

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST.

SUMMER NEWS LETTER 2017

Dear Member,

I do hope that you are all reasonably well. If so, perhaps you can tell me the secret!

Some things to bring you up to date with what is happening at Bancroft: First, the latest on the United Utilities Water Authority saga. After a long silence from them, the Committee decided to try contacting them once more to attempt to persuade them to reconsider the ridiculous amount of money which they are demanding for Highways Drainage. The result of that was a letter from Yorkshire Water stating that if we did not send them £7,000 within two weeks, our mains water supply would be cut off! I should add that we have always paid our mains water bill in full together with the sewage charge. One might almost say that it all smacks of blackmail. The Authority was again contacted with the result that we have a "stay of execution" until September. Our Secretary is currently writing to everyone we can think of for assistance. That is the state of the affair at present.

I need hardly remind you that if we had to pay the swingeing charges demanded for Highways Drainage, together with no mains water supply, Bancroft Museum would very soon be forced to close. We ask that all Members consider contacting their Member of Parliament, and any other body they think applicable, to protest about this unfair treatment of a small voluntary charity such as ours. If you do, we would very much appreciate it if you would let us know. Thank you.

Figure 1: The campbell leave for Halifax





Figure 2: Two horizontal steam engines arrive at Bancroft

Many years ago, we were given a fairly large Campbell oil engine which we hoped to be able to exhibit eventually. Then in 2003, we acquired the Smith Bros. & Eastwood tandem engine from Bradley Mill. Now that it is in place, we have run out of room, because the Campbell with its associated equipment takes quite a bit of room. Now, the Campbell was made in Halifax, and they do not have a single example to display to the public. However, we are on very friendly terms with the chap who runs the Halifax textile museum, and he was most anxious to acquire an example. The result is that he has taken the engine, and in return, has given us a pair of small horizontal steam engines. We may be able to find room somewhere for one of them, and perhaps find a home for the other. That is for the future.

Steam Days this season have not been too bad, but the July 9th was extremely good. There was a quite large contingent of the Series Two Land Rover Club in attendance, and they brought a lot of people with them, including Fred Dibnah's three daughters and his two Land Rovers. They all seemed to enjoy themselves, and there was a string group to entertain the visitors.

We have been very fortunate in receiving a number of generous donations this year, from current Members and from some who have sadly passed away. Such donations are, of course, greatly appreciated as we have to spend such a lot on insurance, electricity, etc., and still have the front end of the Bradley engine house to rebuild. That is apart from the water job, and any potential problems with the Roberts engine, Cornish boiler and chimney - all of which require specialist and expensive up-keep.



Figure 3: Fred Dibnah's daughters at Bancroft

We have not been able to claim any Gift Aid since 2013. This is not through lack of trying, I assure you. The only way it can be claimed is "on line", and you would not believe how complicated it is. To compound matters, the Government in their wisdom have changed the rules several times (to save money). Our Treasurer, Tony N. has been wrestling with the problem for a time, and has now managed to claim Gift Aid for 2014. I am lost in admiration for his expertise and tenacity. Hopefully, he will be able to eventually get back all the Gift Aid up to the present time.



Figure 4: Two of Fred's Land Rovers

We have had one or two steam buffs over to look at the valve timing on the Smith Bros. & Eastwood engine, and Jim H has been busy working of odds and ends that need attention. It is very close to being able to run but we need to be sure that everything is right before we think of a grand launch ceremony. So much long and hard work can be ruined by too much haste.

Well, I do not think anyone can say we have had a really good summer so far? As I write there is a howling southerly gale and driving rain - I am very glad that I managed to mow some grass yesterday. Perhaps we will have a more settled August and September. Whatever the weather, please come and see us, and bring along a friend or two.

Jim Gill.
Tel: 01282 865626.

July 2017.

Figure 5: Our volunteers prefer to remain anonymous whilst the little petrol Crossley is being hoisted away.

