



CRANKING



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The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

Editor's Note

You don't get a newsletter for ages then two come along together! I have received several complaints about the newsletters getting out of sync, so as I had plenty of copy for a change I thought I'd put one out so that from next month we should be back where we were. As long as your contributions are received by the deadline the next issue should be around the end of the month. Contributions and applications for the post of editor to:

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Chairman's Report

Monday 28th October club night. This was going to be the Wessex Club's model night, regrettably not the long-legged type in a short skirt.

I am very grateful to all those club members who came along and put on quite a show of excellent models, from steam and electric powered 16mm trains to Roger Kempson giving us such an insight into how he restores music boxes, and I do not mean the tiny ones with the fairy that prances around when the lid is opened. Roger had brought along a box that he had spent months rebuilding, and repinning the cylinder. Talk about a labour of love, this alone I believe took around nine months to complete, let alone the rest of the work.

I took along a collection of steam engines that I have collected and restored over the years, Ted had brought a brief case full of model aircraft engines, they are for sale. Interested? then ring Ted on 07751918283. I was very tempted, but having so many projects on the go at this time one has to draw the line and stop buying goodies and toys.

Now to a more serious subject. **YOUR CLUB IS WITHOUT A VICE CHAIRMAN** and the committee needs one fast; there must be someone who can take on this role, it is far from rocket science, just a couple of hours a month, and with the loss of our dear friend Gary we now need a new committee member, so why not come and join us and help run the Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd. for the future?

Our evening meal at the Old Down Inn will be in January 2020, if you want to be included in the happy throng please give me a call. It is not too late but it soon will be.

Time is passing and the new year looms ahead. I am sat here trying to conclude a list of events and speakers for 2020, CAN YOU HELP? If you can please please give me a call, I am having sleepless nights trying to arrange a list of events and evening speakers for 2020 so a little help would be most welcome.

One new event for 2020 will be the autojumble and sale at Frome market at Standerwick on March 28th. I won't forget as it's my birthday, so please give this new event your support. FULL DETAILS give Ted a ring on 07751918283.

One for diary is the 6th June, Wedmore crank-up at Sweets Peat & Science Museum, give Herb Gane a call for full details.

Now has anyone in the club access to a small marquee, around 30ft x 20ft? We want one around this size for the 20th and 21st June 2020. Why? Well we have an Abba tribute band booked for the rally and they will be performing over the two days, during the day. This with many other new attractions will make next year's rally something special. If you can help please let me know.

Tuesday 5th November saw a large number of Gary Sainsbury's friends and family assemble at St Mary's Church in Market Lavington to say goodbye to a good man and friend. Along with the sadness was the feeling that we were all better for having known him. Rest in peace Gary, you were taken too soon.

Eric Gay, Chairman

Editor's note: The following article, which I have taken the liberty of editing slightly, was sent to me by Robin, and may bring back some memories for older members and be informative for newer ones.

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd.

A Brief History

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd. was formed in **September 1976** by a group of enthusiasts of early gas and oil engines. The nearest preservation club at that time was some twenty miles away, was not very well organised and it was felt that stationary engine enthusiasts were not being catered for as the exhibits deserved.

During the Camerton Rally in **August 1976**, the suggestion was made to form the local engine enthusiasts into a new club purely to cater for stationary engine enthusiasts, so an inaugural meeting to gauge further interest was set up in Mary and Dave Chapman's house at Midsomer Norton the following month, **September 1976**, and the venue publicised in the local press. To everyone's great delight, some twentyfive people turned up on the night, even including the then editor of the Stationary Engine Magazine which was still in its early years. The aims of the club were discussed, set out, and a committee quickly formed that same evening. It was agreed to always run on formal lines with a full committee and a clear constitution; this has continued successfully up to the present day. The aims were simple; to promote the study of early engines and encourage the interchange of skills and experience necessary for their restoration and display. This first committee consisted of Eric Brain (*Chairman*), Mary Chapman (*Gen Secretary*), Ann Brain (*Treasurer*), David Farenden (*Vice Chairman*), Ailene Conibeare, Phil Lane, John Spear, Adrian Stride and Ben Whittock. Other non-committee members but keen helpers at the time of the inaugural meeting, were Bill and Marg Appleby, Ken Appleby, Michael Cannon, Gordon Chapman, Dave Chapman, Herb Gane, Vi Whittock, Phil Wookey, Tom Randall, Ted Ashman and of course Stuart Ashman who was co-opted onto the committee in early 1977. He later became Treasurer. Ailene became Secretary when, in February 1977, Mary started the Newsletter and became Engine Registrar.

The attractive Club logo was designed for the Club during 1977 by an expert in heraldry; it consists of a five-spoke flywheel (each spoke representing the five original counties of Wessex) with the Wyvern of Wessex intertwined.

The first General Meeting was arranged in the Queen's Arms, a public house in Chew Magna, in **November 1976**; this was a slide show of engines at rallies. It caused some embarrassment because so many people arrived that there was hardly room for the projector and screen, even less for the regular customers! Therefore in **January 1977**, it was decided to seek a larger, permanent meeting place and the Old Down Inn at Emborough was selected as it had a large room, was at a junction of two major routes and, more importantly, right in the middle of the area. Committee members John Spear and Phil Lane were detailed by the committee to make an initial approach to the Old Down Inn, which proved successful. The second General Meeting and the first meeting at the Old Down was in March 1977, an illustrated talk on Petter Ltd by the late David Edgington. In its first year the Club ran a small informal rally at **Easter 1977**, at Kilmersdon, Somerset, just for Club members;

at that time already around sixty. Later on in that year, the WSEC was welcomed at the East Somerset Railway at Cranmore and held a two-day event in its car parking field.

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd. takes pride in having been one of the first stationary engine clubs to offer a Third Party Liability Insurance as part of its membership package almost from the outset. About twelve years ago, the club was one of the first to become a Company Limited by Guarantee to protect itself and its membership: in effect each member holding a share in the company with the elected committee as directors. Having been always run along formal lines, this was not a difficult transition for WSEC and most similar clubs have since followed suit. It was almost certainly the first engine club in the U.K. to have a maintained site on the Internet.

The Club has strong links with the Stationary Engine Magazine in appreciation of the early association during their joint formative years, with a strong proportion of the more erudite members being regular contributors to that excellent publication.

There has been some talk recently about extending the remit of the club to include other areas of interest and while I know that the Wessex Club was set up to be for **stationary engines only**, as so often happens other interests become involved and the original idea gets changed somewhat, not always for the better. The fact that the attendance at club nights is low compared with all those years ago when the Wessex was founded, is not something restricted to the Wessex as many clubs are suffering the same fate, as fewer people want to meet and converse face to face so to speak when they can, thanks to social media, make contact with folk virtually anywhere in the world from the comfort of their arm chair

Through the years, although people join and disappear for reasons of their own, the Club has maintained a steady membership of around three hundred and it is significant that many of those at the original meeting in 1976 are still club members, some even still have the same engines they had at that time!. The venue for the annual show was changed frequently which gave a better chance for all the widespread members to attend. Over past years, venues as far afield as Cheddar, Semington, Longleat, Yatton, Lackham and East Cranmore have been selected. It was held for the first time at Clutton, Somerset in 2003. The rallying experience of early members resulted in a selection chosen from them to form the committee of the two legendary 'Great Gatherings of Stationary Engines at Longleat' in 1979, and again in 1981, both sponsored by Stationary Engine Magazine. Visitors came from all over the world, from South Africa, USA and Canada whilst one engine even came from Australia

The Club also held a popular annual small event known as the 'Crank-Up' at Nunney Catch, near Frome, also a Sunday Crank-Up in early December, whilst a more recent addition to the calendar is the 'Mince Pie Crank-Up' normally on the day following Boxing Day. These events raise money for various charities with the amount raised each year well into four figures. During any typical summer weekend Wessex members can be found rallying a huge variety of early examples of petrol, gas, or oil engines at rallies all over the South West, or even regularly as far afield as Astle Park in Cheshire, St Agnes in Cornwall, and on separate occasions, at Inverness and Alness in Scotland.

Anon

Attendance at Club Meetings

In last month's newsletter our Chairman Eric stated how the number of club members attending club nights had fallen dramatically, with only a dozen or so in attendance. Chatting the other day to one of our club's founder members he could recall helping to set up our club solely as a stationary engine enthusiasts club, as at that time there were many clubs in existence that catered for all sorts of machinery, including steam, tractors, vintage cars and commercial vehicles and all kinds of horticultural equipment. I can recall myself belonging to one of these clubs, and on club nights there was never a mention of my hobby and it was as though (not intentionally I am sure) we were the poor relations, we hardly ever got a mention or a photo in programmes and magazines. Perhaps we weren't as majestic as a pair of shire horses or a showman's engine but we were always supportive at most if not all events. So you can imagine how such a club's attendance figures

would be much greater than ours with such a cross section of hobbies to talk about, but that doesn't mean we should diversify, we are among only a handful of clubs who are Just for stationary engine folk, which makes us rather special, and I am sure this is why this is why the club was set up with this in mind some forty odd years ago. Another factor on falling attendance figures is that you can communicate with anyone in the world regarding our hobby all within the comfort at home in your armchair; it's a sad fact but faced with a long journey on a dark cold wet winter's night sometimes the poor old club meeting no longer stands a chance.

Robin

For Sale

Illustrated catalogue from 1904. Christy & Norris, Broomfield Road Ironworks, showing milling machinery, magnetic separators, crushers, stone breakers, high pressure steam engines, gas engines, oil engine and early electric motors. This is not a copy, it is original and is as new. £40

John Deere Model "E" engine instructions and parts list. £12.00 ono.

Fuller & Johnson 1½ hp Model "N" petrol engine operating instructions and repair price list. £12.00 ono.

Lister Pumps for Household and Estate Duties, reprint of original published by David W Edgington, Westbury, Wiltshire. 38 page booklet. £15.00 ono.

Fuller & Johnson People's Priced Engine, 4 hp F & J Frost Proof engines, farm pump engine, including paint colours and other useful information, even giving details of battery box. £8.00

Crossley Brothers Limited. Instructions for re-lining and repairing white metal bearings. £5.00

Eric Gay, 01225 754374

Club Events

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| Monday 25 th November | C/N The Wessex Quiz Night with supper! |
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Information or opinion contained in this newsletter does not necessarily represent the views of the club or committee. All information is as accurate as possible but I apologise for any inaccuracies that may appear. Comments and constructive criticism are always welcome.

If you have enjoyed this newsletter please consider submitting a contribution to the next one!

Last date for inclusion in the Newsletter is the 20th of each month.