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PRESS RELEASE

Museum's Fundraising Appeal hits Halfway Mark

A campaign to raise £60,000 to restore the world's only working full size replica of the Newcomen engine is steaming ahead at Black Country Living Museum and has already reached the halfway mark! £30,000 for vital restoration work has been donated by Black Country businesses and the Dudley Museum is celebrating reaching the milestone in time for the Newcomen Engines 300th birthday in 2012.

The Newcomen engine was the single most important invention of the Industrial Revolution. It was accelerated industrial development in the Black Country and ultimately across Britain and overseas and formed the basis of all later types of steam power. The Museum's engine is closely based on the original 'Fire Engine', as it was known, pumped water from coal mines on Lord Dudley's estates.

In 1986, after more than ten years of painstaking research, the Museum completed the construction of a full-scale working replica of the 1712 engine. But after 25 years of service, £60,000 of work is needed to restore it to its full working potential in time for its tercentenary birthday celebrations.

Carolyn Pugh, the Museum's Director of Development said: "When 'in steam' the Newcomen engine is one of the Museum's most impressive sights but this work is crucial, not only to prepare it for its starring role next year but also so that many more thousands of visitors can learn about and enjoy it in years to come.

"£30,000 has already been raised from a number of generous private trusts, individuals and companies including the Owen Family Trust, the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and the Friends of the Black Country Living Museum but funds are still needed."

Next year the Museum's engine will take centre stage to celebrate the 300th anniversary of this important invention. A programme of refurbishment began in August which includes replacing the wooden head frame and adjusting worn parts of the pump and the mine shaft. The valve gear, piston and cylinders will also be repaired. The work is scheduled to be completed for the Newcomen tercentenary celebrations at the Museum in July 2012, which includes a Newcomen Society Lecture by television presenter, Adam Hart-Davies.

To find out more you can visit the blog at <http://newcomen.bclm.com> or call Carolyn Pugh on 0121 521 3511.

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Image attached

Caption: Newcomen Engine, Black Country Living Museum.

Note to Editors:

About the Museum

Black Country Living Museum is one of the UK's leading open air museums. Attracting over 307,000 visitors each year to an astonishing 26 acre site just two miles from the town centre of Dudley, it captures and admires the achievements and culture of the region's past and the extraordinary impact this had on the wider world. Spanning from the 1700s to the 1950s, the Museum's thriving village, canal, tram way, school, public park and fairground sits alongside the energy of an industrial landscape of mining, steam power, heavy metalwork and lime kilns, offering a visitor experience that few others can match. We also have one of the best fish and chips shops for miles around!