

CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

April

2009

Thirty second
year of
publication

www.wessex-sec.co.uk

From the Sump

The AGM passed off without incident, a good turn out from the membership of over fifty people. This year was the first where we had used the new postal voting system & I understand thirty two members took the opportunity to vote by this means. This represents about ten percent of our membership & it is good to see the system in use.

It was, however, pointed out by several people that the system could be open to abuse as there was no means of identifying the voter as a club member & I have no doubt that this will be sorted out by next year.

I was thinking the other day about the way we feel about our engines. Whilst our culture reveres & venerates our heritage & everything to do with it, we see it as separate & not of the modern world. The Industrial Revolution has cut us off from a past where everyday objects were just that & might continue in use for generations if they were still useful & functional. My father had tools in his woodworking box that have turned out to be nearly 200 years old. They were just tools & if the steel held a good edge, a chisel would slowly shrink as it got sharpened away, but it would not occur to my dad or any of his peers to set it aside as special or to replace it with a new one just because it was old.

Mechanised warfare, incredibly swift development & mass communication has made us look at objects from the past in a completely different way from objects made today. Even WW2 equipment is esteemed and valued as long lasting & built to a high standard whereas in fact it was built down to a price & had no real life expectancy past the end of hostilities.

Modern equipment is very much of the moment & has a very short life expectancy. Will we really be collecting the myriad of Chinese generators currently on the market for half a weeks wages in 25 years time? I bet we are!

We, of all people, should never fall into the common trap of modernity and view the past as somehow fundamentally different from today. Whilst the past is not a foreign country, we may well be the guides that can lead others within its expanding boundaries & keep a perspective on history.

Moving the Metal

For sale

Vauxhall Vectra. 120K, top of the range, excellent order. Sold with new MOT at time of sale. £890 ono
Phone Eric Gay - 01225 754374

Wanted. Braked trailer (750 kilo) to carry a 4hp Amanco. WHY?? Phone Richard on 01722 501017

Wanted – Barnard W110 piston. A piston from a Austin/Morris "A" series 848cc SV or very early Mini would do the job. Phone Tony 01373 464982

Wanted. Starting handle for Bamford 9hp. Crank 2 5/8". Phone Ron on 01749 870756

Wanted. ABC engine. Particularly 1915 250cc Firefly but anything considered. Good price paid for the right engine!

Wanted. Triumph twin WW2 genny or parts.

"Vapourising" small stack of old 'uns - £1 each.

Wanted. "Stationary Engine" Magazine. Now only need 16,17,18, 24-34,36. Have early copies to swap!
All above, phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

Netley Marsh Rally, 24 – 26th July

Exhibitor's donation. I cannot see a reference to this on their website. so I phoned the Secretary this afternoon. It is true that there **will be** a charge of £10.00 to exhibit at this event again this year. This is a decision that is now made annually in order to recoup their heavy loss in 2007 when the event was effectively rained off.

A Wrinkle & A Nod by Kim Siddorn

Finding material for making piston rings for bigger engines can be difficult. Various sources like old drain pipes might spring to mind, but the other day a new idea came up in conversation. Older cars had brake drums & they were made in a very good close grained cast iron. They have also been heat treated & exposed to the elements for a number of years. When I was an apprentice we used to call it mellowing.

Another source is brake disks. The very latest versions might not be cast iron – you'd have to check – but some are solid & others are ventilated – just what one might need for an oil scraper ring.

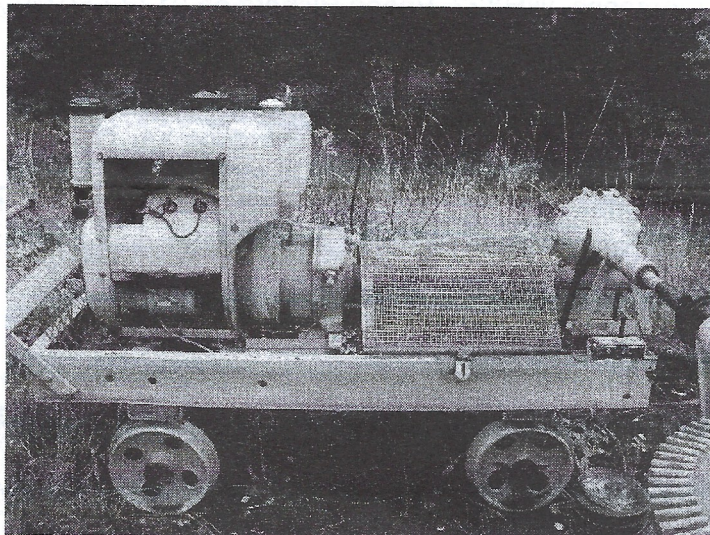
Articles, cartoons, photos etc are always very welcome – this is not a one-man band, but an expression of all our thoughts and experience. Submissions should be preferably typed or word-processed or even handwritten, (if brief), - it is the content we're after, not the grammar or spelling, so please don't feel your efforts will be ignored. The editor reserves the right to change, edit, augment or lessen your Deathless Prose and asks all to note that opinions expressed in this newsletter may or may not represent club policy

J. Kim Siddorn, 9, Durleigh Close, Bristol. BS13 7NQ or by e-mail to kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk.

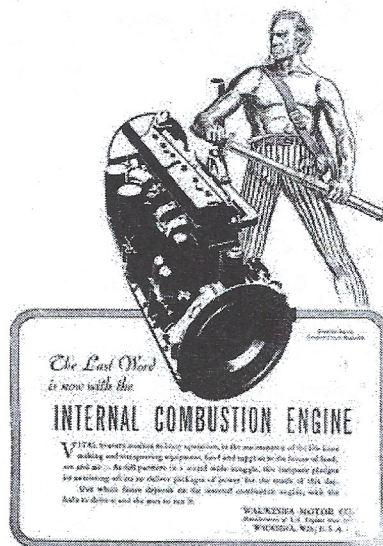
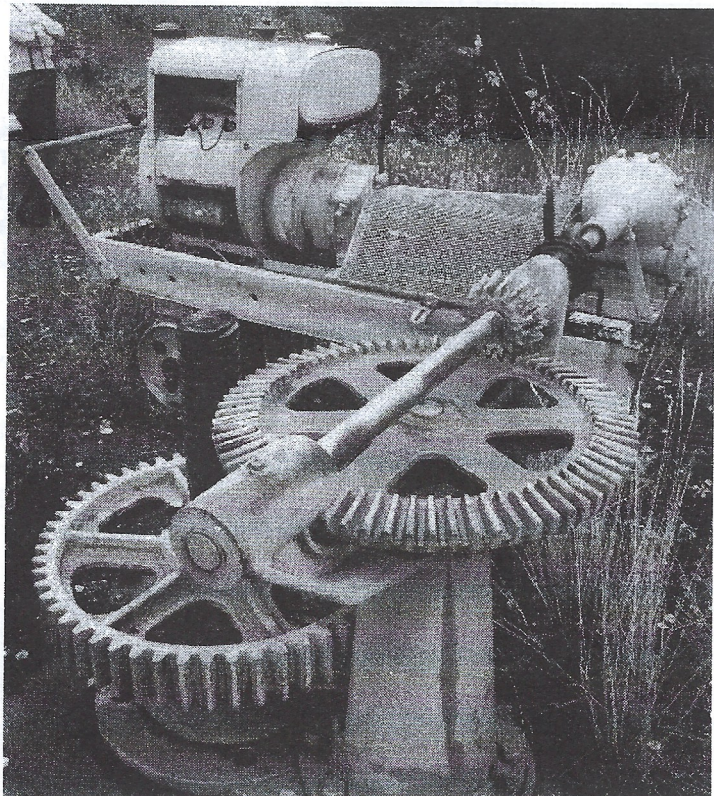
Featured Engine No. 27

A Wisconsin Vee Four By J.K. Siddorn

When Hazel & I drove across the USA, I found occasional engines in the wilderness. The most remote I found was on our way to Yellowstone, I came across a Wisconsin vee four powered machine, once used for driving the gate opening gear for the sluice gates of the Jackson Lake Dam in western Wyoming. Jackson Lake is mostly natural, trapped water from the last ice age. The dam was built in the early 1900's & added thirty three feet to the top of the natural barrier.

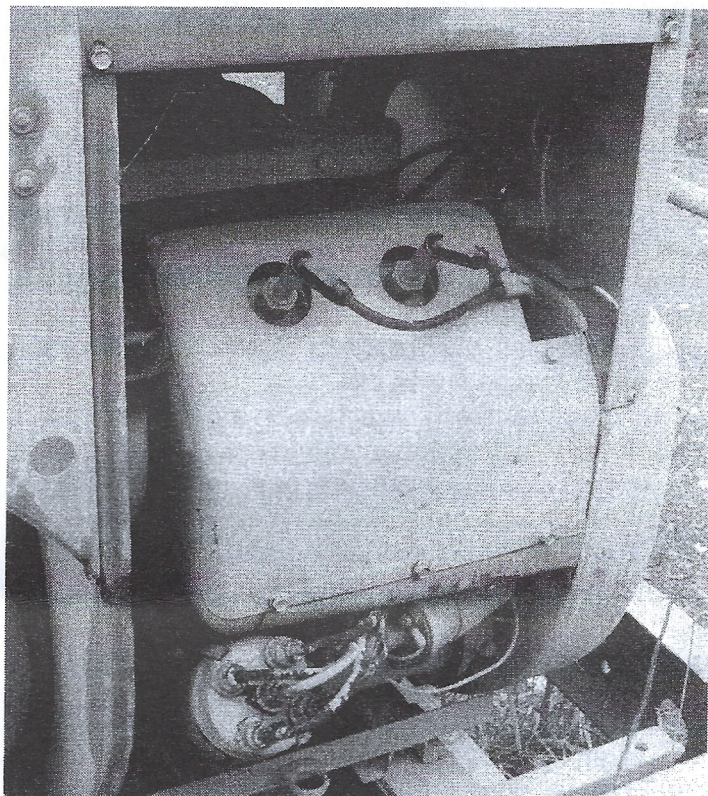


The vee four engine was introduced into the range in 1934 & in various models was in production until 1970. During this time, although the engine retained its basic configuration, the bore & stroke changed from 2 5/8" x 3 1/4" & ended at 3 1/2" x 4". The power output rose dramatically from 16 hp at 2,600 rpm to 60 hp at 3,600 rpm



More familiar to our readers as an engine to be found on balers, this version has electric start & drives a gearbox, the output shaft of which drives a worm reduction box (looking suspiciously like half a back axle from an early car!) and this in turn extends the drive outboard of the trolley where the business end is a

small bevel gear. This is all mounted on a small hand-propelled rail trolley & is pushed from gate to gate along the top of the dam. At each sluice gate, the drive is engaged, the engine started & the massive gates hoisted up. The trolley is then pushed on to the next gate.



Although now in retirement, this method of controlling the water level was in use for many years, the Wisconsin powered device being only the last one in use. There are pictures of the unit working in 1975.

A variant of these units was found below decks in the stern of Liberty ships where they provided emergency rudder control if the wheelhouse was damaged. An example was used to bring the "Bering Straits" into port in Russia on the Archangel run.

Calendar of Events for 2009

May 9/10th . Event. **Vintage Working Weekend**
Breamore Countryside Museum. Phone Eric Gay for details on 01225 754374

May 16th **Event.** Big Sortout at Netley Marsh

May 18th .Club night. **Members Evening:-** Bring along ten photo's or slides on any subject. There will be a prize for the best effort. *(Please note that club night is a week early to avoid Whitsun Bank Holiday Monday)*

June 3rd .**Event.** 65th Anniversary D-Day Crank Up on Wednesday evening at the Old Down Inn. Please bring something War Dept if you have it, otherwise bring anything!

June 20/21st . **Event** Wessex SEC Rally at Semington

June 27/28th **Event.** 1000 Engine Rally, Astle Park.

June 29th .Club night. Guest Speaker:- Kim Siddorn
OCEAN STRIDING BISON illustrated talk about Viking ships & their uses.

July 27th . **Event** at club night. Evening Crank Up at the Court Hotel Chilcompton.

Aug 3^d . **Event.** Haynes rally. A one-day event as last year. Camping available from Saturday night. Free admission to the Museum.

Aug 24th . Club night. Evening Crank Up at The Old Down Inn. *(Please note that club night is a week early to avoid August Bank Holiday Monday)*

Sept 28th Club night. Guest Speaker:- Dennis Chedghey illustrated talk on 1930's RADSTOCK

Oct 4th .**Event.** Vintage & 4x4 Sort Out, A34/M4 junction, Newbury Showground *(Sunday only)*

Oct10th .**Event.** Skittles and supper evening at The Royal Oak Corsley

Oct17th **Event.** Winter Sort out at Cranmore Railway Station Yard.

Oct 26th . Club night. Guest Speakers:- Bob Burgess, Colin Dipper TRADITIONAL ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC

Nov 14th . **Event.** Engine Sort Out, Enstone, Oxon.

Nov 30th Club night. Guest Speaker:- Keith Shephard, illustrated talk titled A Look at the ENGINE MAKERS OF WESSEX

Dec 6th . **Event.** Winter Crank Up at Nunney Catch.

Dec 27th **Event.** Mince Pie Crank Up, The Court Hotel **(Note change of venue)**

ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION

Social news

By "Earwig"

Jackie Lambert is still getting mail sent to her old address. Please send correspondence to 19 (NOT 15!) Beechwood Avenue, Frome.

Thanks to club members & guests for strong support at Mell Daffodil Day. Report next month.

It was nice to see Mo Dukes back up and running after being poorly earlier in the year. We look forward to seeing him again at Tatworth mini rally on Sunday 7th June.

Two of our senior club members celebrate their seventieth birthdays in April. Brian Munt and John Emery have both clocked up 140 years between them, having been well looked after by Clas and

Dianne! May Mr Punch continue to reign and Madison's spark plug collection long continue.

Chairman's 2008 Report *(printed as received)*

By Brian Baker

2008 saw the club financially sound, this was due to the sterling work of our treasurer Jackie, and she keeps a careful rein on the finances and monitors any spending by the committee. The clubs activities and events during 2008 were a mixture of successes and disappointments; we had a brilliant selection of guest speakers here at the Old Down Inn, usually with a room completely full of members. Then we ran a coach trip which was a disappointment as we could only half fill the coach and had to end up subsidising the event, another disappointment was the lack of entries for the rally at Haines, why? The members who did attend thought it was brilliant. A highly successful event was the skittle match at Corsley, this attracted more members than we really had room for. The other success story of 2008 was the Sortouts at Cranmore, they were the best yet, and they are now well established in the calendar and attract buyers and sellers from all over the West Country and beyond. On reflection 2008 was a good year for the club mainly due to the work put in by the committee over the course of the year. At this point I would like to thank the committee for their dedication and teamwork in running the clubs affairs and events, it has been a pleasure working with them on your behalf I am rather disappointed that we have had no nominations from you to replace Andrea who is standing down this year, also no one has come forward to take over as Treasurer when Jackie resigns next year, remember the club cannot function without its officers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andrea for the hard work she contributed to the committee over the years and wish her well for the future. I would also like to thank some of the members who do important jobs for the club but are not on the committee, Mary Butler who devotes a lot of her time distributing the newsletter each month and ensuring you get it on time, and Diana Davis who organises the skittle match each year and is responsible for ordering our suppers, and running the club shop. That ladies and gentlemen concludes my report for 2008.

Club Visit to "Oakham Treasures", Portbury

By Eric Gay

T'is a bit of a haul from Trowbridge to Portbury *("and it lies on a three mile grade..." ? - ed)* & I did think twice before deciding to go. Saturday 21st March was dry, sunny and warm and around 8.15am the Nissan fired up and we set off to make our way to Portbury. My daughter got we poor old souls a route off one of they new fangled computer things, but that was going to send us through Bristol. Perhaps not on a Saturday morning! So

I got out an old fashioned map and made up my own route & we arrived at Oakham at about 9.30.

Some Wessex Members were already on site and it was not long before more turned up, in all around 24 members. I've been to a fair few museums over the years, but Oakham has a wonderful and varied display of vintage exhibits it would be hard to beat. They say to allow two to three hours for your visit, but I reckon four to five is more like it.

I will just tell you of some of the exhibits you can see, over one hundred tractors on display & all in good restored condition. Most displaying information boards for you to read. Look into the roof of the buildings & there are model aircraft of all types, most of them are of aircraft of a bygone age. I had better give Stationary Engines a mention. From .5hp to 14 hp with many very rare engines, one I have never seen before being a Start Right from the USA - I would have liked to take that home. All this display was backed up with journals, manuals, books and documents.

You could spend all day just looking at all the old enamel signs I would estimate that there is well over a thousand, advertising boot polish to Blackstone oil engines and all displayed so they can be read.

The historic stores have to be seen to be believed with many thousand of items, items from butter churns to Vim, to boot polish to blow lamps to smoothing irons, the sweet shop, pub, tobacconist, Grocery store, Haberdashery, Chemist, Toys and Hardware this is just some of the treasures that you can see at Oakham. The very fine cyder press would certainly get the full attention of one member of the club - now famous after his TV appearance - well done Paul.

Oakham is as it says a museum of treasures and i for one will pay another visit to this wonderful museum. As well as the museum there is a very large & well stocked farm shop plus a good Cafeteria & the food is good and very reasonably priced.

So, if you have a free day & you want somewhere to go, give Oakham a try.

Wish it generated water

By Kim Siddorn

After buying an old Briggs & Stratton genny off e-bay, I finally managed to ingeniously arrange to meet the vendor in a multi storey car park in the centre of Birmingham at 9.00pm last night. He was in Birmingham over Monday night (only) every week. I had a photo session in Huddersfield that I discovered I could arrange at my convenience, so did just that. Someone else even paid for my fuel and I got paid quite well to be a posing Viking for a couple of hours.

The Volvo boiled in the multi-storey of course, having contracted a leaky radiator whilst in store when we were away. There I am trying to chat amiably to this rather nervous and extremely pleasant chap whilst tipping water into the bottle, clamping the cap tight until it stops bubbling, (repeat as necessary) and transferring the B&S to the back of the Volvo. In the midst of all this, the door to the stairs swings open and two NCP bods appear like genies from a bottle. We regard each other as the Vendor wordlessly carries the engine from his Citroen BX to the Volvo, bonnet up and steaming and absolutely smothered in salt and shite from 300 odd miles of fast motorway work.

Are we drugs dealers? Selling Riacin? Packing AK47's away for a rainy day? (I can't spell Ouzi.)

"Can we help you at all sir?"

"No thanks, it's not very heavy " I riposte as I suspiciously slam the tailgate shut on the green finned lumpy thing that bears no resemblance to the sleek Honda suitcase gennys they are no doubt used to. Martin the Vendor laughs nervously and Mr Carpark One glances at his friend.

"Well, if you need anything"

"Yes, I could do with some water. Can I find you downstairs in a minute?"

"Um, yes."

"OK"

And so we all part, the NCP men to their lower storey, Martin (who teaches otherwise normal people to be Tax Inspectors) vanishes down the stairwell whilst me and my warm Volvo spiral downwards to seek them out in their subterranean lair, where I relieve them of several gallons of water - I cannot imagine where it all goes, you know.

Tonight, I unloaded it, photographed it, read the label, visited the well laid out B&S technical pages on <http://www.edgeta.org/tekdata.htm> and discovered that my purchase was built during the darkest days of the War in December 1942. It is a PC301, a Power Charger with a five-fin -i- type engine and an L type head. Bore and stroke are 2.00" X 1.50". The dynastart is a 12v 100watt direct drive unit by Marathon Electrical Company. A year younger than me - well, well. It needs some petrol pipe and a couple of dynamo brush caps. Can anyone help with the brush caps? I'll see if I can find a quiet moment to have a poke about with it tomorrow

I'm getting quite fond of these little generator (etc) engines. There were so many different configurations made around this time. I've got the BSA that is generically similar to the B&S (being a SV single), the MarVil, a curious two stroke and the Coventry-Victor flat twin. I suppose the ABC might sort of fit into this category too. Generally, they are not expensive yet, there are a fair few about still, they are not heavy AND they perform a useful function as they'll charge your battery if it's flat!