

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST.

AUTUMN NEWS LETTER.

Dear Member,

I confess that I had to think twice when I typed in the title of the Letter – Autumn – is that time already? I am very much afraid that it is; the trees are changing colour and there are some leaves on the ground. We had a very early spring and are now paying for it. However, there are still three months of our season to go, and we must try to make the most of them.

The annual AGM is history now, with the Chairman and Treasurer giving their reports, and various other business dealt with. Harry M's son, David, showed the meeting the new Bancroft website. Why not have a look at it; I think you will agree that it is really good, and David deserves a big "thank you" for his hard work.

One other thing was discussed, and put forward by our Chairman regarding the state of our finances. He has asked me to include the following:

"Some six years ago I wrote to everyone explaining the difficulty we were having in funding new electrical wiring, the old system having been condemned, and asking if members would be prepared to contribute a small amount each month by standing order directly from their bank account. Such sums could be Gift Aided to increase their value to the Trust.

"The example I gave then was that if thirty members gave £5.00 per month each, that would give us £1,800 per year; plus tax relief that would come to over £2,000, an amount which would be a significant help in the regular maintenance of buildings and machinery.

"You will remember that last year we started repairs and re-pointing the chimney but could only afford to pay for the top third to be done. This year we plan to complete the work which will make a significant hole in our reserves, especially as we had to pay for the replacement of rivets in the Cornish boiler last winter.

"Due to an increased effort with publicity recently, our visitor numbers have increased, but of course that source of income is very variable, and, due to the present national financial situation, sources for grants are also drying up.

"If you feel that you would like to help us in this way please contact myself, Jim Gill or Richard our treasurer at the Mill, and we can let you have necessary details. A standing order means that you can vary the amount you give, or cancel it at any time, so you are in control. We would welcome any help you can give to keep Bancroft steaming."

Yours sincerely, Arnold Bettess (Chairman).



Apropos of the above, I have given the steeplejack the OK to go ahead and complete work on the remainder of the chimney. It is not something that can be left any longer! The residents living around the mill area will no doubt be a little happier if there are no gaps or cracks in the brickwork!

You may remember from the last Letter how we learned with great shock that Fred F., who has run the engine for some time now, had sustained a bad heart attack. I mentioned that he was on the road to recovery, and I am delighted to say that he is progressing well – and back running the engine! We notice that he is eating a lot of salads and other healthy food now.

Another source of stress and strain for some of us is the Bradley Project. Having successfully assembled both engine beds on the foundations; fabricated and fitted all holding-down bolts; repaired the cracks in the main bed; renovated a large number of other parts and obtained heavy lifting tackle, attention was turned to the high-pressure piston and rod. In order to reassemble them in the cylinder, the piston HAD to come off. The piston, however, had other ideas. It took three complete Saturdays of gentle persuasion, accompanied by sustained attacks with heavy hammers and drifts, before it finally gave up and came loose. To compound our troubles, there are two small cracks in the rim of the piston, and one of the piston rings is also cracked. Just more delay and expense!



It's not all doom and gloom, however. The high-pressure cylinder is now in position on the engine bed, and whilst we decide how to sort out the piston problems, there is nothing to prevent us from assembling the valves and valve gear on the high-pressure cylinder, and mounting the governor in position. If we do that, it will certainly look more like an engine. There are quite a few visitors who come regularly, and I always think they must

not think that we have been doing very much, but with some more bits in place, they will have something to see and talk about.



For the future, there is the Heritage Open Day coming up in September – always brings in plenty of people. We hope that YOU will also come and see us, it is good to see familiar faces. We have had our numbers increased lately by some young men who have been referred by a local volunteer service- the more the merrier, for hopefully they will keep coming for a long time, and ease the work-load on the more mature of us.

Goodbye until the next Newsletter.

Jim Gill (Hon. Secretary) 01282 865626. September 2011.