

# CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

August 2009

Thirty second year of publication

www.wessex -sec.co.uk

#### From the Sump

As you'll see opposite, I'm advertising the small book I've published recently to complement & augment the current series of articles in SEM. This is a service that we would be delighted to offer all members of our club as there must be many with decades of knowledge and expertise to set down for posterity. I've said before that I would very much like to publish anecdotes and stories from our member's experience of engines in their everyday lives. Sadly, the majority have come from Robin Lambert who was kind enough to find me articles written by his old friend Albert Critall some thirty years ago. We are collecting now the engines which powered industry & agriculture for a hundred years and if you used engines during your working years, I would very much like to publish your memories of them in this newsletter.

Another aspect of this interest is, of course, manufacturing and information about stationary engine production even fifty years ago is very hard to come by. Since the war, so many firms have been bought up, amalgamated and taken over, each time the records of the purchased company going out with the rubbish. At the same time, long serving employees often go too, close to retirement and glad to get out with money in their pocket rather than serve a new and probably uncaring master. Their stories are of interest to us all and once again - I'd be delighted to be able to serve in a minor way and give all those silent years a chance to speak again. It isn't as though we were short of big companies with Petter & Lister bracketing our geography. Please do get it down so others can share the best years of your life!

As a matter of interest, I had my book printed in Latvia (on the east of the Baltic) and it cost less than half what it would have cost to have it printed in the UK. This meant that I could afford to do it and to get my research into as many hands as possible –practicing what I'm preaching, see!

Finally, the September (not August) meeting will be consulted about the Theft Insurance I have been looking into for our members. Basically, it needs 25 of us to buy into the scheme to make it cost free for the club, well under 10% of our membership. If you can't be there & wish to support it please respond to me direct.

# Moving the Metal For sale

**Petter 8hp.** 1919, M type. Class One prize winner, totally rebuilt reluctant sale. Best offer near £1.200. Phone Eric Gay - 01225 754374

**Enfield "Sloper" Diesel**. Apparently in good order, free with compression. I'll never get around to it! **JAP 55 twin cylinder**. Ran fine the last time I tried. Probably never used in anger! Swap for something small & interesting or £140.00 for either (not both!).

"Somme to Beverley by Way of Sunderland"
A history of the ABC engine at war, 1915 to 1971 - By J.K. Siddorn. 70 pages, 80 photos and line drawings, cardback. Published by the author – address below. £4.99 including UK postage. £5.99 Worldwide (Sterling only accepted)

A comprehensive history of the stationary engines, APU & GPU units built by the All British Engine Company Ltd. Based upon the text of the series of articles that appeared in Stationary Engine Magazine during 2009. The work includes new information, corrections and eighty contemporary photos, line drawings and adverts - and the captions are accurate, capacious and exhaustive!

Birthday? Christmas is coming - an ideal small gift!

### Special notices

The Wessex Heavy Horse Society are running their usual event again this year. It is their 27<sup>th</sup> annual show and will take place on Sunbday 27<sup>th</sup> of September at the Turnpike Showground off the B3081, the Gillingham to Shaftsbury road.

I know that WSEC members have supported this event in the past & Mike Horler has asked me to invite engine entries through the newsletter.

Please contact Mike on 01761 470694.

WSEC Social do! - Skittles and Supper evening at The Royal Oak Corsley on October 10<sup>t</sup>" at 7-30pm. You need to let Diana know you are coming, so ring to book your place on 01373 464982.

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. 32
Gardner 4LW's at Internal Fire By Kim Siddorn

As we do most years, Hazel & I "go somewhere" for our wedding anniversary on 12<sup>th</sup> August. As we live in Bristol, this usually means Wales and a visit to see how they are getting on at Internal Fire falls into our very loose itinerary.

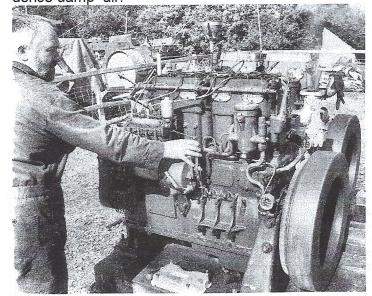
We turned up after a quick "are you open?" phone call – which, I suspect, is usually the only notice that Paul & Hazel Evans ever get. The bridge & M4 were a clear run & I trusted the satnav to guide me across country by the backroads & it worked! No pigsties or unfordable rivers crossed our path.

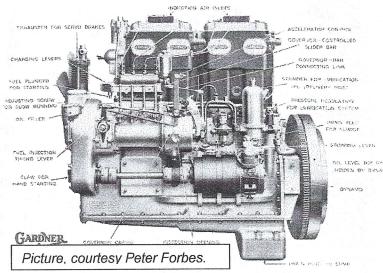
We received the usual warm & friendly welcome & after tea & biccies, Paul & his Volunteer of the Week, Dan Howden, got the covers off a couple of new additions lurking in the yard. A pair of Gardner 4LW engines stood blinking in the warm sunshine. They are of 5.6 Litres capacity, rated at 29 (RAC) hp & turn the scales at 1,092lbs. They are recent additions, courtesy of Trinity House and ex of The Lizard Lighthouse in Cornwall. The Second World War separates their manufacturing dates & they are slightly different.



They were supplied specifically for their Trinity House duty by Gardners and the bed plate they sit on was purpose made for the They both drove task. Crompton dynamos, but in addition, one drove a three phase alternator & the other four cylinder radiallydisposed compressor. An interesting device in itself, its narrow width allows it to

sit on the bedplate whereas a in line compressor would require a separate platform. It supplied the huge foghorn. It was said that on calm nights, the sound could be heard 25 miles away, carried by the dense damp air.





Paul & Dan were keen to show them off & a few minutes of finding a funnel, a union & some bits of pipe & we were ready to go. The lefthand (post war) engine fired up without much trouble, starting off as a single cylinder engine until the pump found enough Diesel to bring in the other cylinders.

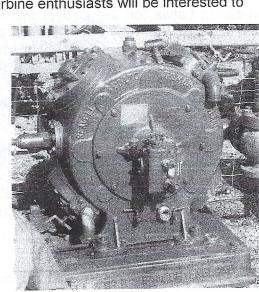
The right hand engine had arrived with the decompressor open & Paul was not sanguine about the chances of it running, lacking as it was in the compression department. However, the engine was only a reluctant starter & this was soon overcome & black particulate blew away downwind in an honest attempt to increase the museum's carbon footprint. They made a fine, full blooded Diesely noise, water & fuel spattering on all sides as the throttle was opened.

Paul has a leg in a full length plaster having dislocated – indraw of breath, purse the lips & squint the eye – his knee whilst working on an engine a couple of weeks ago. Therefore, Dan was the motive power for the starting and it was good to see a man in his prime burning calories whilst his elders – if not betters – looked on!

You may recall that these engines featured in the TV series "Coltrane's Planes & Automobiles" & you can see a 4LW running on YouTube here:-

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51mFuXgBFmY
Gas turbine enthusiasts will be interested to

hear that the Proteuspowered 3 megawatt stand by generator from the Princeton automatic station is approaching a state where it can be started. Paul briefly spooled it up for me whilst I was there.



#### Calendar of Events for 2009

NEW! Sept 3rd & 4th Event. Strawberry Line Miniature Railway at Avon Valley Country Park, Pixash lane, Keynsham, BS31 1TS, Engines required. Contact Mike Bass, Tel: 0117 9860124 Sept 28th Club night. Guest Speaker:- Dennis Chedgey illustrated talk on 1930's RADSTOCK Oct 4<sup>th</sup> .Event. Vintage & 4x4 Sort Out, A34/M4 junction, Newbury Showground (Sunday only) Oct 10th . Supper & Skittles at The Royal Oak, Corsley. 7.30 Phone Diana 01373 464982 Oct17<sup>th</sup> Event. Autumn Sort out at Cranmore station. 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, THE ENGINE MAKERS OF WESSEX Dec 6th Event. Winter Crank Up at Nunney Catch. Dec 27<sup>th</sup> Event. Mince Pie Crank Up, The Court Hotel (Note change of venue)

## ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION

Chairman's report (printed as received) The crank-up at the Court Hotel on the 27<sup>h</sup> July was well supported with engines on display, plus Colin Baker superb 1946 Morris series "E". We were lucky with the weather, we had a few drops of rain at one stage which made me cover up the raffle prizes but most of the evening it was dry. The hotel was busy serving drinks, hot dogs and filled rolls, (cost me a fortune with Oliver and Henry in tow). The evening was rounded off with the raffle which made a few bob for the club funds. The following Sunday was the "Mini-Rally" at Haynes Motor Museum at Sparkford, as last year it did not attract a large entry, but the members who did exhibit enjoyed a very pleasant day with a nice selection of engines on display. If there was an award for the longest exhaust pipe on a stationary engine it would be won without a doubt by Robin with his Stuart engine/generator. It is several metres long to take the copious clouds of smoke away from the other exhibitors who would probably be gassed. The smoke is due to the noxious mixture of petrol and diesel that is supplied to him from a garage that extracts it from the tanks of idiots who do not know the difference between a petrol pump and a diesel pump. It is certainly a cheap way to rally, but not too good for the environment. The day was as usual finished with the raffle which was well supported with prizes, we also had a separate raffle for a litre bottle of scotch, and this was donated by a member who wishes to remain anonymous so I can only respect his wishes. I had my eye on this particular prize but unfortunately it was not to be. Don't forget the Skittles and Supper evening at The Royal Oak Corsley on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7-30pm. If you wish to attend give Diana a ring to book your supper on 01373 464982.

#### Social news By "Earwig"

We'd like to mention: - Happy birthday to Pete Gear on 21<sup>st</sup> Aug & to Robin Lambert on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept.

# Petter Collection Moves to a New Home

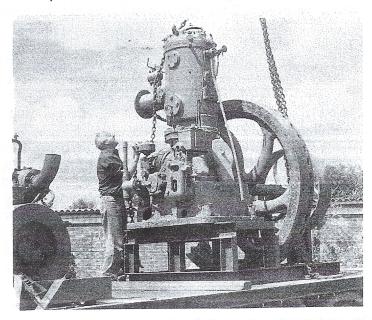
By Robin Lambert

Looking back over some 33 years our club had just about been formed several of our members were invited to view a private collection of stationary engines at Lodge Wood Farm, Hawkeridge which was the home of our then president David Edgington and his wife Doreen. During the evening combined with a barbeque lots of new acquaintances were made many of which have remained good friends over all these years. My own knowledge of stationary engines at this time only stretched as far as a couple of Listers but as we all know we all have to start somewhere. What was on view at David's was really impressive, including amongst others a large collection of Petter engines. So, how do you amass such a collection? Let's turn the clock back to how it all began.

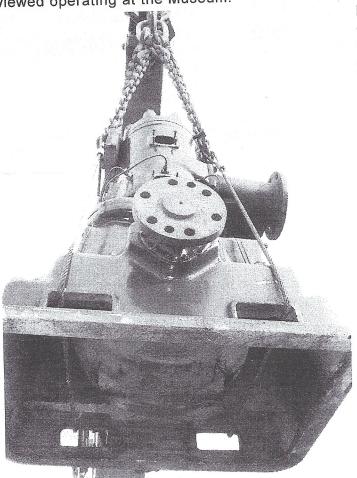
In the 1970's Petters Ltd, - at the time a Hawker Siddeley Company - had a collection of eighteen engines in store at Hatfield Airfield, while a further two resided at Staines. The collection consisted of semi-modern ex-show engines, such as PDV6, PC3, PD4, and older vintage engines examples of which had been handed back to the factory for possible preservation. Due to the ongoing recession, rented space was seen as an unnecessary expense and although new stock and machinery could be re-housed, placing the collection of engines was not so easy.

Various possibilities were explored but without success and at this point when it looked as if some of the lesser important engines might be scrapped, David stepped in & offered to re-house the whole collection.

While some of the engines went back to Petters for possible show and display purposes, David placed some of the others at a later date with museums and a few found good homes within the stationary engine movement. The final five engines - mostly large in size - remained with David for some 35 years and were considered of vital importance to Petters history.



Earlier this year, they were offered to the Internal Fire Museum to provide a safe haven & preserving them for posterity and viewing by future generations. A 4hp Handyman was collected earlier this year and was subsequently rallied by friends of the Internal Fire Museum at Astle Park. A rare Harmonic followed later, this engine is now in running order and can be viewed operating at the Museum.



This now left three remaining Petter engines at the farm, so on the 28th July arrangements and plans had been made for there removal and I made my way to Lodge Wood to see what was to take place. Firstly the barn roof had to be removed at an earlier date to allow access for a crane to make its lift. In itself, this was not easy as the 6 wheeled 25 ton crane could only get as close as the rear of an industrial unit on a neighbouring trading estate!

The crane's stabilising legs had to be well blocked as the boundary ground area was not compacted. A further complication was an overhead telephone cable that was between the engines and the crane.

The first engine to be lifted was moved by the transporter lorry that was to haul the engines back to Wales. It was an eight wheeled flat bed DAF with the largest reach grab arm folded up rear of its cab that I have ever seen - it must have reached over 30ft. It lifted an ex-ferry boat twin cylinder Petter Atomic Marine engine over the fence and on to its flat bed close to the cab.

Now it was the turn of the heaviest engine, a Petter 50hp VJ weighing in at six tons. This is a single cylinder vertical hot bulb engine with a two ton flywheel on an outrigger bracket. This lift proved more difficult as although the crane jib was probably close to 80 to 100 foot high, the phone wire was to prove to be an obstacle. The engine was lifted off the ground just a fraction and swung gently towards the crane until the lifting chains just touched the phone wire and the engine was lowered to the ground. The lifting chains were then re-positioned on the other side of the wires and it was plain sailing to the lorry bed where the engine was placed over the two rear axles.

The next lift was to be a 36hp Atomic TX the engine being placed at the rear of the lorry bed and all that remained was for the three engines to be secured for the journey to their new home.

What I found most interesting was the communication skills between the crane driver and lorry driver. They had never met before and apart for a brief chat prior to the lifts, just a few hand signals from the lorry driver as he attached the lifting chains, and sometimes re -adjusting them was all that was required. This was true work experience no doubt gained over many years. Should our club run a second trip to the Internal Fire Museum in a year or so's time I would certainly like to be on it to see these engine brought back to life.

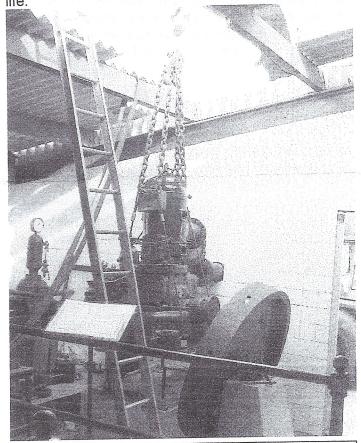


Photo credits. The photo on page 3 was supplied by Robin Lambert, the photos on this page are from the Internal Fire website.