

WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

MAY 1989

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THE SPANNER.

Returning to the subject of supporting local enterprises which I raised in last month's Newsletter I have received some thought provoking comments from Tony Adlington which I think are well worth reproducing in some detail. As regards the rest of the membership I believe you must have died.... not a blessed word. Some times I think the Newsletter team is wasting it's time in producing a monthly Newsletter. Please, oh please give us some support or reaction... it only needs a telephone call to Temple Cloud 52714 to let me know that you are still alive.

However to some thing more constructive, Tony's letter says:-

"As a preservation society it is of importance that our efforts should support and blend in with such exhibitions and displays of rural equipment and what better place than Rural Life Museums. These places are visited by a large number of summer visitors in addition to the numerous school educational trips. It is not always realised that within the agricultural modernization and growth a most important contribution was that of the simple, portable and cheap power made available by the small Stationary Engine. Many of the small farmers could not afford the heavy outlay of steam engines or tractors were able to remain viable by buying a stationary engine which provided a 'maid of all work' solution.

I would suggest the setting up of a small working party within the Committee, to look into the practical aspects such as:-

- 1) Could various engines be supplied on short term loan periods (We must not deprive a Member of his much loved engine through out a whole season).
- 2) Could it be arranged that, during the period of loan, say a couple of weekends, the unit be shown driving some farm machinery.
- 3) Could a special Club plaque be instituted for presentation to Members whose engine has been on loan. The plaque to be mounted for all time on the engine showing that it had contributed to County Country Life displays.
- 4) Could the working group look into the possibility of the entire Club providing a weekend rally at a museum site (perhaps fitted in with other rural exhibits, one thinks of Morris dancers).
- 5) Could the local press be contacted to provide free publicity.
- 6) As regards choice of Museums the Somerset Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury would appear ideal as a try out."

The idea has progressed a little since I raised the possibility in that the Committee have considered the matter and by and large support it. For my sins I have been deputed to get it off the ground and will be approaching the Radstock Museum within the next couple of days. Tony Adlington suggests Glastonbury, but unfortunately the South Somerset folks have pipped us at the post as they already put on a display there. I'll be reporting back to the Committee in due course but I would greatly appreciate hearing from members who would like to be associated with the project.

Turning now to the use of unleaded petrol. Again the Committee have given support but dodged the question of making the use of unleaded fuel a condition of rally entry. Whether we like it or not this will be a fact of like soon, as have you noticed that when garages begin to stock unleaded petrol they discontinue selling 2 star. The choice will therefore be

4 star or unleaded, and 4 star is wasted if not even harmful to our engines. The experts all tell me that unleaded fuel has no adverse effect on the exhaust valves of stationary engines and there is no need even to retard the ignition. So "Go Green" is the message for all stationary engines. This chicken has also come home to roost as the Committee has asked me to investigate the cost etc. of printing suitable stickers. Watch this space for progress.

Now for something completely different. During the last month Hallatrow, and the Post Office in particular, has been busy celebrating birthdays. John Emery has reached his half century (I hope John will still speak to me now) while Diana has celebrated her *@" birthday (darn this typewriter, it never works properly). All our congratulations must however go to Mr. Emery senior who celebrated his 80th Birthday and is still a very active rally member. Only a few days ago I spent a half hour or so with him while he repainted his faithful Amanco. All the best to you Les.

Finally I've been looking at the prices of engines which have been for sale recently. While the cost of all other good things in life seem to have risen considerable the prices for stationary engines have remained remarkably steady. Yes they have risen, but not to the same extent as many other hobby items, or have I been looking in the wrong places. Sale reports are always welcome. Incidentally I'm sorry to see that Derek Maybee is offering his Crossley for sale. I hope that doesn't mean that his interest in stationary engines is waneing.

That's the lot for now, hope to see you at Cheddar and please if I don't recognise you give me a Yell, I'm the walking lamp post with a pipe in my mouth.

Cheers,
Claude Lowther.

CLUB DIARY

17/18th June. WSEC ANNUAL STATIONARY ENGINE RALLY at CHEDDAR. The show of the year, don't miss it. Entries are well up to expectations, so all we want is the weather... get your prayer mats out, or alternatively send a donation to Michael Fish with a request for his best efforts. In addition to your pristine exhibit bring along your faithful Lister D to take part in the Lister D Economy Run on the Saturday afternoon. For an entry fee of 50p you could win a minor fortune. Entertainment together with a Bar BQ has been arranged for exhibitors on Saturday night. My spies tell me that there may even be a repeat of the special cabaret act which our Chairman so enjoyed last year... he's so lucky.

Sat 24th June. Wedmore Funday. Unfortunately because of building work on the Football Club's clubhouse this event has had to be cancelled for this year. Phil Harris apologises to all who have made arrangements to attend.

Mo 26th June. CRANK UP and ENGINE CLINIC at the Old Down Inn, Emborough. This is an informal gathering of engines and enginemen where perhaps members will run their engines not usually rallied. Bring along that stinker that always seems to play up (and I don't mean the wife) and get other members opinions regarding a cure. It will therefore be an advantage to have tools and test gear. Should be an interesting evening and one directly concerned with stationar engines.

Mon 31st July. Call My Bluff. A quiz based on the popular TV programme but angled towards stationary engines. The Chairman will shortly be holding auditions.

Sun. 6th August. The WSEC sponsored TENCREST RALLY on the A37 near Gurney Slade. Engines, cars, motor bikes and Car Boot Sale etc. Proceeds to be divided between CLIC and WSEC. Details concerning engines from Bill Coombes Oakhill 840868, Car Boot from Phil Harris Wedmore 712048 and draw from Brian Verrall Cheddar 743460.

Mon 21st August. Visit to the Somerset Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury. Assemble at the museum at 7.00pm for a conducted tour.

Fri/Sun 6/8th October. Weekend trip to York. Not surprisingly plans for this event have been abandoned because of lack of support.

COMING EVENTS.

Sat 2nd Sept. Wellow Flower Show. Engines are welcome to this one day event although overnight camping facilities will be available for those exhibitors wishing to stay until Sunday for the other village activities.
Details from Lois Gumm. Tel. Coombe Down 835840.

Sat 9th Sept. Faulkland Flower Show. Members are cordially invited to bring 7 or 8 engines along to this show.
Details from Rob Lambert Tel. Frome 63526.

CLUB ACTIVITIES.

Monday 20th March. Talk and Demonstration by Indespension Ltd.

At the March meeting, the Club was pleased to welcome Mr. Kevin Brindle from the trailer parts manufacturer Indespension and Mr. John Honeyfield from Honeyfield Trailers of Bristol. Mr. Brindle gave a brief history of the company, founded in 1968 to make the suspension units to a modified Swiss design. The Company has now grown to employ 140 staff at their manufacturing plant at Boulton plus many more in their 12 depots across the country. They now make a complete range of trailer parts and finished or kit form trailers, and currently attract a seven million pound annual turnover.

In the early days most parts were sold for the DIY market and were used with second hand car hubs and wheels etc. In recent years however the regulations have been tightened and from 1989 onwards fitting of ex-car hubs with brakes is not allowed. With the requirement for a 50% braking efficiency, a hydraulic rather than the old type spring over-run coupling must be used. All braked hubs from 1989 onwards must also be fitted with an auto reverse mechanism. This device allows the trailer to be reversed without the brakes coming on and does not require the operation of a manual catch that some of us are used to. The way the auto reverse hub works was explained to us and an actual hub was on display.

The new trailer laws are not retrospective so older trailers need not comply, but of course must be road worthy and meet existing legislation. Parts such as spring couplings are available for maintenance purposes only.

Indespension are now manufacturing their products to European standards in readiness for the easing of the EEC trading restrictions and hope to be competitive in the wider market. Two video's were shown during the evening. The first showed manufacturing processes for a new range of bolted construction ready built trailers including the rigorous tests carried out when towed at speed over rough ground and loaded with concrete weights. Further tests were carried out in the laboratory where the trailer wheels were in contact with a hydraulically driven ram, computer controlled to simulate any road surface. Needless to say the trailer and suspension shown in the film passed with flying colours. The second short video was on various boat trailers.

Everyone present on the evening received an Indespension handbook, this is a complete guide to trailer building, regulations, calculations for getting the correct size of steel chassis members and much more. For anyone who was unable to get to the meeting Honeyfield Trailers will have a stand at our annual rally at Cheddar and will be able to answer your technical queries there.

Our thanks go to Indespension and Honeyfields for an interesting and informative presentation. One last thought for those of you with Indespension suspension on your trailers, they will withstand shock loading of up to nine times their rated load. - happy towing.

Jeremy Adams.

THE MARKET PLACE.

FOR SALE Raised Roof for Bedford Caravanette CF or possibly Ford Transit. £40.
Brian Palmer. Tel 0984 40017.

FREE To a Junior Club Member, Teagle Hedge Trimmer. Would make an interesting exhibit. All complete, just needs a good home and a little work.
Contact Rob Lambert. Frome 63526.

FOR SALE 1921 CROSSLEY P 1060 4hp. Class 1. On original engine trolley. Fully documented history. £600.
110 volt dynamo with small switchboard and lights. Unrestored. £100.
Circular saw bench. 30" blade. Good condition. £50.
Derek Maybee, Bramble Cottage, Rhodyate, Blagdon. Tel. 0761 62795.

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HIS OWN GHOST STORY .

In the early 'thirties', serving my engineering time and working quite late one night, I was on the run home from Chester to North Wales over some very lonely roads. It was a dry and fine night and while the acetylene headlamp of my old 250cc New Imperial did not do a lot to brighten the way there was a good moon during cloud breaks and I made quite good time starting down the long flat road past Broughton aerodrome to Harwarden village.

Then it clouded over again and the road darkened and quite suddenly down the road towards me, I saw the single head lamp of another rider. The days work had been long, I was so tired that I took little notice of him at first, until with a start, I realised that he was approaching on my side of the road and quite fast. He was getting nearer quickly and unless the idiot pulled over we were both in trouble. I gave the situation a long minute then swung the bike onto the grass verge, jammed my finger down on the horn button and shouted at the top of my voice. My front wheel dropped into a verge drain, locked and I went straight over the handlebars and into the hedge. The bike went on its side and the engine roared and spun the back wheel like crazy.

For a moment I lay shaken then staggered up, shut off the hand throttle lever (we did not have spring loaded twist grips in those days) and burst through the hedge so angry I could have beaten up the drunken fool who had caused it all. As I did so the clouds cleared and bright moonlight bathed the long straight road in each direction.

To my utter amazement, the road was empty, there was no other rider in sight, no other motor cycle in the other hedge nor on the grass verge, there was not even a sound other than the tick of my own cooling engine and the swish of my rear wheel as it gradually came to a stop. It was just not possible. I had seen him, he had ridden straight at me, this was no illusion, tired I may be, but I knew with crystal clarity what I had seen and every move I had made. There was nowhere, just nowhere he could have gone in the moment before I had got to my feet and charged through the hedge.

I was very shaken and quite a bit scared and had to sit down for a moment before I could haul the bike up and see what damage had been done. I was lucky, one bent footrest and a dent across the headlamp, which of course had gone out.

As you can imagine it was a bewildered and not very happy young lad who rode on. Either my tired state had produced an illusion that had made me crash my own bike on a straight road and a dry night or I had my very own ghost story to tell.

Anyway, there was no point in sitting there, so kicking the bent footrest straight and lighting the headlamp I headed for home. By the time I had got to the end of the straight and turned up Hawarden Castle rise I had thought it out and was convinced that I had just experienced events which were not of this time and space.

The road swings left into the village and its houses, and coming round the top bend I saw that which made me slam on the brakes and sit staring at the scene ahead of me.

There outside the Police Station and clearly lit by the street lamp was a large dark coloured furniture van. On its tailboard, the bottom draped in a sacking cover, which dragged on the road and completely masked the base of the van and its tail lamps, was tied a large overmantle mirror which was all of six foot square.

Lifting the sacking from the road was Constable Pryce Evans, his cycle propped against the van, and a man who was obviously the van driver helping him.

I sat astride the bike, realising that my ghost lamp had been my own headlamp reflected back at me from the great mirror. Its fallen shroud had completely blended the dark van into the road surface and, at the same time, muffled any exhaust sound. My own tired state, the poor headlamp on my machine and the fact that what wind there was blew away from me, had all combined to set up a situation which seemed a mystery. Had I lingered a few moments more on the road I would have missed the tableau I now saw before me, I would have then never guessed the truth.

So you see I don't have a Ghost Story after all.

Tony Adlington.

SPACE FILLER.

Comment from near relative on looking at the stationary engines resting in the garage:-

"Yes, they are very nice, but what do they do?"

Well there's no answer to that one is there?