

BULLETIN 3.1

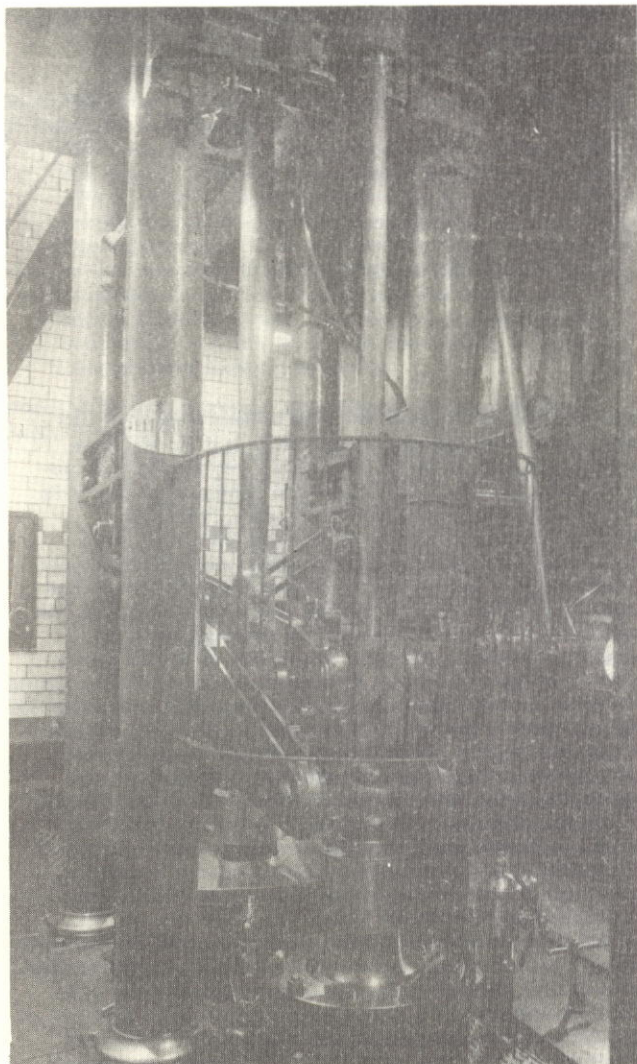
JULY, 1976

GRASSHOPPER RESCUED

The preponderance of the horizontal type among preserved textile mill engines reflects the general preference for this layout when space was not at a premium in the engine house. Nevertheless, vertical steam engines were still being installed in some mills late in the nineteenth century and when an example, thought to be unique among surviving engines in having a grasshopper beam, came up for disposal recently, some quick intervention by local enthusiasts was necessary to prevent it being cut up. The engine in question, which worked at Edwin Shaw's Clough House Mill at Slatwhaite in

Yorkshire was the first engine made by Schofield and Taylor of Huddersfield, and probably the last large example of its type to be made. It was installed at the Clough House woollen mill in 1887, and worked until the mid-1960's when electric drive was installed. Working steam pressure was 130 p.s.i. and the engine is unusual in being built as a compound, rather than converted from simple working as were many other beam engines. The flywheel was mounted above the beam and drive to the mill machinery was both by gear-and-shaft and by a rope race.

The engine weighs fifty tons. A generous private loan enabled the South Yorkshire Trades Historical Trust to secure the engine for preservation. The present owners of the mill have agreed on a 'stay of execution' on the earlier proposal to remove the engine for scrap, and members of the Sheffield Trades Historical Society, the Northern Mill Engine Society and the Colne Valley Society are presently co-operating to dismantle the engine and remove it within the six months allowed by the mill owners. It is proposed to re-erect the engine in due course for public display at Wortley Top Forge on the outskirts of Sheffield.



By Courtesy of George Watkins

THE BASFORD BEAM ENGINE AT NOTTINGHAM INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

Early in the 1960's the Nottingham Corporation Water Department decided that the remaining 100 year old Cornish compound rotative steam pumping engines at their Basford pumping station in the northern suburbs of the City were reaching the end of their useful working lives, and the decision was made to replace them with vertical spindle, variable speed electric pumps. Several interested people then made representations to the civic authorities to ensure the preservation of these splendid examples of mid-19th Century municipal engineering. On-site preservation was not practicable for a variety of reasons and eventually one of the pair was offered to the City's new Industrial Museum at Wollaton Park, who undertook to dismantle and rebuild the engine at the museum. The task of carefully taking the engine apart, labelling all the bits and pieces and removing them to temporary storage at Wollaton and at the City Engineer's depot fell to the Arkwright Society — a volunteer group of engineering enthusiasts led by the ever-resourceful EX-REME Colonel Frank Tatham. This body of stalwarts also carried out much of the re-assembly of the engine and were joined in this task in August 1974 by the Dorothea Restoration Engineers Ltd., working for Nottingham City Museums under the Midlands Area Service Agency scheme. The Dorothea boys — or 'the Cloggies' as they became known from the idiosyncratic but eminently suitable choice of footwear of at least one of their number — did sterling work on the later stages of the assembly and all the finishing operations on the engine.

The engine, which was opened to the public on 12th June, 1975, has been re-erected in one of the outside yards at the Industrial Museum which is housed in the 18th Century stable block of Wollaton Hall. What is effectively a gigantic architect-designed steel and glass case has been built around the engine, part of which lies below ground level in a deep concrete-lined pit whose walls are chock-full of steel reinforcement (Wollaton Park is in an area subject to subsidence because of old mine workings). The visitor can