



# SALTFORD BRASS MILL PROJECT

*Established 1997 – Registered Charity 2017*

*To conserve Saltford Brass Mill and educate the public on the history of the mill, the heritage of the Bristol based brass industry and its relevance today*

## Annual Report – 2020 / 21

### Aim

1. This report covers the period May to December 2020 and preparations for opening in late 2021. The report addresses:
  - Meetings of the Trustees.
  - Conservation of Saltford Brass Mill.
  - Education of the Public.
  - Displays and Interpretation.

### Coronavirus

2. Activity in 2020 was severely curtailed due to the coronavirus emergency. Regular working groups were suspended and the mill was not opened to the public in the 2020 season. It is hoped to resume the brass mill programme in September 2021, subject to coronavirus restrictions.

### Meetings of the Trustees

3. The 2020 AGM, meetings of the Trustees and meetings of the SBMP Committee have taken place via zoom.

### Conservation of Saltford Brass Mill

4. Conservation of the Mill has focused on:
  - Garden Maintenance.
  - Structural Survey of the mill.
  - Historic England Consent to carry out repairs and maintenance.

#### Garden Maintenance

5. The gardens continue to be maintained by volunteers to provide an attractive setting for the mill in the Shallows; gardening being carried in compliance with Covid-19 restrictions.

#### Structural Survey

6. Over the winter period it was observed that the furnace chimney had suffered environmental damage to the pointing and masonry. This stimulated a photographic survey of the structure and production of a survey report for B&NES, building upon the survey report produced in 2019 following the de-watering of the mill and survey of the culverts. It was agreed with B&NES that a programme of ongoing conservation and repair is required over the medium-term future.
7. B&NES have removed a self-seeded ash tree from one of the banks of the west leat which was causing damage to the monument. A structural engineering survey has also been carried and priorities agreed for ongoing work.

## Historic England Consent

8. Historic England consent has been sought to conduct general repairs and maintenance over a five-year period. Once B&NES have received the structural engineering survey, additional consents may be required.

## **Education of the Public**

9. Opportunities for education of the public about the Mill have been severely constrained as a consequence of the coronavirus emergency but opportunities have been taken to: deliver talks to local interest groups using Zoom; improve the website; support third-party research; and Investigate collaboration with other museums, in particular in relation to links with the Africa Trade.

## Visits

10. No visits to the mill occurred in early 2020 as a consequence of the coronavirus emergency.

## Talks

11. A limited number of talks have been delivered to local history groups by zoom and by pre-recording for uploading to the internet. Three talks have been recoded and are available on the SBMP website: the early history of the brass industry; the later history of the brass industry; and John Padmore, eighteenth century engineer.

## Website

12. The website has been refreshed, two particular additions being a virtual tour of the mill in lockdown and an expanded explanation of the relationship between the brass industry and the Africa Trade.

## Saltford

13. A number of short pieces have been published in the Saltford Community Association News to maintain local public interest in the mill

## Collaboration

14. Discussions have been held with a number of museums in Bath about educating the public about the relationship between Bath and the Africa Trade, with an objective of developing a collaborative programme in the near future. The museums include the: Museum of Bath at Work; Bath Preservation Trust; American Museum; and Holburne Museum.

## Third Party Research

15. There have been a number of requests for assistance in research on the brass industry to which the SBMP has responded, most notably from a researcher exploring the history of the Steel Mills and South Mill in Keynsham which may have links to the brass industry.

## Africa Trade

16. Following the toppling of Colston's statue and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement there has been increased awareness of the links between the brass industry and the Africa Trade. Comments about our interpretation have been positive with people seeking more information. This has been reflected in the new displays and our website.

## **Displays and Interpretation**

17. A number of improvements will be made within the Mill before re-opening in late 2021. As a consequence of a generous and substantial legacy from Joan Day's estate:
- A new outside sign has been installed to inform passes-by about the mill.
  - The entrance foyer will be re-ordered to improve visitor experience. A new desk will be constructed, to provide more space and ease the moving of furniture when the risk of flood is high. A new book cabinet will be constructed, lighting will be improved and new display panels will be installed.
  - Improved lighting and sound will be installed in the annealing furnace to help visitors understand its operation.
  - All displays in the mill will be refreshed and reproduced on Dibond board to present a more attractive appearance to the mill.

**Tony Coverdale**  
**Chair, Saltford Brass Mill Project**