

Chedham's Yard Supporters' Newsletter **September 2014**

We would like to thank you for registering to receive news about the Yard.

It has been a busy year so far working towards being totally volunteer-led which commenced in July. Without the support of the full time staff it is fair to say we have encountered a few challenges but these have been managed and given us an insight on how to operate in the future.

Activity at the Yard

Wheel Repairs

The wheels from the tip cart the wheels were removed in January and taken to Acton Scott in Shropshire – as we mentioned in our March issue - where replacement parts were made. The wheel parts were returned to the Yard in June and the wheels re-assembled on site.

Shaping the Spokes

This picture shows a spoke being shaped at the Yard. Guide lines are marked on the blank which is then hand-worked using a plane and spoke-shave to give the required profiles.



Initial shaping with a plane



Finishing with a spoke-shave

The spoke blank is held between two supports and turned around so that each face can be worked. Once the profiling is complete, the tenons are cut on the ends so that they can fit into the mortice apertures in the hubs and felloes – rim segments.

Tyre Fitting

The iron tyres were refitted at the Yard. The diameter of the iron tyre and the wheel are carefully measured and the tyre adjusted so its circumference is about 1" less than that of the wheel. The process involves heating the tyres in a wood fire to about 800°C which causes the tyre to expand and then placing it onto the wooden wheel. Some localised charring inevitably occurs but this has the benefit of burning away any high spots. Once in place the tyre is cooled by pouring gallons of cold water over the completed wheel. As it contracts, the wooden wheel joints are squeezed tightly together producing a strong and stable wheel.

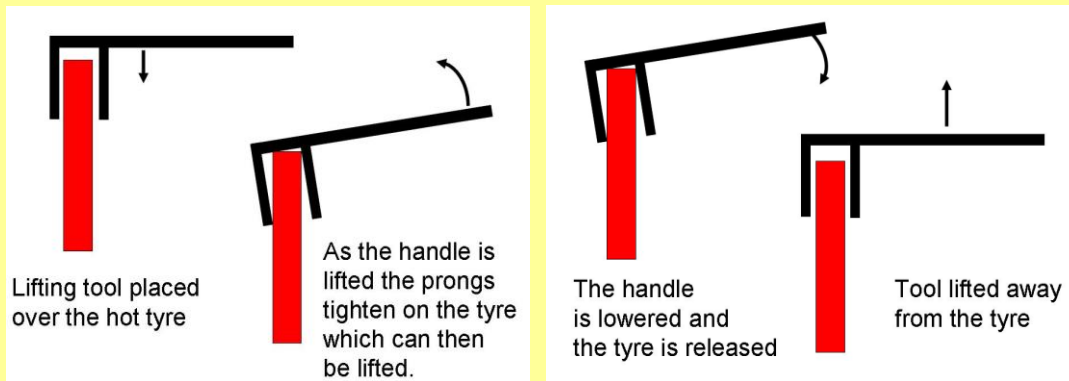


Heating the iron tyre to about 800⁰ C



Dropping the hot rim onto the wheel and Cooling the tyre with cold water

The wheel building and tiring days at the Yard were a success, they were visually impressive and attracted additional visitors. The days were made more interesting by the two wheelwrights from Acton Scott who carried out the work by providing, a sometimes humorous, commentary on why and what they were doing!



The hot tyre is handled with simple claw like tools from which the tyre can be dropped onto the wheel.

Work on the cart is an ongoing project, one of the cross beams between the shafts has rotted and is being replaced, this will stabilise the shafts, Stephen England is supervising the work

Following the successful re-tyring of the wheels and the shaft repairs, the wheels have been refitted leaving to the cart with work on the body still to be done. The old paint will be stripped off and the woodwork refurbished where necessary and then repainted. We want to show the stages of cleaning and repainting so that visitors can see what work has been done This work is planned for the closed winter period of 2014-15.

Straking Pit

The strakes – tyre segments, are heated and applied hot to the wooden wheel, nailed in place and then ‘cooled’ in the water at the bottom of the pit. As with a full tyre - the contracting strakes pull the wheel tightly together to give a strong rigid assembly.



Wheel in the Straking Pit with loosely attached strakes

Cart Jack

When the wheels were removed and replaced on the cart a simple, quick action, wooden jack was used. It consisted of an upright post and a long beam pivoted on the post. No hydraulics here. To lift the cart, the jack was placed under the axle and the pressure applied by hand to the handle to lift the cart. The principle being - identical to that used in Formula 1 today. The two fitters showed that despite the age of the cart with the technology, the wheels could be removed very quickly, perhaps not to F1 standards but certainly a lot quicker than using screw / hydraulic car jacks.

We have been fortunate in attracting a young person to the team. James (Jamie) Parker from Leamington expressed an interest in having a project for the summer vacation and has been mentored by Stephen England to make a replica 'quick lift' carriage/cart jack. This is based on the jack used by Acton Scott when the cart wheels were removed and replaced at the Yard. Photos, which included a calibrated gauge, were taken and then scaled drawings produced.

The jack will be on display at the Yard alongside the cart when it is complete. The project is giving Jamie an insight into engineering drawing coupled with practical work to convert the drawing into hardware – using the very hard-wearing wood – oak.



Quick Lift Wooden Jack

Drying Shed

Last winter saw a reorganisation of the Drying Shed where the wood was stored after being cut into planks ready for the wheelwright. This winter more work will be carried out in the shed with the intention of adding additional exhibits. During the year we cleaned out the straking pit and added a straked wheel to show an alternative tyreing system to that used for the cart wheel assembly described above.

Art at the Yard

A local artist visited the Yard last year and then went on to produce an oil painting of the Blacksmith's workshop. The painting received excellent reviews at a recent Coventry Art Festival.

We have received permission from the artist, Mrs. C Chandler, to sell prints of the painting and we can now offer these as mounted prints to visitors. The prints can be seen in the Visitor Centre.



The Yard has also been given a large photograph of the forge and again we hope to be able to negotiate with the photographer to be able to offer prints for sale.

This year we have been able to offer two booklets covering the Blacksmiths' activities and how these relate to the farming community. These are based to some extent on the author's first hand experience. Copies of the booklets are available in the Visitor Centre.

Open Studios

The 'Open Studios' event in July attracted almost 200 visitors with four local artists displaying their crafts, all items on show were available to buy. These ranged from the traditional ceramic to the quirky.

The artists were - Sue Lindon, Amanda Glanville, Roz Ingram & Jacky Mahony.

Roz Ingram – Whilst studying at University Roz became involved in ceramics and now works as a freelance artist working with schools and community groups. She works from home and is also a member of the 'Gallery at the Guild' based in the old silk mill at Chipping Campden where you can find up to 25 local artists.

Amanda Glanville – Amanda's interest lie in glass work and she focuses on glass beads and produces some interesting objects which include jewellery and ornaments. She is Coventry based with a studio in Solihull but is now setting up a home facility. Amanda has been working in this medium for many years and has considerable experience and skill. She too is associated with the Gallery at Chipping Campden and has also displayed her work at a 'pop up' gallery in Stratford upon Avon and demonstrated/exhibited at the esteemed Oxfordshire show Art in Action this year.

Sue Lindon – based in Stretton on Fosse. Sue attended a pottery workshop at Stratford College and became hooked on potting and has worked with porcelain and stoneware for 8 years. She has her own studio and kiln and exhibits her wares along with other potters at locations around the area.

Jacky Mahony - Contemporary Studio Ceramics. Jacky makes wheel thrown and hand built stoneware and porcelain ceramics for use in the home and garden.

A selection of the items on display are shown below.



The Web Site

We changed the web site design at the beginning of the season but unfortunately we are still finding minor and irritating glitches. We are working with the web designers to iron out the problems. During recent weeks many pictures have been added to the 'Gallery' section of the web site, these cover most of the significant events of 2014, to date.

The booking page has also changed to recognise that it is **no longer necessary to pre book.**

Group Presentations

Group presentations continue to be popular with a wide range of groups in the Midlands area, these are given by Heather Cox, David Close and Charlie Gilbert. We have had a few technical problems with the technology which has now been replaced by new state-of-the art equipment.

If you know of a group who may be interested in having a presentation please ask them to contact us at the office. This is now an unmanned phone but we will return calls within a few days.

Shows and Exhibitions

On 16th May we participated in the Warwick Museum's 'Show and Tell' event in the Town Centre, Market Square. This was followed by the Village Street Fayre and Walton Fete. All were well attended and the stalls attracted a lot of attention which resulted in many people visiting the Yard.



Our Stand at Warwick

Schools and Scouts

Francesca, our learning development officer has worked hard to develop a learning programme for the schools and has engaged with the Scouts and other groups to enjoy



what the Yard has to offer. The schools programme is now up and running and will form part of our activity in the future. The work has provided a sound base from which to move forward. The activities are focused on supporting Science and Design and Technology Curriculum for key stages 1-2 of the National Curriculum.



The Scouts and their carts

Going Forward

We are now entirely Volunteer run and we are responsible for how the Yard moves forward including setting our objectives and vision for the future.

This is something which the Trustees take very seriously and are working hard to get everything in place for next year. Until the end of 2014 we are still involved with the Heritage Lottery Fund and have a few details to put into place before we get the 'sign off'.

**Please watch the web site for event announcements.
With pre-booking *no longer* a requirement - feel free to drop in and see
how the Yard is moving on**

**We would be delighted if you'd like to become a Volunteer – so please do
make contact via the e-mail address, as below.**

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