

**Chedham's Yard**  
**Supporters Newsletter No 5**  
**July 2020**



Welcome to the fifth Newsletter from Chedham's Yard for 2020.

Following the current Government announcements and guidelines we have had to reconsider if / when it would be safe to re-open the Yard, taking into account the physical size and layout of the premises.

Reluctantly we have come to the conclusion that with the coronavirus still very much out in the community we cannot safely open the Yard during 2020. The only exceptions may be the Halloween and Christmas events in October and December. We will review the situation in September, by which time we may have better understanding of the risks.

If we do decide to open for these events we will let everyone know.

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, commercial and the hospitality businesses have all been affected. Even with the relaxing of the lockdown restrictions smaller premises like Chedhams Yard cannot meet the government guidelines in terms of social distancing and it is primarily for this reason that we have decided not to open during this turbulent period.

We now plan to reopen the Yard on Easter Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021. We will have a full programme of events for the season.

### **New Equipment**

We have been given a large circular wooden table and chairs for use outside, this is in sound condition but will need some minor restorative / preservative work. When in use it will be sited on the gravel area alongside the visitor centre / café

A new spinner wheel has now been fitted to the seed fiddle which will be on display during 2021.

The original spinner wheel has been mounted inside a small display box.



Our refurbishing focus now turns to the **shandy barrow seed drill** and the **treadle grindstone** both of which still need a lot of work.

The shandy barrow has been partially dismantled and a few new parts have been made to replace those which were beyond repair.

The grinder poses a different set of challenges.

The grinding wheel itself has cracked radially probably due to corrosion of the spindle which has exerted a lot of pressure from the centre. This can be repaired.

The spindle needs to be removed and the wheel clamped back together and bonded using a high performance epoxy.



The main body of the grinder is comprised of two cast iron side plates and a sheet steel panel between the two which then forms the water trough.

The cast iron parts are in very good condition but at least 50% of the steel panel has rusted away and will be replaced. It is hoped that this can be done without dismantling the body which is held together with 5 long bolts. Surprisingly all the nuts could be moved so it has been possible to remove the ancillary parts, clean and repaint them ready for reassembly. We hope to be able to return the grinder to a usable condition ready for 2021.

We have also renovated the **push hoe** which we have on loan.

The hoe is a Planet Junior of American origin and was used for hoeing between rows of crops. It was claimed that it was 10 times more efficient than a man with a single hand hoe. The hoe dates from at least the 1930s.

Other attachments were, and still are, available including harrowing tines and a plough shear.



## **TWAM**

During the year we have been given various boxes of tools which we will be passing on to TWAM for use overseas in Third World countries. If you have tools you no longer need we will accept them on behalf of TWAM.

Give Eric a call on **01789 555678** to arrange a handover date, time and location.

## **A Potential film /TV location**

The yard has many unique features and we have tried hard since the Yard was opened in 2012 to become recognised as a potential filming location.

To date we have only had one film crew and they behaved very badly arriving early and very noisily one Sunday morning. They would not tone down their noise which understandably upset the neighbours.

## **A Shooting 'planned' at Chedhams Yard**

At Chedham's we had a recent enquiry about using the yard as a shooting location for a popular TV series.

They were looking for a genuine 1950s style workshop as the backdrop within a few minutes' drive from Moreton in Marsh. The initial visit by the location's director was encouraging but they also needed a nearby woodland area which unfortunately we could not provide. We are still waiting for feedback.

Even if we are not selected for this we are now recognised by the BBC as having something special to offer so there is always hope for the future.

We discussed our previous problems with a film crew and we were assured that if the site were to be used the BBC film unit would contact all local households and would make sure that no one was inconvenienced in any way.

## **An overview of what should have been happening for the remainder of 2020.**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Aug Willow Weaving with Avril Smolders.**

Avril Smolders a well-known local and experienced willow weaver had planned to return to the Yard

There was a time not so long ago when, if you needed a basket or other small container, you would make it from the material available in, or next to the water ways, local fields and hedgerows. Willow was a popular material due to its flexibility.

Avril will be explaining and showing how to make baskets and other objects using willow. There will be a range of willow items for sale.

In the wetland areas reeds were often used to make baskets instead of willow.



### **8<sup>th</sup> Aug Honey Bees and their Hives with Liz and Steve Bates.**

Steve and Liz Bates are beekeepers from nearby Combrook who were returning to the Yard to talk about honeybees, which are fundamental to our survival. They are highly efficient pollinators and the farmer's friend.

Steve and Liz were looking forward to talking with visitors about the bees, beekeeping, honey and other hive products.

There would also have been the opportunity to roll a beeswax candle or two for which there was a small charge.

Whether you are planning to keep bees or just find them interesting, this was an opportunity to learn more about these fascinating creatures.



## 15<sup>th</sup> Aug The Wellesbourne & District Lions

The Lions is worldwide charitable organisation whose volunteers raise funds and support a wide range of local causes.

Ordinary people delivering amazing things which often goes unheralded.



The Wellesbourne Branch provides financial support for people in need and groups within our community and beyond.

This would have been the opportunity to talk to the team at the Yard and learn more about the Lions and how you can become involved. New members are always welcome.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug Children's Craft Workshop with Debbie

Debbie was returning to the Yard this Saturday to lead the children of all ages in a range of fun crafting activities and having fun with paper, card paints and glue. There was no charge for this activity and would have been a great event for the children whilst mum and dad enjoyed the cakes and drinks..

## 29<sup>th</sup> Aug The plight of the farm labourer in the mid to late 1800s

Steve England who has a wealth of local historic knowledge was looking back at the hardship amongst the farm workers while landlords wanted more work for less money. Improved farming practices and early mechanisation also played a part. Some families were evicted from their tied homes with nowhere to go.

Inevitably some found themselves up in front of the local justices, often the very people who were creating the problems.

They needed a spokesperson who could coordinate their activities and bargain for a better deal. They found such a person in **Joseph Arch** who was initially a hedge layer working around the local farms.

He came to the forefront when, in 1872, he organised a rally of the down-trodden farm labourers. Reports state that 2,000 labourers turned out for the meeting in Chestnut Square, Wellesbourne in spite of various attempts by the land owners to sabotage the meeting.



The result was the formation of the Farm Labourers Union with Joseph Arch as their leader. He went on to be an MP and a friend of Edward VII. This would have been an opportunity to learn more about him and the plight of the farm workers through pictures and records and by talking to Steve England.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sept Patchwork and Textiles

Jane Cobbett had planned to return to the Yard with a display of Vintage Patchwork from her Educational Quilt Collection which would have been displayed throughout the garden and buildings. There would have been some items for sale.

Patchwork and textiles are an interesting subject, we hope to be able to book Jane again for 2021

## 12<sup>th</sup> Sept Sketching with Audrey

Audrey Sibert is an accomplished local artist who teaches art from her studio on the Dovehouse Estate in Wellesbourne.

Whether you already enjoy sketching or haven't tried to draw anything for ages, this was to have been a good opportunity to be surrounded by interesting objects in the old workshops or amongst Autumn colours in the garden and to see what you could do.

Audrey would have been guiding and suggesting ways that your pictures could be improved either by content or the use of light and shade etc.



Even if you had come away with just a few abstract squiggles, you would have spent a pleasant time focussing on the sights and scenes in the tranquillity of the Yard and its variety of unusual artefacts.

Basic sketching materials would have been provided.

If you want to know more about Audrey give her a call or send an e-mail to [audrey.sibert@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:audrey.sibert@hotmail.co.uk) alternatively we will forward your question to her.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sept Heritage Open Day

This is a nation-wide festival supported by the National Trust and the theme was **Hidden Nature.**

This was to be an opportunity to learn more about what is all around us but hidden from view and affecting our daily life. Do you know how many insects and other creatures are living in your garden or window box?

How does the moisture from the ground reach the top of tall trees this, and many other aspects that we take for granted would have been explained.

Heritage Open Day will happen again next year but at this stage we are not sure what the topic/theme will be.

## **26<sup>th</sup> Sept Tying with Robin Hill**

This would have been another chance for visitors to see the whole process of fitting a new metal tyre to a wooden wheel from fixing the wheel to the platform, heating the metal tyre (rim) and then fitting the red hot tyre to the wooden wheel.

This is a very visual process which provides many photo opportunities. Due to the risks and the location of the tying platform visitor numbers have to be restricted.



We hope to be able to re arrange this event for 2021

## **31<sup>st</sup> Oct Halloween and Pumpkins with Debbie and Andy**

This free fun event has been running for several years and has always attracted a lot of children who are keen to carve their own designs on the pumpkins aided by Debbie & Andy. Children are encouraged to dress up in their scary costume for the event to add atmosphere.

Like all the other events this year it has been cancelled but will be reinstated for 2021.



## **12<sup>th</sup> Dec Christmas at Chedhams**

This should have been the final event for 2020 with carols and songs by the wood stove, Christmas cheer, cakes and mince pies plus Father Christmas in his grotto and a selection of unusual gifts on sale which had been made at the Yard.

Unfortunately event this will not be taking place but Santa will be back next year.



## **2021**

We have already started planning for next year 2021. On all open days there will be demonstrations by our own wood turners and blacksmiths demonstrating the processes used in the past. Each Saturday there will be a different theme plus guided tours, refreshments and items for sale that have been made in the Yard. The on site staff will be happy to discuss any aspect of the Yard.

It is a special year for the team at the Yard and all who have been associated with it in so much, that it will be **20 years** since the Parish Council bought the yard and set up the Trust to renovate and run it.

During the early years Bill Chedham, who was the last member of the family to work at the Yard, was very involved in the archaeological work and helping to explain how the Yard operated. Bill stayed with the project through to it's opening, which he attended in July 2012. Sadly he died a shortly afterwards.

We hope to have a full programme of events and to be able to rebook some of those who were planned for 2020. Some have already indicated their willingness.

### **Presentations to Groups Clubs and Societies**

Most of the presentations booked for 2020 have had to be postponed, some have already been rescheduled for 2021. The team at Chedhams will be resuming the talks from January 2021. If you would like someone from the Yard to give a talk to your group/club/society then e-mail Eric on [e.lawley@ntlworld.com](mailto:e.lawley@ntlworld.com) or give him a call on 01789 555 678.

### **Volunteers**

The Yard is run entirely by volunteers and working as part of the team is both challenging and rewarding. If you have a few hours free and are looking for a new venture, then why not become part of the Chedhams team.

### **Additional Information**

For more information on any aspect relating to the Yard call us on 01789 842770 or 01789 555678 and leave a message or e-mail Eric on [e.lawley@ntlworld.com](mailto:e.lawley@ntlworld.com)

## Programme of Events

### Free Entry on Saturdays

#### Opening Times 11am to 3 pm

11 April	<i>Easter Egg Hunt &amp; Children's Crafts</i>	<i>cancelled</i>
18 April	<i>Blacksmith &amp; Wood Turning demos</i>	<i>cancelled</i>
25 April	<i>Hedgehog Conservation/Preservation</i>	<i>cancelled</i>
2 May	Quilting and Patchwork	cancelled
9 May	6.00am Dawn Chorus Walk	cancelled
9 May	Children's Craft Workshop	cancelled
16 May	Moths & their Role in Our Life	cancelled
23 May	Photo Competition	cancelled
30 May	Masonry / Stone Carving	cancelled
6 June	Blacksmiths & Wood Turning demos	cancelled
13 June	Wheelwrighting Skills Explained	cancelled
20 June	Bats & Countryside Conservation	cancelled
27 June	Open Studios – Multiple Artists	cancelled
4 July	Ewe to You – Spinning & Weaving	cancelled
11 July	H.O.E. Wood Turners & TWAM	cancelled
18 July	Wellesbourne Art Group	cancelled
25 July	Stained Glass Workshop	cancelled
1 Aug	Blacksmith & Wood Turning demos	cancelled
8 Aug	Honey and the Honey Bee	cancelled
15 Aug	The Wellesbourne & District Lions	cancelled
22 Aug	Children's Craft Workshop	cancelled
29 Aug	Plight of the Farm Labourer	cancelled
5 Sept	Patchwork & Textile Display	cancelled
12 Sept	Sketch Pad Day	cancelled
19 Sept	Heritage Open Day - Hidden Nature	cancelled
26 Sept	Iron Tyre Fitting Demonstration	cancelled
31 Oct	Halloween Pumpkin Carving & Fun	cancelled
12 Dec	Christmas with Carols, Santa & Fun	cancelled