

# BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST

## AUTUMN NEWS LETTER

*Dear Member,*

*Work on our mill chimney was finally completed about a month ago, and the bill paid. Although it has seriously depleted our bank balance, it is unlikely to require any attention for the next decade. It does look nice, with the new red-mastic pointing, its coats of linseed oil, and all twenty-six iron bands painted. It looks very smart from every angle.*

*The other item of note was the centenary of our Cornish boiler which almost coincided with the last Steam Day in August. One of our lady members had organised a lovely cake, which was made and donated by a local confectioner. The cake was in the form of the boiler, and was beautifully engineered with sight-glasses, pressure gauge and safety valves. It was a great shame that it had to be cut up, but it tasted as good as it looked! Many photographs were taken, as you may imagine. The boiler and boiler-house were also decorated for the day. We have to have some welding work done on the old girl at the end of the season, but she is doing well, and steams well, so long as there is a supply of dry wood to feed her - and an energetic "fire-beater" to do the stoking.*

*The Cornish boiler was not part of the original Bancroft Mill lay-out, which was steamed by the big Lancashire boiler (which now does service as our water supply tank). It*

*was not until 1947 that an additional boiler-house was built, and the Cornish boiler bought second-hand from a Burnley firm. The reason for an additional source of steam power was to aid space heating in the mill, and to assist with ancillary machinery. In the event however, the Lancashire boiler was able to cope with everything and the Cornish boiler was used very little, no doubt to the relief of those who had to attend to the flue cleaning!*



*When the Trust was first started, in 1980, all the fittings from both boilers had been taken for scrap. The founder members found and retrieved fittings from all over the country, including*

*Cornwall, to replace the missing parts with similar valves, sight-glasses, gauges, etc.. In 1996, when we secured a Heritage Lottery grant, we arranged to have the Cornish boiler taken to the repairers which involved the removal of the roof, and a very large crane to lift all 8 tons of it out! That renovation involved the replacing of the lower half of the boiler shell, this year it needs some internal welding, which thankfully can be done in situ.*

*The National Heritage Open Days has now been and gone. It turned out to be a lovely sunny and warm weekend. As we have come to expect over the years, there were plenty of visitors who seemed happy to put pennies into our donation boxes. The shop and the tea-room also did very well indeed - thank you lady volunteers for that.*

*The engine and boiler both performed well, although on the second day, the engine vacuum began to drop. That was because the whole water system was getting warm, and the atmospheric pressure was dropping too. The result was that we were using more fuel. Just one of the problems of running for two days together.*

*In between engine runs, the visitors were entertained by singers and a clog-dancer, all in the Lancashire tradition. Entertainers at Bancroft now have a little more space to operate in now we have moved the shop counter. Outside in the car-park, we were treated to a show of 16 old motorbikes in pristine condition. What a treat it was to hear the throaty growl of some of the big v-twin engines. All in all, I think we had a very successful weekend, especially when one considers all the other Open Day free events, plus the Preston Guild week. We also raffled another replica of the Bancroft Engine makers name plate, tastefully mounted on a board.*



*Some more work has been done to the Bradley Engine. John R. and Ian A. have been working on the air-pump and condenser. It has been cleaned and painted, and placed in position at the rear of the engine, and more pipe-work added. It rests on brick piers built by Roy F.*

*so that we can get underneath it to attach pipes. Foot plating is also being prepared to cover the pit containing the steam transfer pipes.*

*One of our stalwart volunteers who has been fairly immobile for a while, is to have an operation on his leg shortly. We wish you well, Dave, and look forward to getting you working again!*

*Jim Gill. Hon.sec. Sept.2012.*

