



# SALTFORD BRASS MILL PROJECT

## 2015 Annual Report

### **AGM: 23rd June, 7.30pm, Brass Mill, Saltford**

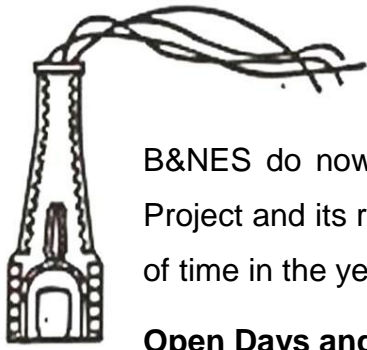
*This report covers the period from 01 July 2014 to 23 June 2015*

Repairs to the Mill finally started in September 2014 but took longer than hoped, not finishing until November - the Mill therefore remained closed to visitors (other than groups) throughout the 2014 season. The work undertaken involved a complete rewiring to appropriate industrial standards (fully waterproof fittings and copper-clad cables) plus strengthening of the structure in areas earlier surveys identified as being weak - so the building should be sound for a few years to come. Which does not mean that there is nothing left to be done - the roof in particular is in need attention. The good thing is that the Mill is now recognised in B&NES building maintenance programme which provides a route to getting things done.

Even with the repair work complete, B&NES were uneasy about allowing the Mill to operate its normal schedule of 'open days' due to concerns over Health and Safety for visitors and the application of the Disabilities Discrimination Act (not all areas of the Mill being accessible to the disabled). To cover these concerns Tony Coverdale has produced a thorough H&S Risk Assessment which has been accepted by B&NES - so the Mill re-opened on schedule on the 9<sup>th</sup>/10th May for National Mills Weekend.

Unfortunately, in mid-2014, the waterwheel seized, seemingly being obstructed by the sluice paddle which has similarly seized. Investigations throughout ensuing months have failed to identify the precise cause of the problem; suffice to say that it appears it will be necessary to replace/rebuild the paddle - which means damming the water flow to it. We are looking at the best way of doing this ourselves and have sought advice/a price from a company involved in this work (which is beyond our budget). Of course, being unable to rotate the wheel has meant that we have not been able to progress the repairs to it that had been planned.

The fortnightly Working Parties have continued, concentrating on getting things ready for the new season, in particular remedying items picked up by the H&S Risk Assessment, and with the winter being kind to us (no floods this year), a good standard was achieved for re-opening.



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B&NES do now want to re-open discussion about the future structure of the Brass Mill Project and its relationship with B&NES so this is likely to consume a considerable amount of time in the year to come.

### **Open Days and Visits**

The mill was closed for restoration during the 2014 season but re-opened on the 9th May 2015 for the 2015 season. The re-opening was arranged to coincide with the 'National Mills Weekend' and 'Mills-on-the-Air Weekend'.

In the first two months of the season, the mill has been open to visitors on seven occasions, welcomed three Group Visits and hosted special visits by Dr Stephen Birkett of the University of Waterloo, Canada and BBC Points West.

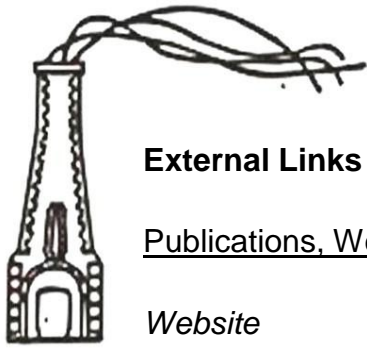
### **Talks**

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

1. Glorious Revolution to Industrial Revolution - Part 1  
*18th Century Origins of the Avon Valley Copper & Brass Industry*
2. Glorious Revolution to Industrial Revolution - Part 2  
*Later Developments in the Avon Valley Copper & Brass Industry*
3. The Restoration of Saltford Brass Mill  
*The life and times of a Grade II\* Listed Building and Ancient Monument*
4. John Padmore  
*18th Century Engineer and Polymath*

A total of 21 talks have been delivered, the details of which are at Annex A.

A further 11 talks are planned for the 2015/16 programme.



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## External Links

### Publications, Website and Media

#### *Website*

The Brass Mill project's website ([brassmill.com](http://brassmill.com)) has been updated to incorporate recent research and make material and publications available for future research.

#### *Brassmill Pub, Keynsham*

A number of display panels have been produced for the Brassmill pub, Keynsham, explaining the work that went on there up to the 1920s, focusing in particular on wire drawing.

#### *BBC*

The SBMP has featured on a number of BBC transmissions, including:

- As a background theme in the 'Antiques Road Map of Britain'
- BBC Points West, as a venue to describe the find of a Carthaginian coin in Salford.
- Bristol Radio, publicising the re-opening of the mill.

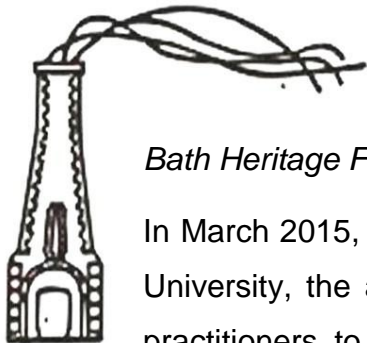
### Museum Groups and Universities

#### *Avon Industrial Heritage (AIH) Forum*

The Salford Brass Mill Project is supporting an initiative by the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society (BIAS) and the Avon Industrial Buildings Trust (AIBT) to promote joint action to research and conserve the industrial heritage of the former County of Avon by establishing a forum to: (1) share information and ideas; (2) agree policy and proposals on matters of mutual interest; (3) support affiliates on planning and conservation matters; and (4) encourage research and publish its findings.

#### *Avon Local History Association*

The SBMP has links with the Avon Local History Association (ALHA), selling ALHA publications on mill open days and promulgating talks on the brass industry through the ALHA netw0rk.



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### *Bath Heritage Forum*

In March 2015, Tony Coverdale attended the Bath Heritage Forum, organised by Bath Spa University, the aim of which was: to bring together local, regional and national heritage practitioners to facilitate debate within the sector in general, the Heritage Forum also fosters collaboration and partnerships between the sector and Higher Education.

### *Bath Museum Group*

The project continues to support the Bath Museums Group.

### *Bath Spa University Display*

The portable display produced in 2014 by Bath Spa University has been used on a number of occasions at external events including:

- 2014 AGM of the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries.
- Handover ceremony following completion of the brass mill restoration programme.
- BBC TV - Antiques Road Map of Britain.
- Beau St Hoard Road-show - Saltford Village Hall.

### *Keynsham Civic Centre*

The SBMP has provided a number of exhibits for display in the Keynsham Civic Centre and has provided text and images to be used in a touch-screen display to be provided in the library.

### *University of Waterloo, Ontario Canada*

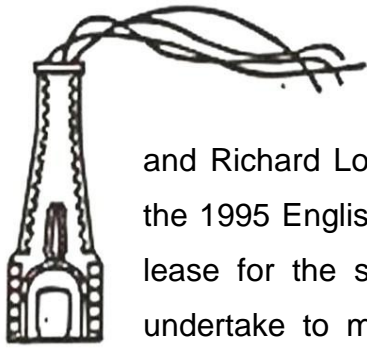
Dr Stephen Birkett, Associate Professor in the Department of Systems Design Engineering, University of Waterloo, Ontario Canada visited the mill in April as part of his research into 18th century wire-drawing techniques. Stephen is an experimental archaeologist who replicates engineering processes in order to restore harpsichords and pianos.

### **2014/15 Work Programme - Progress**

Progress against the 2014 Plan has been:

#### Management Agreement

The plan was: to negotiate a new management agreement between SBMP and B&NES. Representations have been made to Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services (B&NES)



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and Richard Long, Head of Property Services (B&NES) about fulfilment of conditions of the 1995 English Heritage Grant, namely that: (1) the local council should take on the 99 lease for the site and building (which commenced in 1981); the lease holder should undertake to maintain the building following its conservation; and (3) the public were allowed access to the site and building. Agreement has been reached between Heritage Services and Property Services that Property Services should lead on fulfilment of the conditions. Keith McCombie (Property Services) is the principal contact, with Paula Freeman of Heritage Services as a second point of contact. The Salford Brass Mill Project have supported B&NES in delivery of the English Heritage conditions, in particular opening the mill to the public. To place this arrangement on a more formal footing it may be necessary to change the structure of the Salford Brass Mill Project (SBMP). The SBMP is currently an 'Charitable Unincorporated Association'. To enter into a formal relationship with B&NES it may be necessary to restructure the SBMP as a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation', or similar body.

### Waterwheel Sluices and Starts

The plan was: to continue essential repair and maintenance of the waterwheel starts, sluices and drives. Work was progressed on replacement of the 'starts' but has been interrupted as a result of the damaged / jammed sluice. Repair of the waterwheel sluices will necessitate erection of a coffer-dam in the head-race. A technical assessment has been sought from 'Portadam', a specialist contractor, and quotations provided for various damming options. Discussions are taking place between the SBMP, B&NES and Mill Island Moorings about the most appropriate repair option for sluice repairs.

### Replica Battery Hammer

The plan was: to produce a full-size replica of a battery hammer for installation in the battery mill / squash court. This was deferred while the mill underwent conservation and restoration works. The project will be revived in the coming year.

### Public Promotion

The plan was: to improve promotion of the Mill to the public. This has been achieved through external talks and links with external organisations.



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## Brass Mill Leaflet

The plan was: to produce a new Brass Mill leaflet. A new leaflet has not been produced, the existing leaflet still being fit-for-purpose. A leaflet for visitors providing a suggested tour of the mill has been produced to assist visitors wanting a self-guided tour.

## Volunteers

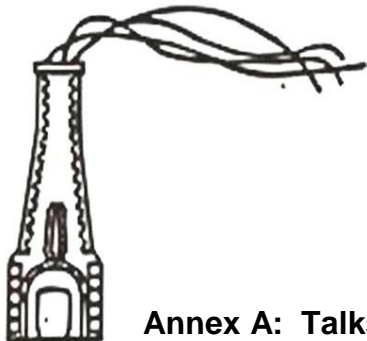
The plan was: to seek new volunteers to enable increased opening hours. A number of new volunteers have been recruited, both for working parties and hosting of visitors. A series of talks have been delivered to inform volunteers of the brass mill's history. This will be consolidated through the 2015 season.

## **Finance**

A copy of our audited statement for the financial year to 31 December 2014 will be available at the meeting.

## **2014/15 Work Programme**

- Negotiate a new SBMP / B&NES management agreement.
- Continue essential refurbishment of the waterwheel, sluices and starts.
- Produce a full size replica of a single hammer for the battery mill
- Increase promotion of the Brass Mill
- Train additional volunteers to facilitate increased opening hours.



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## Annex A: Talks 2014 / 15

16-Sep-14	18th Century Origins	Science in Radstock
07-Oct-14	18th Century Origins	Paulton Library Group
10-Oct-14	Later Developments	Saltford Library Group
11-Oct-14	18th Century Origins	National Trust - Bristol Centre
16-Oct-14	John Padmore	Widcombe History Society
12-Jan-15	18th Century Origins	Bristol & Avon Family History Society
19-Jan-15	18th Century Origins	Keynsham Local History Society
28-Jan-15	18th Century Origins	Saltford Brass Mill Project
28-Jan-15	18th Century Origins	Keynsham Rotary Club
03-Feb-15	Later Developments	Paulton Library Group
18-Feb-15	John Padmore	Bristol Society of Model Experimental Engineers
05-Mar-15	18th Century Origins	Wick & Abson LHG
15-Apr-15	Restoration of Saltford Brass Mill	Widcombe History Society
16-Apr-15	Restoration of Saltford Brass Mill	Frome Cruising Group
29-Apr-15	John Padmore	Filton LHG
07-May-15	18th Century Origins	Bath Trefoil Guild
26-May-15	18th Century Origins	Midsomer Norton Probus
13-Jun-15	18th Century Origins	Saltford Festival
14-Jun-15	Later Developments	Saltford Festival
20-Jun-15	Restoration of Saltford Brass Mill	Saltford Festival
21-Jun-15	John Padmore	Saltford Festival