

15 July 2010

### **Heritage Lottery Fund awards development grant to Combe Mill**

Combe Mill Society has been awarded a development grant of £72,700 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) it was announced today.

The money will be used at Combe Mill to conduct surveys, explore effective ways of interpreting the Victorian industrial and social heritage to a wider audience and to estimate the cost of conserving the building. Ways to improve visitor access will be looked into and specialists will examine how to repair the original Cornish steam raising boiler.

The HLF first-round pass\* means that the Combe Mill Society can now progress to the second stage of the HLF application process. The project will start immediately and lead to an application early in 2011 for the full £626,000 of HLF support that they are seeking for their project.

Commenting on the importance of this award, Combe Mill Society chairman Tony Simmons said "Receiving this grant is great news for all volunteers, local councillors and visitors to Combe Mill who have long recognised the importance of saving this hidden gem of industrial history for the enjoyment and education of future generations. As well as starting the development work leading to the round 2 funding application we must also now start serious fundraising to generate matching funds for when the real job of restoration begins next year."

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the South East said: ""We look forward to hearing from the Combe Mill Society on their detailed proposals for restoring this historic building, and developing its use for the benefit of the local community."

**- ENDS -**

For further information, please contact Tony Simmons 01993 891851

Note for Editors:

#### **Combe Mill Society**

Combe Mill Society began restoring the Mill in the late 1960s and has held occasional public steaming events each year since the mid 1970s. The Society has recently signed a 35 year lease on the Mill that gives it security of tenure that grant bodies need when considering funding applications. The Society totally depends on income from their open days to generate income to maintain and operate the industrial museum. For more details see [www.combemill.org](http://www.combemill.org).



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Until it was taken out of service in 2005, the original Cornish boiler was the oldest working example in the world of this type still operating in situ.

Combe Mill was once the powerhouse and workshop of the Blenheim Palace Estate sawmill. The building is located in what was known as Combe Yard being the Estate's original maintenance base. The other Grade II listed buildings within Blenheim Palace Sawmills, as the yard is now called, have been converted into office accommodation and storage use but Combe Mill remains as it was in the 1950s when the building became redundant.

### **Heritage Lottery Fund**

**\*A first-round pass** means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.'

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK. Website: [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)