

## Combe Mill Volunteers Advice

### River Evenlode Water Sampling – 2015 Water Blitz

Following the training session given by Andrew Carpenter at Combe Mill, two volunteers from Combe Mill Society offered to take six samples from the Evenlode and adjacent meadow.

Samples had to be gathered on Monday 14 September so the fact that it was damp and raining could not be used as an excuse for postponement.

#### **Lesson 1 - Wear sensible clothes and footwear**

We had been briefed to sample the river, Mill tail race, the quarry spring and two springs in the meadow. In the event we could only find one spring (tufa fen) in the meadow and substituted a meadow bog sample which we fell upon (literally). We could not sample the tail race because rain drops splashing into the race prevent identification of the exact spring and we had by then run out of sample sachets.

#### **Lesson 2 – find out by talking to local walkers and residents where springs are located or time will be wasted in locating them.**

Our sampling tool was a small plastic drinks bottle attached with tape to a long bamboo cane at right angles to it. This enabled the bottle to be tilted when rinsing it out and when pouring the sample into the small measuring cube. We also had two more small drinks bottles to hold samples for carrying them back to our test station

#### **Lesson 3 – have plenty of pockets to hold the sample bottles and keep your hands free and have a marker pen to label the bottles.**

We set up a temporary testing station/laboratory in the waterwheel room at the Mill and initially carried two water samples back to it for testing. We soon realised that the sampling bottle could also be used to carry a sample and therefore we could take three samples before returning to base.

#### **Lesson 4 - setting up a base station is worthwhile to get out of the elements (wind, rain , sunlight) which could distract from handling and interpreting the sample.**

We took photos at each sample point to record the terrain and also the position where the sample was taken to remind us when determining the grid reference later. Try to include the end of a building or a gateway or bridge that will appear on the map. We also took photos at the test station of the test sachets held against the colour strip to record the test results.

**Lesson 5** – have white paper and a pen handy to write the identity of the sample in the photos.

After completing the sample testing we set up a portable PC to display Street Maps and entered the nearest post code. We zoomed in to the largest scale and, for each sample, moved the location arrow to our best approximation to where each sample had been taken and read off and recorded the coordinates on each sample form.

**Lesson 6** – think ahead about how sample coordinates are to be determined.

Finally we presented our results in a report with colour photographs.

A fun exercise.

Time taken about 2 hours.

Tony Simmons - 24 September 2015