

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. OCTOBER 1982

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SCIENCE MUSEUM OPEN DAY, WROUGHTON

This report is written with a spectator's eye. We (my wife and I) arrived at Wroughton after Sunday lunch. Wroughton is a war-time airfield set on the edge of the downs above Swindon with panoramic views. During the war, 15 M.U. and 76 M.U. were based here; now the airfield is a Naval Aircraft Yard. However, for this show, the runways were used as car parks, full from end to end. After a lengthy walk, we came upon two huge ploughing engines, a McClaren and a Fowler hauling a Fowler six furrow plough across about half a mile of land. In the same area also ploughing, were a pair of Shire horses, a 1918 Titan tractor, a 1943 Standard Fordson, and a modern Ford 8200 pulling a six furrow plough; a fine example of the evolution of ploughing. After watching for a while, we approached a temporary railway line, upon which a full sized replica of the locomotive "Rocket" was doing a brisk trade in rides; judging by the length of the queue. We then arrived outside hanger D4, along the East side of which were the Wessex and Cotswold Engine Clubs separate enclosures - why separate? The only Wessex engine which I recognised was Eric's Amanco, having met him and Tony Jones at Uffington Rally only two weeks previously. The Wessex members present were John Emery with his 1923 Ruston Hornsby IP (magnificently restored; Robin Lambert's 1931 Ruston Hornsby PB & mechanical hacksaw; Dave Cleaver and his Lister DK; Bill Appleby with his Lister J and Ian Skuse and his Wolseley Sheep Shearing outfit. As Eric was the only Wessex member I knew, the usual nattering took place; this resulted in my being "conned" into writing this article (no hard feelings Eric!! just a bit of help from a far flung member). Next, it was on to the other compound as I know several Cotswold members. As far as I can remember, there were two Petters, a Bamford, Lister Diesel, Lister D-types, and a Lister A, all in all, a good show of engines, attracting a crowd of interested spectators. I was then dragged away by Jean, my wife, into D4 hanger to see all manner of stalls and exhibits. There were various Railway, Canal, Transport, Marine and Aircraft Preservation Societies in here. On the COEPS stand there was a very interesting Wolseley 1½ hp engine of the 1923-37 period, awaiting restoration. On then to Hanger D3 which once housed Lancasters, Spitfires, and, in later years, Canberras. In here, the Science Museum has a display of cars, horse-drawn vehicles, two ploughing engines, some of Fred Smith's collection of tractors, combines, pea-pickers, and also space rockets and other space hardware. Up in the roof of this hanger was a space satellite, also a pedal powered aircraft made of wood and plastic film; the most flimsy aircraft I have ever seen. Outside this hanger was a Showman's engine powering a Fair Organ. At this point, Jean had decided she had seen enough so I continued on my own. I headed for C3 Hanger in which I had once worked, being overtaken on the way by an unknown Wessex member buzzing past on a powered pedal cycle which I remembered seeing in the Wessex compound earlier. (Probably Stuart "Ton-Up" Ashman...Ed). Outside the Hanger, a line of Vintage buses, vans and lorries were running trips around the air-field. Inside were aircraft of yesteryear; a 1934 De Havilland Rapide, 1934 Douglas DC3, 1933 Boeing 247D (flown from Florida this year via Greenland and Iceland), Comet in Dan-Air colours, Aero-engines, a Trident recently taken out of service, and many more lorries, vans and engines. A final walk around the Hanger and it was time for that long trek back to the car after a very pleasant afternoon. I hope all Wessex exhibitors had an equally pleasant day out and a safe journey home.

Jim Miller

TROWBRIDGE COUNTRY FAIR

On Saturday 4th September I went to Trowbridge Park Country Fair. There was nine engines on show, proudly presented by their owners. There was Mark Tilly's 1926 2 hp Ruston Hornsby, John Emery's 1923 Ruston Hornsby - this was a nice engine, Rod Lambert's 1947 Petter 1½ hp; he also had a bicycle, Bill Appleby's 1936 Ruston Hornsby 8 hp, and Tony Jones' 1926 Crossley 3 hp. Tony was advertising for an engine minder (female!!!) to polish brass and make tea, he spent all day eating. Mary Butler's Wolseley 1½ hp was also very nice. Derek Maybee had a 1917 Amanco 1¾, Wilf and Les Crouch a Wolseley 1½ hp, they had some lights, Mike and Jane Cannon's Tangye 1917 2¾ hp started with a blowlamp. We had a fine time. There was 100 stalls. There was a Disco and £18 was collected for C.L.I.C.

Stephen Butler (aged 7)

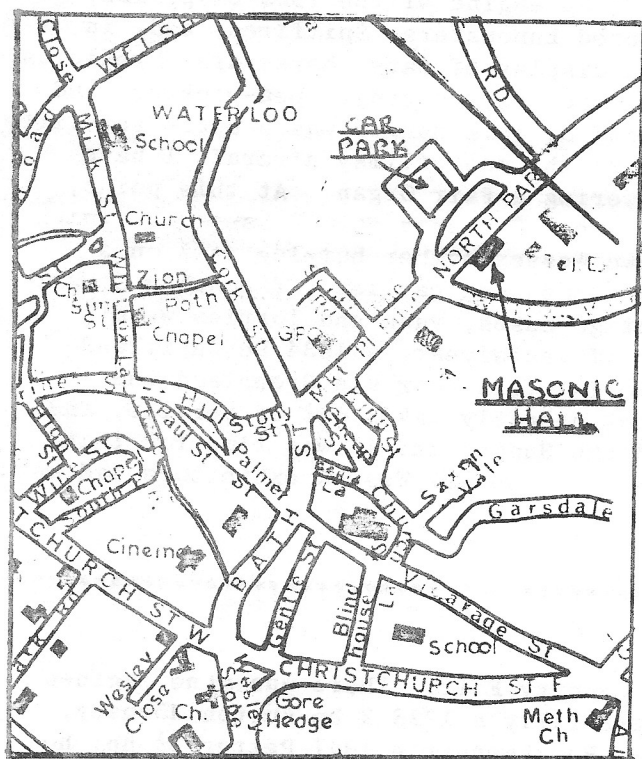
NESTON PARK RALLY (I)

Off we set, all the family; complete with lorry and a caravan on tow as we were hoping for a nice trouble free Bank Holiday weekend at Neston - this was our first overnight stay at a rally. Well, as we reached about half-way of our journey, Phil thought he would like to check the newly fitted towbar, lights, etc. We pulled into the next lay-by and he was doing just that when...CRASH... I heard the sound of breaking glass. I turned around to see he had managed somehow to push his hand right through our good friend's tidy caravan window, sustaining several

nasty cuts to his hand and wrist. Nevertheless, on we pressed and reached the site to find to our surprise, several people we knew already there. Surprising because it was only Friday afternoon! Now then, after unhitching, etc. the next job was to erect the awning and as we had never even put a tent up before, it was quite a performance. After an "inside-out" first attempt, we finally achieved it. A nice calming cup of tea and a wander around and the evening soon closed in, followed by a squabble as to who would sleep next to the broken pane. In the end the boys and I decided the culprit should, so after a bit of moaning we settled down for the night (a bit of a COLD night). Dawn broke, and I think we were up and had had breakfast by about 7 o'clock. I had in the back of my mind that something was going to happen all day but the day went well with a lovely display of engines, tractors, steam-rollers, and plenty of stalls which helps make a rally for the ladies. As the sheets were going over the engines, the second disaster was preparing to happen. Phil and our youngest sone, Andrew, went to the main arena to play football ending up with a friendly wrestle on the grass. The next thing I noticed through the broken pane was a very angry looking husband holding his mouth and muttering that "the little b.....r had just knocked my tooth out". On closer inspection and trying to stop smiling, I noticed his crown hanging out; but no toothache, so after a few minutes he had cooled down. Later on we went to the Beer-tent where I rather think too much beer was drunk to drown his sorrows as I felt a body climb out over me several times during the night. Sunday passed all too quickly with the weather holding out very good and many spectators to talk to. We saw a lot of new faces and quite a few different engines although Wessex members were quite abundant; Bill Appleby, Brian Munt, Rob Lambert, to name a few. Sorry all the rest but I can never remember all your names! Monday was an equally pleasant day except a nasty storm just as the tug-o-war was about to start. Soon the rally was over and we packed up the engine and van and headed homewards; having enjoyed myself so much that now I am hoping we can acquire a caravan of our own for next season - and enjoy even more entertainment than we ever thought.

Audrey Harris

THE W.S.E.C. ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE



November 27th is the date to remember for our Club's Annual "knees-up". Entry forms were attached to the July Newsletter; if you have forgotten to get your tickets, there could well be some left, so apply as soon as possible to Diana Emery on Temple Cloud 52939. The venue is the same as last year, the Masonic Hall, Frome, Somerset. Also the price is the same as last year, £5 per head, payable in advance, of course! Music this year is "live" by SIRROCCO, a local group with a good reputation for music to suit all tastes. A free glass of sherry at the door to set the mood, a good meal, some light after dinner speeches, and, of course, the raffle. This will be shorter this year with a limited number of better prizes to allow more time for the dancing.

Arrive 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. start.

The small map is for the guidance of those not familiar with the centre of Frome.

HARRY'S MISCELLANEA (A regular round-up of thoughts from our random rallyist)

At the Wilts group N.V.T.E.C. Atworth Rally a tug-o-war took place, a hastily picked team under the coaching of Ray Saunders, took part. Naturally they LOST because they wore wellies!! No grip on grass - and they were pulling against experts. At the Stonehouse Rally, a well-known Sodbury Vale member brought his Amanco but left his starting handle at home. As he could not find another one it was decided to start it with a belt off a standard Fordson. After quite a time, the belt was crossed to make it turn in the CORRECT direction; then it started immediately (mine starts on the flywheels... Ed). In the sale there was a very rough 1920 International, not sold as the reserve of £100 was not reached. Quite a few Wessex members attended; some were in the programme but did not bother to come. Every time I go to the Stonehouse Rally, I break down on the same patch of road on the way home. So its a good job I am finishing rallying for good this year.

Early in July I wrote to H.R.H. Charles, Prince of Wales, inviting him and Diana to our

rally at Troublehouse Inn, near Tetbury on August 15th. About a week after the rally, (from which £45 was given to Tetbury Hospital) I received a letter from Buckingham Palace thanking me for the invite and how they could not come; yet Charles drove past on his way to play polo at Cirencester. Here is a transcript of the letter which I can and will produce when asked there are a few doubting people in the Sodbury Vale Group as to me actually receiving this letter!!

Dear Mr. Champion, The Prince of Wales has asked me to 'thank you for your letter in which you so kindly asked of he and the Princess would like to attend your Mini-Steam Rally. I am afraid their Royal Highnesses were unable to accept your kind invitation since they had already made their plans for that day, some time ago. Nevertheless, their Royal Highnesses much appreciated your thought in asking them. Yours sincerely, Major David Bromhead, Equerry to H.R.H. Prince of Wales.

Harry Champion

THE AUGUST CLUB MEETING

We were pleased to be able to attend the Club 'Crank and Buy' whilst on holiday at the end of August. As usual the event was held at the Old Down Inn car park much to the amusement of passing locals. The evening was fine and dry and the proceedings were well under way when we arrived at about 7.30 p.m., lighting being provided by the Frome Electric Light Co.! Some twelve engines were running during the evening, considerable interest being shown in two or three new acquisitions having an outing in the evening air.

A large number of useful, potentially useful, potentially useless and useless items were available for sale or exchange and it appears that almost all those attending found something of use. A surprising amount of interest was shown in the number of marrows being sold!! The highlight of the evening was when a van belonging to Mr. Smith of Trowbridge arrived full of ex-government and surplus items at reasonable prices, including what must be a large proportion of the world's Norman T300 spares.

Towards the end of the evening, the draw for the raffle took place; winners being as follows:- Lee Chandler, small garden tool set; Ray Earle, tow rope; Mrs. Willan, mints; no one seemed to want the fourth prize of plums, but finally Tony Jones was persuaded to accept them. (If you don't want it and its edible - try Tony....Ed).

Barrie and Sue Thomas (Truro)

NESTON PARK RALLY, ATWORTH (2)

A large field close to the small village of Atworth was the site of the Neston Park Rally which was for the first time, a three day event. This rally grows more popular each year but, unfortunately, had keen competition, being held on a Bank Holiday, with Meccari just a few miles down the road, and Uffington and Honiton Hill Rallies, which are also very popular. We arrived early Saturday morning and to our surprise, found most of the exhibitors in position. A new exhibit to this show was Ron Frampton's impressive display of working models and another rather unusual Enfield Horizontal Twin Diesel was on display which, with Mike Harris' Lister Diesel, did some useful generating during the dark evenings.

Ring events took place daily, with old vehicles and historic motor-bikes going around. On Monday a tug-o-war competition took place with a very gallant local team made up of enginemen pulling against professional teams. This scratch team was under threat and pressure from coach, Ray Saunders, and could not hold out quite long enough to win; even though the referee was from the engine line-up (Phil Harris was referee; and now we all know why HE wasn't pulling, don't we? Well if you don't you haven't read page 2!!!).

A nice selection of stalls, proved interesting for the browsers, but some mysteriously disappeared on the Sunday afternoon; also Kookie the Clown was a great hit with the children. Tom Smith had his interesting display of curios set up. Evening entertainment included live music plus a video disco. A very nice three days; with the weather extremely kind to us and all credit must go to Graham Escott who seemed to work non-stop for this event, and to all his helpers who made it all possible.

Jackie Lambert

WANTED: Large steel or cast iron Frying Pans, must be in good condition and about 12" to 18" in Tony Jones, 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge, Wilts.

Information on Allen & Simmonds Auto Culto Cultivator. Contact Brian Verrall, 2 Northville Place, Lower North Street, Cheddar, Som. Tel. Cheddar 743460 evenings.

Young lady, preferably aged 24-36, as rally companion for 1983 season, and/or with view to lasting friendship. Ability to make unlimited quantities of tea and to cook, a definite advantage. Tel Trowbridge 5351.

FOR SALE: Barford motorscythe, similar to Allen Scythe, needs only slight attention to put into useful working order. £85

Lister Junior, 1941, complete and original but dismantled. £45

JAP air-cooled engine on iron wheeled trolley with water pump, minus a few off parts and rather tatty. £25

Small air-cooled Villiers engine about 1940. Called "The V-Engine". £15

Lister 6 hp. L-type with "combustion" style head, frosted but has recently run for about half an hour. £75

Very interesting small Dennis air-cooled engine, made about mid-30's, drip-feed oiler, magneto needs attention, new rings, mounted on wooden skids, has been rallied all this season on lorry with Blackstone. £55

Any of these engines for part-exchange for small caravan - or caravan bought at right price. Phil Harris, 2 Cocklake, Wedmore, Som., Tel. Wedmore 712048.

OBITUARY: We regret to record the recent passing of one of the Stationary Engine world's most well-known figures. Nelson Ewer of Lymington was THE recognised authority on Blackstone engines, drawn from many years of working with this and many other makes of engines. His interesting articles and comments in the Stationary Engine Magazine were always worthwhile, accurate and eminently readable. The Wessex Stationary Engine Club tenders its condolences.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- November 29th "Kennet & Avon Canal" an illustrated talk at Old Down Inn, Emborough, by our friend, Bob Scudamore.
- December 4th Club Jumble Sale at St. Peters Church Hall, Westfield, Radstock. This is a most important fund-raising event to help subsidise the Dinner & Dance of the previous week. Show your appreciation of the evening by coming along and bringing any jumble, toys, books, and especially bric-a-brac, to sell to restore Club funds. If you can't come, please send. Doors open 2.00 p.m. promptly. Hall usually open from mid-day onwards for helpers.
- January 31st "The Crofton Society". A talk on the Berkshire Pumping Station, and its beam engine.
- February 28th The Annual General Meeting. Held, as always, in the Club Room at the Old Down Inn. This is your chance to voice your opinions as to the running of the Club, and, instead of taking a back seat, get onto the Committee and take an active part. Also pay your 1982 (revised?) subscriptions!
- March 28th "Cindy" at last, by popular demand we have the infamous epic about restoring a traction engine. Certain Club members who have seen this film, are still a bit breathless when they talk about it. We promise you an evening to remember!!!
- April 25th "Diesel Engines". A talk by Mr. Day of Bristol.
- May 23rd "Going Dutch". An illustrated talk by Pete Steele and Graham Escott about their experiences rallying last year in Holland.
- June 27th Another of the very popular "Crank & Buy" meetings at the Old Down Inn, Emborough.

WROUGHTON ROUND-UP

"Oh my head, so much for that -?*' =y Rugby Club". First Question "Where are we going today Dad?". "I don't know Son", "Wroughton" says mother. So off we set, leaving the sun at Bristol. We arrived at a gloomy, misty Science Museum and it did not clear up all day. What with the crowds, hangers that are like Alladin's caves, etc. we all had a good time. The W.S.E.C. was represented by John Emery with his very fine Ruston Hornsby 5 hp., Eric Brain with his Amanco, which emitted strange sounds until he annointed it in the right places with an oil can, Robin Lambert who was STILL trying to cut a piece of steel on his Ruston powered mechanical hacksaw, Bill Appleby, and his Lister J-type, who else? .. Oh yes - myself with the Wolseley sheep-shearing set! It is a pity that some of our members entered and then did not bother to attend. How they spoiled the day for those who would have liked their entry tickets. Rod Lambert had his Cairns motorised push bike which caused great fun for all our Club. I set off on it after instruction but found the saddle a bit hard! There is so much to see at Wroughton, all types of ploughing, radio controlled boats, planes, hovercraft, firefighting, rocket rides! all in all, a very nice place to be on a Sunday after the night before!!

Bacchanalian Bernard

OVERHEARD at Wroughton: A well-known Wessex member wheeling a sheep shearing set past a group of enginemen was heard to mutter "If only I could FIND some b....y sheep, I'd shear the b.....s".