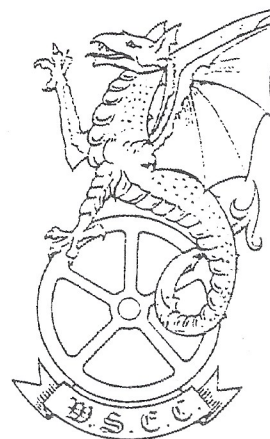


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

APRIL 2004

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NEWSLETTER



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

With the rally season now started I would like to remind members when exhibiting their engines to make sure that they observe the safety code at all times. Also to present a decent exhibit with a descriptive log sheet filled out to let the general public know what you are exhibiting. After all you must remember they have paid good money to come to the event to view your engine. Happy Rallying.

******* CHAIRMANS REPORT *******

Once again we had a record crowd turn up at our March meeting at the Old Down Inn to be entertained by Peter Davey giving a talk and slide show on the Clifton Rocks Railway, which ran from Hotwells up to Clifton in Bristol. It really was a very interesting and entertaining evening for the large number of members who turned up and I'm sure we can look forward to another good club night when Peter returns in November to give us a talk on Bath Trams, definitely another evening's entertainment to look forward to. The first event I have taken an engine to this year was to Mells Daffodil Day, this really is a brilliant day out as over 10,000 people descend on the village of Mells to take part in all the attractions on offer. The streets are closed to traffic and filled with stalls and street vendors selling everything under the sun. The stationary engine section is organised by our President Robin and what a superb job he makes of it, with around 45 engines it was quite an impressive display viewed by thousands of people during the day. Many thanks to Robin and Jackie for a brilliant day. It's still early in the year and already we have 330 paid up members in the WSEC. Founder members such as Eric Brain and co must be really proud of something they started over a quarter of a century ago still flourishes.

******* EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY *******

SUNDAY MAY 9th WSEC Crank-Up at Radstock Museum. Turn up anytime after 11am. Free entry to the Museum. If you require further details ring any committee member.

SUNDAY MAY 9th HAZELBURY BRYAN RALLY This is one of the best one day rallies in the calendar. With a very large number of entries in all classes and a massive car-boot sale selling everything under the sun it attracts thousands of visitors. For more information or an entry form ring Dickie Plummer on 01258 817597.

MONDAY MAY 24th Club night at the Old Down Inn. Members Evening. Bring along some of your photos to be shown on the screen. Also a guess the object competition. Don't forget to turn up, could be fun.



**BIRTHDAY WISHES FROM THE COMMITTEE AND CLUB MEMBERS TO CHAIRMAN
BRIAN ON MAY 1st - HOW OLD !!!!!!!
WE WON'T MENTION HIS AGE BUT HE WILL NEED 70 CANDLES FOR THE CAKE**

THE GREAT ALASKAN HIGHWAY – PART TWO – BY ERIC GAY

The actual construction was an astonishing feat involving in excess of 20,000 people, made up of both US and Canadian Military, and included numerous civilians. Fortunately most of the work took place during the spring and summer months when it is not so punishingly cold. The survey teams and Bushmen that went ahead of the construction crews during the winter months of 1941/42 endured tremendous deprivation being obliged to live in tents with the temperatures down to 60 degrees below zero. Even the construction crews fared little better, they lived in tent cities, or hastily erected wooden shacks. The pay however was excellent for the period, and it was this that ensured a steady stream of willing civilian workers, men and women, from all parts of Canada and the USA. The Americans shipped in much of their equipment through the coastal ports of Skegway and Anchorage. Skegway is of particular interest as it was through this port that the prospectors started their journey inland during the Klondike gold rush of 1898. Skegway has been an important Alaskan ice-free port for more than a hundred years, and sits at the base of the infamous white pass. The only practical way to reach the interior as it was known, was via the narrow gauge railway that connects the 110 mile stretch with White Horse, capital of the Yukon. The railway was built in 1900 by teams of Canadian and American workers under the direction of a young Canadian railway engineer named Michael J Healey. Until the arrival of Healey in Skegway the task of building a railway was considered impossible. However despite the enormous hurdles the railway was built. Initially it connected with White-Pass owned Stern Wheelers that navigated 400 miles of fast flowing Yukon river between Whitehorse and Dawson City. Evidence of the difficulties in building any sort of road link between Skagway and Whitehorse is demonstrated by the fact that the Klondyke highway was not built until 1980. The railway had been the only link between these vitally important centres for more than eighty years. The Alaskan Highway was nothing more than a dirt track with wooden trestle bridges crossing the numerous rivers. The Americans paved their 300 mile section fairly soon after the road was completed, and by 1961 when Martin made his first trip up most of the stretch between Beaver Creek and the Alaskan border (mile 1217) and Fairbanks at mile 1523 was already hard surfaced. The Canadian section took much longer to complete and certainly in 1961 very little, if any of the 1200 miles in Canada was anything but mud and gravel, although of course the surface was regularly graded, and many of the most treacherous sections encountered on the original road had been rebuilt or re-routed. But it was still a tough country to drive through at any time of the year. In winter it became a nightmare with lots of blowing snow which greatly restricts visibility, and temperatures recorded as low as minus 72 degrees, that is over 100 degrees of frost which is unimaginably cold. The only benefit of this extreme cold is that the gravel roads become frozen absolutely solid so the surface is then as good to drive on as tarmac. The people like businessmen, hunters and of course lorry drivers gradually used the highway in increasing numbers. So small communities grew up along it's length. These were identified initially by the distance from the start of the road at Dawson's Creek, mile zero. For example mile 101 had a small road house known as Blubbery truck Stop, but it was always known simply as 101. The crossing over the mighty Teslin river was mile 803 and mile 918 was Whitehorse. Even today the road is marked in miles rather than the Canadians metric system. (Thanks for common sense). Of course it was the trucks that helped build the road in the first place, and trucks that service the communities that existed along it in later years. But it was not until 1954 that a small company from Washington State (in America's Pacific North West) just across the border from British Columbia in Canada started a regular service from mainland US to Alaska. The company was Lynden Transfer, a family business specialising in the movement of dairy products. They decided to run a regular service to towns such as Fairbanks and Anchorage, and in 1954 the first trucks began to roll up the highway. The inaugural trip from Seattle to Anchorage, despite unbelievable conditions, the two man team covered the 2300 mile trip in four days, and the inhabitants of Anchorage were treated to the first ever shipment of hanging beef. The trucks first used for this journey that involved appalling roads and extremely adverse climatic conditions were Kenworths, these trucks were already famed for their rugged construction and reliability. The trucks were specially adapted for the tough haul, and huge lists of extra items included specially insulated cabs, reinforced chassis and suspension, insulated and protected wiring and fuel lines, stone deflectors protecting the fuel tanks and lighting, heavy duty batteries and a MOOSE guard in front of the radiator. One of the biggest problems facing the drivers were punctures, they overcame this in part by locating spares along the length of the highway. Because of the gravel roads and indifferent tyre technology of that time drivers had to cope with as many as 25 punctures on each round trip. Over one ten day period it is recorded that 60 tyres were either replaced or repaired. It may be surprising but drivers preferred the winter to summer on the grounds that there were less traffic, blowing snow was better than choking dust, and road surfaces were smoother when frozen solid.

ERIC GAY. To be continued. Part three next month.

CRANK – UP AT NUNNEY CATCH TRANSPORT CAFE

SUNDAY 4th APRIL 2004

To begin with, it didn't look as if many would turn up for this event. I think many, after seeing the rain and winds the evening before, decided to wait and see what the weather did ! Thankfully the weather was sunny, and exhibitors soon started to roll in. These included our Vice Chairman Eric Gay, exhibiting for the first time in years. 32 engines in total were in attendance, plus Gordon Callow's Ariel Leader, Steve Payne's Dodge US Army lorry, various farming implements and an Austin 7 open top tourer, a little cold in this weather I would have thought! The engines as always were varied. They included an Amanco Three Mule Team, owned by Robin Lambert, Norman T300, owned by Mrs D Davis and a Ruston Hornsby PB owned by Edward Carp. Plus of course, the gleaming 1920 Petter Junior owned by Eric Gay, driving a 50V dynamo. Mounted in a covered box trailer was the Lister D and mill exhibit owned by A H Lewis of Newport. The back of the trailer sported a sign which read "Stationary Engines on the move." On the subject of mills, one driven by a Ruston Hornsby PB displayed a dire warning of the consequences of putting fingers in the mill, in front of the mill was a bowl containing two severed fingers and a piece of skin, luckily all plastic. As always, Kim Siddorn, despite in his words, 'a stinking cold' managed to exhibit yet another interesting and unusual engine. The Westbury ECC 80 watt charging set was designed in the early 1940's by Edgar Westbury, working for Stuart Turner. The engine was revolutionary for the time, small capacity (15cc) high revving (3500rpm) four stroke, side valve, all aluminium engines. This example is complete, even down to it's canvas cover. It has seen virtually no use, and was still covered with varnish and grease... Without a battery attached, the engine generates 38 volts. Connecting it to a 12v battery induces the nominal voltage to rise from 14 to 17 volts, the revolutions to drop and the engine to run more steadily. I know I always moan about exhibit boards, but I would like to point out that there have been a series of articles in Stationary Engine Magazine on the subject, so I'm not the only one! On the subject on exhibit boards, I think that when information on the engine is displayed, it's great, but when members display poetry about engines it deserves a special mention. The Lister A exhibited by Alan Vickery had a poem propped up on the trolley wheel, which I think members will enjoy, and is hopefully reproduced in this newsletter. The raffle was held at 2.00, and there must have been over 60 prizes. Thanks to all the staff in the cafe who supplied well-deserved breakfasts and lunches.

JONATHON HOCKEDY
JUNIOR REPORTER

***** THE MARKET PLACE *****

FOR SALE Box Trailer. 7x4. Drop down tailgate. Winch. 13" wheels.Brakes. ready to use for rallies etc. Bargain at £200. ONO. Ring Roy on 01934 419826 for further details. Weston – S – Mare area.

FOR SALE 2 Portable hand turning Lister Sheep Shearing units, with cutters. Corn Grinding Mill plus other assorted items. £200 the lot. Ring 01934 516606 for further details. Weston – S – Mare area.

WANTED Urgently wanted to finish restoration project. Petter M glass tube for lubricator. Ring Brian on 01749 342671 if you can help out.

WANTED Can anyone help the West Wilts Society of Model Engineers ? The lawn mower that keeps the grass down at their Westbury model track has given up, it requires another engine, has anyone got a surplus pull cord Victor engine that would suffice, or perhaps, do you have a spare Flymo type petrol engine mower that you are not going to use anymore and would like to find a good home for it. If you can help please ring Des on 01225 755375. Trowbridge area.

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

The WSEC would like to welcome the following new member to our club, Mr Steve Payne from Semington. We hope your membership will be a long and happy one. Steve is no stranger to Wessex events as he has attended them for a very long time, I'm glad to see Steve is now a member.

A VISIT TO MILESTONES MUSEUM, BASINGSTOKE.

SUNDAY 14th MARCH 2004.

Arriving early in wet, windy weather it was very nice to find the doors open so that we could wait inside, in a large bright reception area. The first impression, looking down onto the museum, was that it wouldn't take more than a couple of hours to look around. In fact there was so much to see we spent more than twice that time looking at the great variety of exhibits. We were first introduced to Tasker's, which started as a blacksmiths, expanding into cast iron and then steam engines. Robert Tasker established his Waterloo Iron works in the beautiful Anna valley near Andover over 170 years ago. His son Henry was apprenticed to Clayton and Shuttleworth in Lincolnshire, and on returning to the Waterloo Works, with a small team of skilled craftsmen, produced steam engines. In 1856 they produced their first portable engines, followed in 1869 by their first self moving, chain driven traction engine. Production remained modest, only one hundred were built between 1869 and 1905. In 1902, following the introduction of the one man operated 5 ton tractor legislation, they completed the first of their famous "Little Giant" steam tractors, over three hundred of which were built in the twenty-one years to 1923. These tractors were very popular with timber hauliers. It is interesting to note that Tasker's were the only builders to remain loyal to the chain drive system throughout the steam era. There were several Tasker's engines on display in the museum, also they have recreated a small section of the manufacturing workshop with old machines driven first by treadle, then by belts powered by a steam engine. There are several streets of shops each with an incredible amount of artifacts in the windows, and on display inside the shops. Amongst the shops there is a sawmill with a large display of hand woodworking tools, a Railway Station with adjoining coal-yard, and a Fire Station With some very old hand operated water pumps. An early motor cycle spotted in the back of an old garage caused a lot of speculation, the maker was not convincingly established so more 'research' was needed, I overheard a member say. In the streets we came across a varied selection of transport, early horse drawn removal van, a tram, lorries, a trolley bus and hand carts. There was an OEC motor cycle with sidecar, these bikes were made by Osborne Engineering Company of Gosport, from 1901 to 1954. Their first few machines used Minerva engines. From 1920 they made Blackburne motor bikes and around 1922 OEC motor bikes appeared with Blackburne engines, as well as other power units. A racing model used the overhead camshaft 350cc Blackburne, and some road bikes had the oil-cooled Bradshaw 350cc power unit. In 1927 the first duplex steering machines appeared, followed by a range of both bizarre and conventional machines using various engines of 147cc to 998cc capacity. OEC would build almost anything that a client specified, which earned them the nick name of 'Odd Engineering Contraptions'. Collectors corner, with it's collections of domestic items and machines stirred many memories, and the early hair perming equipment horrified us. We didn't sample the refreshments in the Edwardian style Baverstock Arms but we did have a good lunch in the Speedwell Cafe. Suitably refreshed we went to the Wallis and Stevens Ltd works, a Basingstoke firm which produced their first traction engine in 1877, and went on to produce a wide variety of types and sizes of engines including road engines, rollers, steam wagons and showmans engines. In the Thornycroft works there was a film running telling the history of this local company. John Isaac Thornycroft began building his first steel steam launch in his fathers back garden on the banks of the Thames when a teenager. From this small beginning in Chiswich in the 1860's he created a firm which grew into one of the two great British torpedo boat specialist, and played a major role in the development of commercial land transport. They built the first commercial load carrying vehicle in the U.K, it was a 1 ton steam van with front wheel drive and rear wheel steering, powered by a verticle twin marine engine. It was shown at the 1896 Crystal Palace Motor Show. Their second wagon was one of the earliest tipping refuse trucks. In 1898 road vehicle production moved to Basingstoke, and about that time the boat construction moved to Southampton. One of the reasons for the moves was wages were too high in the London area. Their steam wagons were popular as tippers and refuse collectors, as well as seeing active service in the Boer War. They built one of the worlds first artic steam lorries, and won the premier award at the Liverpool Self Propelled trials in 1898. By 1907 steamers had taken a back seat, but the company went on to produce a wide range of commercial vehicles until a take over by AEC Ltd in 1961, leyland Group in 1962, the Thornycroft name had vanished by 1970. The Thornycroft name is well remembered in association with ships and lorries, but in the early years of the twentieth century, Basingstoke built Thornycroft cars, these were well known in the motor racing world. John Thornycroft entered one of his cars in the 1907 Isle of Man TT race. A Thornycroft car was on display in the entrance hall, advertising the exhibition "Life in the fast lane" a century of speed in Hampshire, coming to Milestones in April to 23rd May. Surely worth a visit! Milestones living history museum is fascinating and this was a visit we thoroughly enjoyed.

MARGARET SIMMONS