

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? The weeks have flown by and we are now getting ready for the start of the new season, not however without some trepidation. We are up against our old worry of where we will obtain sufficient supplies of wood to fire the boiler! At the moment, we have enough old pallets for two steamings, and so far have not been able to locate a further supply. The problem is that so many firms now re-cycle their pallets, or use them for their own fuel. The situation is quite dire, as without a plentiful supply, we cannot run.

The Cornish boiler has been inspected and passed for this season, but (there is always a "but") considerable welding of the boiler shell will have to be carried out before next year. That, coupled with the on-going work on the mill chimney, has saddled the Trust with a very considerable financial headache. We are also quite desperate for some new fire-bars. So much so, that we are going to order 10 to keep us going, thanks to a member's loan. They will cost £30 each. We still need a further 30 bars to make a decent full set, but that will have to wait.

The yard side of the Lancashire boiler house has been fully clad with plywood, and the old, rotten sliding doors will soon be consigned to the boiler where they may produce a pound of steam!

Now I am afraid that I have to tell all Members that the Trust has had to increase the membership subscriptions. They have remained the same for about 7 years, but we feel that we have no option. Please note that the new rates are as follows for this year: Young people (up to 16 years) and Senior citizens, £9. Adults £12. Life membership, £120. I feel that it is still good value, especially when the cost of stationary and postage is taken into account. Cheques may be sent to me at my home address. For those



who receive this missive by email, my address is at the end of the letter. We have also increased the entrance fees for non-members on Steaming Days. Your treasurer would appreciate subs. as soon as possible, and please do not forget to say that you agree to Gift Aid being claimed if you are a tax payer, and have not already told me. Thank you very much.

Despite these necessary and regrettable increases in membership charges we wonder if visitors from previous steamings would consider becoming a member. For £12 per year you can visit as often as you wish, Saturdays when we work and those Sundays when we steam. If you are of pensionable age or between 6 and 16 years then the cost is reduced to £9 as stated above. Membership can make a very welcome birthday present whilst giving the recipient the opportunity to get close to the engine and other machinery. If you would like to undertake some job or other we should be pleased to provide the opportunity, just watching is quite acceptable too!

BRADLEY ENGINE STOP VALVE (BEFORE)



Although we do not have any money to spend on the Bradley Engine Project at present, work has continued apace in renovating and assembling many parts.

The latest of note is the engine stop valve. This is the big valve which admits the steam into the engine, or cuts it off. It is a Hopkinson Triad valve, the like of which none of us had come across. It was also fairly well seized. John R. did a lot of research and came up with drawings, and the information that it was of 1920 vintage - so must have replaced the original. A great deal of time was spent on the valve and it is now fully functional and ready to mount on the high-pressure cylinder. John and his merry band have also been cutting out the many jointing gaskets which are required for assembly. In addition to all that, every nut and bolt has to be cleaned and the threads made good.

BRADLEY ENGINE STOP VALVE (AFTER)

The Bancroft engine has had attention too, and a lot of cleaning done to the bright-work by Tony and Fred. Hopefully it will have no problems when we do a test run prior to the first Steam Day on March 18th. There are quite a lot of activities to accompany most of the Steam Days, so do come and see us.

I will write again in the summer, when we get all that hot weather!

March 2012.

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