



# Combe Mill

## Forward Plan

To be superseded by the Society's Business Plan which will cover accreditation matters – Feb 2012

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## Museum Details

Name of museum	Combe Mill
Name of governing body	Combe Mill Society
Approved by governing body on:	xx March 2010
Policy is due for review by:	31 August 2010

### ***1. Museum's statement of purpose***

The objects of the Combe Mill Society are:

- (a) to advance the education of the public by the operation of Combe Mill at Combe, Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire, demonstrating, recording, preserving, practising and disseminating the whole range of skills in the construction, maintenance, operation and associated activities of water- and steam-powered mills, along with items directly associated with Combe Mill, the Blenheim Estate and Oxfordshire.
- (b) to research, establish, restore, maintain and equip Combe Mill to demonstrate, improve and teach the design, construction, operation and use of water- and steam-powered mills for the purpose of the education of the public, together with the dissemination of the results of any research conducted and to carry out works for the improvement, development and promotion of Combe Mill.

### ***2. Existing collections***

Combe Mill was once the powered workshop and blacksmiths' forge within Combe Yard that served the Blenheim Estate until the sawmill and yard were closed in 2000.

The workshop building occupied by Combe Mill museum is the original two-story Victorian building.

The internal machinery of Combe Mill is complete and includes a rare surviving example of 1852 A-frame steam engine with Cornish boiler and fuel store connected by line shafting to the rear room (workshop) where there are bellows and a mid-C19 forge and grinding wheel (whetstone), and upstairs to the mid-C19 wood lathe (and band saw). Dual-drive water wheel to rear with 1926 breast fed 'Poncelet' style water wheel.

The Mill was listed at Grade II\* for its complete and working set of machinery including the 1852 beam engine and boiler, line shafting and gearing, forge and lathe, which altogether is a rare survival of importance in a national context, and of interest as an originally dual-powered mill whereby water or steam power could be used depending on the water supply. It is also architecturally distinguished externally and has historical and group value within the Blenheim Estate.

As well as the artefacts and craftsmen's tools that belonged to the premises when the Combe Mill Society began restoration in the mid 1960s, some further items and collections have been acquired as gifts or permanent loans in the following years.

In particular the collections in Combe Mill comprise:

- Stationery steam engines showing the development of such

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- Historic church tower clocks (all working)
- Combe Yard ledgers dating from mid 1800 until approximately 1930
- Trade catalogues for materials purchased for the development and maintenance of Blenheim Estate.
- Shoe and boot maker's tools and patterns
- Blacksmiths' tools
- Wheelwrights' tools and patterns
- Domestic artefacts
- Carpenters wooden tools

NOTE: All machinery and clocks are in working order and demonstrated to the public.

### **3. Policy review procedure**

The Forward Plan will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every six months for the first two years of the accreditation process. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

### **4. Forward Plan**

This Forward Plan is a living document that defines the programme adopted by Combe Mill Society in the first instance to achieve accredited status for the Combe Mill Museum.

The steps listed below should not all be considered as sequential activities – some parallel activities will be undertaken if adequate volunteer resources can be identified.

The key steps are:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | Appoint a Curatorial Adviser who will steer the accreditation process;  |
| Step 2 | Get feedback on the process by engagement with other small museums through the membership of the Oxfordshire Museums Council;                             |
| Step 3 | Seek external funding to buy a laptop computer and the collections management software (MODES) recommended by the Curatorial Adviser;                     |
| Step 4 | Prepare and agree a Forward Plan for Combe Mill Museum;   |
| Step 5 | Assign dates for completion of key stages of the Forward Plan   |
| Step 6 | Educate the Society membership on the issues and consequences of becoming a 'museum' through the media of the Newsletter and informal discussion;         |
| Step 7 | Prepare Policies to govern all museum processes (see list of priorities);   |
| Step 8 | Complete Object Entry Forms for machinery, tools, artefacts, documents and collections (see priorities). File these to form the Inventory. Label objects; |
| Step 9 | Meet at regular intervals to assess the Object Entry Forms to determine which objects shall be accessioned or otherwise;                                  |

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- Step 10 Enter selected object details into the Accession Register. Permanently mark objects;
- Step 11 Evaluate the effectiveness of how objects are interpreted to visitors and define/take corrective actions;
- Step 12 Prepare procedures that support museum policies

### **5. Priorities for Collections Management**

The priorities for various steps are defined in this section.

#### **Prepare Policies – Step 7**

Trustees will prepare museum policies with the following priorities in mind.

Priority		Policy	Completion Target
1		Forward Plan	
2		Acquisition and Disposals Policy	
		etc	

#### **Completion of Object Entry Forms – Step 8**

Completion is defined as: filling in a form for each object or collection;  
photographing each object and collection;  
filing the above in the Inventory folder.

Priority		Activity	Completion Target
1		Fixed objects (e.g machines, clocks);	
	a)	Machines	Aug 2010
	b)	Clocks	Aug 2010
2		Collections of tools and artefacts that are known to belong together and for which a volunteer 'owns' the information relating to them. Entry Forms for individual objects within each collection will be carried out over a longer timescale.	
	a)	Carpenters' tools collection	Oct 2010
	b)	Shoemakers' tools collection	Oct 2010
	c)	Wheelwrights' tools collection	Oct 2010
	d)	Blacksmiths' tools collection	Oct 2010
	e)		
	f)		

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Priority		Activity	Completion Target
3		Combe Yard journals and work related documents;	Nov 2010
4		Old photograph collections – hard copy and digital images	Dec 2010
5		'Loose' tools	
	a)	Forge area	Mar 2011
	b)	Workshop wall hung	May 2011
	c)	Engine room – all	July 2011
	d)		
	e)		
6)		Individual items within collections	
	a)	Carpenters' tools	Oct 2011
	b)	Shoemakers' tools	Oct 2011
	c)	Wheelwrights' tools	Oct 2011
	d)	Blacksmiths' tools	Oct 2011

### Assessment of Objects – Step 9

Trustees will meet to categorise objects on the second Thursday of each month.

At each session the following order of priority will be adopted in prioritising the work.

Each session will be facilitated by the Curator (designate).

Priority		Category of Objects	Completion Target
1		Fixed objects (e.g machines, clocks);	Sept 2010
2		Collections	Nov 2010
3		Documentation	Dec 2010
4		Photographs	Jan 2011
5		'Loose' tools	Sep 2011
6		Individual items in collections	Dec 2011

## **Accessioning of Objects – Step 10**

Once the Trustees have identified those objects to be accessioned the information and images contained by the Entry Form for each object will be entered into the Accession Register database (MODES).

The priority by which this activity is done will be driven by the output of the assessment sessions defined for Step 9.

## **Interpretation of Objects – Step 11**

As information about objects is collected the posters used to inform visitors will be re-examined for completeness and the content transferred electronically to form part of the object record.

Consideration will always be given to relating objects having related purposes into a collection which can form a theme concerning some aspect of the history of the Mill or the local community.

## **Prepare Procedures – Step 12**

Procedures that implement museum policies will be prepared, reviewed and implemented as follows:

<b>Priority</b>		<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Completion Target</b>
1		Safety Risk Assessment	
2		Building Environment Condition Assessment	
3		Building Security Assessment	
4			
5			