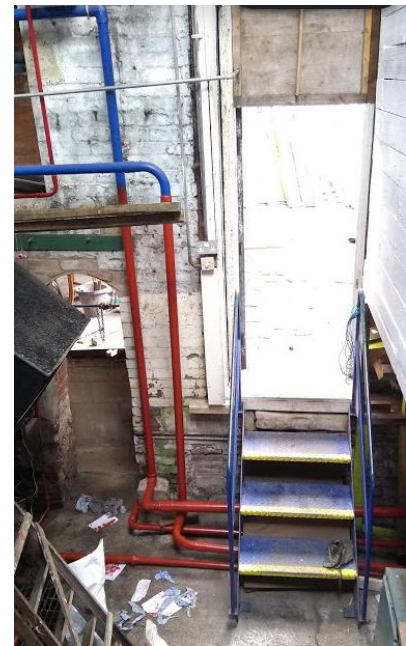


Dear Member,

We are now into another year, and we hope that it is a peaceful one – although that is a very optimistic wish with what is going on in the world at the moment!

We started treating the boiler water towards the end of last year, and when the time came for the boiler to be inspected, we kept our fingers crossed. All was well, however, and the Inspector was pleased at its state and gave us the OK for another year. This time, after the inspection, we filled the boiler to the brim (so there was no air-space in the top) and added double the normal quantity of chemicals, as recommended, to tide it over, for the winter. So, it should not deteriorate any further until the time for the first steaming.

Since then, Adie has been very busy rubbing down and repainting some of the boiler room pipe-work – on the right you can see it at the primer stage, - and Phil D has been crawling into the fire-tube with a compressed air needle gun, and removed a great deal of accumulated and burnt-on scale. The picture below shows 6ft Phil inside the 3ft dia tube. A very dirty job.



Whilst all that has been going on, David, Roy, Tim, Phil S and Derek were busy in the main flue, between the boilers and the chimney. The outer side had been rebuilt some years ago, but the other side, against the economiser wall, was in danger of collapse. You may remember that last year Roy and Phil S installed new fabricated steel supports for the flue roof made by Jim H. This means that the rebuilt walls do not have to support the weight of the roof. Work is well on the way to with the new flue wall now. In this picture you can see David and Tim with the wall built about half way up – another very dirty job – and though it is not as cramped in the flue as in the fire tube, what you cannot see here is the aperture about 2ft by 1ft 6in that David and Tim had to crawl through to get in there to do the work.

During and after the Christmas break, Jim H had been poorly with the dreaded lurgy, or some such thing, but is back with us again, together with



his daughter Carolyne, who keeps us supplied with tea and coffee. Jim is still a bit croaky, but perhaps has not been taking his cod liver oil!

When you next visit us you will notice a number of differences. Peter and Brian, have been re-arranging the Weaving Shed, to make more room for the Butterworth and Dickinson loom we were given last year by William Reed of Nelson who these days specialise in weaving 'Technical Fabrics' for things like parachutes and hot air balloons. The 'Shed' has been enlarged by David and Derek who have removed the back wall (towards the boilers) and pushed it back about 18in. Here are a couple of photos, the first showing the new studwork in place and the second with it part finished.



If you have ever been to the Mill on a Saturday in January you will know how cold it can get, and in the weaving shed in particular this is a problem - you cannot work on looms with frozen fingers. Peter and Brian are very grateful to Roy who has arranged a propane fan heater for them with an output of about 6kW which makes it the warmest place in the Mill apart from the Boiler room on a steaming day! This has made their current job of re-siting the Pilling and Cooper looms much more comfortable.



The pressure is now on Peter and Brian to get the Pilling loom back in to operation to keep up with demand for the new Centenary tea-towels which will be on sale from 29th March, so get your orders in as it is a limited run.

Another change you will see, on the wall at right angles to the big picture black and white picture of the weaving shed, is a new picture of the Mill as it was in the late 1970s before it closed. We have received this as an anonymous donation for which we are very grateful.

It is difficult to appreciate the size from this picture, but it is about 5ft by 8ft.



It is that time of the year when Membership Subscriptions are due. If you are receiving this by post there is a renewal form enclosed and a new Gift Aid declaration which we will need (if you are eligible) as we expect to be operating under the new Charity **Bancroft Mill Engine Museum** very soon. If you are receiving this by email, you have probably already received a reminder by email.

We are getting closer to the first Steaming on 8th March, which will be followed by the Centenary Steaming on Sunday 29th March. A really momentous anniversary, although we understand that Roberts engine is probably slightly older, having been ordered before the Great War and built over a period of about five years, only being finished after the end of the war. The weather could do anything at that time of year, so it is a case of – fingers crossed again. One of our Life Members, Geoff Shackleton, who is extremely knowledgeable not only about steam engines (stationary and locomotive) but also on the textile industry in the area will be starting the engine at 1pm. On the day there will be entertainment by Lancashire Sid and Friends, plus a raffle for some good prizes. Both engines will be running, and besides a number of invited guests, Members, and of course any member of the public will be most welcome. To that end, we will advertise the event as widely as possible – including the local Town Crier. We would like as many of you as possible to come dressed in period attire. Come on ladies, dig out those long dresses and floppy hats. There will be judging of the best outfit – with a prize!

Jim Gill. 01282 865626. February 2020.

Steaming Days this year – Sundays unless stated otherwise

8 th March	21 st June	Saturday 12 th September
29 th March	12 th July	13 th September
19 th April	2 nd August	4 th October
10 th May	23 rd August	25 th October
31 st May		15 th November