

# SALTFORD BRASS MILL PROJECT

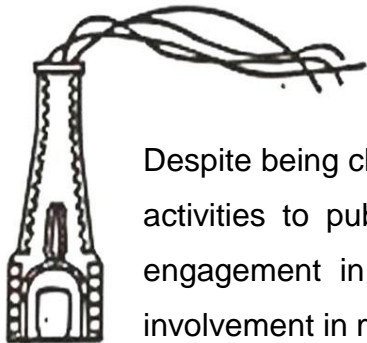
## 2014 Annual Report

**AGM: 17th June, 7.30pm, Crown Inn, Saltford**

*This report covers the period from July 2013 to June 2014.*

A frustrating year! As reported at the last AGM, the Mill was closed to both volunteers and visitors at the end of 2012 due to safety concerns, following which B&NES had conducted a thorough programme of surveys covering the structure of the building, electrical system and asbestos content. In July 2013 the Mill was visited by B&NES Councillors David Bellotti and Ben Stevens who expressed their wish to see the building repaired and their appreciation of the work being done by the volunteers; shortly after this we learned that the volunteers could restart work in the Mill, although visitors remained excluded - as they still are. With the invaluable support of Duncan Hounsell, communications with B&NES continued over the ensuing months and then, in January 2014, at the end of a visit from Sir Graham Watson, our MEP, we learned that B&NES had committed to undertaking the work necessary to allow the Mill to reopen fully. In March 2014 the Chairman of B&NES Council, Councillor Neil Butters, visited the Mill, and then at the B&NES Council Meeting in April, following an address by Duncan Hounsell, Councillor Bellotti responded that work on the Mill would commence shortly (later learned with an expenditure in the region of £50,000). At this time we also met with the B&NES officer assigned to Project Manage the programme of work and offered any support within the capacity of our volunteers. It is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of August, when we will be able to reopen to visitors; however with work on a Scheduled Ancient Monument it is always possible that circumstances will arise which delay things!

With the uncertainty surrounding reopening there has been little stimulus to start any substantial projects within the Mill, however some smaller jobs have been progressed. Replacement of waterwheel starts is an ongoing job and new steps have been constructed to provide better access to the furnace area - and, of course, there has been the clearing up after flooding. The Mill flooded three times in quick succession, the first occasion being Christmas Eve when the waters rose - and then fell - very quickly. The water was the deepest we have seen since the 2000 flood and left a thick layer of sediment to be cleared; it was also deep and turbulent enough to rearrange the very substantial timbers that lay along the walls of the battery mill area!



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Despite being closed to general visitors, the Brass Mill Project has engaged in a number of activities to publicise the Mill, including the hosting of special visits, delivery of talks, engagement in joint projects, publication of papers, development of the website and involvement in museum groups.

### Special Visits

We have been able to host a number of special visits with the permission of B&NES; small accompanied visits by enthusiasts who are conscious of the hazards being permitted, subject to caveats regarding safety and supervision. We have hosted visits from:

**Weston Super Mare U3A:** In July 2013, the Brass Mill gardens were opened for the Weston Super Mare U3A, as part of a walk around the Saltford area.

**Cambridge Museum of Technology:** On September 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Brass Mill was visited by members of the Cambridge Museum of Technology. The museum is based in the original sewage pumping station for Cambridge, built in 1894, now a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

**National Music Museum, University of South Dakota:** Later in September 2013, the Brass Mill was visited by Dr Sabine Klaus, curator of the Utley collection of brass instruments at the National Music Museum at the University of South Dakota. Dr Klaus believes that sheet brass rolled at Saltford may have been used for the manufacture of certain instruments in the collection.

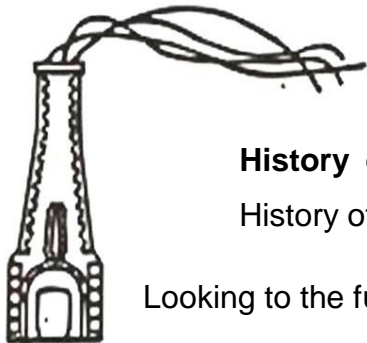
**B&NES Councillors David Bellotti and Ben Stevens** visited the Mill in July 2013 to see for themselves the work that was arising from surveys.

**Sir Graham Watson, MEP:** In January 2014, the Brass Mill was visited by Sir Graham Watson, Lib Dem MEP for South West England.

**Bath Spa University:** In February 2014, the Mill was visited by Dr Kristin Doern, a senior lecturer at Bath Spa University, and nine of her students in support of a third year heritage project.

**Councillor Neil Butters:** In April 2014, Councillor Neil Butters, Chairman of B&NES Council and an officer of the Heritage Railway Association visited the Mill.

**Valerie Craymer:** The mill was visited by Valerie Craymer, a visitor from Australia whose ancestors worked at Keynsham Mill.



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**History of Bath Research Group:** In May 2014, the Mill was visited by the History of Bath Research Group.

Looking to the future:

**Royal Geographic Society:** On 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014, the West Country and Wales Royal Geographic Society (Regional Chair Dr Kathryn Monk) will undertake a circular walk around the Saltford area which will take in the Brass Mill.

Additional requests have been received for visits to the Mill, but which could not be accommodated, including:

- Royal Commonwealth Society, Bath and District Branch.
- Alveston Local History Society

### **Talks**

A number of talks have been given by Tony Coverdale and Joan Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Copper and Brass Industry in the Avon Valley, including:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 13 Royal Commonwealth Society
- 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 13 Bath Royal Literature & Scientific Institute
- 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 13 Pensford Local History Group
- 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 13 Weston Super Mare Local History Group
- 7<sup>th</sup> Mar 14 Saltford Library

There are already a number of talks programmed for 2014/15:

- 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 14 Midsomer Norton Library
- 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 14 Saltford Library
- 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 14 Westbury on Trym Local History Society
- 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 14 Widcombe Local History Society
- 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 15 Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society

### **Bath Spa University**

In 2014, Saltford Brass Mill and the Avon Brass Industry were used as a theme for a Bath Spa University third year heritage project. Nine students produced a 'mobile display' about the brass mill and Avon Valley industry which can be used at off-site locations whilst the



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Mill is closed. The project, which was run in conjunction with the Museum of Bath at Work, culminated with an open evening at the Museum of Bath at Work to launch the display on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. The project was led by Dr Kristin Doern, Senior Lecturer in History and Heritage Subject Leader.

A meeting has been held with a second year student at Bath Spa University, who is hoping to incorporate the 18<sup>th</sup> Century brass industry into his third year dissertation.

### **Publications and Website**

#### ***Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society***

In May 2014, a paper entitled 'The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Copper and Brass Industry in the Avon Valley', by Joan Day and Tony Coverdale, was published in the journal of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society (BIAS).

#### ***Website***

The Brass Mill project's website (brassmill.com) has been updated to incorporate research conducted in support of the Bath Spa University project and to make material and publications available for future research.

#### ***Brassmill Pub***

Work is in hand to produce a number of display panels for the Brassmill pub, Keynsham, explaining the work that went on there up to the 1920s, focusing in particular on wire drawing.

### **Museums Groups**

#### ***Bath Museum Group***

The project continues to support the Bath Museums Group.

#### ***South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries***

Tony Coverdale has also taken on the role of B&NES Representative in the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries with the aim of raising awareness of the Brass Mill Project and to maintain a positive link with heritage groups in the region.

#### ***Bath Heritage Forum***

In March 2014, Tony Coverdale attended the Bath Heritage Forum, organised by Bath Spa University, the theme of which was heritage developments in the Bath area.



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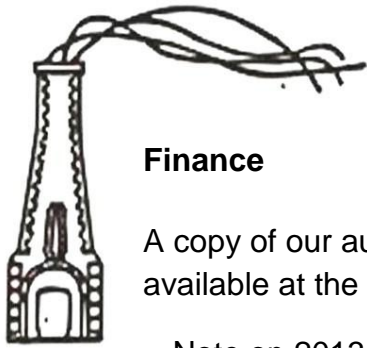
### *Bath History Curriculum Project History/Heritage Fair*

The Brassmill had a stall at this fair , in the Assembly Rooms, Bath in January 2014, hosted by B&NES Heritage Services and Bath Spa University. This was attended by many local primary school teachers, to see how the local museums can support them in the delivery of the new history curriculum. Several showed an interest in the mill, so this could be followed up once the mill is open.

### **2013/14 Work Programme - Progress**

The Plan outlined in the Minutes of the 2013 AGM was to -

- a) To negotiate a new management agreement between SBMP and B&NES - B&NES has been approached on the subject but we have not received a response.
- b) To continue essential repair and maintenance of the waterwheel starts, sluices and drives - work on the starts is ongoing; the remainder is held awaiting clarification of the overall repair programme.
- c) To produce a full-size replica of a battery hammer - due to uncertainty over re-opening, delayed until next season.
- d) To procure a model of Saltford Brass Mill - no progress.
- e) To improve promotion of the Mill to the public - good promotion is being achieved through external talks but we are unable to benefit from this until the Mill re-opens to visitors.
- f) To repaint the squash court - no progress.
- g) To produce a new Brass Mill leaflet - no progress. (Consider for next year)
- h) To seek additional volunteers to enable increased opening hours - additional names have been received but unable to take advantage of this, or recruit further, until there is a clear programme to re-opening the Mill to visitors.



# SALTFORD BRASS MILL PROJECT

## Finance

A copy of our audited statement for the financial year to 31 December 2013 will be available at the meeting.

Note on 2013 Accounts (to 31st December 2013:

The effect of the Mill being closed to the public is clear from the accounts. The income is mainly subscriptions and 'Grants and Donations'; the latter comprising £70 from NatWest as compensation for the problems with changing account signatures, the generous donation of £400 from Salford Parish Council towards the hammer reconstruction project (not yet spent due to the closure) and £275 donations following the 9 presentations by Tony Coverdale.

The expenditure has been correspondingly low, mainly maintenance materials, electricity standing charges and essential supplies (coffee and garibaldi).

The surplus for the year is about £390 (noting that £400 is still to be spent on the hammer project), so we have just about balanced our in-year finances.

At the end of the financial year the combined total in our current and deposit accounts was £10,640.

We thank Jonathan Gibbons for auditing the accounts.

## 2014/15 Work Programme

- Negotiate a new management agreement between The Brass Mill Project and B&NES
- Continue essential refurbishment of the waterwheel, sluices and drives
- Produce a full size replica of a single hammer for the battery mill
- Procure a model of a battery mill
- Address means of increasing promotion of the Brass Mill
- Re-paint the squash court
- Seek additional volunteers to facilitate increased opening hours.