles presiding over the draw

Thanks also to Brenda Boyles and Marc Richmond for being our main raffle ticket sellers.

Margaret had attracted many varied prizes for our Grand Raffle with Peter Trowles conducting the draw at 3pm with his usual panache.

Running from 11am until 4pm the day went quickly and the constant rain did not detract from everyone's enjoyment.

Clearing up began that evening and continued the next Wednesday.

Well done Margaret, Ray and Wendy for being the main organisers and thank you to all those who helped before, during and after the event.

Tony Simmons



Above - various contented market stall holders

Additional photography by Bob Wheeler

Forge refurbishment update

You will recall that some months ago concern was expressed over the state of the cast iron castings comprising the blacksmiths' forge. We asked Cast Iron Welding Services to visit to survey and inspect the forge and to quote for repairs.

They concluded that the forge is not in any danger of collapse. Indeed photographs taken over the decades do not show much change.

The good news was that CIWS would be able to dismantle, transport, repair and reinstate the forge. The parts to be removed would be the hood itself and the left hand back plate. Other parts might be included if further magnetic testing on site proved it necessary.



Andy Handyside dual hearth forge

While it was good to know that CIWS could do the repair, the trouble was the expensive cost which is £43,872 incl vat. The cost of remaking a pair of tyueres is £3840 incl vat.

We have tried to find alternative repairers that could dismantle and reassemble the forge but without success. We have also tried to reduce the cost from CIWS by adjusting the scope and by negotiation but with no luck.

In view of all this, the Board has concluded that for the present we will not go ahead with repairing the forge. The blacksmiths are going to make regular measurements of the various cracks in the hearth and we will note any changes that happen.

Tony Simmons

Christmas Fayre 3rd December 2023.

I would like to send a sincere big big thank you to all the Volunteers, Friends, Stallholders and all the helpers who came along on Sat/Sun to support me with the Christmas Fayre, I just can't thank you all enough.

A thank you too, to all who donated Raffle prizes and contents for the Hamper. The Hamper was full and looked great, with 29 prizes for the Main Raffle, what a brilliant event.

The weather was not ideal, but it is December... the event was a great success with raising much needed monies for Combe Mill that will carry us through to 2024.

Monies raised that I know at this time, (Tues 5th Dec) (a summery can usually be seen in the Tea Room) Gift Shop £223.75. to include £55.00 from reindeers made by Allan ... £50.00 from Reindeers made by Tony T.... £95.50 from Blacksmiths Items.... £60.00 from the Hamper Raffle.... £45.00 from my donation Table.... £ 135.00 from the Tombola.... £287.00 from the Main Raffle with £370.00 from Stallholders.

All Raffle prize winners that were not around when the Raffle was drawn have been contacted and prizes collected.

Thank you all so much your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to you all for 2024 season.

Margaret Gruber Outside Event Organiser

Wood turning experience

We are pleased to report that we recently held our first wood turning experience session. Stuart Graves was our first customer and he was very pleased with his taster session conducted by Tony Thurlby.

One experience was recently won at the Grand Raffle draw and two more have now been sold.

We hope to sell more such experience sessions in the months ahead.

Thank you very much Tony T for making this possible with the help of Richard Edwards.



Health and Safety Policy

There is a regular need to review and update much of our health and safety documentation. This includes the biennial need to review our Health and Safety Policy. When I asked members “what it was the Policy said?” I usually met a wall of silence. This saddened me. The Policy is important to us all. All wanted to work safely and most believed they did. Few knew what this meant in practice.

There is now no excuse for not knowing. Version 8 of the Policy is available. The Policy’s aim is summarised as “Our health and safety policy is to maintain safe and healthy conditions within the curtilage of the Mill and its associated grounds”.

As members we all have personal responsibilities. We must:

- Co-operate with others on health and safety matters;
- Take reasonable care of our own health and safety;
- Ensure that any activities we are carrying out do not pose risks to others and
- Report all health and safety concerns, such as Untoward Incidents and Near Misses to an appropriate person.

If you receive your Newsletter via email you will be sent an electronic copy of version 8. If you rely on the postal system and visit the Mill regularly, we will send you a copy by post.

If you don’t receive a copy and would like one, please telephone the DRS (Tel 01865 862691).

Philip Hawtin

Volunteering explanation

When someone volunteers to help at Combe Mill we hope that you will settle in and come regularly to work with us. At the end of this time we like to invite you to become a member and to continue your work with us. Sometimes this does not happen and you would rather pay the £25 to become a Friend and simply receive our newsletters.

Recently several of you have extended this probationary period for quite some time and we will with regret be removing your name from our database.

Where does the water go?

Having written the booklet about the Beam Engine I thought that I knew most of how it worked. Except that the other day, I realised that none of us knew exactly how overflow and drain water gets from the engine to the tail race of the Evenlode. We know it passes underground but what is its route?

Now some of our long term members might know the answer and perhaps to prompt memories the following photograph was taken in the 1970s during the installation of the spoked out-rigger pulley by which the beam engine drives the line shafting. It was taken also around the time of installing the Thomas Bradford steam engine.



If anyone does know anything about the route please get in touch with Tony Simmons who will relay the information.

Tony Simmons

More photos from the Christmas Fayre



Forthcoming events - 2024

Monday 08 January - 7pm ZOOM Board Meeting

Membership fees are now due

Our membership fees remain unchanged - **Full membership is £10, Family membership is £15 and Friends are invited to donate at least £25.**

The additional cost of having a hard copy newsletter is £12.

Please remember to amend your Standing Order if you have used this method of payment.

Tony Simmons

All volunteers

If you have not already applied to become a Member or Friend of the Society, we will be taking your name off our list to receive our newsletters.

We are sorry to see you go and would welcome your feedback as to how we did not meet your expectations when first signing up.

Program of events for 2024 - not yet in place

Month		Theme	Managing
17 March			
21 April			
19 May			
16 June			
21 July			
18 August			
15 September			
20 October			
01 December			

Although the event dates for 2024 have not yet been agreed, please keep these Sundays free in your calendars.