

Dear Member,

Well, here we are, in the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness with the leaves dropping quickly, although at the moment it is unusually mild. As I write this, there is only one remaining Steam Day this year, after which there are a good number of things to do over the winter period. One of the first is to empty the Cornish boiler and clean the flues. Not a pleasant job and one for the slightly younger volunteers to tackle. We confidently expect that we'll be inundated with volunteers only too willing to take it on..... If nobody volunteers we are in a bit of a predicament and this potential inability to undertake a critical task represents a serious risk to our operations. We are also keen to see if the special paint which was applied to the water-side of the fire tube has checked any further corrosion. The Boiler Inspector is booked to examine the boiler at the end of November and he will no doubt give us his view as an expert in these matters and we hope that all will be well.

The next issue to be addressed is the flue wall between the boiler and the chimney. This is the dividing wall between the main flue and the old economiser and it is in a rather parlous state, now beginning to bulge quite alarmingly. The intention is to rebuild and strengthen the wall with concrete blocks, like we did to the other side of the flue some years ago. To do this we'll have to lift the flagstones around the economiser to gain access and it is going to be a difficult and time-consuming job.



In September we had the usual Heritage Weekend with free entry. Not so many visitors this year as last, but last year we had added attraction of the first steaming of the Smith and Eastwood engine. We were however delighted to see three Members of longstanding, who have not been able to visit us for a number of years. It is always pleasant to welcome old faces, especially as the older end finds it increasingly difficult to travel.



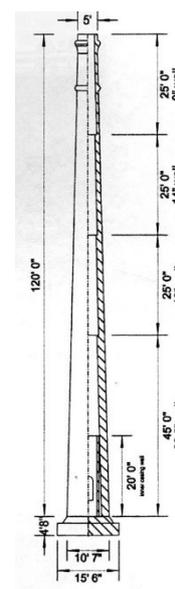
The Eastwood engine has run quite well this year, but a problem has been identified with the main-bearing on the crank side. Oil fed to it is finding its way around the bearing and running into the foundation. Apart from soaking the concrete we are losing precious and expensive oil. That will be looked at after the final steaming. Hopefully, a successful outcome will result. The photo does not show the oil leak, but it is one of the wonderfully atmospheric shots taken by Bingley Camera Club earlier this year.

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of Peter and Brian, our two weaving experts, both the Pilling and the Cooper looms are running well after being almost completely rebuilt. The Pilling is churning out Bancroft tea-towels and the Cooper, some very nice plain cloth - ideal for backing curtains etc. In fact, the Pilling has churned out so many tea-towels that we have woven out the beam! A new beam has been wound for us by Howorth's of Nelson and Peter is in the process of knotting it on – 638 tiny neat knots – in order and without any tangles or crossing of threads. This beam has cost us almost £840, which is a considerable expense, but we should recover the cost over a couple of years and then be into profit from the sale of tea towels, especially at the rate Carlyne sells them!



Peter has also made a complete new set of punch cards for the design on the tea-towels, and is making some more to add ready for the Bancroft centenary. Each hole in the cards has to be punched separately by hand! There are over 840 cards and up to 48 holes in every card. The means he has punched more than 20,000 holes. Peter has also been raising money towards our chimney repair fund. For his 78th birthday, he - along with Ian, our Secretary - did a sponsored walk over the three peaks (Ingleborough, Whernside and Pen-y-Ghent) in a very good time, raising over £1200 when we include the Gift Aid that we can claim back. We are all very grateful for his generosity (and envious of his fitness).

Talking of our need to raise money to keep the chimney in good repair, perhaps it would not come amiss to remind you of the importance of such things. A chimney is vital to the raising of steam in the boiler. A chimney is needed to force air into the furnace and carry away the gaseous products of combustion to a height where it is not objectionable and cannot do harm to the surroundings. It creates a draught (which can be natural or induced or forced by a fan or steam jet) which carries oxygen through the fuel and the flue settings. Without a plentiful supply of oxygen, complete combustion cannot take place, of course. Early chimneys were usually square, and although easier to construct, were less efficient due to friction of the gases in the internal corners. They also presented more area to external wind pressure. The later stacks were sometimes hexagonal or octagonal, but the majority of the later ones were generally round. The round shape was much more efficient to the flue gasses and the pressure of the wind, and structurally sound. Look at a large chimney and you will notice that it tapers from base to top. The usual taper or "batter" is around 0.25" per foot of height, in fact on our 120' chimney with a diameter of 11feet at the base and 7 feet at the top the batter works out at slightly less; 0.2" per foot. Apart from the aesthetic consideration, a saving is made in weight and materials, and a further reduction to wind pressure. The structural calculations involved in designing a large chimney are long and very complicated, and bearing in mind the colossal weight involved, require very good foundations. The drawing shows a cross-section of a chimney similar to ours.



So, look and marvel at the few large old stacks that are still in existence.

In the yard we have spent a lot of effort tidying up the wood which we have in storage. We try to do this because the yard is that bit of the Mill which visitors see first and if their impressions are that the place is a bit of a scrapyard or a tip it will colour their views of us before they ever get into the Mill itself. On the sawing side, Jim Hackett has got for us some tungsten-carbide tipped saw blades which, along with the other improvements he's made to the saw bench, mean that we are able to cut wood not only more efficiently but also more quietly – which is always a good thing as it helps if we don't annoy the neighbours too much.

We have one more volunteer since the last Steaming Day to add to our little band of regulars. He is another Philip who is keen to come on a regular basis. It sometimes gets a little confusing with two Jims and now two Philips but some of us will no doubt be able to cope! Anyway, welcome Philip 2, and we hope you stay with us for a long time.

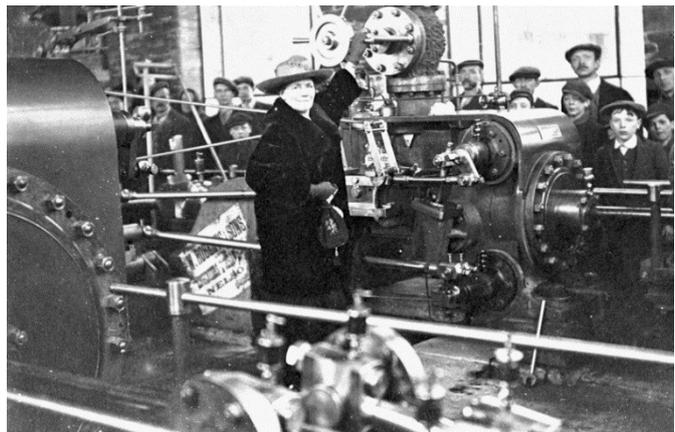
That is about all the news up to date. We hope to see some of you even during winter months: we expect that someone will be at the Mill every Saturday, except 22nd December, 29th December and 5th January, unless we get snowed in – or out!

The website will have details of the dates we are closed in due course and I should point out that next year's steaming dates have already been published – www.bancroftmill.org.uk The first one is Sunday 3rd March.

Our dates for Heritage Weekend are 7th and 8th September – it looks as though Heritage England will not after all propose two weekends (as they did this year) so we might be out of step by a week. That just means Barnoldswick will be ahead of the rest of the country so let's look on that as a positive!

Next year in the Mill we are hoping to set up an exhibition focussing on the people who worked in Bancroft Mill - or other local mills – and what life was like in the textile industry. If you have memories, please get in touch with us because we'd like to capture this information before it is irretrievably lost.

We are hoping to use anything we get to help to promote our centenary in March 2020. The Mill engine was formally started in March 1920 by Eliza Nutter, daughter of James and Mary Jane, and as part of this we are going to try to trace the families of anyone who was there on the day – see picture aside – so if you know who any of these people are, please let us know! The youngsters on the right hand side could well have living descendants who recognise them!



That's all then for now. May we wish you all the compliments of the season and hope that you have a very peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Jim Gill.

01282 865626. Nov. 2018

www.bancroftmill.org.uk