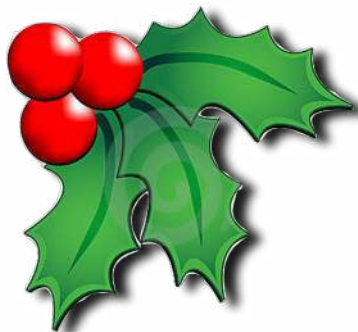




The Combe Dard

Newsletter of the Combe Mill Society



December 2022

A message from the Chairman

I would like to thank you all for a tremendous year at Combe Mill. Many thanks to the volunteers who turn out every week.

The steaming events this year have been successful in bringing in revenue to the mill and especially our most successful Christmas Market ever!

Whether you are a friend of the Mill, a Member of the Society or a Volunteer I would like to thank you for your support and dedication and wish you and your families the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

Happy Christmas

Steve

Christmas Market 4 December 2022

By Wednesday 23 November Margaret and Ray had put out twenty road-side advertising boards together with posters on lamp posts advertising our Christmas Market.

On Saturday 3 December the team of volunteers turned up to help with erecting marquees, fitting out all the Christmas lights and setting out the tables around the site. The Christmas tree donated by Blenheim was decorated with lights. Andrew set up his music system and Ray erected the flood lights around the site. Wendy and her helpers decorated the Foreman's Office to become Santa's Grotto and readied the Pattern shop route for visitors to the Grotto. A cup of tea and biscuits were a welcome end to the day.

Sunday 3 December saw the seventeen stallholders arriving to set up their colourful gazebos with help from volunteers where needed. They manoeuvred their vehicle around and set up all in very good humour. Members of the Hanborough and Freeland Scouts arrived with their leader Paul to give assistance. They

were a lovely group of children all very helpful and appreciated by the stallholders for serving refreshments from the Tea Room and encouraging raffle ticket sales.

As the market got underway at 11am we were surprised by the inrush of visitors which lasted until late morning.



Last moment preparations in Santa's Grotto - the glitter ball



Cars were parked everywhere right out to the lane, a great turn out, a big thank you to all who came along. The blacksmiths could be heard hammering in the forge – a very popular venue for visitors.

The Tea Room was run by Julia Trowles and Brenda Boyle who were kept very busy all day. Likewise the BBQ was busy and which ran out of stock soon after lunchtime. Sales from the Gift Shop were steady with lots of winners from the Tombola which offered some fantastic prizes. Handmade items from our own volunteers were on sale – wooden Christmas trees and snowmen together with laser-cut Millie badges.

A big thank you is owed to all who contributed items for raffle prizes, including the generous cash donation from Cotswold Screen Printers. Contributed items for the hamper all made for wonderful prizes.

Finally, Margaret would like to give a big thank you to all the volunteers, helpers, wives and all who participated to make the Christmas market the big success it was. Without the support of you all it could not have happened. Braving the cold weather, we should all be very proud of ourselves.

We have raised a welcome amount of money for the Mill. Thank you all again.



Tickets for the Grand Draw sold well from the table staffed by Tony, Peter and Gillian. At 3pm Peter engaged some onlookers to draw the tickets and the prize distribution began. Margaret contacted the winners that were not present and distributed the prizes - thanks Margaret.



The hamper that was filled by contributions from members was impressive, too.

Santa's workshop 2022

Santa's workshop was set up along the length of the pattern shop with lights, an inflatable Santa, Santa's post box, mice to find and a tree to decorate as well as watching the Elves at work turning trees and snowmen. The visitors then went into the Grotto to listen to a story with Santa and each received a present too.

Many thanks to the Elves who worked tirelessly all day even though it was pretty cold. Thanks to the helpers and to all who lent us lights and decorations- what a transformation. Oh, and thanks to Santa himself for giving his time at this busy season of the year!

Santa's stall also raised over £40.

The Grotto was a success due to online bookings and was almost fully booked for the eight sessions, a tremendous improvement on last year! Thanks also to the Burnside Partnership for their sponsorship.



Wendy Foster



Elf Clive was charged with caring for the mice which featured in the story telling



Thanks Everyone

Comments from stallholders Christmas Market 2022

Hi Margaret

Just a quick email to thank you so much for today . You and your team did a fantastic event and ,the cubs/ scouts were brilliant too with keeping us going with coffee and hot food if we wanted it . Again Thank you so much. I will be in touch in the new year about the other events for 2023 and please thank everyone from me for them fantastic effort .

Yours thankfully - Lynda xx



Gemma helping in the Tea Room

Hi Margaret,
What a fantastic event and my favourite Christmas market to do! Thank you so much for organising it. I would love to do some more markets next year at the steamed events. Please can you put me down for the birds, bees, bats event and the wood event. I may do some more if there's availability once I've checked my calendar for next year!
Kind regards Liz

Dear Margaret,

Thank you for allowing us to be part of the market which was very successful. We would very much like to come to the Christmas Market next year, and if possible we would like to have the same pitch placement as this year. We would also be interested to attend the Crafts and Skills themed steaming event, which I think is in September?

Crafty Boaters

Morning Margaret, you beat me to it! I was going to e mail you to thank you and the team! We had a fantastic day (despite the cold but we can't do anything about that!)
A big thank you to you and your team for making us all feel very welcome and the scouts for keeping us going with hot drinks! Everyone was on hand to help and this was one of the best markets I have done this year, not because of takings (which were good) but because how helpful and welcoming you and your team were! So a big thank you! Look forward to next year!

Vicky

Julia and Brenda ran the Tea Room



Hi Margaret

Thank you for inviting me.
The event was very well organised, and a great success so well done.
Will be in touch. All the best Tom.

Branding iron demonstration

A branding iron bearing the word 'Blenheim' has been hanging in the forge for decades. Noticing it was now residing nearer the hearth, Tony Simmons asked blacksmith Bob Kitchener to demonstrate the burn mark it was capable of making.



Care is needed to apply even pressure to get all letters to burn evenly.

It did prompt Tony to wonder if similar 'technology' could be adopted to identify volunteers by their membership number - nah!



Tony Simmons

Mill locks have changed

A key safe exists within the ground floor corridor to the lift. Only those who regularly come to the Mill to work will be told the key combination.

Whoever arrives first at the Mill needs to unlock all doors and then immediately return the key to the safe. Your present key will no longer work so please hand it back to Terry Bailey.

Thank you Nigel for doing this work for us.

Tony Simmons

Blacksmith's busy year

Senior Blacksmith Bob Kitchener reckons his team will have provided more than thirty blacksmith experience sessions this year. Since November we have taken orders for another twenty vouchers - so plenty of work for 2023.



We all should thank our blacksmiths for not only offering these one-to-one experience sessions but also for all the commissions and handmade items they produce for sale in the Gift Shop.

Fantastic!



Forge visits

The Hanborough and Freeland Scouts paid two Friday evening visits to the forge this month and enjoyed making pokers. The efforts of the blacksmiths were much appreciated.

Donations

You can donate to the Mill while you shop using EasyFundraising or Amazon Smile. Every little helps.

Thanks to those anonymous members who do donate behind the scenes - it is greatly appreciated even when we cannot name names.

Remember that Christmas is a time of giving!!!

Remembering the highlights of 2022



Nigel and Colin cleaned and repainted our Sissons steam engine



Our blacksmiths refurbished the large forge bellows



We started a new working partnership with the team from Everyone's Evenlode



We took delivery and installed a new river pump to drive the waterwheel

COVID precautions could be reduced



Margaret has expanded the Gift Shop and continued selling a wide range of Mill related items including those made by in house volunteers and blacksmiths



Wendy replaced the Tea Room tables and chairs and with Steve has continued to provide members and visitors an excellent service throughout the year



We ran several events for children including Wild Wednesdays, Teddy Bears' picnic and Pumpkin trail/carving



The IMechE formally presented us with their Engineering Heritage Award on 21 August



Peter Trowle fronted our appearance on the BBC's CountryFile program that was broadcast on 15 May

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 21 December - 2.30pm Mulled wine and mince pies in Tea Room

Wednesday 11 January - 2pm - Board Meeting re Business Plan

Monday 13 February - 7pm – Board Meeting ZOOM

Increased membership fees

Everyone is experiencing increased costs and we are no exception. Our membership fees have remained unchanged since 2013 and we are now increasing them - **Full membership is now £10, Family membership is £15 and Friends are invited to donate at least £25.**

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

Tony Simmons

Best wishes Bob

We all send our best wishes to Bob Wheeler for a speedy recovery from his recent procedure.

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 communications from us.

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.

Events for 2023

19 March		STEM	Derek/Wendy
16 April		Military Vehicles	Margaret/Ray
21 May		Barn Engines and Horticulture Machinery	Ray /Andrew
18 June		Wheels past and present	Ray/Andrew
16 July		Wildlife by the Evenlode	Wendy
20 August		Models and Collections	Ron/Ann/ Andrew
17 September		Crafts and Skills	Margaret
15 October		Woodcraft	David Knight
03 December		Christmas Fayre (not in steam)	Margaret/ Wendy
