

## Cowbridge Sawmill newsletter number 14 – December 2019

### PROGRESS REPORT FROM OWEN

I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work in making the September Open Days such a success. It really is great to see the Milling Machine and the Lathe being used. They added greatly to our visitor experience.

We were also delighted to welcome the Exmoor Society for a tour shortly after the Open Days and it was wonderful to have the waterwheel operational for them.

We have two more volunteers as a result of the Open Days and I would like to welcome Mike Saunders and Adam Godfrey to FORCE.

One of my greatest pleasures is to see my “junk” being restored rather than scrapped. We are now working hard on five fronts in order to have more machines running in May 2020. Martin on the Semi Auto Lathe, Gordon on the Planer/Thicknesser, John on the Grinder and Mike Saunders and myself on the Spindle Borer. Adam comes every two weeks to work on the renovation of the 1950s Crane. Don and Mary continue to successfully sell-on unneeded items in our garage sales.

Belle seems to be making a success of her business in the Forge, so is likely to continue and may even expand with an assistant.

We are looking forward to another successful Open Weekend in May. Tony, Lesley and I met two people at Simonsbath Sawmill Xmas Fayre who would like to attend with stalls of interest. One is a Spoon Carver, Peter Collins, who will demonstrate his skills and the other is a company who produce Charcoal products.

Again and sincerely very many thanks to all who keep the wheels turning here. Owen

For those of you who wonder what the volunteers do at the Mill, this picture, taken by Martin, is a reminder of the condition of the Mill basement in 2012. What an improvement today!



But we always need more volunteers and here are our requirements!



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Our featured volunteer this issue is John Johnson



John hails from Yorkshire and he served his apprenticeship as a fitter/turner at English Electrics in Lancashire, although “They spoke a foreign language”. His later experiences working on knitting machinery, dumpers and diggers and at one stage as a gas fitter/engineer have given him a wealth of expertise to draw on when working with our vintage mill machinery.

After running a pub for 5 years near Yeovil John moved to Somerset where he took up a job at Haven Holidays. There he met two of our other volunteers, Don and Lorna, who, after plying him with tea and biscuits, persuaded him to visit the Mill on one of our Mill Open Days. Since then he has been hooked and has become a regular at the Mill.

John has been our most prolific restorer of the vintage machinery. He has restored the Fire Pump, Oat Crusher, Mangold Grinder, Hand Pillar Drill, Windlass, Compressor and Mower Grinder. Some of these have proved a real challenge, with much of the machinery incomplete or scattered around the Mill. In one case John was given the wrong parts altogether! He also turns his hand to regular leat clearance and guiding on our Open Days.

A quiet man, of many talents, John simply says of his Mill work “It helps to keep me off the street! “ ..... For which we are very grateful.

Future Events: National Heritage Days

**COWBRIDGE SAWMILL**

**OPEN DAYS**

**Sat 9<sup>th</sup> and Sun 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Open 11am to 4.30pm each day

Guided Tours and Displays throughout the weekend. Refreshments available.

***Free Admission but donations welcome.***

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We continue to hold tours for local groups, all free of charge - although a donation is always welcome! If you are a member of a group which would like a tour, or would just like to see how things are progressing yourself, please contact Owen Rush on 01643 841744  
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The Yarn Market Hotel is willing to give all Mill visitors a 10% discount off their accommodation booked directly with them which **MUST BE CLAIMED** by saying **COWBRIDGE MILL 10% DISCOUNT**. The hotel would also give 10% to Cowbridge Sawmill so if you have the Mill weekend down on your calendar for a visit, why not give them a call. Bookings can be made by email [hotel@yarnmarkethotel.co.uk](mailto:hotel@yarnmarkethotel.co.uk) or by phone to 01643 821425