

December

2012

Thirty fifth year
of publication

www.wessex-sec.co.uk

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

Granfer To The Rescue

By Kim Siddorn

The autumn wind was bitter, raising swirls of damp leaves across the allotments as they ran down the gentle slope to the river. The Severn Estuary was not far away as the crow might fly, perhaps seven miles, but the Atlantic Sou'westerly was unimpeded by the few trees planted along the reims but the flanks of Mendip funnelled the mass of flying air.

The river was old, its meandering banks brought up sharply by successive hands over ten thousand years of time from when the first men laid a hazelled Track Way there. This was long ago, at a time before the Channel was filled from North Foreland to Wight, when a man might still drive his goats across from the winter pasture to eat the birch sprouting along the edge of the retreating tundra a little north of the Levels.

In summer, the water flowed contained in a watercourse, the sides of which had first been defined by a Roman soldier with a wooden spade. But still in winter, the river might assert itself a little and reappear in its old bed, a trapped oxbow at the foot of the slope.

His greasy old gardening hat pulled down across his forehead against the flying leaves, George pushed his barrow across the road towards his allotment. It was a poor day to be out "Not fit for man nor beast" as his dad reminded him from the comfort of his armchair. Certainly not fit for an old boy with an Argentine's bullet in his thigh that troubled him on cold days. There was a not much to do at this time of year, but now the leaf was off, George thought he might have a go at the patch of bramble that footed the slope. He'd brought saws and secqueters of various kinds, an axe and a billhook – and some monstrous leather gloves. He built a small fire and was soon into the task, the dry old bramble crackling away and filling the air with a fine autumnal smell of burning wood.

The old air raid shelter, brick built by his granfer, soon appeared but to his surprise, emerging from the briar there was another building against which the air raid shelter had been built. It was a bit smaller but still substantial with an iron door. He couldn't shift it although it faced up the slope away from the prevailing wind (*Cont, page 4*)

Moving the Metal For sale

Petter AVI 5HP Diesel Ser No 618657. Restore or spares. Some frost damage £35
JAP 3A. Two air-cooled engines, 1 complete ,1 for spares. £20

Contact **Brian Verral Cheddar 01934 743460 evenin Lister 1948 28 DH**, s/n 1/17438. Rocker gear dismantled but all parts available. Turns over with compression. Ex milking parlour, no trolley. Needs restoring but probably never been apart. Dry stored. With factory handbook. Frome area. Open to offers but £650ono as a starting point!

Phone **John 07517 036026**

Water pump, manufacturer unknown. On a trolley, working. £650ono

Pulley 12" Dia 4" Wide 1.425" (36 mm) Bore. £15

All above Phone **John Light 07885 466464**

Farmborough

Award Night Star Caravan, Has all mod cons inc cooker, Fridge, Shower etc, Can be viewed at Chapmanslade Nr Frome, Asking price £700.

Contact **Jeff on 07564818529.**

Scott PAB Generator complete except for a couple of gauges. This is a very rare find and only the second one I've seen in ten years. It has had a lick of paint but could do with some work.offers £350 ish
Lyon/Norman gen set, bought by the seller's father just after the war and in good order

Wisconsin/Jaeger close coupled water pump, Fully restored from rusty wreck!

Contact **Keith Kerley by e-mail**

Diane Atkinson <miss.diane@btinternet.com>

Vintage Magnetos - Martin Dry

Tel: +44 (0) 117 9675225

Email: vintagemagnetos@blueyonder.co.uk

- We repair and supply parts for British and American magnetos as fitted
- to Veteran and Vintage stationary engines, motorcycles, cars and tractors .
- We carry a wide range of spares for Lucas, Wipac, BT-H, Thompson Bennet, ML, Simms, American Bosch, Fairbanks Morse, Wico International
- Repair and supply 6v and 12 v control boxes.
- Rewind (on a replacement basis only) low and high tension coils
- Repair and supply 40-watt and 60-watt dynamos for British motorbikes.
- Supply low and high tension cable and connectors, distributor cans & nickuns

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

Phone - 0117 964 6818

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Calendar of Events

Key. CN = Club Night. E = Event

Jan 28th CN. Talk By Robin Lambert
Feb 25th CN. Annual General Meeting. 8.00pm at The Court Hotel. There will be a FREE buffet. Please do make the effort to attend and have YOUR say in the running of your club
March 2th (Sat) E. Wessex Spring Sortout At Cranmore Railway Station.
March 9/10th E. West Country Game Fair at Bath and West Showground. Phone 01392 421500 lisa@contour.co.net
March 25th CN. "Sammy Miller's Motor Cycle Museum" Slide show by Brian & Oliver Baker
April 1st E. Easter Monday at Mells. Contact Robin Lambert 01373 463526 if you want to attend as space is always limited **Mells Entry Forms will be going out with the January Newsletter as Mary has quite a lot of stuff to go out in December.**
April 20th (Sat). Enstone Spring Sale. info: Mrs. Anne Harris 01367 810415
April 21st (Sun) E. Crank Up at Nunney Catch.
April 29th CN. "Cheese Making" By Pauline Alvis. Cheese for sale after the talk.
May 20th CN. Early Because Of Bank Holiday.
Alternative Hobbies Night.
May 26/27th E. Selwood Rally. Southwick Nr Trowbridge.
 Forms from Mrs Pearl Francis, 45, Stonebridge Drive, Frome, BA11 2TW.
<http://www.selwoodvintage.co.uk/page6.html>
June 15/16th E. Wessex Midsummer Vintage Gathering. Our club rally at Semington.
June 8/9th E. West Bay Rally. Phone Matt Scadding 07948 579841
June 22/23rd E. 28th 1000 Engine Rally, Astle Park.
June 24th CN. In House Member's Quiz.
July 20/21st E. West Oxen Steam & Vintage Show. Ducklington, Whitney, OX29 7TY (off junction of A40/A415) Info: Mrs. Anne Harris 01367 810415
July 21/22nd E. Much Marcle Steam Rally. Rye Meadows near Ledbury. HR8 2LX Phone, Dot Pullen, 01531 633664
July 28th (Sun) Crank Up at Frank Nash's cider farm at West Pennard. Phone Brian for details
July 29th CN. Crank Up At The Court Hotel
Aug 19th CN. Early Because Of Bank Holiday. Slide Show By Brian Baker. - Club Events This Year.
Sept 30th CN. "Engines at the 1000 Engine Rally" by Kim Siddorn.
Oct 5th (Sat) Skittle Match At South Parade Frome
Oct 12th (Sat) E. Wessex Autumn Sortout At Cranmore Railway Station.
Nov 12th (Sat). Enstone Autumn Sale. info: Mrs. Anne Harris 01367 810415
Nov 25th CN. Photo Night. Bring 10 Photos, hard copy or USB stick or CD rom.
Dec 1st (Sun) Anti-Freeze Crank Up. Nunney Catch
Dec 27th (Fri) Mince Pie Crank Up At The Court Hotel

Chairman's Monthly Report

by Brian Baker (printed as received)

The meeting at the Court Hotel on Monday Nov 26th had quite a good attendance for the "Photo night," where members bring along a selection of photos to show on the clubs epidiascope or the projector. The photos shown varied from Arthur's selection from Wessex events to Kim showing the building of a Viking Long House that he had recorded on a USB stick to show on the new projector. Also Oliver had compiled a program from photos that I had taken at the crank up at Nunney in the spring. He had Spud Taylor's huge truck with a sound track of an engine running and the song Truck Driving Man playing. Next were Arthur and Liz with their Mustang with Mustang Sally playing, when it got to Eric's engine the music was Raindrops are falling on my head, with reference to Eric having to cancel the rally, this was a good evenings entertainment followed by the raffle. There was a prize of a bottle of wine for the best entry and as I appealed for someone to judge them without a volunteer coming forward I decided to pick a winner myself, this I deemed to be Arthur as his selection of photos was about Wessex members and Wessex events, well done Arthur. As this was the last meeting this year apart from the Mince Pie crank up I can tell you the January meeting will be a talk by Robin Lambert. The Anti-Freeze Crank-Up at Nunney Catch on Sunday 2nd December had quite a good entry of engines, I counted over twenty, we also had two Mustangs, Arthur and Liz and their friend, Robin had his Triumph 1500, Spud Taylor turned up with his massive truck, what a noise it makes when he revs it up, I would not like to pay his fuel bill. There was also a small tractor with a hydraulic shovel on the front, quite a useful looking bit of kit, but make unknown. Kim had an interesting display of voltmeters, ammeters and spark plug testers etc. I would like to thank Martin Coombs from Sutton Montis nr Yeovil who turned up with his large Crossley for donating six bottles of wine for the raffles, you are a very generous man Martin. The turn out of exhibitors and visitors was really good, this always seems to be a popular venue and we have already booked the two dates for next year. The café was doing a busy trade with breakfasts and roast dinners so they must have been pleased with the trade on a day when they would normally be closed. The raffle was held in the café, (it was cold outside) and Carol done magnificently by selling around £90 worth of tickets, well done Carol, what would we do without you? As you know from the last newsletter we now have a membership secretary, Wendy Gane, Wendy was really busy in the café taking subscriptions for next year, I was really impressed, she looked as though she had been doing it for years, well done Wendy, and this is a really important job as it involves most of our annual income. Don't forget it will soon be time for the AGM when we will be looking for new committee members to replace those retiring. So come on, do your bit for the

club. I will close this report by wishing all our members and readers a very Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

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Social news

By Earwig

Junior Club Member Oliver Baker is training to be a Chef and things took a new twist for him when he helped with the catering for a Wedding. This was to be his first undertaking at such a prestigious event and, despite a very long day, has added another string to his bow along with his playing a guitar in a Band and taking singing lessons. Now here is a young lad that's not letting the grass grow under his feet - well done Oliver.

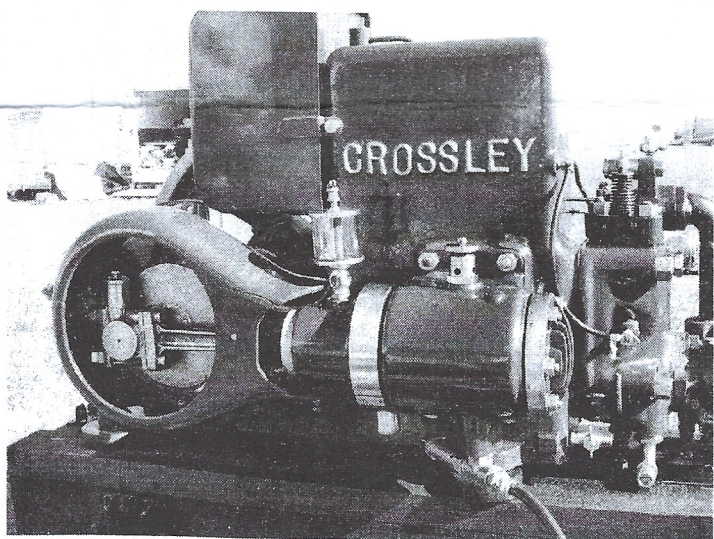
We hear (Raffles Lady) Carol Phillips did her rounds with the aid of Crutches (there's no stopping her) following a Hospital repair to her knee, get up and running soon Carol.

We also hear past club President and committee member Herbie Gane will be celebrating his Six and a Half Decades this time. Congratulations Herb, long may your wheels keep on turning.

Two Weekends in August (And A Bit In The Middle)

By Robin Lambert

Looking back over what was possibly the most miserable, wettest year for Exhibitors, Show Organisers and Visitors alike, we reflect how 10 days in August went for us. Starting off on Friday 10th August we arrived at Bridgwater Rugby Ground for a two day event organised by a Car Club. This was to be our second time on a what must be a perfect site, the well maintained sports field also has a Club House with showers that can be used by exhibitors.



The Crossley (above) is a 1926 Model H C that was supplied new to Bexhill Gas & Water Company at its East Sussex Treatment Works to charge the tanks with compressed air to start main Generator Engines.

John our Engine Steward who along with his helpful Granddaughter had everything at his fingertips and it was a pleasure to be under his control, but John did tell me that his allocated engine space has been cut back year by year meaning next year exhibitors will have to be less in number.

Our Club was well represented here as was the Bristol Club, all bringing along some nice exhibits including two by Ed and John Thorne. Although this is mainly a vintage Car Club event there is lots to see with plenty of Stalls many of which are Auto Jumble and thanks to Mike Snook I now have a set of Magneto points for my Villiers Mag. His eagle eye spotted a set amongst all the bits and pieces, so thanks and well done Mike.

Next to us in the Engine line were Sylvia and Graham White who brought along their Kyko Hot Air Fan. This in fact misbehaved after getting too hot in its displacer cylinder and ceased to run and we just happened to have a spare fan on board (like you do) and loaned him it too carry on with here and the next weekend at Cornwall.

The Saturday evening here was most enjoyable in the Club House with a small band playing and on our table a Joke telling competition between Steward John and his Chimney Sweep friend kept us in stitches for almost two hours. It was some time later I realised who the Sweep was as, many years ago, he had come to our Club Night and told us all about his job which was hilarious.

Well, with the weekend over and Monday morning upon us, it was time to move on South West in the direction of Devon. In driving rain we headed on down the M5 followed by Sylvia & Graham to Trago Mills close to Newton Abbot for a look around this Giant Complex. There is even a scale railway here, complete with a station and lots to keep children amused.

Mid afternoon came and on to our next port of call at Plympton just on the outskirts of Plymouth for an overnight stop, the site we use is close to the Park and Ride so very handy for a trip into Town and free if you flash your bus pass! Unfortunately for S & G they had to pay as Welsh Passes are no use in England (what bad luck) So Tuesday on the bus and into town to look around the large indoor market, then a half hour walk up to the Hoe. This is well worth the effort just for the view, its all downhill then to the Barbican Marina to scour all the Antique and Collectible Shops hoping to find a bargain.

Tuesday morning came and we were off again to what was the old St Agnes Rally that is now re sited at the Stithians Showground, midway between Truro and Redruth. It's nice to be able to pull in here a few days prior to the event as we can get all set up with our Exhibit and use the site as a base for a couple of days at leisure in the area.

With the Show under way on the Friday, not much took place as driving rain and gale force winds swept across the County causing havoc everywhere, a nearby camp site had forty tents wrecked and a

huge tool stall on the field lost its canopy, we tried to put up a 8 x 6 foot tent and had to give up even with four strapping chaps assisting. So Friday was a non starter with all exhibits left under wraps, Saturday and Sunday all went to plan with good support from the public and the sun even came out. The stationary engine line was well supported and around a dozen Wessex exhibits were on display here ranging from Generators to large open cranks. It's always nice to meet up with our Cornish Members who we only see once a year or sometimes at Astle Park. The Site here is a bit like a Mini Bath and West Show Ground with hard roads, well kept grass area, Lots of Loos and Showers many in permanent Buildings or Porta cabins and a Shop is Installed for all our needs such as Milk, Bread, Veg Frozen foods and Newspapers, which takes a lot of pressure off us if we have forgotten anything.

I must say a big thank you to our Engine Steward David Roskilly and his team for the way they all look after us and make our stay so enjoyable,

Granfer to the Rescue – from front page

the hinges were not rusted too badly.

Back home, hot mug of tea in hand, he asked his dad about it.

"That'll be the old pump house"

"What old pump house?"

"It's always been there – well, all your life, anyway, I think your great granfer was a boy when the Water Board put it in – must have been before the First Lot. There are buried pipes that run out into the old oxbow to pump it dry if the water gets up – if the wind is on the slope and a spring tide fetching up the estuary, the water can get up here to the houses. Not in my lifetime, but during the Second Lot, '42 I think, it was only the old pump that saved the day. Made the difference between being flooded out and not, up here."

"Well I'll be damned. You never said."

"You never asked." The older man got up and rummaged in a sideboard drawer, then another, then in a kitchen cupboard, finally grunting with approval as he scratched through a biscuit tin of oddments. He proffered a big old key. "There you go".

"This is the key to the pump house? – I can't believe I'd lived with you all those years, worked the allotment with you an' all and you never said."

"Never came up. It isn't in service anymore, the big electric pumps on the Defences clear the water away now. Must be fifty years since it was used. Your old granfer would be chuffed to bits at the thought of it running again after all these years. Doted on it he did and when the Water Board came to take the engine away, he got an injunction to stop them crossing his land. That's why its still there."

Next day, the weather had changed for the better and although brisk, the winter sunshine warmed his back as he struggled with the pump house door. The key turned in the lock pretty easily most of the way, but then stopped and he dared not force it. Plus Gas helped and then suddenly it moved, the door springing open a fraction. A good prise with his crow, fingers into the gap and - Howard Carter must have felt just like this! – it opened with a rusty creek. His torch revealed an old engine and

pump and, as far as he could see, it was more or less as it had been the last time it was started at least fifty years ago.

Over the next few weeks, he was in and out of the pumphouse many times. He also asked the successors to the Water Board about it but they – predictably enough – denied all knowledge of it. He took the view that it was on his allotment and therefore was his until the Water Board took it away! The engine was a 1910 Crossley Gas Engine and there was overhead line shafting to the pump of indeterminate manufacture.

Getting it all to move was a bit of a job, but not too hard as granfer George had greased every surface and filled the cylinder with oil. The air stank of petrol for days as George cleaned it all off. Many on many a time he felt he wasn't alone and the restoration went easily, spanners being to hand and not falling out of sight into the depths as so often happened on jobs like this. The magnificent curved spoke six foot flywheel was Post Office red and there were curious scuff marks on the inside by each spoke. It came to him why when he automatically put his foot on the wheel to help turn it, that this was how it was started, but the town gas supply had long since been cut off and actually getting it to run would need Calor Gas and a certain amount of fiddling around. But it wouldn't go, the magneto had no spark and cleaning the points made no difference, it had just spent too long in the damp.

Then it was spring and real life took over with a teaching job to deal with, wife and kids and his increasingly frail father, the Crossley in the pump house took a back seat.

Far out in the Atlantic, the air mass swirled ever tighter and faster, heading dead into the Severn Estuary. It had a clean run and the Welsh coast and Mendip forced the wind speed to increase to an unholy force not seen in two generations. On the highest tide of the year, the water drove across the Somerset Levels as though it were a tsunami, the oxbow at the foot of the slope vanished in a sheet of water that headed up the slope towards the houses. The electricity substation was on the flood plain – of course it was! – and spectacularly threw its insulation up in the air with a loud bang as the water overcame to local pumps.

George came to get his dad and found him at the edge of the allotments, staring at the flood, the worst in living memory. He leaned on the fence with him and contemplated his ruined allotment.

"Time to go dad. It's six hours before the tide turns."

"Listen."

"What?"

"Just listen." Away down the slope there was the sound of an engine running flat out, the hard flat crack of the big single cylinder exhaust audible above the gale when you listened for it. The older man waved his pipe at it, the tobacco in the bowl bright red in the gathering dusk. "That'll be yer granfer, he always liked that engine".

No need to protest that granfer was dead this 25 years: no need to point out that there was no gas main running to the pumphouse: no need to say that the magneto was utterly knackered. It wasn't even creepy. The two men smiled at each other and went indoors to drink a toast to the older George for whom he'd been named. There was no rush anymore, matters seemed to be in hand as it were. The water lapped along the gutter outside the rank of houses, but it never got any further, turned back by the old pump in a brick built shed that was over 100 years old.