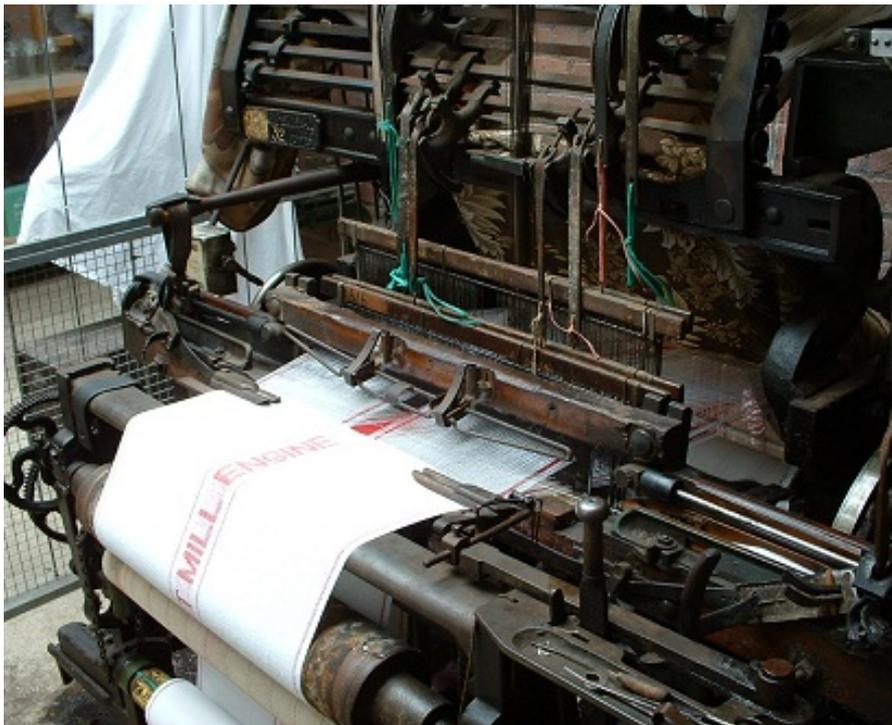


BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST
WINTER NEWSLETTER 2012

Dear Member,

So, another season has ended, and the Bancroft engine has been put to bed for the winter. Because the weather had turned so cold, we drained down the whole system as soon as the last Steaming Day ended – better safe than sorry. Sir Ranulph Fiennes the explorer, has just set out on an expedition across the Antarctic continent, after training in the Arctic regions. If he wanted to acclimatise himself to the cold, he should come to Bancroft Mill in the winter! With all the mass of machinery in the buildings, and no heating, your intrepid volunteers feel warmer when they go outside.

Our tea-towel loom is at last working again. After a great deal of work by Peter R. and Ian Mc. the new warp beam was installed and over 600 ends successfully knotted. Peter states that it is running like a dream now, and the tea-towels it is weaving look perfect – to me anyway.



We are still on the lookout for someone to volunteer to regularly operate it on Steaming Days.



Ian McKay after cleaning the flues

The year has been quite a good one for the Trust, so far as revenue, donations and subscriptions are concerned. The mill chimney has been sorted out and paid for. We have a good full set of fire-bars for the Cornish boiler, and the money for the necessary welded repairs to the boiler shell is set aside. The only fly in the ointment is the ongoing dispute with the water authority, which has dragged on from the beginning of the year. Trying to negotiate with them is frustrating to put it mildly. Our Chairman has amassed a huge file of correspondence, not to mention

telephone calls. We are also very grateful to our local M.P. for his considerable and continuing input on our behalf.

Once the Cornish boiler has been stripped down, ready for its annual inspection, there are a couple of welded seams in the outer shell which require re-welding. The problem is that with the fire-tube being offset within the boiler, it makes one side extremely hard to reach, and the weld repair has to be done on the inside. An octopus would be ideal to handle the job!

Lots of work and improvements are always going on all the year round at the Mill. One of the latest is the creation of an area of decking near to the public entrance. This replaces a narrow

path and a grass slope, and it is planned to have plant pots and picnic tables where visitors can sit and drink their tea/coffee in the hot sunshine, which we will undoubtedly enjoy in the coming summer! David N. and Derek G. have been labouring on this project for a while, and involved building a stone wall as well as the woodwork,



Many of the Steam Days have featured various types of entertainment between engine runs for the benefit of visitors, thanks to Harry M. who organised them. It all goes towards a day which hopefully caters for all tastes.

Perhaps you remember that in my last Newsletter, I mentioned that we had had a beautiful cake donated for the Cornish boiler centenary in August. I did not have a photograph of it at that time, but have put that right in this issue. Tony N. put together the montage, which I think you will agree, is very good, with our Chairman, who fires the boiler, looking ready to feed or eat it!

Work still continues on the Bradley engine, with John R., Ian A. and Fred F. beavering away with help from Roy F. Other parts which will be required for fitting before long are being prepared. There is no doubt that grant money will be needed soon, and work on costing is already being undertaken. The firm that



made and fitted the gland packing for the piston rod is still in existence, and when we contacted them about three years ago, were quite prepared to provide new packing for the engine and intimated that it might be done free of cost. Obviously, we are not quite ready for fitting them yet, but Ian A. has kept the firm informed of our progress. Over that period, the firm has been "re-organised" and it appears that they will now charge us!

Please note that subscriptions for the coming year will be welcomed now by our Treasurer. I am including slips with the paper copies. Remember, every penny helps, or as my Granny used to say, "Every mickle makes the muckle".

Finally, may I wish all of you a very peaceful year to come, and look forward to seeing YOU at Bancroft.

Jim Gill (Hon.sec.) January 2013. Tel:01282 865626.