



# The Combe Yard

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Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society

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January 2024

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## Greetings for a Happy New Year to all readers

This month's newsletter is a short one but contains the list of events for 2024 and various calls to action for help.

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## Training program

Many of you will know that after a lot of work by Nigel Events a training program is now underway to enable several members to achieve the right level of competence to raise steam and run the steam engines in time for our new season opening in March.

The program takes students through paper-based work to understand risk assessments and method statements for raising steam and running the different types of steam engine. The classroom work is soon to be followed by practical in-steam training followed by lots of practice to achieve confidence in the various operations.

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## Work Plan for 2024

There is a fresh plan of work in the form of a jobs list located in the tea room. Please take the opportunity to add any topics you think are missing so we we can begin to prioritise the work.

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## We are going to re-assign some back-office jobs

Would any of you be willing to take on one or more of the following back-office jobs currently being done by Tony Simmons.

- 1) Experience voucher clerk
- 2) Annual pass and special ticket issuing clerk

A written description is available to explain what each role entails. They are all part-time ad-hoc tasks that can be done at home.

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## New maintenance roles

The new Maintenance Plan (see member's website) refers to check lists that itemise the various items involved. Many tasks fall to the respective Head of Technical Area. Others fall outside these boundaries.

Les Allen has kindly agreed to be responsible for one such role which is for checking the various notices, photographs, artworks located in and around the Mill.

This does not include the temporary yellow road signs put out each month for our steaming events.

## Please add your name

This list of Open Day Wednesdays will soon be on display in the Tea Room.

Will everyone please choose at least two days on which they will record visitors and take money in the Ticket Office between 10.30 and 4.00 hrs as well as allowing time before and after to set up and close down the ticket office.

Should you wish to only volunteer a part day then please agree with someone else to share the slot and enter both names in the table.

Members involved with visitor-facing tasks such as blacksmiths, carpenters, retail and catering may be excused.

## Non-steaming Wednesdays

Date	Ticket Office Clerk	School Hol
<b>March</b>		
Wed 20 March		
Wed 27 March		
<b>April</b>		
Wed 03 April		
Wed 10 April		
Wed 17 April		
Wed 24 April		
<b>May</b>		
Wed 01 May		
Wed 08 May		
Wed 15 May		
Wed 22 May		
Wed 29 May		
<b>June</b>		
Wed 05 June		
Wed 12 June		
Wed 19 June		
Wed 26 June		
<b>July</b>		
Wed 03 July		
Wed 10 July		
Wed 17 July		
Wed 24 July		
Wed 31 July		
<b>August</b>		
Wed 07 Aug		
Wed 14 Aug		
Wed 21 Aug		
Wed 28 Aug		
<b>September</b>		
Wed 04 Sept		
Wed 11 Sept		
Wed 18 Sept		
Wed 25 Sept		
<b>October</b>		
Wed 02 Oct		
Wed 09 Oct		
Wed 16 Oct		
Wed 23 Oct		
Wed 30 Oct		

## Program of events for 2024

Month	Theme	Managing
17 March	Science at the Mill	Wendy Foster
21 April	Military Vehicles	Margaret Gruber
12 May *	National Mills Weekend	Colin Boyles
19 May	Mercedes-Benz Day	Richard Newman
16 June	Environment Day	T.b.a
21 July	Wildlife on the Evenlode	Wendy Foster
18 August	Models and Collections	Cliff Manion + Winfields
15 September	Crafts and Skills	Margaret Gruber
20 October	Wood Crafts	David Knight
01 December	Christmas Fayre	Nigel Evans

*Note \* Not in steam*

### Another forge commission

The house name shown on the right has been made by the combined skills of the blacksmiths as a Christmas present for Christine Maycock's husband. He is very pleased with it.

Yet another excellent piece of work by the forge team.



### Board members

A reminder that our current board comprises: Nigel Evans; Margaret Gruber; Philip Hawtin (Director Responsible for Safety); Peter Trowles (Charity Secretary); Tony Simmons (Treasurer etc); Wendy Foster.

There is no chairman at present.

If you have any interest in joining the board to manage our operations then please contact one of the board members.

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## Forthcoming events - 2024

Monday 08 January - 7pm ZOOM Board Meeting

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## 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.**

Cheques should be made payable to Combe Mill Society and posted to The Treasurer c/o Frith Cottage, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield, OX29 8EJ

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

To pay by bank transfer we are Combe Mill Society, sort code 30-19-83 and a/c# 00213458

*Tony Simmons*

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## Peter Hirst

We learnt from his daughter Pauline just before Christmas that Peter had died on 22 December after his long illness. I don't think any of us realised just how poorly he had been.

Peter joined the Society in July 2009 and was involved in virtually all projects during the long time as a member. His help was often called upon when electronics or electrical matters were involved. He was also a regular 'researcher' when we needed to identify a new item of equipment or tool - he would often find a reference in an old journal or catalogue that specified the item.



He spent a lot of time on open days in the engine room beside the Cornish boiler where he would be either be found explaining its working to visitors or polishing the brassware.



After earlier beam engine drivers such as Tony Penry and David Jones no longer came to the mill, Peter assumed the role of engine driver and was eventually elevated to Head of Technical Area.

Peter had also performed the role of our PAT tester until recently.

Even during his later illness when he needed to carry an oxygen supply, Peter was very keen to carry on to complete the 2023 steaming calendar year, which he did.

Peter was a quiet unassuming man who got on with everyone and he will be sadly missed.

We have send a condolence card to Pauline and Peter's funeral will take place on Monday 15 January at 11am at our Lady and St Hugh Roman Catholic Church, Welch Way, Witney followed by burial at Windrush cemetery and a wake at the Windrush Inn, Burford Road, Witney.

Everyone is welcome to attend all or part of the proceedings.