

Dear Member,

Omar Khyyam said, “The moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on.” I think that applies to this last year, as it approaches its end. The Season has just flown by and a great deal has been achieved at the Mill. There is, however, still a lot to do during the winter months, and I will try to bring you up to date.

David and Derek have completed an extension of our sawn wood store, so we can keep a large amount ready for the boiler out of the rain. Here they are with Ady performing the ceremonial opening. After a few weeks hard work the store is almost full.

Roy, the two Phils and Jim have been making safe the doorway between the two boilers (staff only), and affording a little more height. The concrete lintel was in a very bad way so the weight was taken off by means of two substantial pieces of angle iron cut into the masonry on each side and bolted together through the wall. This required some precise drilling of both parts. Here are some before, during and after photographs showing off the final arch.



I had hoped to include a photo of Roy with his handiwork but I missed him. You can see the finished doorway on the next page.



We are a step closer to the Trust completing its transition to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Our Solicitor has now got agreement from Pendle Borough Council to the transfer of the buildings and land from the original Trustees to the new charity, Bancroft Mill Engine Museum, and we are just waiting to hear from the Charity Commission, so not long, we hope.

After a lot of work over the summer to deal with the issue of rainwater overflowing from the Lancashire boiler Jim H has now rigged up a valve to put the water-treatment chemicals straight into the Cornish boiler, and suitable safe, storage facilities for the chemicals are in place. We were thus able recently to apply the first dose of water-treatment ready for the final steaming on 10th November. We will be changing our practice this year and rather than leaving the boiler empty over the winter, as soon as the Boiler Inspector

has been - and we hope he will give us a clean bill of health after all this year's expenditure – we will refill the boiler and dose it as recommended by our Water Treatment Consultants. We now think that leaving it empty, but not completely dry, for several months each year may have contributed to the corrosion.

The National Heritage Open weekend was not as good as expected in September, but that is partly due to the organisers initially suggesting there being two separate week-ends, and we went for the weekend when we were already due to Steam. The two weekend idea was then dropped, so Bancroft steamed on the earlier one.

We had been approached by a company who were making a programme for Channel 5, and who said they would like to do a few shots of Bancroft, in steam. So, a few weeks ago the film crew showed up, together with a couple of celebrities, and got what they wanted. Please do not ask me for any details, we have been asked to keep details confidential primarily so that we do not prejudice any advance publicity on their part. All we know is that it is a documentary about canals, which will be on air early next year. Apart from a payment for a special steaming, we hope it will bring us some welcome exposure. As soon as we have a definite broadcast date we will let you know.

It is always nice to keep in touch with old established members, especially those who are no longer able to come to the Mill, for whatever reason, and I was very pleased to speak recently to Geoff Hayes in Scotland. Geoff is President of the International Stationary Steam Engine Society, and he and his wife, Naomi have been very supportive Life Members of Bancroft for many years. Geoff reached his 87th birthday at the beginning of October, so belated greetings to him.

At this point may I offer the very grateful thanks of the Trust, not only to all the members for their support, but to those who generously send us regular donations by Standing Order, or by one-off donations. It is all greatly appreciated and helps us a great deal, especially as the cost of services and goods increases year on year. If any other members would like to support us with a regular donation by Standing Order then I am sure that our Treasurer would be delighted to hear from you. You can write to him at the Mill, or if you are reading this electronically you can email him treasurer@bancroftmill.org.uk

I also wish to thank our current band of regular volunteers for their hard and dedicated work. Last, but by no means least, our little band of: Myra, Rita, Caroline and Carlyne, for all the help on mainly Steaming Days, though of course Carlyne also does a great job showing visitors around at other times and selling them tea-towels.

For the Mill's centenary next year, we are producing a special, limited edition of our tea-towels, woven at Bancroft of course. They will carry the dates 1920-2020, and we owe their production to our weavers, Peter and Brian. It involved a great deal of painstaking work by Peter in particular to make the cards for the Jacquardette. There are hundreds of cards – he had first to cut out each card by hand – and tens of thousands of holes each punched by hand. These special tea-towels will be slightly longer than the present ones, and sell for £9 when they become available next year. The eagle-eyed amongst you, checking the picture above and seeing the date 201920 need not worry. This was at an early stage in April 2018(!) when Peter was still designing the numerals. You can see just how long he has been working on this.



Talking of the centenary in March, next year, we are lucky that Geoff Shackleton has very kindly agreed to be our Guest of Honour. Geoff has been a very generous Bancroft Life Member for many years. I am sure he will not mind if I tell you a little of about him. He was born and raised in Nelson, not far from Barlick, and worked for a while at the old Padiham power station. Geoff moved to Yorkshire where he worked at other power stations, ending as Vice-President of a multi-national energy company. When he retired, he wrote a book based on thirty years of research about the textile industry in Pendle. It is called, "THE TEXTILE MILLS OF PENDLE AND THEIR STEAM ENGINES", and is well worth reading, although I am not sure if there are any copies left. You can still find second-hand copies on the internet I understand. We look forward to seeing him and his wife, June on the Big Day.



I think that I will close for now, but hope to see YOU at Bancroft before the season is over.

Jim Gill. 01282 865626. Oct.19.