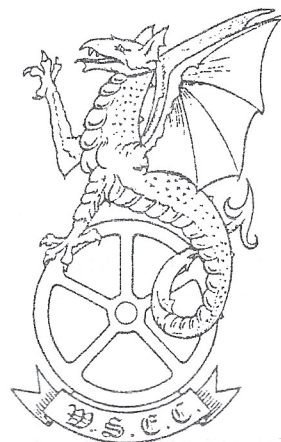


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

APRIL 2001

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NEWSLETTER



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******* EDITORIAL *******

At a recent committee meeting the main topic under discussion was whether to hold the rally in view of the Foot and Mouth crisis. After debating the pro's and cons a vote was taken and it was unanimously decided to cancel. **SO IT IS OFFICIAL, NO WESSEX RALLY THIS YEAR.** However an alternative event will take place at Nunney Catch so all is not lost. Practically every West Country event has now been cancelled, it looks like being a very uneventful year indeed.

******* CHAIRMAN'S REPORT *******

After the bad news of the rally cancellation it is good to have something positive to write about. I refer to the recent Club visit to John Upton's collection at Grately, the Club members who did not attend will never know what a wonderful experience they missed, I have never seen such a large collection of different engines in my life, and am unlikely ever to see anything like it again. Nearly all the engines were 'open crankers', of all makes and sizes (when did you last see an open crank Wolseley?). The event was really well attended by Wessex members who were really welcomed by the Upton family with a superb spread of food and hot drinks. On behalf of W.S.E.C I would personally like to thank John Upton and his Wife, his two Sons and the rest of the family for a truly wonderful day I shall never ever forget.
BJB.

******* NEW MEMBERS *******

The W.S.E.C. would like to welcome the following new members:- Mr & Mrs W Bennett from Evercreech, Mr Steve Baker from Wells, Mr Nick Bryne of Ditchat and Mr A J Merrifield from Tidworth, Hampshire. We hope your membership will be a long and happy one.

******* CLUB ANNUAL COACH TRIP *******

AUGUST 6TH – Trip to Swindon Railway Museum. Book now. Ring Jackie on 01373 463526. Due to a good deal with the Coach Firm the fee is now only £8.50 per head. Children free. Leave Nunney Catch Café car park 9am. Picking up in Frome and Trowbridge.

ENGINE ENTHUSIAST HEAVEN!

On Sunday the 1st April, my Grampy and I went to visit John Upton's collection of stationary engines in Grateley, nr Andover. We travelled with Robin Lambert, the President, as my Grampy stays well clear of any roads with an M in front of the number! We left Frome at around 10am and arrived at 11am exactly. We were greeted by John Upton, who was obviously very proud of his collection, but he said later in the day that if someone gave him a cheque for £10,000 then he would gladly sell the whole lot. We then walked to the back of the house, to a garden full of tents and sheds. There were 10 engines outside, driving pumps and a dynamo. The first shed we went into was a sorry sight, 20 or more engines, waiting for some TLC. The next, much larger shed was crammed full of 200+ engines in various states of repair (or decay), ranging from large open-crank engines to small 2 and 4 stroke lawnmower engines! The engines were from as far apart as the USA, Germany, France and Sweden. One was from my hometown of Frome, the 'Hobbs Engine Company', and one from Communist China, the 'Dong-Feng Engine'. As well as engines there was a large collection of petrol tanks, old signs, flywheels, oilcans, gas lamps, scales and cast-iron heraldic crests. Tucked away in the corner, there was even a 4-foot long model traction engine! Next door was a horse box full of dynamos, carburettors and magnetos and a collection of about a hundred brass door knockers, a collection in itself. I spotted one engine, called the 'Grimoldsby Demon'!. We had food and drink laid on for us by the very generous Uptons with enough food to feed an army, tea, coffee and squash. As if we hadn't seen enough engines already a party of about 20 of us went on an excursion down the road to find some more engines. We walked all down a muddy track and got to a small copse, absolutely full of engines and various other 'stuff'. To give you an idea, I counted 14 kitchen sinks! Scattered through pig-sheds and makeshift shelters (some were even in the back of an old rusty Land Rover) were about 60 engines, plus generators and pumps, all rusting away. There was even a huge Gardner boat engine, about 12ft by 4ft. There were 3 complete tractors, one a Ferguson, petrol tanks, and generators outside. This collection had many of us shocked, amazed and even sad, all these engines rotting away until eternity, when they could be restored and shown to other people. We were all clambering over other engines to get to a particular one of interest to each of us, but I thought I had seen the saddest case, a Lister underneath a tree, covered in leaves and earth, but then tucked away behind a shed, I found a 'Bolton and Paul MK5' in the later stages of returning to nature. This is so sad, these pieces of History, crumbling away to dust. In perhaps 20 or 30 years, if people like the W.S.E.C. don't continue to rescue and restore engines, then I fear that this important part of our history may be lost forever. I know that many of the 40 or more W.S.E.C. members who attended would have loved to take some of these engines home and restore them to their former glory. I must say it was an eye opener for me and would strongly recommend it to anyone else. The scale of John's collection makes the dozen or so in the shed look like nothing in comparison. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

JONATHON HOCKEDY (13 YEARS OLD)

JUNIOR REPORTER.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Brian,

Thank you for the generous welcome you, the Committee and fellow members gave to my friend Jack Guest. I though the talk was interesting and entertaining. Jack has asked me to thank everyone for a most pleasant evening. Jack won a tin of biscuits in the raffle and I won the basket of fruit, which I presented, to Jack for his Wife Mary (who has suffered a stroke). Then at the end Brian you bought us both a drink, a nice gesture on your part. On the way home Jack said 'what a friendly Club', and I felt really proud to be a member of the W.S.E.C, all round a good night out, thank you.

Yours sincerely,

NORMAN FINNAMORE.

The talk by Jack Guest on his 46 years in the Police Force was a superb presentation, really enjoyed by all that attended. Jack came all the way from Honiton and did not get home until around Midnight and he would not accept any fee whatsoever for his time or expenses. He really is an exceptional man.

BJB.

***** 26TH MARCH – THE OLD DOWN INN – EVENING MEETING *****
 46 YEARS LAUGHING – JACK GUEST M.B.E. – EX. POLICEMAN

Monday night at The Old Down Inn with forty members gathered to hear Jack Guest tell us of his 46 years of laughter in the Devon & Cornwall Police Force. Jack's first encounter with the Police happened when with a friend he went sailing and after some time they headed for shore, on landing the two lads came across a body – the local bobby was contacted and on arrival the first thing the officer did was to lift up one of the legs of the corpse and said 'this yer boy got as fine pair of boots could do we a pair like this meself'. As a lad Jack wanted nothing more than a cow or two and some horses out on the moor but as Jack grew up his fathers words kept coming into mind 'get yerself a job we a good pension at end of it', Jack never did get his cows or horses on the moor instead he joined the police force. He spent 18 months as a cadet and during this time the dreaded medical at this examination, a urine sample was called for, with Jack at this time were three other cadets. Now we all know what nerves can do the others could not go so it was share time, Jack shared his sample with the others and know one ever knew. After his 18 months as a cadet he was called up to do his national service, this he did serving Queen and country in the R.A.F. police. On leaving National service he returned to Devon and the police force, his first posting was to Ilfracombe in Devon. At this point in Jacks talk he brought up the subject of the TV series Heartbeat and could not praise this programme highly enough, for its absolute authenticity as Jack said it is absolutely as the police force was in 1950 through to early 1970. In all of the villages that he covered Jack reckoned you could always find a Clude Greengrass. On his first day as a policeman Jack was sent to Barnstable from Ilfracombe to help police Barnstable Fair, he was directing traffic when a car pulled up beside him, which way to Plymouth? Came the voice from within, Jack had no idea so not wanting to say he did not know he said down the hill and then left that will get you to Plymouth. A little later the car returned and when asked again the right way to get to Plymouth Jack answered what you do at the bottom of the hill turn left I told you to turn right, well he did not see the car again so he still hopes that they found Plymouth. Time passed and a new posting came Jacks way, he became a village bobby and around this time he got hitched and this means a police house to live in, he now tells us of the most run down dilapidated cottage one can imagine, even when the handle broke on the bucket in the little house down the garden Jack had one hell of a job to get the force to pay for a new loo bucket. After many reports and memos he was given the OK to spend no more the 2/6d, 12.5np on a replacement bucket and then only after his sergeant confirmed that it was a case of fair wear and tear. Things got so bad at the house that Jack threatened to resign if he and his family were not re-housed. On returning home one evening, outside the house was a large black car Jack recognised as the Chief Constables motor, inside sat the Chiefs lady, he asked if the Chief Constable was inside – yes came the reply, inside went Jack and called to his Wife, her voice came back from upstairs (instant promotion thought Jack) no such luck for as he entered the bedroom he saw the officer on hands and knees pulling lumps of dry rot out of the floor boards, within two weeks Jack had a new posting to the village of Uplime. At Uplime a complaint was made that dustbins were being tipped out over the owners walls and into the driveways and gardens. After much detective work the crime was solved – the local boy scouts up to a bit of mischief. So Jack thought it would be a good plan to take the lads to the house owners and get them to apologise, this he did and everything went well with the lad apologising in turn to the owners of the bins, that was until they came to the Vicarage, now Jack was not in uniform and when the boy had made his apology to the Vicar, the Vicar looked at Jack saying 'well young man I would think you are old enough to know better', well that put and end to anymore of the bin owners being visited. Now word came from on high telling Jack to keep an eye on a certain lady of the village. The dear soul had about 9 children and not a husband in sight, nor did she have an entertainment's licence, the powers that be thought that the children may have been in danger and should be taken into care. Jack was ordered to keep an eye on what was going on at the house, so one evening he stood by the wall of the house watching what was going on in the front room, when he heard a shout 'Mum I want a pee' the answer came back 'I'm busy go out the window' poor Jack that night he got peed on from a great height. Jack Guest entitled his talk 46 years laughing, I am still having the old chuckle remembering the stories he related of his time spent in the police force. For his efforts he was awarded the M.B.E. not the O.B.E. as in the programme and as he explained the O.B.E. stands for others blo... efforts, Jacks M.B.E. = my own Blo... effort. Thank you Jack for a wonderful evening's entertainment and may you enjoy a long and happy retirement.

ERIC. J.GAY

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Ready for restoration
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3 mamod engines fitted
for air, 2 mamods needing
repair, 1 air Wileco
engine, 1 mamod timber
wagon, 1 mamod timber
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cast iron wheels and iron
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to whom all the proceeds
will go. Other barn
machinery may become
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future. For further details
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area)

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

MONDAY MAY 21ST - CLUB NIGHT AT THE OLD DOWN INN Slide show of engines and events by the Chairman. Who knows you may see yourself on film, usual raffle. Please note early date due to Bank Holiday.

SUNDAY APRIL 29TH - CRANK-UP AT NUNNEY CATCH. Everyone welcome. Bring and buy sale, usual raffle, prizes welcome for details ring 01935 824543.

MONDAY APRIL 30TH - CLUB NIGHT AT THE OLD DOWN INN. Guest Speaker Reg Dally (Ex Somerset Coal Miner). Talk on his life in the Local Somerset Coal Mines.

**JUNE 16TH & 17TH. RALLY CANCELLED. INSTEAD CRANK-UP, BRING AND BUY AND
AUTO JUMBLE AT NUNNEY CATCH TRANSPORT CAFÉ.**

9am onwards on Sunday 17th June. Once again Club Members Gordon and Jackie has come to the rescue. This event is restricted to W.S.E.C members and invited guests, usual raffle. Prizes will be appreciated. The Club shop will be set up. If any members have any goods that could be sold to raise funds please bring them along on the day.