

## Trip to Fibre Festival at Coldharbour Mill, Cullompton

On a warm sunny June morning a group from the Guild travelled by coach to Coldharbour Mill which was the venue for the Fibre Festival. It was a smooth journey both there and back and our coach driver, Andy, was a careful and considerate driver.

Coldharbour Mill is a heritage weaving mill and one of the oldest woollen mills in the UK. It has been in continuous production since 1797. Now powered by electricity since 1985 but on the day we visited it was one of their 'Steam Days' where we were able to see the engines and boilers in operation.



The photo above shows the 1910 Galloway boiler lit and in operation to steam up and fuel the engines to drive the Mill machinery

The photos on the right and below show the Beam Engine .



Many of us enjoyed a very entertaining and amusing talk by Joyce Meader entitled 'History of Knitting: Military Knitting - a journey through the history of how British wool has been utilised by the military through time. She is very knowledgeable and has knitted for films such as *War Horse* and *1914*.

Joyce has five different talks and in the past we have had her speak at our Guild meetings on two occasions, one being this same talk of Military Knitting.. Those that had not heard her before were very eager that we add her to our programme for 2025.

Joyce holding up a jumper worn by a soldier in the Crimean War. It is the actual size and has not shrunk in the wash!



A pair of military khaki long johns

Throughout the Mill we were able to see the machinery, learn about the history of the mill and what it produced in the past, as well as viewing the extensive range of wares from the many exhibitors as part of the Fibre Festival.

This photo shows a loom with a wide piece of cloth in the process of being woven - a current design for a throw which is now sold in the Mill Shop.



## The Weavers Song (From the Time of the Industrial Revolution)

**The loom goes click and the loom goes clack  
The shuttle flies forward and then flies back  
The weaver's so bent that he's like to crack  
Such a wearisome trade is the weaver's.**

**Now that it's made into cloth at last  
The ends of work they all make quite fast  
The weaver's labors for now have passed  
Such a wearisome trade is the weaver's. *Anon***

The words for the Weaver's Song were displayed next to this loom.

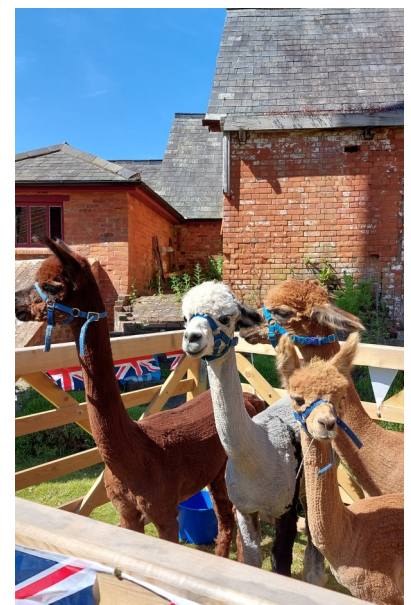
## The Puttee Exhibition

The owners of the Mill in the early 1900s were the Fox Family, and Coldharbour Mill played an important role in the manufacturing, production and distribution of wartime products such as the 'Puttee', which were used to protect soldier in battle. The word 'Puttee' means 'bandage' in Hindi and is used to describe a length of fabric which was wound around the leg for additional protection. During the war Fox's produced roughly 7,000 puttees a week and they were distributed all over the world for armed forces of other countries.



The area around the mill was very picturesque and with the warm sunny weather it was the ideal place to sit and enjoy the day. The mill race is supplied with water coming from the River Culm.

The alpacas were enjoying all the attention they received



**All those on the trip agreed it was a very successful day.**