

WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1985



The material in this Newsletter shall not be reproduced without prior consent and due reference to the Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Views expressed are not necessarily the policy of the Club. All rights reserved.

MAINTAINING THE SUPPLY

Following a chat with our hard worked and long suffering editor about his problem of getting enough material for the Club Newsletter, I wonder if our readers would be interested to learn, 'if that's the right word' a few things about something we all take foregranted - Electricity or the problems of keeping it flowing. Every time we switch on a light or turn on the television, it always obeys us and never seems to fail, or at least for many of us who live in the towns and cities, where our supply comes from a substantial underground cable network,, but spare a thought for those who live in more rural areas.

With almost all my working years associated with the maintenance and operation of overhead power lines, many hundreds of incidents causing major power cuts have occurred. The most regular must be gale force winds, which always seem to uproot or break-off the largest tree which, when crashing onto overhead lines, can cause enormous amounts of damage, snapping poles like matchsticks and pulling down cables for hundreds of yards. These high winds also rip off roofs from barns and sheds, large tarpaulins from hayricks, and they always seem to deposit themselves on the nearest overhead lines.

Another serious problem is thunder storms, it is said that lightening never strikes in the same place twice; don't believe it, it certainly can. Despite a certain amount of protection built into the design of power lines, lightening can cause a lot of damage. Two years ago violent thunder storms swept across Somerset and Dorset during mid- morning and by mid-day you would have thought it was midnight, almost total darkness except for the roar of bright orange and blue lightening crashing from the sky to the earth, the damage done to our network was astronomical, hundreds of wires on the ground and 72 pole-mounted transformers had to be changed, many split wide open as if someone had been around them with a can opener.

Snow, if 'wet' can also be a big problem; it freezes on the conductors causing a large build-up of ice which will weigh very heavy on the lines causing them to sag and eventually snap. So gales, thunderstorms and icing-up, are perhaps the most common reasons for power cuts.

Other third party and dangerous occurrences also account for many faults, such as cranes, high loads and objects coming into contact with overhead lines, this can be extremely dangerous for people and vehicles. I remember seeing a new six-wheeler lorry that had deposited its load, and then drove forward with the tipper up, go straight into a 1100 volt line, all the tyres caught fire and the lorry looked in a very sorry state, fortunately the driver was not hurt. The military also have their share of troubles when on Salisbury Plain; parachutes became entangled with the lines, as do large 50 ton tanks roaring across the plain with their gun barrels in the side position swiping off poles like a wire cutter going through cheese.

The poor old swans get their share of trouble too when coming in to land on rivers and lakes, they just don't see the wire and crash straight into them often killing the bird. Overhead line damage by aircraft was rare since the war years but recently a crop spraying plane came to grief while trying to finish off an awkward corner of a field, his undercarriage got caught up in a high voltage line and flipped the plane over twice, bringing it down in a crumpled heap the right way up. The pilot escaped with only a cut to his hand.

I think the most unusual fault was caused by a giraffe being delivered in a wooden crate to Longleat on the back of a lorry, the driver failed to notice a power line crossing the road, and drove straight through it, the giraffe was not hurt, but what a fright it must have had as it was very nearly garrotted.

2.

Now the less-fortunate people that live in the town and cities don't always escape power cuts - but that's another story

'SEB-astian'

Overheard in the Ladies Loo..... 'No, we never go to their 2-day Event, there's more going on at Netley Bog' AND..... 'Did you say Longleat? - that's where those murals are - they say it gets more erotic the further up you go.....!'

JUMBLE SALE

This much enjoyed annual event took place at St.Peters Church Hall, at Westfield on March 16th. As the helpers arrived the jumble, bric-a-brac and books were sorted out and put in their usual places; this done the next priority was to get the kettle on whilst willing delegates, Bill Appleby and Bob Hallam, went to fetch the fish & chips just down the road (this is the usual yearly ritual). Next Diane arrived and was greeted with everyone singing 'Happy Birthday' to her, don't know who was the most embarrassed, Diane or the songsters, and I won't tell you how old she is?????????

Bill Appleby and Gerald Harris opened the doors promptly at 2 o'clock to the waiting queue and brisk business continued for the next hour. Herb Gane was busy selling raffle tickets, Brian Munt, Diane & John Emery, Bob Hallam, Tom Randall & children, Bill Coombs and Eric Brain ran the Bric-a-Brac stalls, Ann Brain, Christine Rogers, Ann Harris, Carol Skuse, Audrey Harris, Marg Appleby, Wendy Gane & girls manned the jumble. Don Rogers, Phil and Dave Harris deciding the best place to have a chat was in the kitchen, ended up making and selling cups of tea & coffee for the rest of the afternoon, and they did look lovely in their aprons; I wish I'd had my camera. I don't know who washed and wiped out of them, but there didn't seem to be too much tidying up to do after, so they will certainly be engaged for similar duties next year.

Baby sitting duties were also on offer, Bill Appleby looked after some young mother's baby boy while she rummaged through the piles of jumble undisturbed. Are there no limits to the adaptability of WSEC members.

The draw was made at about 3 o'clock and the winners were; Sherry, Dave Harris; Cake, Mrs. Gillham Snr.; Liguers, Mrs. Phillips; Easter Egg, Jenny Oausley; Miniature Horses, Mrs. Gillham, Jr.; and Guest Soaps, Sue Hall.

Thanks to everyone who made a contribution to the success of this sale, even if they couldn't be there and a grand total of £98.36 was taken, this includes the draw (sorry Tom).

J.J.L.

CALEDONIAN COMMENT

The Rally referred to in last month's Newsletter by our Scots correspondent, run by the Border Counties Vintage Association at St. Boswells, is on the 19th May. All Sassenach visitors will be most welcome.

Andrew Mercer also tells us that at their AGM, when he produced a handful of Wessex area rally forms, he was told that the South Bristol Rally was too far to travel. 'And where's Nailsea' they all asked. 'The other side of Bristol!' Andy replied.

We all remember Andy as the only person to be able to enter the Loo at any rally wearing trousers and re-emerge wearing a skirt'.... without getting on the wrong side of the law.

FARMING EFFICIENCY

From the Western Daily Press dated 21.3.85, we learn that the steam plough was introduced into Somerset exactly 125 years ago and ploughed 8 acres of very difficult soil in a day; the same amount of work would previously have needed forty horses! We have certainly progressed since then.

CLUB MEETING, 25th March 1985

The March meeting of the WSEC took place at the Old Down Inn, Emborough, on Monday, 25th March 1985. The evening commenced with the Chairman, Robin Lambert, welcoming members and some potential new members. After a few announcements Robin introduced our guest speaker, Paul Weaver, who had come along to give us a talk on the Corsham Stone Quarries, which produced Bath stone. Paul's talk covered a period from 1840-1950, when there were some 50 quarries in existence and these produced 1½ million cubic feet of stone at the turn of the century. All of this stone was cut by hand using axes and large crosscut stone saws.

During the interval Herbie held his customary monthly raffle, the 1st prize of a socket set was won by Mr. Rastrist (I hope I have spelt that correctly), 2nd prize a photo album went to Tom Randall (hope he has a photo of Ester covered in concrete to put in it), 3rd prize a set of wine glasses went to Mary Wookey.

While this was going on a slide projector (vintage in itself) and a screen were hurriedly procured after much scrabbling about in Penny's attic. This enabled Paul to continue the second part of the evening with slides of how the stone was quarried after being manually cut from the quarry face. It

3. was then hauled on trucks hauled by horses along the tunnels and then up inclined planes to ground level. This latter move was by way of mechanical winding gear mostly manufactured by Stothert & Pitt Limited of Bath. The winding engines were originally powered by steam from a Cornish Boiler followed in later years by Brown & May of Devizes portable engines and in some quarries even a Fowler ploughing engine with the cable drum mounted in a vertical position driven directly from the crankshaft.

This was an extremely interesting and informative evening and our thanks go to Paul Weaver for giving us such an enjoyable time.

Brian Verrall

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

'Yesterday's Farming' - the 2-day event of the South Somerset Agricultural Preservation Club is being held this year at Eleighwater, near Hornsbury Mill, Chard, Somerset on Saturday & Sunday, 7th & 8th September. This year the event promises to be even better than at previous venues, even to making entry open to all comers. Entry forms will soon be available, write **NOW** if you are interested to Brian Crudge, 22 Stoke Road, Taunton, Somerset, enclosing a SAE. Remember, there are other events this same weekend so send off as soon as possible. Perhaps you have already entered following the notice in the February Newsletter?

St. Werburghs City Farm Fair at Castle Green in the heart of the City of Bristol is on Saturday, 8th June from 11.00 a.m. onwards. There will be demonstrations of rural crafts, busking, etc. and demonstrations of all types especially links of the city life to farming communities. Stationary engine entrants will be most welcome. Broadmead is only yards away for the wife's entertainment so please give this event every consideration. For further details, entry forms, etc. contact Steve Shaw, St. Werburgh's City Farm, Watercress Road, St. Werburghs, Bristol. Tel. 428241.

Ystrad Mynach Vintage Gathering held on August 3rd/4th, details from Gordon Jones, 40 Manor Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, Gwent, with a SEA please.

NEWSLETTER

Although certain individuals have indicated how much they enjoy these four pages each month, the Committee are concerned at the lack of participation in actually writing something. To try and encourage members to contribute, we ran an annual competition; if anything, this caused a 'drop-off' in contributions although those members who took the time and trouble came up with excellent articles. None of us hold a M.A. in English Language, we don't expect too much; just a simple rally report, tale of how you found an engine and recovered it, a very difficult restoration project, anything...! We want to read about it, don't worry if you think you can't spell as the word-processor will soon put all that right! (sometimes S.P.Y.).

The Committee take turns to write up the monthly meetings and other Club events so please back them up with your article on your favourite (or otherwise....!) rally. In the following list of Club events, please note that the Committee member's name alongside the event is 'Scribe of the Month'. Please, please give the Newsletter your support, one article a year from 150 or so members will really show the Editor and the Club how much you appreciate all the effort put into maintaining this regular monthly contact with **YOUR** Club. Send to Eric Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Nr. Bristol BS8 4PE.

CLUB EVENTS

May 20th

'Old Down Inn Crank-Up', a popular midsummer evening event. Come along with an engine and try to run it with a pint in your hand. **Note** - this is **NOT** the last Monday in the month (Herb Gane).

June 15/16th

WSEC Longleat Rally, you should have entered by now, if not for any any reason, come along and spectate with the family (Rob Lambert).

June 24th

Guess the object - a sort of Quiz Game (Claude Lowther).

July 29th

Talk on White-Metalling by Mr. Gregg (Ian Skuse).

Aug.19th

'Member's Evening, a chance for **YOU** the member to bring along your films, slides, or just give us a talk on your favourite subject. **NOT** the last Monday in the month (Derek Watts).

Sept.30th

'Things in Peoples Attics', a talk by Mr. Oldiss on collecting bygoners and antiques (Bob Hallam).

Oct.28th

'Collecting Dinky Toys', a talk by an enthusiast on the subject; bring some of your own for a free valuation or to discuss (Eric Gay).

Nov.25th

The maintenance and use of chainsaws, this is a very interesting talk, most people will be thinking of getting theirs out now for winter fuel (Bill Coombs).

Dec.14th

Dinner & Dance, more details in due course (Brian Munt).

4.
ALSO

Another coach trip has been proposed, this time to the very interesting Museum of Science & Technology at Birmingham. This will be a Saturday trip so the engine-wife can possibly do a little early Christmas shopping as the date will possibly be mid-October 1985, now who will volunteer to 'do a write-up' on this one?..? The Museum is bursting with engines, a locomotive (which run up & down on its own length of track, machinery, cars, motorcycles, electronics and needs a good 3 hours to go around. Most exhibits run or are motored over by electricity. Well worth a visit - or further visit!

AND

Don't forget the Bleadon Steam Country Fayre held again this year near Weston-super-Mare, July 28/29th. Details, entry forms, etc. from Roy Cox, 4 Laurel Drive, Uphill, Weston-super-Mare.

PLUS

The South Bristol 'Docks' Rally, held again this year at Bristol Industrial Museum, in the heart of the exciting and beautiful city of Bristol. Sponsored by South Bristol Technical College, The Industrial Museum and The Institute of Plant Engineers; the Great Britain is not too far away and also the shops for the ladies' entertainment. The date is 18/19th May, contact Tom Randall, Welton Hill Cottage, West Road, Welton, Midsomer Norton, Bath. Tel.418926. SAE please.

FINALLY

The 'Full Quart Inn' Rally is provisionally booked this year for Sept. 29th subject to confirmation. Roy Cox will keep us informed.

WANTED

Shortwave mult-band receiver, to cover amateur bands 550kHz to 30MHz or thereabouts. Price not to exceed £50. R.Weston, 38 Church Road, Peasedown St.John, Bath. Tel. Radstock 32857.

Diesel engine to use in dead earnest to drive a sawbench, so must be around 5BHP, air-cooled and reasonably inexpensive. Tony Elley, 6 Entry Rise, Coombe Down, Bath. Tel.Coombe Down 833106 evenings, or Bath 61244, xtn.675 or contact through Editor.

FOR SALE

Ruston Hornsby compressor ex large engine, weighs about 1 cwt, type G175, size 3" x 3½", 250 rpm min., 12" x 3 sheave pulley. £15 ono. Armstrong 1½" centrifugal pump with direct coupling, up to 2800 rpm, £15 ono. Mono ¾" pump, almost new and has run less than 10 hours. £15 ono. Godwin OHO twin pump, 1", new bearings and reconditioned crankshaft, for sale on behalf of a friend. £35 ono. Mike Long, 41 Water Lane, Tiverton, Devon. Tel.Tiverton 254146.

BOOKS! History of Hornsby of Grantham up to 1918, £1.20; and History of Ruston Hornsby 1918-1963, £2.10. Tom Randall, Tel. Midsomer Norton 418926.

Three element CB beam antenna, with rotator and cables. Good value at £45 ono. Mr. James Dando, Tel. Midsomer Norton 413140.

Lister A-type, 3 hp, 1930. Complete on original trolley which needs minor attention to woodwork. As found, £50 ono. Lister D-type, 1935, no tank or exhaust, Solex carburettor, £10 ono. Two cast-iron saw benches with fast and loose pulleys, two blades with each, £10 each. Tom Randall, Welton Hill Cottage, West Road, Welton, Midsomer Norton, 418926.

Lister 6-1 Diesel, No.1451512, 1951, with Godwin OH2 water pump, all on a framework and in good working order. Original fuel and water tanks, £150. Derek Maybee, Bramble Cottage, Rhodyate, Blagdon, Tel.62795.

NORMAN T300 Service Spares. For list please send SAE to Barrie Thomas, Creekside, Greenbank Road, Devoran, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 6PQ.

300 gallon oil tank, 6' x 4' x 2' in good condition. £25. Ivor Yeo, Chyventon, Smitham Hill, East Harptree, Somerset. Tel. West Harptree 604.

Crossley Open Crank, side shaft - approx 5 hp. less tank but with exhaust port. £200. Contact Ivor Yeo - see above - for further details.