

COMBE MILL Industrial Museum

On a warm sunny day, a group of us set off to visit Combe Mill a restored and working industrial museum on the Blenheim estate.

We arrived at the mill to be greeted by the mill workers with coffee and cake which was appreciated by us all,

We were then divided into two groups, one to have a talk about the history of the mill, and the other a tour of the mill.

The mill is very old and mentioned in the Domesday Book, and eventually it became part of the Blenheim estate as a working saw mill, where skilled workers were making the materials to maintain the farm and buildings, and also fencing posts, gates and hinges, along with doors windows and fire places for the estate houses.

After lunch we swapped over and toured the mill. It was interesting to see a breast shot water wheel and to stand and watch the water running onto the old restored wheel which provided all the power for the mill.

Next, we visited the forge where we watched two men working, and wondered how they stood the heat on such a warm day. There was a display of historic tools and machinery to see, and a rare beam engine that drove the line shafting to transfer the power to the machinery.

Upstairs there was a wonderful collection of ancient church clocks and a guide who explained the various ways they worked. There was also an extensive collection of model stationary steam engines with plenty of people to explain details of how they worked and how they were built.

Everywhere we went Millie the wooden black and white cat was waiting for us.

This was a very interesting trip which, listening to talk on the coach everyone enjoyed, we must thank Colin and Dawn for organising this trip.

Wyn Ludlow