

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST.

WINTER NEWSLETTER.

Dear Member,

Quite a bit to appraise you of lately, some of it good, and some perhaps not so good. At the A.G.M. in October, three of your Trust Officers stood down from their posts. It is unfortunate that it all happened at once, but the reasons are that all three are experiencing problems of age and health. The three Officers are, your chairman, Arnold Bettess, your treasurer, Fred Frot, and myself as secretary. In my case, there is an additional problem, as I cannot do anything on the internet, and as almost everything has to be done "on line", it has made my role untenable, apart from other concerns. I am sure you join with me in thanking Arnold and Fred for all their good work and commitment over a number of years.



As with most other voluntary organisations, finding people to take over these posts is not easy. However, Ian McKay who attends to our marketing/advertising, has undertaken to step in for an interim period to take on the role of secretary. Tim Mawdsley has volunteered to attend to membership records, and Jonathan Bettess, who takes care of the Museum shop, has also become chairman. We thank them for stepping into the breach, and trust that others may take on some of the duties in the near future. A new committee of seven

members has been elected. For my part, I remain on the Committee, and will do all I can to assist in any way I can. I also hope to continue to write the quarterly newsletter.

The barring engine of the original Roberts engine has caused concern for some time, as it had become quite worn. Without it we cannot run the Mill engine, so we decided to cancel the December steaming and finish the season a little earlier, in order to give us extra time to attend to the barring engine. It has now been stripped down and all the worn parts identified. Jim Hackett is busy reconditioning the worn parts.

Of course, we will have to have an early trial steaming to make sure everything is in order when this work is completed. The early close of the season also meant that the Cornish boiler could be stripped down and examined. It has now been examined by the insurance inspector and passed as fit for next year.

The Bradley Project is on hold at present, as more pressing jobs are attended to. We are still waiting to hear from Pendle Council Planning and Building control if we can go ahead with the proposed alterations to the front of the Bradley building. Until we get the "all clear" from them, there is no point in applying for a grant and if we are not careful, might be too late to get one for next year. In the meantime Nick P has been continuing wielding his paintbrush to good effect, and the Smith & Eastwood engine is looking very smart.



Near the centre of Clitheroe is an old mill, named Holmes Mill. It did, I believe, originally have a beam engine to power it, but later up-dated to a Clayton & Goodfellow cross-compound. Although it has not been a textile mill for many years, the engine remained in situ, although very few people managed to see it. However, fairly recently, part of the mill

was taken over by a local micro-brewery, and they have opened up a bar and café in the engine house. I understand they are open every day for quite long periods, and anyone who wishes to imbibe a pint or tea and snacks, or even a meal, can sit around the engine which is in quite reasonable condition, I believe.

Queen Street Mill in Burnley has finally closed, with just a couple of employees to finish "moth-balling" it. They will finish at Christmas. There has been a rumour that some concern may be interested in taking it on, but I know nothing more. As Helmshore Mill at Haslingden is tied to Queen Street Mill, it makes the take-over by anyone that much more difficult. Already, even though there are still some people at Queen Street Mill, thieves have been trying to take lead from the roof!



Our Trust finances at the end of the year are in quite good shape. Although it has to be said that the Sword of Damocles is still hanging over us in the shape of the United Utilities' stupid demand for drainage charges, which have now accrued to some £6,800. A sum we cannot pay and have no intention of settling. Getting anyone at all to sort it out is like trying to bale water with a net!

Once we are into January, it will be time for you to renew your subscriptions. Please do not forget, or your membership will lapse. Tim Mawdsley, who I mentioned earlier is now dealing with this, would be grateful if you will be prompt in sending your cheques, donations, stockings of gold, etc. to the Mill. It will assist him in his new post. Thank you very much.

Below are the steaming dates for 2017. Please put them in you diary or calendar.

March 19th

April 16th

May 7th

May 28th

June 18th

July 9th

July 30th

August 20th

Sept. Sat 9th & Sun 10th (Heritage days).

Oct 1st

Oct 22nd

Nov 12th (last steaming).

At the A.G.M. it was decided to increase certain charges - this relates only to entrance fees and canteen charges. It is some years since they were put up, and still remain cheaper than most entertainment venues. The subscription charges are pegged at the previous rate. Any further information can be found on our website: www.bancroftmill.org.uk

That is all for the time being. I trust that you will all have a peaceful New Year.

Jim Gill.

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