

A Brief Look at the Anson Engine Museum



PAST

The Anson Museum is located on the site of the old Anson Colliery, Poynton, Cheshire. It is the result of Les Cawley & Geoff Challinor's years of hard work collecting and restoring engines. Opened to the public in 1989, the museum has an impressive, operational, collection of engines and some driven machinery. Some of the renovated engines were built in the 1890's. Crossley Brothers took up Otto and Langen patents to build atmospheric gas engines. Manchester became predominant in the development and manufacture of stationary engines. Around 1900 there were over 20 engine makers in existence within a 20-mile radius of the museum. Mirrlees Bickerton and Day, in Hazel Grove, concentrated on

developing the light and heavy oil diesel engine and L Gardner & Sons of Patricroft became known the world over for their role in bringing the small, quality diesel engines to the industrial and marine markets. Local manufacturers are the prime focus of The Anson Museum exhibits. The museum was granted Charity Trust status in 1987. The museum also has an impressive collection of local history items – photographs, maps, mementos and keepsakes from the Vernon estate and from the Anson Colliery. Over the years the museum has also collected a vast array of records and archive materials from local companies.

PRESENT

The main building houses a large collection of engines, many maintained in running order ranging from the oldest diesel engine in the country, through to more modern diesels. The collection aims to cover the history of the internal combustion engine. Although we already have many outstanding exhibits, there are still sadly, many gaps waiting to be filled. Power for the museum is generated onsite by a Gardner 4L2 and Ruston 5YE. Geoff Challinor and a handful of volunteers, work on the engines and driven machinery, many have been impeccably restored to their former glory. Lack of room and resources does mean that many engines and archive documents cannot yet be displayed to the public.

Sir Nicholas Winterton (MP) agreed to be patron of the Museum in 2003. The summer of 2004 saw the museum hosting a very successful commemorative display of Gardner Engines and Exhibits. The museum has also picked up awards for the museum, its exhibits and members of staff. In 2006 We completed the Les & Ena Cawley Memorial building. It will house some early and rare engines, telling the development of the engines from the cannon to the engines of the future. Also in this building is an area devoted to steam engines – these include a Stott cross-compound mill engine and a Fowler beam engine. Restoration work on the Stott should finish 2008.

FUTURE

We also have an area dedicated to the many exhibits and artefacts of local history. History exhibitions are held throughout the open season concentrating on different topics. Our new reception/tearoom and shop is proving to be very popular with visitors. So too is the new cinema/meeting-room and our improved access and car park. We show free videos and films every weekend. In 2006 the "Rattling Monsters" Exhibition was presented with a Heritage Award from the IDGTE. In 2007 we will be running an exhibition on Tangye engines and machinery. We have also obtained some iconic engines from museums across Europe. Longer-term plans include a larger reception area, café, meeting room and practical teaching area for colleges. To go with the new look, the

museum is actively pursuing Accredited Museum Status. Future improvements planned include the provision of an area dedicated to Crossley and National engines. An educational display of the history and explanation into the internal combustion engine is another area we have planned. An interactive computer area and access to video and audio history information are potential goals too, which will allow us to host school parties more effectively. In the longer term we would like to have a purpose built archive area that would allow access for historians and researchers. As you can see, we have many plans to develop and grow over the years, funding and resources willing.