

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST
SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018

Dear Member,

In spite of the current state of the weather, (as I write this at the end of April) I will attempt to bring you up to date on proceedings at the start of the season. As some of you will know, our very first steaming day had to be cancelled because of snow and icy conditions. We did try to inform as many people as possible, but if any of you did turn up on that day, we can only apologise. Subsequent steamings have been quite good, and on the first one the boiler inspector came to witness the safety-valves operating perfectly.

Young Pip had been inside the boiler earlier to clean and paint some small patches of corrosion. We will see if the special (and very expensive) compound he painted it with stops any further corrosion when we next inspect it at the end of the season.

Donald S. has sorted out the engine house wall clock with new works, dial and hands. It looks very smart. He has also made some more Bancroft Mill wall clocks to sell in the shop. Meanwhile, David and Derek have been finishing off the walk-way alongside the Lancashire boiler economiser and have placed a number of exhibits on the walls there. Does anyone know how you make an entry for the Turner Prize?



where is that generous millionaire?

Bearing in mind the very high cost of maintaining our chimney, enquiries have been made regarding pointing, etcetera, with several different firms. One quote for re-pointing of the whole stack was over £60,000! Obviously, we have to think in terms of doing it in sections each year, and so spread the cost, whilst keeping the whole structure in good condition. Oh,

The Smith Bros. & Eastwood engine seems to be running in a satisfactory way now. The latest modification has been to remove the central weight (about 90kg or 1¾cwt in the old money) from the Porter governor, so that the regulator is brought into play, and is adjusted so that the engine runs at a steady 32 rpm. The governor does look a little strange without its central weight, so it is proposed to put a light-weight tin one on, so that it looks authentic. There are 'before and 'after' photos on the next page.

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The engine seems to use little steam, once it is hot, but constant attention has to be made to ensure it is getting plenty of oil throughout. On a steam day we run each engine alternately, and so far, Aidy seems to be coping with keeping the pressure up in the Cornish boiler.

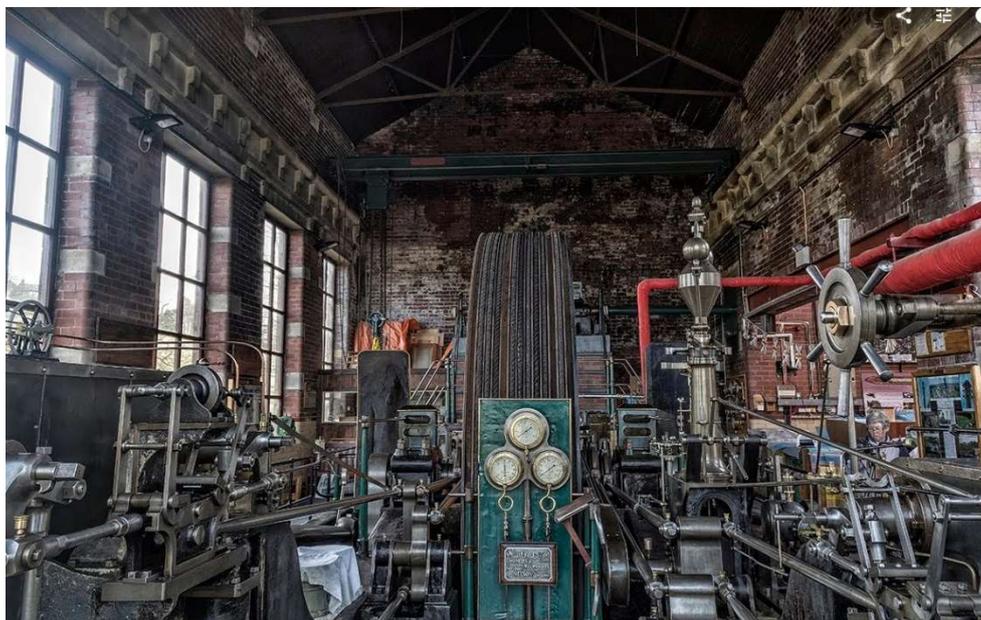
Apropos steam pressure, I can report that we still have loads of pallets stacked in the yard and at the front of the Bradley House. Last week we

were treated to another pile of crates from one of our regular donors, which all had to be dismantled. Although the yard is rather restricted with all the pallets, we dare not complain, as they are of course essential to keeping the "home fires burning".

Still on the subject of wood, a few weeks ago we had some large wooden cable reels delivered. Some were more than a yard in diameter, and we know from experience that they are a pig to dismantle and cut up. Whilst the boiler inspector was at the Mill, he was telling me that his son was renovating an old house and had decided to create a bar in the cellar! He further mentioned that his son was looking for tables, chairs, and so on, to furnish it. I said, "We have just the thing for his bar tables", and showed him the reels, which laid on their side will be ideal. The inspector ended up taking two of them with the option of more if he wants them!

Visitors entering the canteen will now be treated to the sight of the tables covered in lovely new table-cloths. We have Barbara Mc. to thank for them. Barbara rang me during the winter, and after telling me about the cloths, asked me how many tables there were. I now have to admit to a *faux pas*, as I told her six, when in fact there are seven. So we have one odd table-cloth, thanks to me. Sorry Barbara.

Back in February we had a visit from several members of the Bingley Camera Club, who took some really atmospheric photographs. Here is one of them:



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If you know of any similar bodies interested in visiting, or indeed having a private steaming, please do give them our details.

Our two stalwarts, Brian and Peter are turning out some truly lovely Bancroft tea towels on the restored Pilling loom. Peter has also made, *by hand*, a complete new set of Jacquard cards for the loom, pictured here with the old and rather worn set. There are more than 800 cards in each set, each one with anything up to 48 holes in it, and he is working on a special modification to the text, which at present reads

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE

so we can weave centenary tea towels

BANCROFT MILL 1920–2020

in two years' time.



As if this wasn't enough, between them, they have almost warped up the Cooper plain cloth loom. We used to sell quite a bit of plain cloth for curtain lining and similar things and hope that we can do the same again.

I mentioned in the last Newsletter that the Annual General Meeting this year will be at the Mill on Saturday 23rd. June, at 1.30pm. If you have not already put it on your calendar, please do it now, and try to attend. The weather will be wonderful, and we want to see YOU.

With this newsletter you will also find a copy of the Agenda for the AGM together with some explanatory notes on a most important resolution to be voted on at the meeting. This concerns the very future of Bancroft and we hope that you will either attend the meeting to cast your vote or do so by post or email to the Secretary, Ian McKay, in advance of the meeting.

That's about all this time.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jim Gill. 01282 865626. April 2018.

We have just learnt that Alan Nutter, a great-grandson of James and Mary-Jane Nutter died on 26th March this year at the age of 89. He had very fond memories of visiting the Mill as a child and growing up in the Barnoldswick area.

His daughter Judith came all the way from Australia to a special steaming in 2016 and we hope to see her and others of her family at the Centenary Steaming in 2020.