



The Combe Yard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



March 2024

Here we are in March at last after an exceptionally wet February. Nevertheless the preparations for our opening are well underway. There has been a training programme in full swing and proficiency certificates are being issued to members who have attended the training and met the criteria. This is great news for the Mill as we must ensure that we have succession so that we can keep the Mill up and running for years to come. The grounds team have been engaged in more indoor jobs such as painting and getting the Mill looking its best for opening.

Our first steaming will be with a focus on STEM as in previous years and particularly reflecting this year's National Science week theme of time. There will be children's science activities, a trail around the mill and a focus on our clock display too. Margaret is also working hard to ensure plenty of stalls for our spring market on that day. The tearoom welcomes back Christine after her break in Australia, so we look forward to her amazing cakes!

Our next members' meeting is on 13 March at 10am and will cover the role of HTA and plans for the steaming day. I look forward to seeing you there!

Wendy Foster

Wood turning experience

Over the Christmas period we received several bookings for wood turning experiences.

The first of the year was for Peter Kehoe who travelled from Northamptonshire.

Richard Edwards was his tutor for the session and Peter wrote to us to say how much he had enjoyed it and sent a poem he had written to remember the day.



Richard Edwards coaches Peter Kehoe

The Combe Mill wheel,
May not be turning,
Cause The 'Evenlode's' level,
Is a little concerning.

But the lathes are spinning,
The Forges still glowing,
Those ancient skills,
Show no sign of slowing.

Us amateur enthusiasts,
Can get a real thrill,
By trying their hands,
At an age-old skill.

Volunteers keep alive,
Those old traditions,
Of the industrial age,
That created Great Britain.

PK 2024

Roster for the Ticket Office

This list of Open Day Wednesdays is on display in the Tea Room.

Several of you have already put down your name for two or three slots but there remain a lot of gaps.

Please choose at least two days on which you will take money in the Ticket Office between 10.30am and 4.00pm as well as allowing time before and after to set up and close down the ticket office. Half day sessions are possible if you find someone to cover the other half.

We will now allocate names it will be your responsibility to arrange swaps.

Electrical work is underway

The first phase of changing fluorescent strip lights to LED ones has been completed in the Forge and Gear Room areas. The work was completed in two days on 26/27 February.



You will notice that there is now a single on/off switch to control all the forge lighting and we no longer have dimmable lights. The strip lights over the forge have been repositioned to give better illumination.

In the gear room there is now a strip light to better illuminate the gearing.



The next phase will be in the Engine Room. Later we will tackle the Pattern Shop
Terry Bailey is managing the project.

Volunteer needed

We urgently need a volunteer to work on the issuing of annual passes and vouchers that we give as prizes to other charities from time to time.

The task could be done at home. The processing of annual passes needs to be done during the week following a steaming event. Processing of prize vouchers is an ad hoc activity. Both tasks involve the use of the Ticketing program on a laptop and the ticket printer.

Please contact Tony Simmons or Peter Trowles if you are interested.

Mill model refurbishment

When the mill model returned from its last outing someone remarked that it looked 'tired'. The model was made in 2009 so it has lasted pretty well and a refurbishment is long overdue.

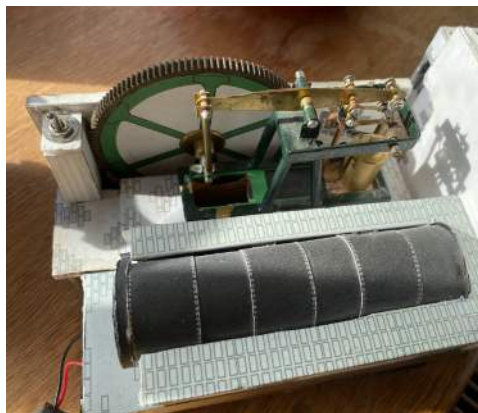
The external artwork had suffered from colour fading and this has all been replaced. The difficulty with this was the fact that the software originally used to create the work has been superseded by other products and much file conversion was involved to recreate the work. As a matter of interest there are over forty A4 sheets of 'labels' that make up the model.

As well as colour fading the model was also suffering from years of handling which had resulted in worn corners and edges, most of which were restored using glue and Pritt Stick.

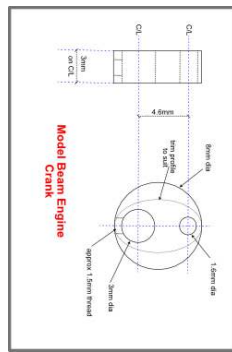
The parallel linkage of the model beam engine was broken but what was initially a simple repair turned into nightmare when the crank soldering failed during reassembling the model. My eyesight and hands are no longer what they were fifteen years ago and, even viewed through a magnifier, it is hard to make repairs.



Contemplating the task



Model beam engine



Drawing of beam engine crank



Close up work on the model beam engine

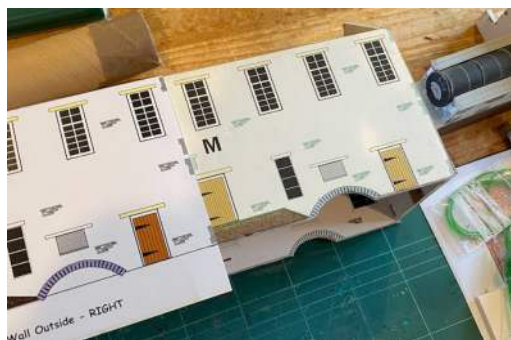
The cog that drove the model flywheel has been replaced by something more robust and a new motor. The speed of the motor is now regulated by a pulse width modulated controller which is housed with the batteries under the adjacent Cornish boiler model.

The model line shafting seemed to have survived pretty well until I realised that the red handle the children used to turn the waterwheel was slipping on the shaft and resulting in no movement. I have decided to totally remake this chassis but this will take time and the existing one will go back on display in the short term.

Also subject to fading and dust build-up, the green baize on the baseboard needed replacing which was a fiddly job but has refreshed the look of the model overall.



Mill model in pieces



New artwork on left against faded model on right

Tony Simmons

Forthcoming events - 2024

Friday 8 March - Board review of draft Action Plan - 2pm Tea Room

Wednesday 13 March - 10am Members' Briefing in Foreman's Office

Monday 8 April - 7.30pm ZOOM Board Meeting

Friday 26 April - 7pm Annual General Meeting

Date	Title	Organiser
17 Mar	Science at the Mill	Wendy Foster
21 Apr	Military Vehicles and Spring Market	Margaret Gruber
12 May *	National Mills Weekend	Colin Boyles (radio club)
19 May	Mercedes-Benz Day	Richard Newman
16 June	Environment Day	Peter Trowles/Alan Burch
21 July	Wildlife on the Evenlode	Wendy Foster
18 Aug	Models & Collections	Ann & Ron Winfield, Cliff Mannion
15 Sep	Crafts & Skills	Margaret Gruber
20 Oct	Woodcrafts and Autumn market	David Knight (tbc)
01 Dec	Christmas Fayre	Nigel Evans

- **Not in steam**

Note we are running an additional Sunday in May for the SPAB Mills Weekend

Subscriptions - last reminder

If you have not renewed your subscription then your membership will lapse at the end of this month.

Please do not wait until you come along to our first steaming event in March. **It is not possible to deal with subscription payments on the day.**

Spring Event

Everyone is now working towards being ready to welcome visitors on 17 March for our first event of the season.

Margaret has booked a good number of stall holders for the Spring Market and we hope the weather will be kind to us.

Tinkering Area

Work is going on to re-model the Tinkering Area to provide youngsters with more activities.

Wendy is working with Cliff Manion and Rose Ralphs to prepare the area.

