

# Bancroft Mill Engine Museum

## Spring Newsletter 2022



Please note that we have decided to cancel the Steaming Day that was planned for Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June as it is the weekend of the Jubilee celebrations. Our next Steaming Day will be Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June.

At our first Steaming of the Year, we were delighted to welcome His Worship the Mayor of Pendle, Cllr Neil Butterworth and the Mayoress, Miss Victoria Fletcher. Cllr Butterworth has lived in Colne for some years and this was his first visit to Bancroft Mill. On the day, both the Mayor and Mayoress started the engine and were presented with commemorative certificates to record the event.



Both greatly enjoyed their visit and were only sorry that they were unable to visit for the Centenary Celebrations.

On the Centenary itself, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, we hosted Geoff Shackleton, eminent local engineer and the author of "The Textile Mills of Pendle and their Steam Engines", who started the Roberts engine after an introduction splendidly performed by the Barnoldswick Town Crier, Elizabeth Anderson-Watson. There were over 130 visitors to watch – it was quite a crowd! Musical entertainment was provided by Mark Dowding and friends from the Lancashire Society.

We should like to recognise the work done by all the volunteers who helped to organise and run this event. It is clearly one of the most notable events in the Mill's history and of course it can never be repeated. Bookings for the next centenary have not yet opened.....



The volunteers who run the Museum dressed in costume appropriate to the 1920's – for some of us it just meant a rummage through the recesses of our respective wardrobes – and some of our visitors dressed up too – one particular family really made a splash.

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

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered in England and Wales No.1181038

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We are always trying to 'up our game' at the mill – making it a higher quality venue so that visitors get a better quality of experience and are encouraged to come back, or tell all their friends how good it was.. We cannot emulate the National Trust, but we can do our bit! The revamping of the café and (former) store, now pantry, has enabled us to offer a much higher quality of cake and tea served in some better quality mugs, both of which are clearly appreciated by the visitors and evidenced by the greatly increased café takings. We wish here to pay particular tribute to the catering team – Rita, Dudley and Myra - who worked so hard to make sure that everything worked. They are almost invisible when they are successful, but we all know if they fail.

The Covid-delayed centenary of the Mill itself was held on a date which coincided with the opening of the Museum to the public in April 1982. Bancroft Mill Engine Trust was established in May 1986 and was registered as a charity later that year. It continued to run the Museum until March 2020. Following the agreement of its Members at the Annual General Meeting in 2018, the Trust has now been formally wound up and all of the affairs of the Museum are now in the hands of the new charity, Bancroft Mill Engine Museum. The legal structure of the new charity means that for the first time, the Museum owns the land, the buildings and everything on the site.

In the last Newsletter we shared the sad news of Peter Mitchell's death. Though 81, Peter was still working part-time and was an active member of a running club and allotment holder with many friends. His daughter Jayne and granddaughter Sophie, knowing that Bancroft was very close to Peter's heart, set up an on-line donation page in his memory which was well supported by his former employer and many friends and colleagues. The end result of this was that Jayne and Sophie were able to present to the Chairman of Trustees, Tim Maudsley, a cheque for the magnificent sum of £1341 which we shall add to the Chimney Appeal Fund. We are very grateful to Peter's family and to everyone who contributed.



Before the first of this year's Steaming Days, we had a trial run as we normally do, just to check that all was well. And what a good job we did! When the boiler was only at about half pressure we noticed a significant steam leak in the area of the crown valve on top of the Cornish boiler. Investigation revealed that a cast-iron flange in the main steam line had broken clean in two. The yellow arrow points to the crack and you should be able to see condensate spraying out to the left and downwards. To give you an idea of scale the flange is 8" in diameter and the pipe is 3" diameter.

Without repair, this would mean that it would be impossible to steam the boiler safely to full pressure. We were able to contact a local firm of boiler makers who were most fortunately able to come, measure up and fit a new flange within a couple of days, thus saving the situation and enabling us to run. For the technically minded, the flange failed by classic brittle fracture across the mounting holes.





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This photo shows the new length of pipe and flange together with the broken one ready for reassembly. The fracture surface indicated that this break could well have been developing over a long time but it would have been impossible to discover without dis-assembly of the pipework. The cause might have been uneven tightening, shock load at some time or indeed a hidden flaw in the original casting - we do not know and as the new flange is a forging and not a casting the issue cannot occur again.



If you are reading the on-line version of the newsletter you can click this link <https://photos.app.goo.gl/WcnQmpdAqhWUWvZbA> to watch a video clip of the leak When the small picture appears you may need to click on the picture to play the video.

As part of the weaving shed upgrade (more on this in the next NL) Brian and Phyllis are gaiting up a new beam on the Cooper loom. The ends of the old warps have been hung up as they would have been done when the Mill was working. The gaiting itself is interspersed with tea breaks and occasional comments which, translated into English, mean “ dear, dear, that thread is in the wrong dent” - again just as it always used to be. The reason this was done was so that when the next order came in for identical cloth, the ends on the new beam could be knotted on to the ends shown below (behind the healds and reed) and then drawn through the (four) healds and the reed - a much easier process than if each end had to be drawn through the correct eyelet in each heald, and then the reed – as Phyllis and Brian had to.



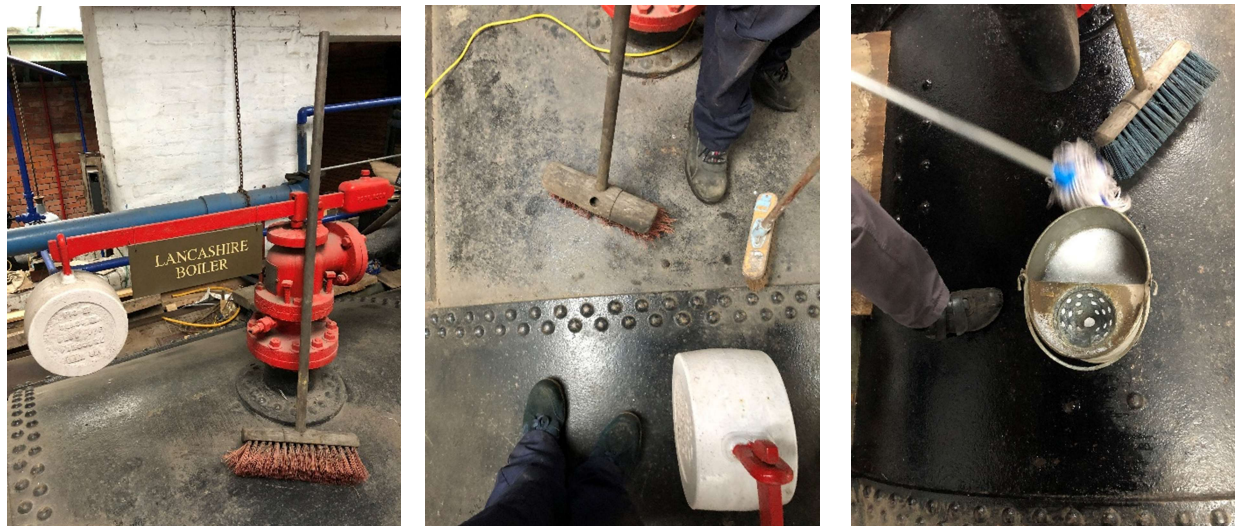
There are about 1000 ends on this beam so it is not a trivial task

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The Lancashire Boiler has been languishing under a layer of dust (and larger *impedimenta*) for a few years. Before the start of this season much effort was put into cleaning and tidying this area by Adrian, one of our more recent volunteers, and Ady. The challenge is now to keep it looking as good.



Finally a plea! – it takes a good few hours to write each of these Newsletters. We are not (necessarily) fishing for compliments, but if you have read this far, please let us know what you think of it. Is it an interesting read? Are there any particular subjects you'd like us to cover? Would anyone like to submit a short article, either Steam or Bancroft related, which we might consider for publication in a future edition? If so please let us know.

Finally, we regret to have to remind some of you that that Membership is again due and if you do not renew this will be the last Newsletter that you receive. You can renew in cash at Reception on a Steaming Day if you wish, or by sending a cheque or preferably paying direct to our bank account – details below.

Account Name: Bancroft Mill Engine Museum CIO

Sort Code: 40-23-12

Account Number: 62534517

**If paying by bank transfer please use your full name as the reference**

Thank you. (says the Treasurer)

The remaining steaming dates for 2022 are:

26 <sup>th</sup> June	17 <sup>th</sup> July	7 <sup>th</sup> August	28 <sup>th</sup> August
18 <sup>th</sup> September	9 <sup>th</sup> October	30 <sup>th</sup> October	20 <sup>th</sup> November