

THE IRON DUKE COMETH....

Can *you* help us to bring the old Duke home to Bradford on Avon?

So who (or what) is the Iron Duke you may well ask?

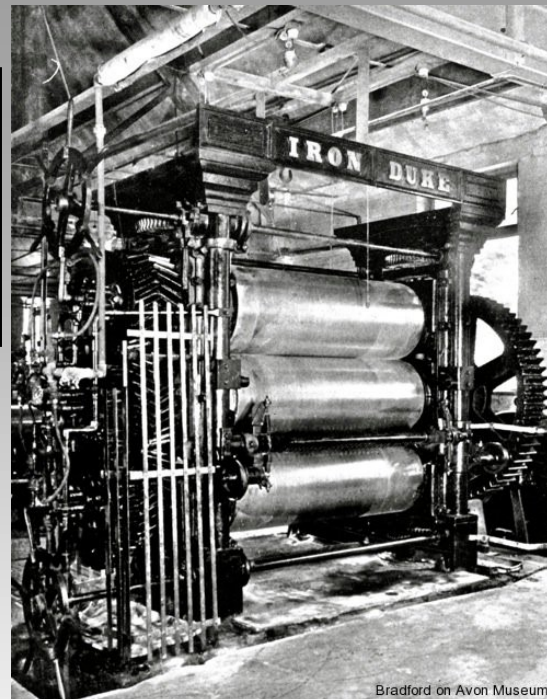
The Duke is an original 'resident' of Bradford and a genuine piece of the town's history.

He's a large (16 tons) rolling machine that worked in the Avon Rubber Company factory at Kingston Mills from 1849 to 1973. After closure of the factory, it has been in safe storage with the Bristol Museum, while we worked for its restoration, return and display.

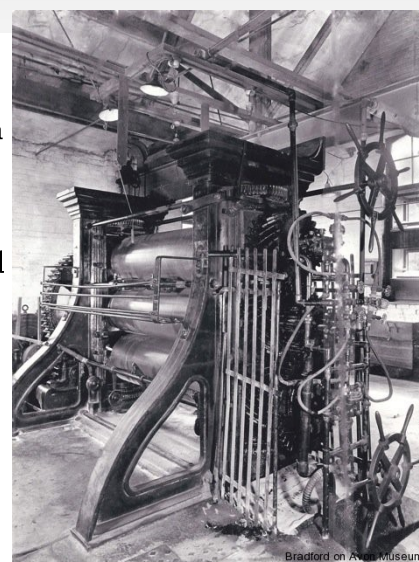
So what?

Well the Duke has national significance no less as Stephen Moulton (great grandfather of the late Dr Alex Moulton)

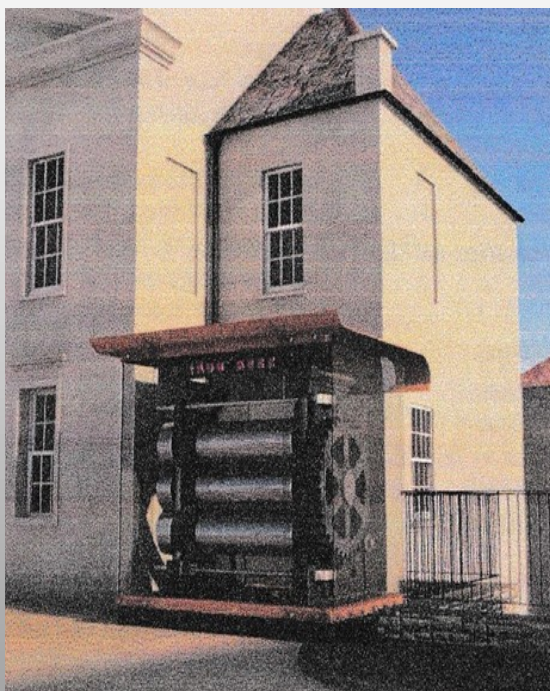
- **founded the entire UK rubber industry HERE in our town. He chose Bradford for its available water power and**
- **buildings, the (by then redundant) woollen mills.**
- **The 'Iron Duke' was installed in Bradford as the FIRST machine of its type in Europe to meld rubber and cotton fabric together to make a waterproof material (based on a design by Charles Goodyear in the USA). The Duke therefore puts Bradford firmly on Britain's industrial map.**



Bradford on Avon Museum



Bradford on Avon Museum

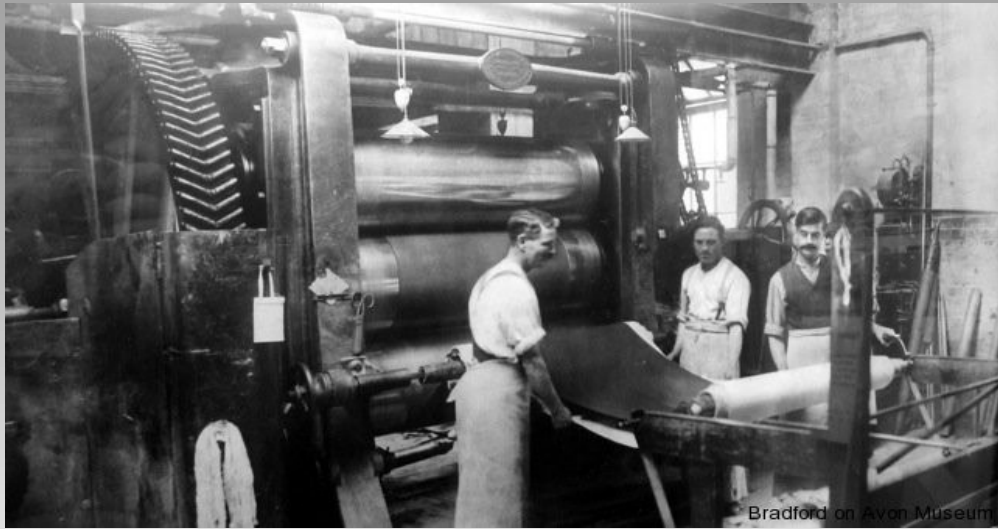


How close are we to bringing it back to Bradford?

Through a partnership between the town's Museum, Preservation Trust and Community Area Network, much has already been achieved and the project is about to start. A site is available in Kingston Road, with planning permission.

The restoration, transportation and a display enclosure for protection from the elements have all been planned, costed and designed.

In January 2016 substantial funding was awarded: £55,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund, £18,000 from the Arts Council PRISM fund, and £3,400 from the Area Board, towards estimated project costs of £97,000.



So it's not just a big lump of metal?

Bringing it back is only the start. The important part is what this will contribute to capturing and interpreting a major part of our town's industrial history, for residents and visitors, now and in the future.

About a quarter of the project costs are to provide a wide programme of events, documents and learning materials - and to facilitate the involvement of volunteers, young and old, in this process.

How will the project capture what working in the 'Black Hole' was really like? And how will young people be involved?

Former employees at the Avon are already participating in recording what working life was like at the Avon (known locally as the 'black hole'). St Laurence school students will take part, working with the Wiltshire Music Centre. These partners will produce a community film, new editions of the Avon Newspaper, and other musical and dramatic work to understand the environmental, social and economic impact of rubber production in Bradford.

Display boards, leaflets and booklets about the Iron Duke will be designed and, with improved signage, can form the centrepiece of a visitors' trail around the town.

So, how can you help?

You now have a chance to be a part of this huge historical project!

All donations, big and small are very welcome and can be sent via the enclosed Gift Aid slip.

If you are able to volunteer and assist with events, practical work including landscaping of the site, or you yourself have a personal connection with the Avon and would like to contribute, please contact:

Mr Chris Dale, Museum Treasurer at chris@cdale99.fsnet.co.uk

Thank you in advance for your support.

