

The Murdoch Flyer Project

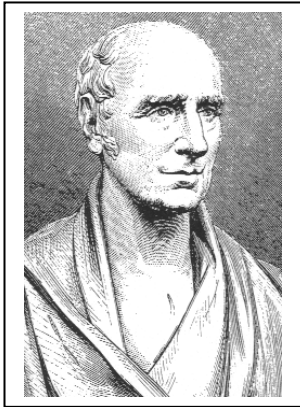
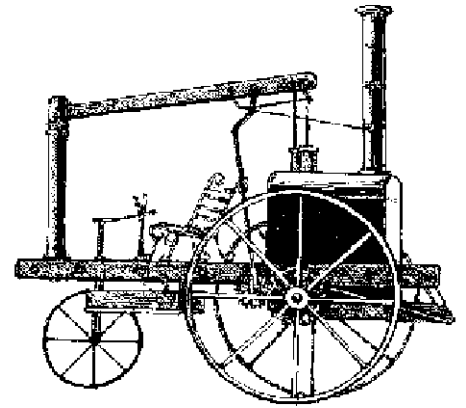
NEWSLETTER

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Murdoch`s 250th Anniversary Edition



Murdoch Seminar and Exhibition at Kew Bridge Steam Museum

William Murdoch was born on 21st August 1754. In conjunction with the Murdoch Flyer Project, a well attended seminar entitled "William Murdoch – the forgotten engineer" was held at the Kew Bridge Steam Museum in London on Thursday 15th July 2004. The seminar was chaired by Professor Heinz Wolff, well known for his television series "The Great Egg Race". Speakers were Janet Thomson (author of Murdoch`s biography "The Scot Who Lit The World") on Murdoch`s formative years in Scotland, Ivor Corkell on Murdoch`s work in Cornwall and Peter Glass (a descendant of William Murdoch) on Murdoch`s life in Birmingham. John R Taylor, holder of the Sugg Heritage Award for his 1988 paper on "William Murdoch – Mechanician, Maverick & Medallist" who is a member of the Redruth Murdoch House Management Committee and has toured the UK and Australia giving talks on Murdoch, presented a display on lighting and covered Murdoch`s invention of the world`s first practical gas lighting. George Demidowicz, who leads the Conservation and Archaeology Team at Coventry City Council, presented a paper on archaeological work carried out at the Boulton & Watt Soho Foundry in Birmingham and John Baughan gave an account of the work and achievements in Redruth of the Murdoch Flyer Project. Following the seminar, the delegates attended the official opening, by Peter Glass, of an exhibition entitled "William Murdoch – Mr Watt`s Right Hand Man" which opened to the public from 16th July until 26th September. We thank Nigel Eden for the loan of two scale replicas of Murdoch`s 1784 steam locomotive and Duncan Nicholson of Penzance who loaned his replica of Murdoch`s oscillating engine.

The Kew Bridge Steam Museum houses the world`s largest collection of steam pumping engines including fine beam engines made by Boulton and Watt and the world`s largest working single cylinder beam engine, the awesome Grand Junction 90 engine, which is over 40 feet high and weighs about 250 tons. These events commemorate the 250th anniversary of Murdoch`s birth. We are very grateful to Lesley Bossine, the Director of Kew Bridge Steam Museum and her staff for their help and co-operation. During his 250th anniversary year, this exhibition will have informed thousands of people who visited the Kew Bridge museum about the outstanding contributions to the world made by William Murdoch. The museum is situated in Green Dragon Lane, Brentford, Middlesex and is open daily from 11am to 5pm. For more information visit their website www.kbsm.org or telephone 020 – 8568 – 4757.

Redruth celebrates Murdoch`s 250th Anniversary

On Saturday 19th June 2004, the people of Redruth and many visitors to the town celebrated the 250th anniversary of the birth of its adopted son, William Murdoch. The Murdoch Flyer Project provided displays in Fore Street Post Office and at the Redruth Community Centre as well as our main display in Alma Place. The shopkeepers in the town decorated their windows in the week leading up to the big event and Fore Street was full of colourful stalls with the music podium at the end of Green Lane. The old tyme fair was located in the Flowerpot Chapel car park off upper Fore Street. The Murdoch Flyer team removed the large static replica of Murdoch`s steam carriage from the Tolgus roundabout and sited it in a prominent location in the town centre near the clock. Miniature steam traction engines were a feature of our display and we thank the engine owners who came and supported us. The theme for the childrens` parade was "Transport in the past, the present and the future" and this produced some superb displays by the school children and their teachers. The Murdoch Day committee invited Peter Glass, who is a descendant of William Murdoch, to formally declare the proceedings open on the Saturday morning and we took this opportunity to present Peter with a framed certificate signifying his honorary membership of the Murdoch Flyer project. During the day, our stalls raised nearly £300 for project funds.

Redruth Fun Day

The sun shone on Sunday 1st August when Redruth`s fun day took place in Victoria Park. The Flyer team supported this event with our usual display and the football penalty shoot-out game which has proved so popular with the youngsters over the last two years and which raised some funds for the project. Our replica of Murdoch`s "wooden horse" was on display and was ridden around the park frequently by Sallie and Keith Dinham and Nigel Eden. En route, they stopped at the stall operated by The Bike Chain and the machine was given a thorough check by Len Pascoe resulting in a "pass" in all relevant test areas. The superb weather resulted in another great fun day. Many thanks to Doug Goodrich who organized our display and to all his helpers.

49th St Agnes Steam Rally 2004

Despite appalling weather, the West of England Steam Engine Society held its 49th annual steam rally at Chiverton Cross, near St Agnes, from August 20th to 22nd. The Flyer project team arrived at the site to set up our display but like many others we were turned away because the field was waterlogged and vehicles were getting stuck in the mud. A reduced public attendance at the rally saw a smaller than normal display of working traction engines and stationary steam engines. The Flyer project display would have included our steam driven miniature locomotive and the full size steam driven locomotive under construction. We will hope for better weather for next year`s big 50th anniversary event. Thanks are still due to Ivor Corkell, who had organized our display, and team members who agreed to help.

News – Friday 14 September, 1956.

"Eight descendants of James Watt, Matthew Boulton and William Murdoch attended the unveiling of bronze commemorative statues of the three men outside Birmingham Commercial College in Broad Street. The ceremony was performed by Sir Percy H. Mills, chairman of W. & T. Avery Ltd., owners of the centuries old Soho Foundry. The 10-foot high statues, which were first envisaged in 1938, stood on a pedestal of Portland stone. Miss Margaret Murdoch, great great grand niece of William Murdoch travelled from Glasgow for the ceremony and said "William Murdoch did not have his fair share of recognition for the work he did. A good many things attributed to James Watt were really the work of William Murdoch". The painstaking craftsmanship of the statues was the work of distinguished sculptor William Bloye, F.R.B.S. Tribute was paid to the generosity of the late Mr Richard Wheatley who gave £8,000 towards the cost of the statues. The total cost was £15,000 and the remaining £7,000 was provided by Birmingham City Council".

The statues, which were later sited in Centenary Square, Birmingham, have recently been removed for refurbishment and it is hoped that they will be repositioned opposite Symphony Hall in Centenary Square before the end of 2004.

Grant from Redruth Charity Trust

The Redruth Charity Trust has awarded the Flyer Project £100 towards the construction of the full size steam driven locomotive for which we are very grateful. Pictures of Redruth Town Crier Alan Jewell, on behalf of The Charity Trust, presenting a cheque to our treasurer Viv Burt appeared in the West Britain and Packet newspapers.

New picture of the Flyer on sale to raise funds

A picture showing the Murdoch Flyer outside Murdoch House has been produced to help raise funds for the project by John Baker of Fish Fotos, Redruth and is available in either a dark wood glazed frame 12" x 10" @ £20 or a card mount 10" x 8" @ £14. Further information can be obtained by writing or telephoning us (see contact details at the end of the newsletter).

Flyer Project featured in leading magazines

Features on William Murdoch and the Flyer project have appeared in two leading magazines. **Cornwall Today** is distributed locally and internationally and reaches a wide audience with Cornish interests. The June 2004 issue carried a five page feature "The Carriage Awaits" about the Murdoch Flyer project and Redruth's celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of this great inventor. **Old Glory** is the leading steam and industrial heritage magazine in Britain with a wide readership in this country and abroad. An article on the Flyer project appeared in this magazine in August 2001 and a two page follow up feature "Progress with the Murdoch Flyer" appeared in the June 2004 issue. We also had a two page feature on the Flyer "The man who set the wheels in motion" in the summer 2003 issue of **Cornish World** magazine.

Construction of full size steam driven locomotive

Our construction fund has passed £12,000 with a target of £40,000. With the timber chassis and column mounted on the front and rear wheels, it has started to look like a locomotive. Due to recent changes in boiler legislation, there has been a backlog of work for engineers at Lloyds but we understand they have now examined Nigel's horizontal boiler drawings and recommend only the enlarging of the boiler stays. The design and calculations are understood to be acceptable but we must await formal approval before we can proceed towards manufacture of a one-off special boiler. It is likely that work will start soon on manufacture of gear wheels.

The Scot Who Lit The World

Janet Thomson's biography of William Murdoch, mentioned in our last newsletter, has been selling well and is still available. Our construction fund has benefited from Janet's generous offer to give us a percentage of her mail order sales income. Thank you very much Janet.

Murdoch's inventions and innovations – Pneumatic Despatch System

The transmission of packages through a tube using a vacuum created by an air pump was invented by William Murdoch. The first commercial system based on this principle was by the London Pneumatic Despatch Company around 1853. Widely used in stores after the Second World War such systems are still in use today and can, for example, be seen in Tesco stores in Redruth, Camborne and throughout the country.

Project team profile – Viv Burt

Viv served an apprenticeship with Tarpen Engineering and was educated at Acton Technical College, Brunel University, and Harrow College. He worked as an engineering draughtsman and was appointed manager of the company's repair department. He became a programmer for numerical control machines in precision engineering. He left the engineering industry and trained as an insurance financial planning consultant, setting up his own insurance consultancy company in 1974 which is now part of a successful partnership. He is also a partner in a hairdressing business with his wife. His largest project to date was building his own house in Redruth in 1980. Viv attended the inaugural meeting of the Murdoch Flyer project in 2000 and was elected treasurer, a post he has held ever since.

Some other Flyers.....

An attempt to re-create the world's first powered human flight (mentioned in our spring 2004 newsletter) at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina ended in disaster. The replica of the Wright Brothers "**Kitty Hawk Flyer**" had crashed during trials but had flown successfully on other occasions. Thousands, including President George W Bush, had gathered at the site to celebrate the historic flight. Unfortunately the replica of the aircraft flown 100 years earlier by the Wright Brothers broke apart as it was about to take off. The good news is the pilot was not injured.

The "**Fumair Flyer**" is the world's largest pedal powered tricycle. It has featured on national TV programmes and is listed in the 1998 Guinness Book of Records. The unique vehicle, which was built in 1996, has completed many gruelling rides raising money for charity in the UK and in South Africa. It has two wheels at the front and one at the back and carries up to 24 riders. With everybody pedaling, the tricycle cruises at 10-15mph and has a top speed of about 25mph.

Flyer Project sales items

Items for sale to raise funds for the project include postcards, notelets, key rings, pastille burners and prints of our specially commissioned painting. If you would like a copy of our current mail order list, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Sallie Dinham, Tolgus Veau Farmhouse, Tolgus Mount, Redruth TR15 3SS.

Friends of the Flyer

Friends subscriptions run until the end of December 2004, but a reminder form for your 2005 subscription is enclosed with this newsletter and it can be sent to us now if you wish. It has been suggested to us that we should increase the annual subscription but we have kept it at £5.00 for 2005. Please tell us your opinion for 2006. We are grateful to Friends who have sent us a donation to our construction fund in addition to their subscription during the current year.

Late News.....

We are delighted to have made contact with Peter Murdoch and Alan Baker, both descendants of William Murdoch, who have joined us as Friends of the Flyer. We thank "Mrs Friday's coffee mornings" for a further £70 donation to our construction fund. Our Chairman John Baughan visited Bellow Mill, Lugar, Ayrshire, William Murdoch's birthplace on his 250th anniversary 21st August 2004 and signed the visitors book on behalf of the Murdoch Flyer project.

Flyer project website

Our website address is **www.murdochflyer.freeuk.com**. Web links include the Redruth Town website, the Hobby Club website and Janet Thomson's website. Further links may be agreed.

Further sponsorship urgently needed

All sponsors are publicised in our project display which appears at public events. Each sponsor of the project in cash or in kind to a value of £500 or more will be acknowledged by a plaque affixed to a coal and water tender which will be towed by the full size steam carriage. We urge companies, local councils, funding bodies and individuals to **please support us now** with cash or by supplying materials and/or services to enable us to build the full size locomotive. Gifts in kind will reduce our cash requirement. We will provide relevant information on request. Large or small sums will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

We need more help to raise funds and build the locomotive, male and female, any age group, people with engineering and other skills. We urgently need younger people to come and help us, maybe only occasionally, with our heavier manual work. We are always seeking new ideas and help with fund raising activities and mounting displays. Anyone wishing to become involved with this project, help by way of sponsorship or donation, or join our project team please contact The Murdoch Flyer Project, 94 Albany Road, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 2HZ. Email : john@baughan3433.freeserve.co.uk Tel 01209 212971.