

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2012

Dear Member,

May I first take this opportunity of thanking all of you who have sent me their subscriptions and donations. Special thanks are due to three members who, between them have donated enough money to replace all the fire-bars for the boiler. The Trust is extremely grateful for all the support it receives, especially in this year of need. Apropos of the subs. slips, I apologise for inadvertently sending some out to members who should not receive them. I blame old age and filling envelopes in a trance. You will remember from previous letters that we will have to pay out large sums of money for the chimney and boiler repairs by the end of the season. Anyone want to sponsor a brick?

Cast your minds back to 2008/9, and you may recall the problem we had with the United Utilities Water Authority, when they brought in new surface water charges, and tried to exact thousands of pounds from us. After a lot of trouble and piles of correspondence on our part, we were able, with the help of a professional member, to prove to the satisfaction of U.U. that no surface water from our site entered any public drains. This year, they have tried it on again, would you believe. Based once again on site area, they are demanding nearly £1,400 per year for highways drainage. We accept that everyone must contribute something towards that, but within reason, and within our means.

In 1857, Charles Dickens wrote at length in one of his novels, of a kind of sickness which pervades most large concerns and government departments. He called it the Office of Circumlocution, which specialises in "HOW NOT TO DO IT", or "HOW TO DO EVERYTHING WRONG". If Dickens could see the state of chaos in the Country today, he would, I am sure, smile, shake his head

*and say, "Nothing has changed". The battle continues, with the assistance of our M.P. The position at the moment is that the Authority is putting the demand on hold whilst they carry out an investigation, which is not helped as they say they have no record of the correspondence of 2008/9! Why should Britain tremble?*



*After our initial Steam Day (which was very good in terms of visitors), we had a private Steaming organised by Fred F. for members of his firm. They were representatives from all around the globe, and all appeared to enjoy themselves immensely. The last two Steam Days, however, were not particularly outstanding, although we had our amateur local radio hams on site, broadcasting at one of them. The first contact they had, I believe, was in Siberia! When they establish a contact, they give out all our details so that the receiving station can look at our website, or look at us on Google. It is all very clever, but most of it is quite beyond me. We also celebrated thirty years of the Museum being open to the public. Arnold provided a large cake for the occasion, and very scrummy it was too!*

*Of late, Jack W. has been practically living at Bancroft. He has been making new displays around the Museum, and re-arranging others, as well as producing fresh notices of varying types. It all looks very nice and gives the whole place a fresh and professional look. Jack has years of experience in design and printing, so we are very lucky to have his skill at our disposal.*



*Generally speaking, the Bradley Engine Project is on hold because of the large financial commitment we have for absolutely essential work this year. However, there are still things which are ongoing, and which cost us little or no money.*

*Special mention must be made of John R, who has established a home from home at Bancroft, along with Jack. The sheer amount of work they have done, often in very trying conditions, is amazing. John R., together with Ian A. have started insulating the high-pressure cylinder, and fitted the blued-steel cladding. Some of the engine drain pipes have been identified and fitted, amongst other sundry parts. The large transfer pipes between the high and low-pressure cylinders have been scrupulously cleaned and offered into position to ensure they fit. So far, the concrete foundations have been practically perfect for everything to fit. That's not bad when you remember that all the dismantled parts of the engine had to be individually measured in order to work out the foundations needed. Some of the high-pressure valve linkage will also soon be fitted. The project still engenders a great deal of interest with visitors. How often does one get the chance to see such an engine in the course of rebuild?*

*It is now one hundred years since the great Titanic sank in the Atlantic Ocean. Much has been made of that sad incident around here, because the famous band-master, Wallace Hartley, lived locally. Here at Bancroft, we also have a centenary to mark. Our Cornish boiler, which is used every steam day to run our engine, will be one hundred years old in August. In 1996 she had to have the lower half of her shell replaced, as it was getting awfully thin, but apart from the odd bit of welding, here and there, most of the old lady is original. Many of us would like to be able to say the same! We intend to celebrate the occasion in August, and Barbara M. is organising a cake, in the shape of the boiler. Barbara has also been putting up patriotic decorations to celebrate the Queen's Diamond jubilee. Sadly, I do not think Her Majesty has the time to include Bancroft in her schedule.*

*That is about all the news for now. Let's hope that we see lots of you members during the summer (which has got to get better, I'm sure). Those who don't make it do not know what they are missing!*

*For now, goodbye.*

*Jim Gill. Hon. Secretary. May 2012.*

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