

Bancroft Mill Engine Museum

Summer/Autumn Newsletter 2020



Dear Member,

We trust that you are all keeping well at this distressing time, and that you obey the National rules to safeguard yourselves and all around you. My wife and I have only ventured into town a few times since before the lock-down for essential purposes, although one of my family members is working and lives at home. I have ventured to the Mill for four brief visits in the past few weeks, including the second test steaming on the 19th September – all worked well. We will run again behind closed doors in November, and then blow down the Cornish boiler ready for inspection in December. The water treatment has also been recently checked, and declared OK.

I am afraid that I must inform you of the sad passing of three long-standing members:

Geoff France was an active volunteer for a good number of years and, even after ill health prevented him from attending, he continued his financial support of the Mill. He died in April aged 93.

Naomi Hayes was 94 years old. She had not been well for some time, and passed away peacefully on 30th August. Many of you will know of her husband, Geoff Hayes, President of the International Stationary Steam Engine Society and know the books he has published in the past. They have been Members of our Museum since the very early days, and were always very supportive and generous.

Lastly, Harry Moore died on 18th September aged 86. He had suffered from ill health for some time and had become very frail. Harry first came to the Mill in 2006 and took on advertising and marketing until 2015. He was a well-known and well-respected engineer and this is reflected in the many tributes which have been made to him. The Mill was represented at his funeral.

I am sure all Members will join me in sending our deepest sympathy to both families.

On my few visits to the Mill, it was nice to see some of the regular volunteers again. I was impressed on the way they kept a social distance, doing various jobs around the site, and wearing face masks most of the time – a bit of a bind, but safe.

At least the place is looking very clean and tidy, a lot of work having been done to clear weeds and plants from between the cobbles. We've got Adi to thank for that, and in a small area around the wood store, where a smooth surface is important, he has levelled and pointed them.



There's also been a lot of painting done and as much boiler fuel cut as we have space to store. In the cellar we have done significant work clearing a great deal of scrap metal which we have managed to dispose of for some very useful cash. We have also sold some redundant items to one of our members who is in the process of setting up his own steam powered workshop.

Bancroft Mill Engine Museum – Gillians Lane, Barnoldswick. BB18 5QR

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Now – and do not faint at this! – the doors to the Bradley shed have been removed and replaced with a weatherproof screen which is in the process of final fixing and painting. These doors had been in situ for donkey's years and as well as being a bit of an eyesore, were affecting the stability of the garage as their weight and that of their associated running gear was wholly taken on the front lintel which supports the pediment and which is itself a considerable load on the foundations of the garage front. This work was overseen by Dave Normanshire and we extend our thanks to him.



These pictures show 'before' and work in progress views.

In the Weaving Shed, Peter and Brian, with additional help from Jim H have continued work to restore the Butterworth and Dickinson Loom which we were given by Reed's of Nelson in 2019. The Dobby has been fitted on top (picture on right) the motor has been refurbished and the loom operated under power for the first time very recently. There is still much to do: the Dobby



mechanism is missing some metal parts which can be fairly easily made, but we also need a complete set of Dobby Lags, which are the wooden bars with holes and pegs which control the healds in a similar way to the cards in a Jacquard Loom.



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The year 2021 brings the 100th anniversary of the death of Elizabeth Brown, Weaver, who suffered an accident in the Mill and died as a result. As far as we know, she was the only person to be killed in Bancroft Mill. Ian McKay has put a great deal of effort into researching her family tree and this will be put on display in the Mill, but we are still seeking information – if you know anything of these people please get in touch:-.

Elizabeth's husband **Herbert Brown**, lived in Barnoldswick until his death in February 1968 - did you know him?

Their son **Frank**, who was killed in the War, left a widow **Eunice Brown** formerly Bodenham née Bury. She may have died in 1991 – did you know her?

Herbert remarried some years after Elizabeth died. His second wife, **Hannah** (or **Annie**) née Ashworth died in 1966 – did you know her?

A happier anniversary was Peter's 80th birthday. There should have been a party, but guess what! We did have a birthday cake, thank you Linda Maudsley, and as befitting the recipient, it had a picture of the Pilling loom printed on the icing. I have to say I rather enjoyed my portion. Fortunately, at 80 and above, you can often ignore dietary restrictions and just eat what you fancy - and why not!

Earlier in the year, Pendle Borough Council informed us that Bancroft Mill was to receive a Commendation Award for "outstanding achievement and going the extra mile". Our Secretary, Ian McKay was also to receive a personal award for his involvement. But his moment of glory was not to be! The award ceremony which was to be at Nelson Town Hall in April was cancelled due to the pandemic restrictions, but hopefully we shall ultimately receive the Mill's certificate and shall be able to display it in the Mill.



It is important that we all recognise that, even though the Mill is currently not open to the public, there is still administration being done to prepare for the day – whenever it may be – when we can welcome everyone back.

The steaming dates for next year have been set (see last page) and of course we shall make it clear in advance whether these steamings will actually take place. The Centenary Steaming, which was originally intended to take place on 29 March this year, has been tentatively rescheduled for 28th March 2021.

Until the next time, when hopefully there may be some more positive news, I will sign off. Please take care and Stay Safe.

Jim Gill. September. TEL; 01282 865626.

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Provisional Steaming Dates for 2021

These dates are all subject to confirmation depending on the Covid situation at the time. It is essential that you check on the Website, in the local press or by calling 07707 670177 a few days before, to see if these events will actually take place.

All dates are Sundays except where stated.

7 th March	20 th June	Sat 11 th September
28 th March – Centenary	11 th July	12 th September
18 th April	1 st August	3 rd October
9 th May	22 nd August	24 th October
30 th May		14 th November

Centenary Tea Towels

You may remember that in 2019 we started weaving special Centenary Tea Towels using a new Jacquard card set. The plan was to start selling these at the Centenary Celebration, and many advance orders were taken.



We are still weaving this special design so perhaps you would like to buy one – or more for Christmas presents!

If you would like to buy one or more you can collect them from the Mill on a Saturday **by prior arrangement** for £9 each or if you would like them to be posted to you (in the UK) they are £10 each. If you would like more than five then please ask and we will advise the postage cost.

You can order by email to info@bancroftmill.org.uk and pay by PayPal using the 'Donate' button on our website.