



SALTFORD BRASS MILL PROJECT

Trustees Annual Report 01

2017

This report covers the 2017 operating period and preparations for 2018

Aim

1. This is the first annual report of the trustees of the Saltford Brass Mill Project. The project group was formed in 1997 to maintain the mill, interpret the history of the brass industry and open the mill to the public. Since its formation, the project has operated as an unincorporated organisation.
2. As reported in 2017, the project intended to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). One advantage of being a CIO would enable SBMP to enter into a more formal agreement with B&NES for the pursuance of the aims of the project, B&NES only being able to enter into an agreement with a legally recognised organisation.
3. The Saltford Brass Mill Project was entered onto the Register of Charities with the Registered Charity Number 1174901 on 27th September 2017. A draft agreement between the SBMP and B&NES has been produced and is under consideration with B&NES legal department and executive committee.

Charitable Purposes

4. The Charitable Purposes of the Saltford Brass Mill Project are:
 - a. The preservation and maintenance of the Saltford Brass Mill, on the river Avon in Somerset, for the public benefit.
 - b. To advance the education of the public in the subject of the Mill.
 - c. For the public benefit to advance education in the history of the brass industry in North East Somerset and the Bristol region by facilitating and supporting research into the industry, its working method and people involved.
 - d. For the public benefit to advance education in the metal industry's heritage, history and relevance for today, particularly in relation to the its place in North East Somerset and the Bristol region.

Activity

5. This report covers activity and progress in achieving these purposes.

Meetings of the Trustees

6. As well as informal meetings a formal meeting of the Trustees took place on 23 March 2018.

Structure of the Report

7. The activity in pursuance of its charitable purpose is described under two headings:
 - a. Preservation & Maintenance of Salford Brass Mill.
 - b. Education of the Public and research:
 - The Mill.
 - The Brass Industry.
 - The Metals Industry.

Preservation & Maintenance of Salford Brass Mill

8. Preservation of the mill has focused on:
 - The Garden.
 - The Bridge.
 - Culverts and Sluice Gates.
 - Waterwheel starts.
9. The SBMP Volunteers contributed over 800 man-hours of effort to maintaining the mill during the open season between May and November 2017. Volunteers also supported out-of-season working parties on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month, supported mid-week out-of-season visits and carried out off-site support activities, including construction of models and displays, administration and preparation and delivery of talks.

Garden

10. The gardens continue to be maintained to provide a pleasing vista in the Shallows and to set the mill in an attractive setting. Maintenance of the gardens is a major activity conducted by volunteers of the SBMP, involving on average 2½ man-days of effort every two weeks throughout the year.

Bridge

11. The lifting footbridge has been maintained and safety improved by replacing the kick-boards along the edge of the bridge deck.

Culverts and Sluice Gates

No 1 Sluice and Culvert

12. In April 2018, members of the SBMP met with Miles Barnes of B&NES to consider options for the repair of No 1 sluice gate. A feasibility study and options report has been produced, which concludes that the gate should be replaced within the next 18 months involving installation of a new gate constructed of greenheart timber. This will require damming of the leat upstream of the sluice, the location of which must enable safe working in the culverts but also minimise the impact on Mill Island Moorings business, so far as is reasonably practicable.
13. The activity should also include an inspection of the structure of the normally flooded culvert to assess its condition and inform plans for any future restoration work.

No 2 Sluice

14. No 2 sluice gate, controlling the water supply to the working waterwheel, was subject to a temporary repair in 2016, the gate being replaced with a sandwich construction of two sheets of 18mm marine-ply (36mm in total). The gate continues to perform well. The opportunity should be

taken whilst conducting the inspection and repair of No 1 sluice to inspect No 2 culvert and replace the temporary marine-ply gate with a long-term repair using greenheart.

Waterwheel Starts

15. The replacement of the waterwheel starts (the timber components which mount the paddles) went on through the year and has been completed in early 2018.

Education of the Public

16. Education of the public about the mill has focused on:

- Visits to Salford Brass Mill.
- Waterwheel Educational Model in the mill grounds.
- Talks to Local History and Interest Groups.
- International Early Engines Conference & Paper – John Padmore.
- Bath Spa University – ‘Sweet Waters Project’.
- Bath University – 4th Year MEng Field-Work Project
- BBC Documentary – Civilisations – ‘The Remains of Slavery’.

Visits

17. The mill has continued to have a steady stream of visitors, the visits being a combination of group visits by local interest groups, open days on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month and special open days, including: national mills weekend; Salford Festival, national heritage open day; and B&NES museums week. In the 2017 Season, the SBMP:

- Opened the mill to the public on 19 occasions.
- Welcomed over 930 visitors.
- Hosted 18 group visits.
- Opened for National Mills Weekend.
- Opened for Salford Festival weekends.
- Opened for the ‘Sweet Waters’ installation in conjunction with Bath Spa University.
- Opened for National Heritage Open Days.
- Opened for B&NES Museums Week.

18. A new tri-fold publicity leaflet has been produced in advance of the 2018 Open Season to help raise public awareness of the mill, the interpretation exhibits in the mill and its opening times.

Waterwheel Display – Wessex Water plc

19. The waterwheel display has been completed with the installation of six interpretation panels describing the operation of over-shot, back-shot, breast-shot; and under-shot wheels plus the operation of a water turbine. This interactive display shows how the action of water turns each of the wheels and highlights how the terrain in which the wheel is installed dictates the type of wheel used. The display has already proved very successful and has been complemented by a number of visitors. Wessex Water plc contributed £300 to the costs of signage which was awarded at a short ceremony in February 2018.

Talks – Local History and Interest Groups

20. A programme of talks to local history and local interest groups was carried out over the autumn, winter and spring of 2017/18 with a total of 13 talks being delivered. The topics covered included: the early brass industry; the later brass industry; the restoration of Salford Brass Mill; and John Padmore – 18th Century Engineer.

International early Engines Conference and Paper

21. A member of the SBMP presented a paper at the International Early Engines Conference in May 2017 on John Padmore; an 18th Century millwright and shareholder in the Bristol Brass Company; hence a shareholder in Saltford Brass Mill. Padmore's achievements have been largely forgotten but recent research has shown that he built copper smelting mills, battery mills and rolling mills. He also built atmospheric engines for raising water, a floating harbour at Sea Mills on the River Avon, contributed to the construction of the Avon Navigation, constructed Ralph Allen's tram-way for transporting stone from Combe Down to the River Avon in Bath, cranes for loading stone into barges at Dolemeads Wharf and the Great Crane in the Mud Dock in Bristol. The paper will be published the 2018 edition of 'The International Journal for the History of Engineering & Technology'.

Sweet Waters – Bath Spa University

22. In the spring of 2017, Richard White of Bath Spa University approached the SBMP seeking to collaborate in a project entitled 'Sweet Waters' which drew upon the evidence remaining along the river Avon of involvement in the 18th Century triangular trade between Bristol, West Africa and the Americas, in particular the Slave Trade. Richard organised a series of walks along the river Avon between Bath and Bristol which involved the brass mill. The programme concluded on 21 Oct 2017 with an audio-visual installation in the brass mill involving music, video and poetry.

Television - BBC Documentary

23. The SBMP were approached in early 2018 to take part in a BBC documentary entitled 'Civilisations Stories - The Remains of Slavery'. The documentary was a regional follow-on to the national Civilisations series. The series considering how art depicted the development of civilisation and the theme of the BBC West production was how art and architecture in the region had been influenced by the 18th Century slave-trade. The interest in the brass mill was that the main activity of the Bristol Brass Company, who operated the mill in the 18th Century, was the production of brass-ware for export to West Africa as barter goods for the purchase of slaves to be transported to the West Indies and the Americas. The documentary was produced by One-Tribe TV Ltd. and was aired on BBC West on 30th April 2018 and nationally on BBC4 on 14th May 2018.

Bath University – 4th Year Civil Engineers Field Work

24. In early 2018, SBMP was approached by Bath University to make the mill available to a group of 4th year civil engineering students to carry out a field-project on the surveying and recording of historic and scheduled structures. The students were given supervised access to the mill on a number of days in March and April. The reports produced by the students will marked coursework and will count towards their MEng degree.

Tony Coverdale

Chair, Saltford Brass Mill Project

20 years of Conservation and Interpretation

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Registered Charity Number 1174901)

Scheduled Ancient Monument (list entry number 1004607)

Grade II* Listed Building (list entry number 1384676)