

BANCROFT MILL ENGINE TRUST

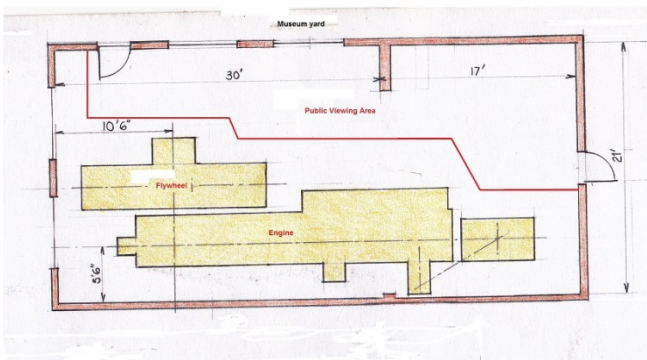
WINTER NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

Did you spot the mistake in the last Newsletter? I inadvertently headed it "Summer", when, of course it should have been "Autumn". Put it down to old age!

Another season has come to a close, and the Roberts engine has been put to bed, snug under coats of oil to keep away the dreaded rust. The old lady has performed well all year, and the new high pressure gland seals seem to have bedded-in nicely. We are also very pleased with the drum recorder which was put into operation this season and which shows us that the engine is running at a smooth and constant speed.

We are now daring to believe that it will not be too long before the Bradley Project is complete with the Smith Bros. and Eastwood engine turning in steam for the first time since 1978! The flywheel is secured and running practically dead true. Of course, it can only be turned with the bar at the moment - which is very hard work, and needs a strong person to use it. The eccentric rods have been put on, and the governor ropes too, although they were so tight that we thought it well-nigh impossible. The connecting-rod is in place but there is a bit of fitting to do with the big-end shell. Once that is sorted out, we will turn our attention to the valve timing. We have got all the insulation material for the steam pipes, and depending on the weather for the outside sections, hope to get that in place this winter. After that, dare I say, it will be all systems "Go"?



It all started with a vision on a piece of paper and a pile of bits on the garage floor (Ed.)

The Cornish boiler has been flued out and the water side cleaned. The welded seams where the new plating was attached in 1996, has to have its ten year tests before next season, and the seams have been cleaned up with a "scale buster" - which is a very noisy contraption, but makes a good job. Apart from Arnold, Richard, Aidy and Tim, particular praise must be given to Ian M and Phil R who grovelled in the flues and inside the boiler itself and did such a magnificent job. To see that pair emerge into the open from the wet and filthy nether regions was a sight to behold! We now have to wait until just into the New Year to discover if the tests will reveal any remedial work. We are praying that it will not be the case.



Going back to the Bradley Project for a moment I should mention that, although the work on the engine is nearing completion, the building itself needs some attention. That means applying for grants again. I have been assured by a representative of one grant source that we stand a good chance of a successful application but we will have to find additional funding to go with it. Next year, we will see what we can obtain.

This season has been fairly good in terms of visitor numbers and income, and we would be fairly content if it was not for one problem which hangs over us like the sword of Damocles. I refer to the ridiculous saga of the United Utilities Water Authority, trying to charge us swingeing amounts for road drainage. This has, as many of you will know, been going on for about eighteen months without a solution. We have given up trying to contact persons in authority, and our M.P. has also given up trying to assist us. It appears no one will take any responsibility or make a decision. In the meantime, we try to put a little money aside pending a final outcome.

Lancashire County Hall in its wisdom, is to close a total of five museums - in addition to libraries, etc.. Most shocking of all is the decision to close Queen Street Mill at Burnley. As you may know, Queen Street is the only complete, steam-powered textile weaving mill in the world! It is to be "mothballed", but because it is scheduled, must be maintained in a secure and dry condition. There is an on-line petition against the closure, and if anyone wishes to see it, the site is:

<https://www.change.org/p/councillor-jennifer-mein-save-lancashire-s-mill-museums>



We are very fortunate in being entirely self-funding, although we have to rely on visitors and other supporters in order to continue, in that some faceless financial wizard in Preston decides that they can no longer support our museum, to save money. It is, however, a rather sobering thought, that with the proposed museum closures Bancroft will be the sole running textile mill engine on its original site in Lancashire!



I cannot close this Letter without thanking a great number of people who have supported us. First of course is our Members, both old and new. We would be nothing without you and the subscriptions and donations you provide. Perhaps I may add that your subscriptions will be very welcome in the New Year. Our final thanks must go to the great band of stalwart volunteers who attend nearly every week throughout the year,

and do such sterling work. They are truly a wonderful bunch of friends. We are always ready to welcome more though, whatever sex or age or skill.

Appended below are our Steaming days for 2016; put them in your diary, although they are on our website: www.bancroftmill.org.uk.

20 March 2016

10 April 2016

24 April 2016

15 May 2016

5 June 2016

26 June 2016

24 July 16

14 August 2016

10/11 September 2016.

(Heritage Open Days).

2 October 2016

23 October 2016

13 November 2016

4 December 2016

We can only hope that we have a nice summer to look forward to, and that it will encourage many of you to visit us, especially those of you who have not managed it for a while, for whatever reason. In the meantime, we trust that you will all have a PEACEFUL year in this unhappy world.

Goodbye for now.

Jim Gill. Honorary secretary. Tel: 01282 865626. Mean Moss Farm, Burlsworth Road,

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January 2016.

