

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. 13. Hallam

AUGUST 1984

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***** THE OLD DOWN INN - est. 1640

How many members attending WSEC meetings or reading monthly meeting reports realise that the Old Down Inn has, for centuries, been an important meeting place? Early in the history of the WSEC, back in 1977, it was decided to meet at the Old Down Inn as geographically it was the centre of our area; thus we unwittingly followed groups of people making the same decision for over three hundred years.

Situated 700 ft. above sea level at the intersection of two important trunk roads, namely the A37 Bristol to Shepton Mallet and the B3139 Bath to Wells main road, the Inn is actually a hamlet of Ston Easton parish. Around the time of the Monmouth rebellion it stood on the edge of common land known as Old Down. An early map (1710) of a local estate shows the house as the 'Red Lion' and the accompanying survey describes it as 'a good house, an Inn'. Whilst the nearby Wells turnpike was being built in 1756, one shilling was set aside to 'buy beer at the Old Down for the men'.

By 1774 the Red Lion had become the Old Down Inn; in 1769 a painting done on a wood panel showed a Stage Coach and horses outside, a copy of this painting can be seen just inside the front door today.

In 1785, a London to Exeter stage coach service began via Bath, Wells and Taunton, the Inn was named as a very important staging post, meeting traffic up from the South West from as far away as Falmouth and, in the other direction, from South Wales. This led, in 1798, to it being established as a postal receiving and sorting office; letters being franked 'Old Down' up to the time of the introduction of the Penny Post Service.

In 1792 the local colliery owners met here regularly to discuss the miners wages and conditions, while in 1793 a promotion meeting was held for the Somerset Coal Canal linking the Somerset Coalfield to the Kennet & Avon Canal at Claverton. Later, the Inn was the scene of another meeting, this time to discuss the demise of another canal scheme, the uncompleted Somerset & Dorset Canal from a point not far from the Inn through Frome to Poole. The Railway Age had come but the proposed line causing the abandonment of the canal eventually came to naught. However, with the Railway Age, came the decline of the coaching trade and thus the trade of the Inn.

In 1885 a fire completely gutted the building, only the four walls were left. Subsequent building did little to alter the character of the Inn but a cobbled way found under the floor of the entrance and bar suggests there may have been a central archway through for horses to reach the stables beyond. Only very recently, the rendering had been removed from the outside of the building revealing suggestions of old windows and other features previously hidden. Our Club Room too, used to have a very high ceiling with projections halfway up the walls indicating that at some time there would have been another floor. Was this caused by the fire of 99 years ago?

So today we share our meeting place with the Cam Valley Morris Men, the Somerset Traction Engine Club and many other groups and organisations, we are following three hundred years or more of tradition; the hospitality of our long suffering hosts, Gordon and Penny Marshall stands the same today in 1984 as stated in 1710 - 'a good house, an Inn.....'

Eric G. Brain

(References for this article were taken from 'Old Mendip' by R. Atthill)

This article was inspired by hearing the Inn referred to, quite erroneously, and even by local people, as the 'Odd Down Inn'. Odd Down is a district of Bath and is some 10 or even 12 miles distant. Oddly enough, there was once an 'Odd Down Inn' at Odd Down; these days there is a 'Red Lion'! Even stranger the 'Odd Down Inn' is now called 'The Burnt House'.....now who's confused?

CONGRATULATIONS to Ian Craddock and Joanne Morris of Hilperton who were wed on July 21st at St. Michael & All Angels Church, Hilperton, Nr. Trowbridge, Wilts. The Club extends every good wish for their future happiness.

WESSEX CLUB RALLY - in conjunction with the Midsomer Norton and Radstock Lions Club 'Family Day' at Norton Down, Nr. Radstock. June 1984

Although the Family Day was only really a Sunday event, Wessex members began taking their places on the Saturday in readiness for the usual Engineman's Gathering on Saturday night in the marquee. Members and their families plus a few Lions totalling 118 in all, enjoyed a Ploughmans-type supper with a pint or two. This was swiftly followed by Brian Munt's draw, made even more interesting with the prizes all wrapped up so that no one knew what they had won until they had unwrapped it. It had to be unwrapped before they regained their seat; the list of prizewinners is as follows:- Sidney Wilson jnr. - Can of Oil; Geoff Bryant - Bottle of Bitter Lemon; Roy Cox - Air Freshener; Stuart Donnolly - Hosepipe; Jacky Lambert - A Doll; Dave Large - Club Tee Shirt; Mrs. Shakespear - Set of Glasses; Phillipa Denham - Fruit Set; Cyril Meecham - Bottle of Sherry; Neil Donnolly - A Soldering Iron; Mrs. I. Cox - A Weather Man (not a real one...!).

Dave Large was so pleased with his Club Tee Shirt that he has worn it ever since, poor Phil Wookey was so envious but we don't sell them in his size/shape/style....(well, well! Ed.).

Back to the Rally.....The Club Chairman, Ian Skuse, then said a few words thanking everyone for coming and hoping they would enjoy the Rally; he also thanked the ladies for their help with the

suppers.

The remainder of the evening continued with lively accordeon music performed by Sally Pople and her entourage. This gave the evening plenty of atmosphere; the 'Birdie' song brought our Welsh contingent out onto the floor helped by Chris Rogers and Ann Harris.

As the evening continued, I think our Secretary was getting a little bit bored, or was it the bottle of wine having an effect, since she suddenly began playing paper aeroplanes with the table mats. I hasten to add that she was aided and abetted by the President. After the gathering Roy Cox had to leave to be admitted to hospital the following morning so he missed the Sunday. He's back on the mend again now and back rallying. Best wishes to Roy for a speedy and successful recovery.

Sunday arrived, roasting hot, just as predicted in an earlier Newsletter. More entrants poured in and set up with little or no problem and very soon all the engines were puffing and banging away. The Club Stall got down to business, all its bits and pieces kindly donated by members. One interesting book given to us caused a few laughs during the day, it was written by Marje Proops. We saw a lot of people flip through it during the day but it remained unsold. We presume none of our Club members have any problems but it was suggested we could have a Club night using it to answer problems...but who would act as Marje!!! During the course of the afternoon, the judging took place and at approx. 4.30 p.m. the presentation were made as follows:-

Derek Maybee

Geoff Bryant

Ashley Gold

Mr. Cann

Bill Appleby & Robin Lambert

- Cranmore Cup for the best horizontal engine, Crossley
- Stationary Engine Mag.Cup for the best vertical engine, Petter
- Junior Shield for best engine restored by a junior member - Lister A-type and chaff cutter
- Best visitir's Engine Cup, Lister engine driving a mill
- Committee Cup for the best working exhibit not already a prizewinner, Ruston Hornsby 8AP driving a 100 volt lighting set

The latter is a new cup this year which is judged by all the committee by ballot and it must be stated that it was purely coincidental that a committee member is co-owner of the winning engine. How embarrassing!

Herb Gane ran another raffle during the afternoon and worked almost non-stop selling tickets to nearly everyone on the field in all that heat. The winners were:- Mr. Beck, a cuddly bear; Audrey Harris, sherry; Mr. Baker, fruit set; Mr. Smele, after eight mints; Mr. Winn, cake; Marg Appleby, junior hacksaw. Some tickets remained unclaimed at the time of going to print.

Soon, after all the excitement of the presentations, everyone began to pack up and wend their weary way homewards after a very enjoyable weekend and we would like to extend our thanks to the Lions Club for their hospitality.

If anyone has any other views on the Club Rally, good or bad, we would like to hear from you; it is the only way to keep the standard of our Rally up to that which you, the members, require. Please put pen to paper and send to any committee member.

Rallying Rambler

***** THE LUBRICATION OF GAS AND OIL ENGINES

It is the reverse of economical to use a poor oil for lubricating purposes, and it is found in practical working that the very best oil, carefully used, is by far the cheapest. Many good oils are now prepared especially for cylinder lubrication. What is required is a neutral oil or grease that will not readily develop free or fatty acids under the action of heat, or vaporize readily, or form a deposit. A mineral oil is usually employed, to which a slight proportion of vegetable or animal oil, or both, is added.

Although vegetable oil readily carbonizes at high temperatures, it has a tendency to fill up the grooves between the piston and cylinder walls, and make them more airtight. Animal oil, on the other hand, although liable to form fatty acids, improves the lubricating power of the mixture, and does not deposit much carbon.

If an unsuitable oil has been used, and the piston is withdrawn, it will be found covered with a thick rusty-coloured mass of deposit, which often sets hard, and consumes a large amount of power, at the same time damaging the cylinder and piston rings. A good cylinder oil usually leaves a slight blue-grey deposit.

A heavily loaded engine will require an increased amount of lubrication. Gumming usually arises from overheating, from bad circulation or inefficiency of the cooling water, insufficient lubrication, or bad or improper oil. Too much lubrication is also bad, as, in addition to wasting the oil, it often finds its way into the air passages, etc., and clogs the admission and exhaust valves. Oil should not be employed to lubricate the ignition or exhaust valve; fine plumbago is often used for this purpose.

See that the trimmings in lubricators and grooves in bearings are kept in order, to prevent waste of oil; they should be arranged to supply no more oil than is necessary to keep the bearings cool, and be removed when the engine is standing.

If the cylinder is allowed to get dry there is little doubt an explosive dust is created, sometimes causing premature ignition; improper or low-flash lubricants will often have the same effect.

The lubrication on large engines is often by pumps or air pressure. If too much oil is being supplied to the cylinder it can usually be detected by a smokey exhaust, which may, however, arise from imperfect combustion of the charge. If the engine is working properly the exhaust should be almost colourless, or with a light blue haze.

The oil used should be of the highest flash point obtainable, as the heat in the cylinder, unlike a steam engine, is very dry and intense.

Reprinted from the September 1912 issue of The Estate Magazine.

Michael Cannon

MONTHLY MEETING, Monday 25th June. The Annual 'CRANK UP'

We set off on a nice sunny evening to the Old Down in for the annual evening rally, 'The Crank Up'. This year seeing as I had to take my turn to write the monthly meeting report I decided not to take an engine along but within ten minutes of arriving, I acquired TWO engines. One was an early Auto-Cycle engine and the other a Brockhurst engine with a few parts missing. After getting myself a pint, I walked around and inspected the assembly of engines, 26, which if I remember correctly, was quite a few more than last year.

Jock, from Scotland, was with us again; he had brought his Amanco and Norman which he had exhibited the previous week at the Club Rally, it was also nice to see John Thorne up from Bridgwater with his tiny engine of unknown make (someone said that one of his Blackstones must have hatched it!). Phil Harris was next along the line with a nice little outfit, a Villiers Marvil driving a Godwin Pump. Phil looked a little lost with this small exhibit.

Phil Wookey arrived with his Wolseley WDI behind his faithful Ford 8 car, known as 'Doris'; also rallying a Wolseley was Ivor Cox, whose brother Roy was away in hospital having a small operation on the hand he holds his pint mug in. Welcome to new member, Ian Marsh, who is no real stranger to the Wessex Stationary Engine Club, his exploits with a Campbell engine and borrowed trailer kept us spellbound for four episodes in this Newsletter earlier this year. Ian had a very unusual Aster generator finished that same morning but, alas, minus its volts due to the field coils being in juxtaposition. President Randall appeared with a Bamford, vertical this time and its first public appearance, while Mike Cannon brought his Fairbanks Morse with a Tangye Pump, Robin Lambert and Bill Appleby had the largest exhibit, the 8 hp Ruston and Hornsby; Bill also had his Amanco 2½ while Don Rogers had the faithful Fairbanks Bulldog off the leash for its evening run! Ian 'Chairman' Skuse hid in the corner with a nice Villiers 1½ hp two-stroke, fortunately it never ran as with the selection of PETTER M's present, we would have had a Mendip SMOG! As always, Listers were in abundance, from the D types of Brian Verrall, Dave Large and John Wheelwright, the gen.set of Roger Pike, the nice A type of Bill Coombs to the unusual 1920 2 hp H type of Eric Brain making its first public appearance since restoration in 1979! Nice to see Eric with a working man's engine. (He is probably alluding to the fact that at least I restored it myself....Ed.).

Gerald Atherton and J. Flood both brought Petters while Dave Watts had a nice Stuart Turner lighting set; Dave Ball and G. Hoddinott brought another Petter, and Bob Hallam exhibited a Ruston Hornsby PT. Jeremy Adams, last but by no means least, had his Lister A type; now who have I forgotten? Oh yes.... Mr. Tony Jones, that well-known engine recluse from Trowbridge and of course John Emery with the little Barker which it's believed, runs on Pedigree Chum (top restorers recommend it). Nice to see Diana sober again after the Club Rally. (I never added that - it **WAS** in the original manuscript....Ed!).

Herb did his usual fine job with the raffle, Treasurer Jackie won some soap, Mike Hodgson won some scanty panties, Andrew Jack Mercer won some smelly scent stuff, Andy Gale won a backscratcher, Marion Lowther a penknife and finally Phil Wookey won a reading lamp to find his way back to Bristol with!

A very enjoyable evening drew all too soon to a close. We would like to extend our thanks to all who took part, not least the Cam Valley Morris Men whose colourful traditional costumes and spirited dancing brightened the evening for ourselves and spectators alike.

Sawdust Sausage (Candidate for the Ban Petter Two-Strokes Campaign)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Annual Rally at the Full Quart Inn at Hewish near Weston-Super-Mare is on Sunday, 30th September. Although entries are already closed, try and come along and help raise money for CLIC. This is always a most enjoyable event at a pub with good food, etc.

North Somerset Group of the NVT & EC hold their annual Rally and Ploughing Match on September 8/9th at Flax Bourton, near Bristol. For details ring Gerald Atherton, Churchill 852886.

The Science Museum are holding this year's Open Day at Wroughton on September 9th from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Plenty to see and do, a most enjoyable day out.

Olde Vintage Rally to be held at the Slab House Inn, Haydon, near Wells on September 15/16th. Entries please to Mrs. K. Bendall, No.5 Austin Road, Glastonbury. Tel. Glastonbury 32236.

CLUB EVENTS

Sept. 24th

The Vintage Comic Postcard Show by the Club's own 'Vintage Card' himself, Brian Munt.

Oct. 29th

Some years ago we had a very successful trip to the Campden Works Museum in Morford Street, just off Lansdown Hill in Bath. Following many requests for a repeat visit to this fascinating collection, we meet at the Museum at 7.30 p.m. for an 8.00 p.m. start. Parking is in and around nearby streets so try and be early not to have too far to walk.

4.
Nov.26th 'Call my Vintage Bluff', a guessing game by Farmer John Forward of the Longhedge Collection. This will be at the Club Room at the Old Down Inn.
Dec. 8th Dinner and Dance. This will be held once again at the Masonic Hall at Frome and will be similar in form to last year's much acclaimed event. Forms for tickets will soon be available, perhaps in the next Newsletter.
Jan. 28th Again, by popular demand, we have Roy PADY from Devon with more Rally films, traction engines, engine restoration films and, we hope, film of that well preserved pair of Bristols for enthusiasts of that very specialised subject.
Feb. 27th Annual General Meeting.

FOR SALE 115v Alternator, single ph, 1.04 amps, £10; Wico series A magneto with slow start, £15; Ruston Hornsby Diesel valves 1¾" dia. head by 7½" stem, £1.50 each; Four off C.I.wheels and axles with wrought iron handle, £20, 12" Suffolk Colt mower engine, OK, £12; Lister 5 hp A type, 650rpm, class 3, £65. Brian Reakes, 43 Queens Road, Keynsham. Tel. 68549.

FOR SALE Lister D type, reverse rotation, 1½ hp, good clean condition and runs well. £20 ono. Roger Parsons, 6 Tynings, Clutton, Bristol. Tel.Temple Cloud 52565.

FOR SALE Briggs & Stratton 5 hp (USA) modern air-cooled aluminium engine c/w integral fuel tank, pull start, as new, ready to run. Will haggle in the £40-£50 region. Ken Waller, 29 Rosslyn Rd., Weston, Bath Road, Somt. Tel.Bath 21773

FOR SALE Magneto, ML type CKS flick mag. £25; small air compressor by Bristol Pneumatics, plenty of brass and copper fittings, needs about 2-3 hp and made in 1947, £40; pair of CI wheels, 9" dia. by 4" wide by ¾" bore, £3 pair. Eric Brain, Tel.Temple Cloud (0761)52633.

WANTED Piston, 6½" dia.to help complete restoration of Campbell engine. A Field Marshall one might just fit the bill so come on all you tractor men, what have you got in the heap under the bench? Ian Marsh, Wolfson Lab., School of Engineering, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, Som. or contact via the Newsletter Editor, tel.Temple Cloud (0761)52633.

WANTED Pulley for Lister D type, any standard size original fitment, Chris Arnold, Bradford on Avon 6565.

WANTED Can anyone supply me with about ten feet of about 1" wide flat leather or canvas belting? Please ring Tom Randall on Midsomer Norton 418926.

WANTED S.W.L. requires 2 metre (144-146 mc/s) F.M. monitor or converter. E.G. Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Tel.(0761)52633.

CAN ANYONE HELP THE CLUB

We are urgently in need of a source of supply of a piece of Heat Proof Glass, 8" x 6½" approx. and up to ¾" thick to repair the picture holder on the Club's Epidiascope. If anyone can help us, contact any committee member as soon as possible.