

Job fears at piano workshop

10/12/19 2

by Janet Brice

WORKERS at a world famous piano workshop near Stroud today told how they feared for the future of their jobs amid talk of a takeover.

Directors at Bentley Pianos, Woodchester, look set to sell the company to main competitor Welmore based in London.

If the takeover is successful the whole operation could be moved to London resulting in up to 30 employees being made redundant.

The workshop has only recently recovered from a massive £1 million blaze which completely gutted the premises leaving just the 200-year-old mill chimney untouched.

One angry employee, who did not want to be named, said workers remained loyal and hardworking after the fire.

"We now feel let down by management as we could all be left without jobs. Many people have worked here for more than 40 years.

"We think it is disgraceful," he said.

Managing director David Grover confirmed "strategies for the future" were

being examined.

"Following black Wednesday and the Conservative Party Conference there is a lack of consumer confidence which shows little sign of recovery," said Mr Grover.

"Although we have got back on our feet after the fire we always have to look at strategies for future.

"A quarter of our products are exported but we are still affected by the worldwide recession," said Mr Grover.

The Stroud Piano Company was founded in London in 1906 and moved to the town in 1911.

In February 1938 the main factory building was completely destroyed by fire and the Bentley Works at Woodchester were bought. The fire jinx struck again in November 1989 and the building had to be rebuilt.

It was opened by Princess Michael of Kent in May last year.