

Newsletter - March 2010

Welcome to all our Members, new and old.

Last year, it was a pleasure to see Cobham Mill continue to attract visitors of all ages from near and far. It was particularly gratifying to hear the comments of a former resident of the town who, having moved away at a time when the mill was almost derelict, had no idea that it had been so well restored and was once again grinding corn. It was good, too, to recruit new members at the Cobham Farmers' Market in April and again during Cobham Heritage Day in September. Some of our newer members have become active as volunteers.

Needless to say, the Trust cannot afford to relax its efforts. We need more subscribers to ensure that the financial future of the mill is secure. We must also increase our 'pool' of volunteers if we are to continue to open the mill to the public and preserve this important piece of our heritage. The task of looking after the mill needs to be shared amongst a greater number of people and we hope that many of you who have supported the Trust over the years will feel able to devote a few hours each year to active volunteering.

Our volunteers help to run Open Days, assist with maintenance of the grounds and become involved with the important work of repairing and conserving the mill machinery, much of which is coming up to 200 years old. The commitment can be as little as a few hours a year. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please be in contact. All contact details are included on the last page.

Looking back and looking forward

Visitors to the Mill.

In addition to the 8 open days, the Trust also welcomed a few groups for private viewings including some young people and mature students, local history societies, walkers and artists. The new parasol was a great success providing improved protection for the stalwarts at the sales table. It was particularly welcome in September, on Cobham Heritage Day, which must have been one of the sunniest and warmest of the season. The mill was open throughout the day and proved to be a very popular attraction, culminating with the annual CCHT Duck Race in which over 6000 ducks had been entered. Thanks to the generosity of the Environment Agency we were able to provide the CCHT with a new boom for the race.

The Video project.

Last year we embarked on a project to produce a 'mini' documentary to show to our visitors. We were anxious that this should achieve two things. First, we wanted to record some of the material which has been collected over the years and so provide an illustrated history of the Mill. Secondly, we were anxious to capture the reminiscences of the people who were most closely associated with the mill restoration. The Millers have been most fortunate to have

amongst the membership Mr Michael Rodd, whose expertise in developing such documentaries has been invaluable. During our Open Days this year, as an added attraction for our visitors, we hope to be showing a number of these short video presentations. Do please come along and watch them – and tell us what you think!

Over time, we hope to expand the content of these presentations to create a more complete history of the mill.

Mill Lease

Negotiations for the renewal of the lease are now in their final stages and we trust that we will have more definite news to report back to you next year.

Maintaining the Mill

Mill maintenance tasks tend to fall into three main categories and primary among these is the on-going conservation and maintenance of the mill machinery. This has included work on replacing of the old paddles and most of the starts which was commenced last year. The new starts are made in oak, which we believe will endure for longer than the elm ones that they replaced. The mill stones have been checked and reassembled. A much needed clearance of the mill tail race has been started, without which we cannot generate the power needed to drive the machinery. Additionally, some repainting of the interior has been undertaken.

Second are the emergency tasks. Last summer there were several incidents of mindless vandalism to which the Trust had to respond. This resulted in the Environment Agency replacing the original wooden fence with steel fencing. As a further precaution we are considering the installation of an active CCTV system as a deterrent to further vandalism and as an aid to the detection and possible arrest of the culprits. Also, this winter has seen the Mill building flooded on several occasions, but thankfully not to the extent experienced last year.

Finally there is the work we undertake in the areas surrounding the mill. The weather-damaged willow tree, whose fallen branches were responsible for capturing so many of last year's duck race entrants, has been heavily trimmed back by the Environment Agency. The damaged picnic table has been repaired and much of the over grown areas surrounding the mill have been subjected to a thorough tidying prior to our first Open Afternoon on Sunday 11th April. As already stated, we have made good headway with the much needed clearance of the excessive weed build-up in the mill tail race. This will be completed in coordination with CCHT's plans for River Hill, which include the establishment and maintenance of a naturalised area of indigenous riverside plants that will extend for approximately 5 metres beyond the tailrace. It is hoped that, by maintaining this as a boggy area with a gently sloping bank on the downstream side, this will continue to be deterrent to unwanted mill visitors.

We have made good use of the Surrey Probation Service, which supervises the Community Payback Scheme. We have benefitted from some excellent help. As last year, we will be employing professional contractors to help with the regular maintenance of these areas.

Changes in Board membership in 2009-2010

Last year Ken Green advised the Board that he intended to resign his board membership. However, we are delighted to report that, after a little persuasion, he has agreed to remain as a Board member for a further year. Ken, in association Mr Ad Wagenaar, has been instrumental in updating the way we maintain and manage our membership database and the Board is very grateful to him and to Mr Wagenaar.

Other matters and contact details

Group Visits to the Mill

We welcome group visits. They help to 'spread the word' about the importance of the mill to Cobham and our local heritage. So if you are associated with any group that may be interested in a visit, please encourage organisers to get in touch. (See **contact details below**)

Subscriptions 2009/10

At last February's board meeting it was agreed that the **Annual Subscription**, which has remained at £1 since the mill's first opening to the public in May 1993, should be raised to a **minimum of £2 per member** for subscriptions due on 1st April 2010 onwards. As always, any further donations you may care to make will be very much appreciated and will help considerably toward the cost of the ongoing and future maintenance the mill.

It might be more convenient for you to place a **Standing Order** with your bank. Such a method is also much more convenient for the Trust. Overleaf is a form that can be used for direct cash or standing order payments. Receipts will only be issued if specifically requested.

You can also assist the mill financially by completing the **Gift Aid Declaration**. For every pound subscribed during the past six financial years, and in the future, a further sum can be reclaimed from H M Government. But please note, **you must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the charity will reclaim for that tax year.**

Do you use e-mail?

If you would be willing to receive subscription reminders and newsletters by e-mail simply send an e-mail to membership@cobhammill.org.uk, with a note to this effect. That's all you need to do.

And finally.....

The CMPT Board would like to thank all our members, without whom the Trust's work could not continue. Special thanks go to our volunteers, many of whom have acted as guides or technicians or have manned the sales tables every year since the first Open Day in 1993. We do hope that more of you will feel like joining them in 2010.

Board members

Richard Ward : Chairman

John Ball : Maintenance / Technical

Michael Measures : Deputy Chairman

Paul Bryant : Visits and Lectures

Harold Addicott : Hon. Treasurer

Mark Quinn: Security

Patricia Ward : Hon. Secretary and Publicity

Nita Rodd: Sales

Ken Green : Membership Secretary

Keith Simm: Roster organisation

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Subscription renewal form overleaf 