



COBHAM MILL PRESERVATION TRUST

NEWSLETTER ~ SPRING 2013

Another milestone: 20 years of Open Days (May 1993 - May 2013)

On June 19th 2011 we celebrated 25 years of the incorporation of the Cobham Mill Preservation Trust as a registered charity. This coming May, we will be celebrating the 20 years since the mill was first opened to the public as the only fully working watermill in Surrey. That's 140 Sunday open days! The Trustees would like to mark this occasion with a gathering which we hope many of you will be able to attend. Details can be found on the enclosed invitation.

Board Membership. There have been several changes during the past year. In July Paul Bryant retired from the Board of Trustees including almost five years as Chairman. Fellow Trustee John Ball writes that although Paul was not a founding member of the CMPT, he has been associated with the Mill since the late 1980s. He has been much involved with the restoration work as a technician, and also in spreading the word about the Mill to groups ranging from Probus to the Surrey Industrial History Group. His knowledge of the insurance world was also very reassuring to other board members. Paul will continue as one of our volunteers.

Ray Brodrick, who has for some years been involved in the conservation work at the Mill, has joined the Board as a technician. Another new director is David Taylor, who has spent over 20 years in the charity sector, as a consultant, trustee and Charity Commissioner. He has taken over as Treasurer from Harold Addicott. Harold continues to look after the membership database, but will be relinquishing this duty later this year when he retires from the Board. For many years Harold has been an invaluable member of the Board, ensuring that the financial position of the Mill Trust has remained strong. The CMPT is very grateful to Paul and Harold for their commitment over the years, and wishes them both a happy retirement.

Website re-vamp. During last autumn, with the assistance and guidance of Richard Mulhall of Starburst Computers, we developed a fully independent and 'stand alone' website. The primary aim of this development was to minimise the confusion that frequently arose between the separate identities of the Cobham Mill Preservation Trust and the Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust. Although we have maintained the links to each other's websites, we are now separately accessible via the internet. If you have not yet come across the new website, just type 'Cobham Mill' into the search bar and there we are.

Now that we have this new 'tool', the trustees are intending to make greater use of the internet as the normal means of communication with millers. As a first step, this edition of our annual newsletter will be published on the website.

Parking close to the mill. The introduction of the double yellow lines along Mill Road causes some problems when a number of our volunteers and technicians need to park close by the mill. To alleviate this the Trustees have been trying to persuade the Surrey CC to allow us to make limited occasional use of some nearby parking in the Cedar Road/Cedar Avenue area. Despite the support of CCHT and CDRA and the intervention of Dominic Raab MP on our behalf, Surrey CC has been unable to accede to our request on the grounds that it would be necessary to amend their traffic regulation orders (TROs) and involves "an expensive and lengthy legal process". However, our request has been added to the list and will be reassessed "in early 2013".

CCHT Riverhill Project. As interested neighbours, we have kept a close eye on the CCHT Riverhill Project which, but for some final 'tidying up', is completed. The CCHT willingly agreed to our request that a strip of land, approximately five metres wide and lying immediately to the west of the tailrace, now marked with some short and unobtrusive wooden posts, be deliberately left in a naturally wild state. Our intention is to introduce some additional and low level planting of native riverbank species to provide wild life habitat. We are currently awaiting advice from the Environment Agency on the most suitable and acceptable planting.

Girl Guides. In late spring last year, we lifted and moved two previously buried old millstones and set them in the middle of the grassed area to the west of the mill. Later, the 1st Cobham Guides, under the leadership of Alison Greenwood, kindly planted a border of low growing and evergreen flowers around them. Additionally, after we had previously rotavated around the edge of the picnic area, the guides also seeded and planted this area with wild flowers. The planting around the millstones was successful despite the occasional flooding and periods of extreme heat, but alas their horticultural attempts in the picnic area were not. We shall be trying again this year.

A new family of swans. Our breeding pair of swans successfully raised a family of seven cygnets. When the cygnets first left their nest their parents seemed unaware of the dangers and some were swept over the weirs. Despite several rescues, their number was soon reduced to four. At the last count, three seem to have survived.

Membership, Subscription and GiftAid form. Our apologies to all who do not require one of these forms along with their newsletter. Although not relevant for many Millers, we still find it necessary to include this form for those who do not pay their annual subscription by Standing Order. As soon as the majority are aware of our new website there should be little further need for this because it can be downloaded and printed directly. As you will understand, a significant portion of your annual subscription (minimum £2 only) is absorbed by the production, printing, and distribution of the annual newsletter. Consequently, we propose to make greater use of the e-mail system for its dissemination.

We will continue to use current mailing system for those who are not connected to the internet. However, for all those who are connected, **please let us know your preferred e-mail address**. Rest assured it will not be used by us for any other purpose than to make contact with you regarding matters related to the Mill Preservation Trust. All you need to do is send an e-mail to info@cobhammill.org.uk with "E-mail address" in the subject line and your name, address and post code as the main text, and we will do the rest.

Mill maintenance - keeping the wheels turning. By the time you read this we should be well on the way with our winter maintenance programme. This year we have needed to do some urgent work on 5 of the 32 paddles. As far as all the other normal care and maintenance tasks on the rest of the ageing mechanical components go, there have been no major problems. So far the Mill hasn't been totally flooded despite all the wet weather. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the Environment Agency for its 'good work' in controlling the river level during the past year.

In Memoriam. We were very sorry to hear of the recent death of one of our Honorary Life Members, Richard Tully. Richard always took a keen interest in the conservation of the Mill and made some very generous financial contributions.

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

Richard Ward, Chairman

Board members: Harold Addicott; John Ball; Ray Brodrick; Ken Green; Michael Measures; Mark Quinn;
Nita Rodd; Keith Simm; David Taylor; Patricia Ward; Richard Ward.

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