

Restoration Grants 2023

This year there was a return to more normal numbers of applications. There were 21 acceptable applications, seven of which were for Small Project grants and they all used the November 2022 criteria published on the AIA website. The spread was: five buildings, one railway bridge, three items of rolling stock, three locos, four vessels, two canal projects, one road vehicle and three items of machinery. A revised application had also been received for Bancroft Mill Chimney and this met the reservations expressed last year about the detailed conservation techniques, so it was recommended that the ring-fenced grant of £20,000 be released.

After due consideration by the Restoration Grant Panel, and approval by the Council, it was decided to award seven Major Project Grants totalling £116,000 and four Small Project Grant totalling £28,800. Total for all eleven applications was £144,800.

Major Projects

Brunel Museum, Tunnel Shaft and Engine house

The Brunel Museum is located in Southwark, on the site of the Thames Tunnel excavated and completed by Sir Marc and Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1843. The world's first tunnel built under a navigable river, it was an achievement of staggering proportions, rightly christened '*the eighth wonder of the world.*' The small educational charity which runs the Museum was awarded a grant of £20,000 towards the cost of restoring the Tunnel and Engine House. This includes stabilisation of key structural brickwork in The Engine House; repair of damaged brickwork on the chimney shaft; the removal of invasive damp from both The Engine House and the Tunnel Shaft; the removal of vegetation from The Engine House walls and Tunnel Shaft roof to allow for repairs to structural and surface cracks, loose bricks and mortar; making repairs to piazza grounds caused by significant root damage; and improvements to the thermal envelope of the buildings' openings e.g. doors and windows.

When the restoration is complete, it is anticipated that 60,000 virtual and actual visitors will be attracted annually to the Museum.

Haslingden Grane Mill – Northlight Weaving Shed Emergency Project

Grane Mill was a state of the art weaving mill built in 1907 when Cotton was King. Originally a scheduled monument and grade II* listed building, the increasingly rare 160ft chimney is complete with over-sail top and proudly declares its name, 'GRANE', for all to see. All the mill's essential building elements survive, including the Engine and Boiler houses with unique almost completely restored Mill Engine, made in Haslingden, which can now be demonstrated by electric motor. Looms are being returned to the North-light Shed and brought back to working order to weave once more.

The importance of Grane Mill was first recognised by the steam plant being given Scheduled Ancient Monument protection by English Heritage in 2004. Following the Lancashire Mills study archaeological analysis, its Northlight Shed and offices were designated Grade II*. The reasons given by Historic England in the listing are its great rarity, being an Edwardian Mill with each different building element surviving with well-preserved managerial and process buildings as well as complete in situ steam engine, boiler plant and chimney. The Edwardian technology of late Stott engine, automatic stokers and the wide span Northlight Shed are specifically mentioned as is the architectural quality and design concept of single storey process flow plan form relating to the power plant. It specifically mentions the discrete shaft race for the efficient

transfer of power. It is the Northlight Shed and Shaft Race which are the main focus of the current project together with related issues, for which application was made and the grant awarded.

The site is being developed into a working museum to not only rescue vanishing regional heritage, but to use machinery conservation, operation and repair opportunities to provide practical basic training in heritage machinery skills, while allowing visitors insight into Lancashire lives through the prism of the engineering that sustained our families and local communities for decades.

Ironbridge Gorge Museum, two Sentinel locomotives

The Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust was awarded Restoration Grant of £10,964 towards its project to restore two 'Sentinel' Locomotives. This project will, conserve and restore two historically important objects which are part of IGMT's Designated collection:

- **Locomotive 6155** – built by Manning-Wardle in 1860, this is the most complete of the two locomotives within this project;
- **Locomotive 6185** – built by the Coalbrookdale Company c1865, this locomotive is incomplete but does allow visitors to the museum to view the inner workings.

The Sentinel Waggon Works Ltd. of Glasgow and Shrewsbury are best known for their steam road waggons, but from the early 1920s they began modifying railway locomotives by removing the old boiler, cylinders and running gear and in their place fitting a Sentinel waggon engine and boiler with chain drive to both axles. The locomotives within this project are the oldest locomotive conversions carried out by Sentinel, that are known to have been preserved.

East Lancs Railway, 19th century family saloon carriage

The East Lancas Railway was awarded a grant of £17,000 to undertake the restoration of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (LYR) Family Saloon No 12 – the only remaining carriage of its type from this once-thriving independent railway company. Despite LYR's impressive credentials, very little survives today to evidence the scale of the network and the impact of the railway on industry and society across the North. Much of the railway infrastructure was demolished and only 21 carriages remain, with the majority in such poor condition that restoration is no longer viable.

Restoration of the Family Saloon therefore presents an exciting – and significant – opportunity to preserve a vital piece of industrial history and, for the first time, enable thousands of visitors annually to connect with its heritage. It is the only example of such a vehicle from LYR's stock of 4,360 carriages and was designed specifically for the transportation of a family. It was constructed at Newton Heath Works in East Manchester, the main carriage building facility for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. Designed under the leadership of Frederick Attock, the works developed a standardised method of carriage construction which was revolutionary in the industry for its time. The doors and window frames were standard fits and created a distinctive style which continued until the end of the 19th century. In its latter years, the saloon was converted into a Directors' Saloon and was used by the Directors of Newton Heath LYR Football Club – the same team which, in 1902, became Manchester United. There is every possibility that the Directors that led the way in making the world's most famous football team were transported in this carriage.

The vehicle is wooden-bodied but on a later steel underframe. The body frame is sound and is capable of being lifted. The interior fixtures and fittings exist and are located in storage in Rochdale. It is currently stored outside and under tarpaulin at East Lancashire Railway's Buckley Wells works – at continued risk of further deterioration due to weather or potential vandalism.

SUC Montgomery Canal, Crickheath wharf wall

Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS) applied for a Restoration Grant to help finance the restoration of the Crickheath South canal wharf. This wharf is located on the Montgomery Canal approx. 6km southeast of Oswestry in the hamlet of Crickheath, Shropshire (Grid Ref SJ292 234) and was the terminus of a tramway connecting the Porth-y-waen quarries to the canal, the loading point being the Crickheath South wharf.

The limestone trade was the primary reason to build the canals here both for agricultural use after burning as lime and for the various areas of ironworks in Denbighshire around Ruabon and further afield in southeast Shropshire. The wharf operated throughout the 1800s and up to WW1, indeed there was a major upgrade and maintenance investment c1897. The coming of the mainline railway in 1860 was a major competition and volumes certainly reduced from then on. The wharf is constructed of limestone rock with sandstone copings of varying dimensions. Its height varies, presumably according to the type of operation being carried out. There is one section particularly raised where the tipping frame stood, a relatively late addition, which enabled the tramway wagons to be tipped. There are some rails still in situ, mainly in an area which has become overgrown with trees and shrubs.

St John Ambulance, 1929 Model-A Ford ambulance

Sympathy, a Ford Model 'A' Ambulance purpose-built in 1929, is one of the oldest remaining ambulances in the country, and the only historical ambulance remaining in the ownership of St John Ambulance, the nation's leading first aid charity since 1877. Years of going out to events have taken their toll, and we are applying for funding to restore this significant historical vehicle to her former glory. *Sympathy* has a strong story to tell, appealing to audiences with an interest in social and industrial history, history of health and caring as well as historic cars. Due to her nature, she has the opportunity to be enjoyed in person by people around the country, as well as reach a wider audience online and through partnerships.

Sympathy was manufactured in 1929 at Ford's Manchester Works in Old Trafford. She was commissioned for the St John Ambulance Sidmouth Division, and spent her first ten years serving in Sidmouth before being transferred to the City of London to work as a rescue vehicle during the Second World War. The ambulance was heavily used during the London Blitz, rescuing casualties from bombed buildings in the City of London and the East End. After many years of intensive and exceptional service, *Sympathy* was decommissioned and sold in 1947.

In the 1980s, the ambulance was re-discovered on a farm where she was being used as a chicken shed. Volunteers from St John Ambulance recovered the vehicle and subsequently undertook major restoration work to restore the vehicle to her original condition.

Bressingham Steam Museum, Burrell threshing machine

In February 2023, Bressingham Steam Museum acquired Burrell threshing drum no.1121. It was built between 1880 and 1890. The Threshing drum was a hugely important invention in the development of farming and agriculture. Before their invention, threshing was done by hand. It is

a mechanised way to separate grain from the straw. The introduction of the Threshing drum is one of the earliest signs of the mechanisation of agriculture. It made threshing a much less laborious process and was much quicker, requiring less people for the process. This particular threshing drum was produced by Charles Burrell & Sons who were based in Thetford, which is less than 15 miles from our museum. They were builders of steam traction engines, agricultural machinery, steam lorries and steam tram engines. They became known for their reliability and quality. As a result, their threshing drums were not mass produced, making this one even more valuable both economically and historically, due to its quality. To our knowledge there are only four Burrell threshing drums left in preservation.

The Burrell Threshing drum whilst complete, has a number of areas in need of substantial work to return it to a usable and safe condition. Without a specialist restoration it would only ever remain a static exhibit. We have aspirations to restore it to working order so that it can become a live working exhibit and be used to tell the story of steam on the farm.

Small Projects

Museum of Carpet, Kidderminster building repairs

The Museum of carpet is the only museum in the UK dedicated to telling the story of carpet making and exploring the legacy of this global trade, both in the town of Kidderminster and the UK as a whole. Kidderminster has been the centre of the carpet industry since the early 1700s and the Museum occupies the surviving Listed building of the former Stour Vale Mill which operated under various tenants from 1855 until 2007. Now on lease from Morrisons with a 50 year lease at a pepper corn rent the Museum is managed by Board of Trustees, four part-time staff and a large body of volunteers. At the heart of the Museum are two unique heritage looms on which volunteers weave carpet, giving demonstrations and talks to visitors. The Museum also has an extensive archive of 26,500 objects and the collection is accessible for research, education and exhibitions, and is available on-line through the website. The AIA Small Project Grant is for some essential repairs to this fine historic building.

Aspley Paper trail, Hollander paper pulp beater

The Aspley Paper Trail was awarded a Small Project Grant to restore a rare 1930s Hollander Beater, also known as a 'Hollander' at its Frogmore Mill site. The Hollander was historically significant as it revolutionized the papermaking industry. Before its invention in the early 17th century, paper was made by hand using a labour-intensive process that involved pounding raw materials with hammers. This machine, consisting of a large roller with horizontal cutting blades that rotate against a bedplate with sharp edges, beats the pulp against the bedplate, breaking it down into individual fibres. The Hollander made it possible to produce paper in large quantities more efficiently and quickly, leading to an increase in the availability of paper and a decrease in its cost. It ties in with the installation of the first Fourdrinier at Frogmore in 1803. Together, they changed the speed of papermaking so significantly, it led to the communication and education revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries. The working Hollander will be a major attraction when the revamped Mill is re-opened to the public in 2024

Loch Lomond Steamship, *Maid of the Loch* steering engine

The *Maid of the Loch* was completed in 1953 and was the last passenger paddle steamer to be built in the UK. She is also the largest ship ever to be built for use on fresh water in the UK and is powered by a 900 IHP compound diagonal by Rankine Blackmore. She was built by A&J Inglis on

the upper Clyde then dismantled and brought by rail to be erected on the slipway at Balloch, where she presently sits for restoration. The ship is being restored on our unique-in-Europe steam powered slipway at Balloch on Loch Lomond with the aim to have the ship sailing again on the loch, under steam. The project is currently focusing on restoring the “under water” elements of the ship, including hull repairs beneath the boiler room, the restoration of the paddles, rudder and steering engine. The latter is of great interest and historical importance, in that it was purchased for the ship in 1953 as new ‘war surplus.’ This hydraulic steering engine model was built for tank landing craft (LCT) and is stamped as issued in May 1945. Such items were made in large numbers for the landings in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and of course ultimately in Normandy.

Britannia Sailing Trust, finish restoration of sailing barge

The 58ft Britannia was built in King’s Lynn in 1915 and worked as a fishing boat until 1968. Sam and Vicki Samuels first bought her in 1973 and converted her into a yacht, sailing from Lowestoft to West Country and later to Scotland, until they were forced to sell her in 1996. Many years later, the couple found her on a mooring in Brixham and, saddened by how neglected she had become, bought her back again for a symbolic £1. After a spell in Cornwall, they had the boat transported to Winkleigh, in mid-Devon, where the restoration began. The couple built a basic shed to cover the boat and assembled a team of volunteers to help, and the rebuild has been going strong ever since. A key part of the project has been to train disadvantaged young people in the art of boatbuilding.

All that hard work and determination was rewarded when the boat was finally launched at Exeter Quay on 24 September 2023.