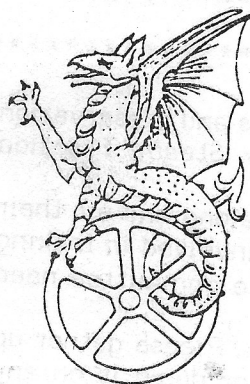


# WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



## NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1984

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**THE OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING** - The Campden Works Museum, Bath

This meeting was attended by approx. 45 members who were split up into groups of 15 by our guides and proved a very good evening.

The Campden Works Museum houses the Bowler Collection which is a reconstruction of the entire works of J.B. Bowler who's firm traded in Bath for 97 years and whose motto seemed to be 'not throw anything away'. This was a family business of Victorian times although trading continued until 1969. J.B. Bowler had many talents it seems; initially he was a good engineer, but was also a plumber, gas fitter, locksmith, bell hanger, brass founder, and as a sideline, as aerated water manufacturer. There are literally hundreds of items in the collection to substantiate all these claims.

First of all we were taken to the mineral water department where ginger beer and mineral waters were made, the original recipes were all on show. A lot of the machinery used was designed by Bowler himself, including a carbonate pump, and was mostly operated by hand. There were few safety guards but one or two had been added later as there had been some problems with exploding bottles. In this same area stood a Velocipede of 1890 and a Pennyfarthing bicycle. As we moved on we saw the machine room where there were milling machines, pipethreaders, drills, etc, all originally driven by a Griffin gas engine. There was a pattern room, foundry room, and a gas lit office where Bowler did his designs, not on a drawing board as today but on a large double 'partners' desk. In this office stood a solid brass clock dated 1780 which is still working.

Conditions in the works were very cramped and the employees mostly earned about £2 per week which was, apparently, a very good wage in those times.

Lastly we were taken to a 'shop room' where we were shown numerous items which the firm made; from brass taps to engine whistles, black-out electric light bulbs which they had bought as a job lot at the end of the war and which probably explains why none were sold! They still have them all at the works. This was a very interesting and informative tour and I could not begin to relate all of the vast amount of information fed to us by our guide, so anyone unable to visit on this occasion, it is well worth a trip on your own; only £1 for adults, and 50p for children and OAP's. After the tour we gathered again for tea and biscuits, and thanked the Museum for the use of their kitchen and Michael and Jane Cannon for doing the catering. They washed up too, with the help of Mary Verrall.

Jack Cash

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**NETLEY MARSH RALLY 1985**

We have been asked by the organisers of this popular event to tell all WSEC members intending to enter and who would like to be together in the engine line to either include a note to this effect or to mark your form WSEC. Please also do the same with the camping form and Marshall 'Chalkie' White will arrange all this for you. Make sure you send your form before April 15th to assist the organisers with setting out their programme.

**Special note:** DO NOT just endorse the form 'Wessex' as another club are using a similar title to ours and this will cause confusion. W.S.E.C. please.

Entries are always somewhat limited at this rally but details are available from the Stationary Engine section organiser Brian White, 3 The Cottages, Magazine Lane, Marchwood, Southampton, SO4 4UX.

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Subscriptions are due on January 1st 1985 except for those joining after October 1st 1984. The rate remains unchanged yet again, £5 family membership, husband and wife, fiancée, mistress,

2. concubine, etc. £4 single member and £1 for a Junior member under 18 years. Juniors are not covered for rally insurance by our underwriters and can only rally when accompanied at the event by a legal parent or guardian who is also a full WSEC member. Please send your subscription as soon as possible please to Jackie Lambert, 15 Beechwood Ave., Frome, Som. and make your cheque/PO payable to Wessex Stationary Engine Club.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jan.28th The second Roy Pady film show at the Old Down Inn. Films of rallies and preservation generally including, we hope, a special feature film based on Steam Traction restoration.

Feb.25th The Annual General Meeting. All members are welcome to come along and air their views, even put themselves forward to join the Committee and get involved in making things 'tick'. All organisations such as ours run by a representative committee need new blood from time to time, we need **YOUR** help.

March 23rd Jumble Sale at St.Peters Church Hall, Westfield, Norton-Radstock. Please gather up all your unwanted items especially bric-a-brac and bring it along or dump it on any committee member. Its good fun on the day too, come along and help. Doors open 2 p.m., mind the rush at the door...!

#### JOHN KYTES GARDEN RALLY

Organising an engine rally in one's garden may seem to some to be the speediest way to the divorce courts and the best way to fall out with your neighbours, but not so for John Kyte. With a lot of help from his wife, Doris, and the family, the landlord of the pub next door, and all his many friends, he always manages to put on an interesting 2-day show.

At the garden entrance, a small Deal organ vamped out a nice selection of music which was easy to listen to whilst watching Ron Frampton and Arnie Critall's super collection of working model engines, all driven by Kohler-made compressed air. A large Dorman engine drove a massive deep-well pump, while inside a specially built engine room, John was about to start up his huge Ruston-Proctor which much weigh about 4 tons. This always draws a crowd as it's not often you get a chance to see a big engine started by its own compressed air. A fine array of some 5 Blackstones ran smoothly and slowly; the smallest one being a 1½ hp owned by Don Baker. The overspill from the garden runs onto the pub lawn, which had more engines on it. One of these was a small Maytag owned by Patrick Knight and rallied by a friend; this ran very well and I was told that these engines were installed in washing machines in their home country of America. Three large Ruston-Hornsby's, Amanco's Listers, Petters, Internationals, Fairbanks, Morse and a rare Wiscona PEP motor all added to the attraction of this working weekend, although the latter engine gave a lot of trouble in starting until coaxed into life by a 12-volt battery and fluorescent light coil. This is always a good standby for an engine with a 'dodgy' magneto. The refreshment stall was kept busy and there were also a few 'bygones' stalls to browse over.

Sunday afternoon soon came and John came around thanking everybody for their support and presented everyone with a plaque.

Robin Lambert

#### A DISAPPOINTMENT

During 1983 we offered a small prize for the most meritorious Newsletter article by a non-Committee member, in the opinion of all the Committee. This was suggested basically to encourage a larger proportion of members to help contribute to the Newsletter. This year, this seemingly good idea at the time, has backfired on us as since the start of 1984 less than 8% of the contents of the Newsletter had come from other than Committee members. We have, to date, a membership of about 140 paid up subscriptions, which, taking family memberships into account, gives us well over 200 interested persons, 13 of whom are Committee members anyway.

Thus, by simple empirical mathematics, it can be seen that we are getting an abysmal response to our repeated impassioned pleas for articles, rally reports, sale reports, etc., for this **YOUR** Newsletter so perhaps individuals object to being singled out for prizes?

With this in mind, therefore, it was decided unanimously at a recent Committee meeting to withdraw any prize or award for the 1985 Club subscription year in the hope that the majority would come forward and help the minority. Come on the other 90% of the Wessex Stationary Engine Club...don't leave everything to the Committee!

#### A CALEDONIAN CAT-ASTROPHE!

Andrew Mercer tells us that he attended the Northumberland Rally at Ashington, had a pleasant day's rallying, loaded up his engine for the 70 or so miles homeward trip, and was just pulling off the field when someone shouted 'don't forget your cat'. He then saw for the first time his recently acquired kitten running off across the field. When captured, he realised that the little beast had spent the entire southward journey sat in the engine compartment, only to re-emerge when Andrew started



the motor for the long trip home. With the advent of the pantomime season, could we have discovered the Scottish Version of 'Puss in Boots'?....'Puss in the Bonnet'...!!

### THE ENGINE HOUSE

The mammoth engine ground to a halt for the last time in June 1910, the china clay resources had run out. Old men went back to their stone cottages, with their last pay packet in their hands and bought their last pint in the 'Pig and Whistle' for a long time. Young men and their families packed a few belongings and set off to London, leaving their forefathers graves unattended. The Pit bosses drove off to new jobs in other pits. Within 15 years a prosperous village had become a ghost town. Men's pipes were crushed into the ground by feet, eager to go.

Now all that is left of life for so many people is a crumbling engine house, the workers cottages were wiped out by the claws of the dual carriage-way.

The engine house sits covered in winding, twining ivy, gently tearing at the crumbling decaying stone. Its tall, once proud chimney reaches bravely from the clasp of brambles and salutes the sky. Down below is the doorway, rusty hinges hang on to last pieces of wood - once part of a solid oak door.

The slates off the roof are now fallen into heaps on the floor; daggers of sunlight penetrate in shafts through the jungle of trees, striking cords as notes fill the room with dancing music. The stonework is eroded away in places, making shapes of old men, houses, sea and clouds.

The floor is worn smooth with many generations of men tending the machinery. Bolted to the floor are planks of wood, all that remains of the noisy, smelly, grimy, oily machine that once pumped water out of the china clay pits. The engine was taken away by an uncaring scrap merchant, several years after the pit was closed.

A young elder bush pushes its way up through the slate; part of nature's continuing process of reclaiming what was once hers.

Outside the house are the clay settling pits. Rows of shallow baths divided into strips to allow the impurities to settle, leaving pure creamy china clay residue to run out the other end. Water boatmen swim like viking returning home from war.

All that remains of years gone by.

Mandy Gane

### AUTUMN CRANK-UP AT THE OLD DOWN, EMBOROUGH - 18th November

Who said the rally season finished at the end of September, because this is not true in the case of the Wessex Stationary Engine Club. The miserable, murky Mendip mist did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of 22 engines along with their owners and families. Was it just a coincidence that they started to arrive just as the hostelry doors opened? As soon as the engines were fed, watered and started up their owners were drawn into the warmth and comfort of the Old Down Inn, emerging to squirt quantities of oil in the right places. For those who took the time out to come to Emborough they were rewarded with quite a good selection of engines ranging from the diminutive Barker of John Emery to the 7½ cwt of Ian Skuse' 4 hp Ingeco. Even a representative from the 'Land of My Fathers' turned up in the shape of Emerson Salkeld and his Petter 1½ hp new model, so presumably the Severn Bridge is still standing! Brian Munt handled the raffle in his uniquely extortionate way - not so much 'would you like to buy a raffle ticket' more of a 'oi you, get yer money out'! However, first prize of a brace of freshly shot pheasant was won by Brian Verrall who was overheard saying as he walked away 'Mary is a good pheasant plucker'. Dot Watts won a bottle of wine and Don Rogers won a rabbit - a dead one of course but just as hairy or is it harey - sorry! The final prize was a box of shortbread, won by Claz Munt. A most enjoyable autumnal afternoon that was well supported by the members, I hope Gordon and Penny benefitted from the extra revenue as well.

Michael Cannon

**FOR SALE:** Large battery charger, 6/12/24 volts adjustable to 30 amps. £25. I.N.Yeo, Chyventon, Smitham Hill, East Harptree. Tel. West Harptree 604.

### THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

A short page-filler whereby the Editor chronicles the events of 1984 and lets off steam generally before being suffocated by the annual seasonal 'goodwill'.

Nineteen eightfour has been the year that Tony Jones finally hung up his starting handle to succumb to domesticity, the year that the sun blazed down all through the rally season; even Stourpaine was dry, and the year that our WSEC insurance indemnity was increased to £500.000 following current rends. It has been the year of the paper aeroplane for our secretary, Diana, the year of the Ingeco for Ian Skuse, the year of the cow-pat for Messrs. Lowther and Verrall, and the year that Robin and Jackie Lambert became the first WSEC members to actually be farther north than Andy Mercer. This has been the year of the Stationary Engine Magazine for David Edgington; well,

4. the tenth year actually, while for President Tom Randall, it has been the year of Restoration; the kitchen this time, not the Bamford - and burying Ester in wet concrete in the process...! It has been the year that not even the 'People's Republic of South Yorkshire' could prevent the splendid Steam Traction Engines appearing at rallies all over our area - even though, by the smoke, the fuel used sometimes appeared a little suspect. Even the Dring Donkin made a very welcome appearance at our rally, was it true that Rod had Marg combing the local Norton Hill Colliery site for a basketful of nutty slack...? Jane Cannon had an uplifting experience at Yeovil Festival of Transport whilst hubby Michael lost his poetically immortalised eyebrows in a rather closer encounter with hot air, manufactured by his Petter S type's blowlamp. This was a new engine on the rallyfield for 1984, as were the Lister A type of Roger Parsons, the Asters of Ian Marsh and Robin Lambert, the Skuse Ingeco, the Lister A type of Dave Clack, Dave Squire's Gardner, Ed Thorne's Stuart, Claude Lowther's Amanco Hired Man, not forgetting the Munt Meat Machinery Museum's Bladder Inflator driven by an innocuous little Villiers Mk.10. It has been the year in which the Editorial Wolfsburg Wheelbarrow has been seen rather less often towing the restricting weight of stationary engines to rallies and more frequently in the visitor's car park. This has given me a better chance to view with a spectator's eye and, thus, for 1985 I would like to set down these guidelines, controversial though they may be!

Firstly, the old chestnut...., we all know the pros and cons of camping and cars behind engines. A rally is, more often than not, an exhibition for the general public who, I am sure, would rather see engines as exhibits on their own, rather than mixed up with what passes as a cross between Greenham Common Gypsy Camp and a scrap car dealers yard. Yes, I know the other side of the argument, but who spends all their time guarding their engine, let alone running it...! Also, the argument about rainy rallies just doesn't hold water(!)

Secondly, non-running engines at rallies; I maintain that Yeovil Festival is a classic example of an event with so much taking place that it is a prime target for the free entry ticket rallyist. Once more this year I do not remember seeing more than six engines running at any one time wherever I stood. One Wolseley remained motionless all day; all year - judging by the rust on its flywheels, and the same engine was at Stourpaine, similarly motionless.

Again, any engine however esoteric it may be to the enthusiast, is just so much old scrap metal to the general public unless it is displayed as an **EXHIBIT** with a sign telling just simply what it is, where found, what it did, etc. The date of manufacture is always open to question in spite of the vast knowledge to be obtained via the Stationary Engine Magazine or some of our more learned friends. One case in point which immediately springs to mind is an engine of American origin regularly exhibited by a member of a neighbouring Club (whose Logo is a plough). This engine gets older by a couple of years every year but its regressive action has halted at this year at 1900 although its actual date must be around the mid-1920's. why make a fool of oneself when the truth is irrefutable?

We, the Wessex, have an agreement with certain other clubs that we will not encourage our members to enter rallies that **CHARGE ADMISSION** for exhibitors and, where possible we avoid giving those events any free publicity. Of course, it is up to you the individual to rally where you wish but this is a trend which could spread like wildfire. Don't forget there are plenty of other rallies, perhaps too many. We hear from a very reliable source that Yeovil Festival are to charge £1.50 per entrant this year. This is a bad move on their part and a policy which could easily result in the finish of yet another event. All preservation exhibitions exist because of the time, trouble and cash of enthusiasts who are willing to come along and exhibit their items. When they start having to pay for the priveledge as well, then that gets a bit much.

Talking of shows, what a crying shame that South Somerset Agricultural Pres. Club are moving away from the prefect tailor-made site at the Bath & West Showground. Surely this can only result in harm to what has always been a hitherto first class two-day event. A large site, hard roads, proper buildings, and above all, toilet facilities that are second to none, cannot be compared to tentage, portaloos and a possible quagmire. Oh well, at least **they** won't be charging entrants to enter....!

Finally, our own rally this year, 1985, will be at Longleat as previously announced. We have been privileged to be asked to join with another preservation group for this event but have been limited to the number of engines. Therefore priority will be given to those members who will undertake to rally on both days. Put the date in your diary as soon as you pull it out of your Xmas stocking, June 15th and 16th 1985.

Merry Christmas and Happy and Safe Rallying for the new Year.

Emerson Brantingham.