

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. DECEMBER 1983

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THE HEDDINGTON AND STOCKLEY RALLY SOCIAL

This popular social evening arranged by the Rally Committee for the exhibitors took place, despite rumours to the contrary which were circulating previously on Sat., 15th October. It was attended by about 100 exhibitors plus their families who were welcomed by George Hyde, Rally Secretary, and all the rest of the Rally Committee.

There were many familiar faces present including Des Penny from the steam world, the Woolford family from Yatton Keynell, Ian 'Perkins' Cradock and Joanne Morris, Bill Foster, George and John Moore, Jim Bourne, Dave Cleaver, Len and Rene Fry and many many more.

The evenings entertainment started with a film, kindly shown to us by Mr. & Mrs. Brady from Colyton, Devon; the film being shot at the 'Yesterday's Farming' Show, and some very familiar faces were spotted. Wally Hunt and Petra almost stole the show, being prominent throughout; next on the bill came a musical interlude with a local brother and sister Country and Western Act called 'Guitar and Two'; this proved to be excellent with much scope for foot-tapping, hand-clapping and singing along by the visitors. Sadly, this entertainment was only to last a half hour. Next, came the raffle and the food, kindly prepared by ladies and friends of the Rally Committee. After the food, the speeches; Bill Foster replied on behalf of the exhibitors, thanking the Committee for their kindness in putting on such a super evening. The evening continued with the films starting with a film of a Devonshire horse-ploughing match; then a Devonshire version of Ornithology (bird watching!!) in last summer's near tropical conditions, this included both the feathered variety AND the female human form, swimming and sun-bathing at a river location in Devon. (Now we all know where George Hyde goes when the Rally is over...! Perhaps I could give you a lift down next year George...?). The silence during this film and steamed up spectacles had to be witnessed to be believed. The evening ended eventually with an uncensored film featuring the infamous Cindy; this proved to be very popular; (Tony Jones....that 'master of the understatement...' Ed.) but several ladies were seen to leave the room in seemingly total disgust. Others, who shall be nameless, seemed to enjoy it very much. A member from Yatton Keynell stretched his neck to see, so much that if he had stretched it any more, he would have ended up like an ostrich. Sadly, this brought to an end the evening at about 11.30 p.m. and everyone left with the knowledge that next year's rally will be held on the 7th/8th July, an event which we will all look forward to very much.

Generating Jones

WOODLARKS RALLY , September 10th/11th

This very popular rally held in aid of the Woodlarks Handicapped Girls Home, celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. All exhibitors were greeted by Peter Powell who was in charge of the Stationary Engine Section, we were followed in by Keith (over the bridge) Reader, who helped us into our position; Terry and Shirley Heath arrived soon after and we welcomed them with a nice cup of tea. Soon after we retired for the night but were woken during the small hours by the sound of rain pitter-pattering onto the roof of our van.

Saturday dawned brightly, however, and soon Shirley and I were on our way around the stalls. Later that day we attended an excellent barbeque run by Christine Powell to the music of the Gavioli organ of Mr. Searle from Horsham.

All day Sunday was wet but we were well pleased with the plaque mounted on a leather strap; this was too good to put on a plaque board so we put it on the wall of our van by the seats. We had a good journey home after a very enjoyable weekend.

Len and Rene Fry

YOUNG ENTHUSIAST

Stephanie Ashman, daughter of Stuart and Jan, and the Club's youngest member, has recently uttered her first word. It is a great tribute to our Treasurer and his wife that they have started to bring her up in the great traditions of our favourite hobby....the word? "ENGINES" of course....!

A WINTER'S (CAUTIONARY) TALE - The Recovery of a Campbell Stationary Engine

One of the advantages of a new job is the opportunity to seek out and meet new 'engine' friends. The tea-break conversation about vintage cars and commercial vehicles led on to better things, namely stationary engines.

Ian, who owned a couple of Listers and a very unusual Aster lighting plant, also enjoyed country walking. A couple of years previously, he had strayed from the footpath and come across

an old lamp-start engine in a tin shed along with a few other bits and pieces. 'What sort was it?', and 'is it still there?' were the obvious first questions; followed by 'OK, where is it?' all these were answered by the same silent grin!

We week or so later, Ian informed me that the engine was in fact still there, but the piston has been removed. Seeking out the owner, he had made a tentative low offer for the engine, which had been accepted. Would I accompany him and his friend Mark, who owned a very necessary Land Rover, to view the engine? Having vowed a vow of 'non-disclosure', we set out one frosty January lunch hour, to the outskirts of Bath, down through a deserted, derelict market garden to the bottom of a valley, very muddy and overgrown with briars and nettles. The engine was a Campbell of Halifax of about 8 hp, with the early horizontal flyball governors and a single flywheel 63" in diameter by 5½" face. The shed had been mostly burned down and the concrete floor was deep in wood-ash. Among this ash, we found the lamp, the bearing caps and numerous other recognisable bits and pieces. Untouched by the fire, quite remarkably, were two drums of TVO, whilst outside was the original earth silencer on the end of its pipe. The Campbell had been used to drive a 57 volt generator and a three-throw water pump, this latter item was, like the engine, partially dismantled with pieces scattered everywhere. Turning over a charred cupboard, we found a discoloured envelope faintly bearing the name of the market garden; inside were the original wiring diagrams of the generator and the installation layout dated 1908. This tallied with what we had already decided that the approx. age of the engine must be, and confirmed that the unit must have been on the same site for some 75 years. Subsequently, we found someone who remembered the engine working in the late 1960's, so it had a good working life until some vandal had begun to dismantle it, perhaps burning the shed down in his frustration. Ian hailed from Maidstone, the problem was not only how to remove the engine, and haul it up the steep hillside through the briars and mud, but how to transport it to Kent! Because the price was so right, the engine was so old, and the generator itself probably worth more than the sum required, it was decided to go on and recover the engine the following week.

The intrepid Mark and Ian spent a busy day (during which we had a fall of snow) dismantling the rest of the engine into smaller pieces and resorting the parts. It was decided to leave the pump as it made the task too great. In the meanwhile, since our previous visit, the earth silencer mysteriously vanished so no time had to be lost. A pull-lift borrowed from a friend, which proved a very valuable tool, and the Land Rover, was commissioned, together with my large heavy-duty trailer which was unused following a partial rebuild and strengthening operation. The day for recovery dawned very frosty, the otherwise muddy ground was frozen really solid, just what was needed....but at this point things started to go horribly WRONG.....!

(This true story will be continued next month)

 THE OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING

This meeting filled the Club Room to overflowing for a slide-show by Tony Jones using some of Verne Kindschi's slides from the USA. The slides were of their Club Show and it started by showing their permanent engine display sheds which they have built and also the engines within. They have only installed engines of totally different working principles to help make their display more interesting. Using the slides we were then moved out of the shed to look at some of the engines in the show-ground. Soon it was time to have a break for a pint.

After the break we had some slides taken by Tony himself, of local churches, general views. These brought comments from members.

Mark Tilly

 NEWS FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER

From Berwickshire, Andrew Mercer writes.....

"We have just had our Vintage Working Rally at the Border Country Life Museum. I started this Rally in 1981 but this year have had to 'rope-in' a few more bodies because of the sheer size of it. We had rain on the Saturday when we were setting up the Rally, it got wetter and wetter, but it faired up during the night and we managed to have a full show, including the harvesting operations'.

He asks 'Where is the rest Home for Rally Organisers? - or is it full up with Newsletter Editors?'. Perhaps Brian Crudge of S.S.A.P.S. can come up with a suitable answer...!

 SUBSCRIPTIONS 1984

Soon the Turkey will have been reduced to it's bare bones, the Pudding stripped of it's silver threepenny bits, the Carol Singers will, thankfully, have gone home reaching for the throat-lozenges, all the big stores will have packed up the Christmas Cards and coloured lights, Rudolph will be back in his stable and Wessex Stationary Engine Club members will be thinking of what to do with that £5 note which Auntie Mary so generously gave them

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because she was so confused by all the gifts on display she couldn't think of what present to give.

Yes, it's subscription time once again, except for those who joined the Club since October 1st 1983. Please renew as soon as you possibly can, it makes our hard-worked Treasurer's job so much easier. You should receive your 1984 Cert. of Insurance as soon after as we are able; if you renew by post, it should come with the next Newsletter.

The subscriptions remain the same as 1984, £5 for Joint Membership, £4 for a single and £1 for a junior (under 18 years). Please remember, a junior member is excluded from the insurance scheme unless he/she is over 16 years and is accompanied at a Rally with his/her working exhibit by a parent or legal guardian who is ALSO a paid up Club Member. This is a stipulation of our Insurer.

Send your subscription for 1984 to: Stuart Ashman, Moorledge Farm Cottage, Knowle Hill, Chew Magna, Nr.Bristol; just write the details on a piece of paper including your telephone number if possible and make your cheque/P.O. payable to 'The Wessex Stationary Engine Club'. Please don't delay.....Do it TODAY.....!

THANK YOU from the Club to those responsible for October's meeting. A full house saw slides of engines never normally seen in this country, and names we read of only infrequently. Aermotor, Foos, Handy-Boy, Lawson, Racine, to name but a few, were interspersed with John Deere, Michigan and Fairbanks, Morse. Yes, thank you David Edgington for making the slides available to us, also to Verne Kindschi for his time and trouble and, not least, to Tony Jones for his recording artistry matching the sound to the scene with such dexterity.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

January 30th	A slide show by the Trowbridge Camera Club of Steam Traction Engines, Fair-ground Organs, and other items of general interest
February 27th	The Annual General Meeting where YOU will be welcome to come along, perhaps join the Committee if you feel like a share of the work needed to run this Club, or merely to let off steam and air your views. Just come along and help vote on next year's committee perhaps?
March 26th	Michael Cannon with an illustrated talk on the 'Narrow Gauge Railways of North Wales'.
March ?	It is hoped to hold another of our very popular Jumble Sales during March sometime. Meanwhile, start collecting up your bits and pieces, especially Bric-a-Brac, which always sells well. Details will be announced after Christmas.
April 30th	Yet to be arranged
May 12th/13th	Bristol Docks Rally
May 21st	(NOTE - this is NOT the last Monday in May due to Bank Holiday) Car Boot Sale, the 'with-it' name for a Bring and Buy at the Old Down in
June 25th	Evening Crank-Up, run your engine with a pint in the other hand! At the Old Down Inn. This is another popular annual event

Other events under discussion include a visit to the Engines at Blagdon Pumping Station, a repeat visit to the Campden Works Museum in Bath, a film on Badgers by the Somerset Nature Conservancy, and, if there is enough interest, another coach trip to either the Science Museum at South Kensington or to the Museum of Engineering at Birmingham perhaps?

Abbey Hill Steam Rally takes place on Easter Weekend 1984 at Boundary Road, Yeovil, Somerset; this event is now established as one of the premier events in the Rally calendar. To enter send a SAE to Terry Heath, 'Ter-shi', Bradford Road, Sherborne, Dorset. Entries close February 28th.

WANTED

Villiers Mar-vil, must be complete- this is a tiny horizontal engine with a kick-start. It is required as a 'first engine' for a youngster to start the hobby. Tel. John Thorne, Bridgwater 423941.

Set of 4 cast iron wheels, must be 8" to 9" in dia. Tel. Eric Brain, Temple Cloud 52633.

Giles Cartoon Annuals by collector; Nos.1-15, 18, 21, 22, 31, 33 & 35. We have duplicates to swap with other collectors or still buy. Please contact Eric & Ann Brain as above (0761)

BTH Magneto, type M1, Tel Brian Verrall on Cheddar 743460.

FOR SALE

Petter Al petrol stationary engine, 1946 complete and in running order, with a reprint of the owners manual. Make good project for the winter for young enthusiast, therefore not expensive at £20 ono. Tel. Chris Arnold, Bradford-on-Avon 6565.

Open front crash helmet, as new condition, small size, suit lady or young person. £5 Tel. Temple Cloud 52633 (0761).

Lister D, running but without exhaust. Cheap to good home. Contact Mr. B. Hayden, 65 Marsden Lane, Frome, Somerset. Tel. 66130.

THE CROFTON TRIP, November 13th

Looks like a nice day, dry but nice - so I am told. It must have been a good Saturday night as my head is rather numb and I certainly have felt a lot better than this on a Sunday morning.

Right then, lets get going. Off we set for the Old Down Inn; we, that is, being wife Carol, and children, Andrea, Ashley & Claire. The reason we are about so early on a Sunday, is because our Club has organised a trip by coach to the Crofton Pumping Station. Here we are then, driving across the Mendips and we have just caught up Gerald Harris and family. We arrive in convoy at the Old Down Inn to find Roy Cox and family already waiting. We must have the correct date as even more Club members appear...and here comes the coach. It looks quite posh. Right-O! All aboard...now heres a surprise! It's Stuart Ashman, on time for once!

Off we head for Trowbridge, the staging post for more Club members. Good job we have instructions supplied by Tony Jones or we would never have found them. Now the coach is full and we are well on our way to Crofton via Devizes and Marlborough, and then on to the Saver-nake Forest which is quite pretty, Hello - the driver has got his map out. 'Hope he knows where we are going' says Brian Munt. (Sorry but we can't record Don Roger's reply). We must be getting close now, for there is the smoke coming out of the chimney. They must be getting ready for us. We are met at the gate by a most enthusiastic car-park attendant trying his best to get our huge vehicle parked tidily. "Be back at the coach by 1400 hrs" says the coach driver. This is better, the smell of hot steam and oil really does take some beating as far as I am concerned, we are now in the pumping station itself. As we enter we are charged £1 for adults and 50p for children, not expensive for what you will see in return. The pumping station is on the Kennet & Avon Canal and houses two early Cornish beam engines, a 1812 Boulton & Watt and an 1845 Harveys of Hayle. They were installed to pump water to the upper levels of the canal and have been fully restored. They are the oldest working steam beam engines in the world. We were given a guided tour of the station by Chris Harvey, who as you will recall, gave us a talk on the Crofton Pumping Station in the early part of the year at a Club Meeting. To see and hear these engines working is really something. Each stroke delivers a ton of water into the leat leading to the canal.

After seeing the engines, we went down to the boiler house where we saw working stationary steam engines and other working models. I was most surprised to see a female stoker! I suppose we must expect this now, what with equal rights (I wonder if she burnt her bra). Back to the coach now for some lunch and then off to see a restored windmill at Wilton, just up the road.

At last we arrived at the windmill, the coach driver having just done a ten point turn to get here. We are met by a Col. Lewis who says he will give a guided tour but can only take ten persons at a time...and there is about fifty in our party! So it is first in gets a look. Actually he can take about forty-five, we 'miscounted' and didn't tell him! This mill is fully restored and is still used to grind corn. Unfortunately the Colonel had a sore throat and could not talk all that much. Nevertheless, it was very interesting; cameras were clicking and flashing all over the place. Soon we were back on the coach and retracing our steps back to Trowbridge and hence to the Old Down Inn. Brian Munt took a collection for the driver. I think it was a most enjoyable day out and feel sure there will be another trip in the not too distant future to some other interesting place.

Ian Skuse

AND FINALLY.....

George Orwell's year of 1984 is almost upon us and 1983 is almost gone. This Newsletter starts the year off with Chapter 2 of the Campbell story, a report on the Dinner & Dance (hopefully!) and a report on the November Club Meeting, where Brian Munt had us in stitches, setting a Royal occasion to the tune of 'Roll out the Barrel'! Otherwise we are desperate for articles for this Newsletter, can you help?

All that now remains is, on behalf of the Club, to wish you all A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe Rallying during the New Year.