

### **Open Days and group visits**

Despite being unable to open last April as a result of the extensive damage inflicted on the mill by the winter floods, the rest of the season was very successful. Every opening attracted a lively crowd. Particularly well attended was Heritage Day during which filming took place for a short programme subsequently shown on Sky TV. Also well attended was the last open day of the year when we were delighted to welcome members of the American Community School Cub Scouts and their parents. On both occasions, tea, coffee and homemade cakes encouraged visitors to linger and enjoy the lovely views.

The pre-booked group visits were also successful last season. These included Bookham National Women's Register, Pirbright Art Club, Cobham Free School, 2nd Hook Cub Scouts, and members of a local historical society. In all, over 150 adults and children were introduced to the mill in this way. With only one exception, it was fully operational during these visits. Due to the limited availability of suitably qualified volunteers who can operate the mill at such times, and to avoid disappointment, we recommend that a request for a group visit be made at the earliest opportunity.

### **Visit of HRH Countess of Wessex GCVO**



On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014, as part of her visit to Cobham to see the Riverhill Regeneration Project and to unveil the new Riverhill Information board, the Countess paid a short private visit to the mill. It was in operation for some of the time so that she could be given an explanation of how the machinery worked. A brief history followed. We were also able to show HRH the desperate condition of the building and its machinery before the Trust began the extensive restoration work that brought the mill back life. Sadly, protocol restricted the number of Millers allowed on the property during the visit, but a few were introduced before our guest was presented with our brochure, a copy of the DVD and a bag of freshly ground flour.

## **Board Membership**

Three members of the Board, John Ball, Mike Measures, and Mark Quinn, all Directors of long standing, retired at the 2014 AGM. All indicated their willingness to continue as volunteers. We thank them very much for their contribution over the years. Noel Ingram joined the Board in October.

### **A tribute to John Ball** *By Greta Curtis*

Many of us remember and appreciate the qualities of those involved in the restoration of the mill in the late '80s and early '90s but I would like to pay a special tribute to a very modest man who was involved from the beginning, only retiring from the Board last July. I refer of course to our dear friend, John Ball.

John specialised as a water engineer and his job took him worldwide. His technical knowledge and skills with people attracted many to join the restoration project. Research was very thorough, involving scrutinising plans and consultations with other mills. Old equipment was repaired, as were internal building structures. Problems were solved in many areas. All this was done with great patience, good humour, and much hard work. In 1993, the Mill was opened to the public and has proved a popular place for many families and children to visit.

All those involved contributed so much to the transformation of Cobham Mill, but I am sure you will join me in thanking John for the outstanding contribution he made. This was not only to the mill restoration, but also to the improvements to the environment in and around the mill and the River Mole, achieved through his close liaison with the National Rivers Authority and, more latterly, with the Environment Agency.

## **Planting Project**

As reported last year, with the agreement of the CCHT, an area bounding the mill tailrace was deliberately left in a naturally wild state. Our aim is to introduce some additional and low level planting of native riverbank species in this area and we have received some planting advice from the Environment Agency. However, flooding delayed the Trust embarking on the project last year and the need to dredge the tailrace may delay us still further, but the intention is still there!

## **Website, Membership, Subscription and GiftAid form**

This is just a reminder that Cobham Mill has its own site on the internet, with a website that is updated from time to time. If you have not yet come across it, just type 'Cobham Mill' into your browser search bar. Also please do direct friends, neighbours and visitors who are not Millers to take a look. Forms for membership, for paying subscriptions and making donations, and for signing up to GiftAid are all available via the website.

### **Newsletter – a special plea!**

As the usual gathering in March last year had to be cancelled, the Board decided to circulate this newsletter to all our members. In future, however, we intend to distribute copies only to those members who have given us their e-mail address or those who have specifically asked us to post a copy to them. To ensure that you receive your copy next year, please check that we have your e-mail address or that you have informed us that you would like a copy posted to you. The newsletter can be accessed via our website and copies will be available on our Open Days. Be assured that we will only use your e-mail address for matters pertaining to the Mill.

### **Looking ahead**

The new season lies ahead of us and I trust it will be as successful as the last. My thanks to all our hard working volunteers and to all Cobham Millers for their continued support.

Richard Ward, Chairman

Board members:

Ray Brodrick; Bob Cummings; Noel Ingram; Nita Rodd; Keith Simm; David Taylor; Patricia Ward; Richard Ward.

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