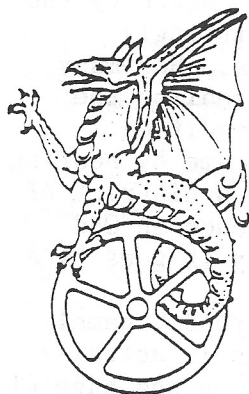


# WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



## NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1994

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### BRIAN & RAY BAKERS CRANK-UP - Monday 27th December.

This is the third crank-up arranged at Nash's Timber Yard by Brian and Ray Baker and once again the weather was kind, it being dry and frosty with snow on high ground. Mary and I arrived around 9.30am to find several members had beaten us to it. Whilst I was sorting out the engine Mary immediately made off to the refreshment shed and a nice warm fire. It wasn't long before she was joined by Maureen Gay and Freda Kerley who between them did a most excellent job making and serving tea and coffee along with hot sausage rolls, mince pies, sandwiches, cheese rolls etc all supplied by our hosts.

During the morning a steady stream of members arrived complete with engines, these included Listers from Bill Coombs, 3hp - Cecil Giblett, 'D' with solex carb Don Rogers, Roger Pike 'D' generating sets and no less than six assorted Listers exhibited by Brian and Paul Baker. An interesting International - possibly a Tom Thumb?? was brought along by Terry Heath. Carrying on around the yard was Keith Readers Teles, Stan Kerley small Villiers, Dave Austin with three small charging sets BSA Poona and Stuart, Derrick Watts - gas engine this was just an excuse, the real reason for coming was to give his wife Dot a birthday treat, what better place to take her, hope you enjoyed it Dot - it could have been the sales!!!! Two diesel engines were exhibited a small Petter AA1 by Ted Routley and Royal Enfield of about 6hp by Keith Nash. Eric Gay brought along his Bamford but no petrol, all the garages still being shut for Christmas, still Brian Baker came to the rescue and Eric was soon up and running, Wally Camp brought along a Tandem Gas engine of his own design, this ran very well. Mike Bevan and John Brooks - Melco and Wolseley were going well, as was John Hancocks open crank Bradford. Ted and Lloyd Durbin had their 3hp Amanco going well, as was Gloria and Ted Carps Petter. Once again the tractors from Brian Lovell and Roy Pointing were on show, as was a freshly painted LE Velloccette motorcycle which belonged to Bill Appleby, I think he is rather pleased with the paint job done by Brian Baker. Another brave member to arrive on two wheels was Ray Powell and his son Derek on a rather nice Honda Gold Wing. It was nice to see our President complete with camera at the ready, hope there was something interesting to record Eric.

Members had an extra attraction in the refreshment bar, a video of the Somerset & Dorset Railway supplied by Roy Pointing. Several other members were present - Graham White and Dave Foster from over the bridge, also Bob and Jill Hallam, John Cuff and Herb Gane. As usual a good selection of raffle prizes was on display with quite a few donated by members and after a few words of thanks and a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' for Dot, Eric proceeded to conduct the raffle. Prizes of Sherry or wine going to Dave Foster, Eric Gay, Paul Baker, Ruth Russell, Brian Baker and Ted Durbin. Gallon of oil - Bill Coombs, Biscuits Dot Watts and Herb Gane, Ted Routley - Polishing Cloths, Lloyd Durbin - Chocolates, Stan Kerley mixed nuts - the edible type. John Hancocks bath soaps and myself a magnetic screw-driver. About 2.30 people started to pack up and make for home and I can only finish this report by thanking our hosts Brian and Ray Baker for putting this event on and the ladies - Maureen, Freda and Mary for their expertise in the catering department and last but not least everyone who supported the event and if you were there and didn't get a mention personally - my apologies.

BRIAN VERRALL.

THE OLD DOWN INN - ESTABLISHED 1640.

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club has enjoyed the hospitality of the Old Down Inn at Emborough on the top of Mendip almost since it was formed back in 1977. It was chosen by the committee at the time as being the geographical centre of our area; thus we unwittingly followed decisions made by similar groups of people for over three hundred years. How many Wessex members attending our meetings there or reading monthly meeting reports realise the Inn's place in our local history? The inspiration for this article which is a modified version of one by the same author which appeared in a WSEC newsletter in 1984, came by hearing the Inn often referred to quite erroneously as the "Odd Down Inn". Odd Down is a district of Bath some ten or twelve miles distant from Emborough. Oddly enough, there was once an Odd Down Inn there but it burnt down and was thence called the "Burnt House". Today it goes by a new name, the "Lamplighters".

Situated 700ft above sea-level at the intersection of two important trunk roads, namely the A37 Bristol to Shepton Mallet road and the B3139 Bath to Wells road, the Inn is actually a hamlet of Ston Easton parish. At 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 Old Down for the men". A turnpike cottage can still be seen some 300 metres on the left towards Chilcompton. By 1774 the Red Lion had become The Old Down Inn; in 1769 a painting done on a wood panel found at the Inn showed a stage-coach and horses, a copy of this painting can be seen at the Inn today.

In 1785 a London to Exeter stage-coach service began via Bath, Wells and Taunton; the Inn was described 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" right upto the introduction of the Penny Post service in 1840. At that time, the present B3139 was the main road, the junction only having been 'staggered' as it is today in recent years following a series of horrendous road traffic accidents at that spot. The A37 use to emerge from the southerly direction right opposite the Inn where the new house stands, traffic then had to execute a left, then right turn to proceed on to Bristol. Subsequent road improvements thus formed a perfect spot for our Wessex Crank-Ups under the beech tree which is now to the right of the road.

In 1792 the local colliery owners met here regularly to discuss the miners wages and conditions, then in 1793 a promotion meeting was held for the Somerset Coal Canal linking the Somerset coalfield to the Kennet and Avon Canal at Claverton near Bath. Later on, the Inn was the scene of another meeting, this time to discuss the demise of another canal scheme, the uncompleted Somerset and Dorset Canal from a point not far from the Inn to Frome and thus on to Poole in Dorset. The Railway age had arrived and newly proposed lines caused the abandonment of the canal project which, although started, came to naught. However, with the railway age, also came the decline of the coaching trade and thus the trade of the Inn.

In 1885 a fire completely gutted the building, only the main walls remaining. Subsequent building fortunately did little to alter the character of the Inn but a cobbled way found under the floor of the entrance and the bar suggests that there may have been a central arched way for horses to reach the stables beyond. In recent years the rendering was removed from the front of the building revealing suggestions of old windows, the original entrance archway, and other features previously hidden. When we first went there, our present clubroom had a very high ceiling with projections part way up the walls indicating that at some time there may have been another floor. Was this caused by that fire over one hundred years ago?

So today we share a meeting place with a number of other groups, organisations and local auctions. In so doing we are following three hundred years or more of tradition and the hospitality of our long-suffering hosts, Gordon and Penny Marshall, who have recently opened a comfortable new bar to the west of the establishment, stands the same today in 1994 as was stated in 1710 - "a good house, an Inn...!"

ERIC G. BRAIN.

INFORMATION REQUIRED - PLEASE.

Can anyone help by supplying information on a late 1930's Lacy Hulbert & Co. Type LV01-SA Compressor. Its a water cooled single cylinder hopper cooled unit, mounted on twin receivers of approx. 4" diameter each and is driven by a Lister 'D'. Any operating instructions or technical information would be much appreciated - Please contact:- Bill Bontoft, 18 Oakleigh, Bottesford, Scunthorpe, South Humberside. DN16 3NB or phone 0724 854062.

MARCH CLUB MEETING - MONDAY 28TH.

An illustrated talk by Bristol Docks Diver - Bob Brome.



MEMBERSHIPS.

Jackie has asked me to thank everyone who has promptly renewed their membership subscriptions. This has helped her a great deal with the book keeping, we would also like to say a big welcome to some new club members - Miss L.E. Barr from Swindon, Richard Grant from Frome and E.A. Connell from Aldershot. Although some of you may live too far away to travel to club meetings we hope to meet you all around the rallies or perhaps at Semington. ED.

5TH DECEMBER AT THE OLD DOWN INN, EMBOROUGH.

The annual anti-freeze crank-up was held by the Wessex Stationary Engine Club with a large gathering of hardy warm hearted members assembles in the car park were 30 engines of all sizes, with displays of collections and models. The weather stayed dry throughout the day that concluded with a raffle that was enjoyed by all. A very well done to all those who gave time to organise this event.

27TH DECEMBER AT EVERCREECH JUNCTION.

Once again at the invitation of Brian Baker and friends, this now annual event was staged at workshops in the old Somerset & Dorset Railway site of Evercreech Junction. On display were 32 engines of all makes and sizes with 1 motorcycle, 2 tractors and models. To help keep the frost away an open wood fire was burning for members and visitors to warm themselves. Inside the workshop a video was showing continuous film of the Somerset & Dorset Railway when in operation, also with the help of many ladies, hot drinks, hot sausage rolls, mince pies and a large spread of good food was offered to everyone. The event was brought to a close with the usual raffle of Christmas fayre. Our gratitude to Brian Baker and friends for their hospitality.

28TH DECEMBER - DALWOOD FARM, CULSTOCK.

Once again Frank Lee and his family entertained the winter event staged by Ray Fisher and his family in the buildings of the farm. On display were 12 tractors, 14 stationary engines 2 motor bikes, 2 displays of model farm implements and blowlamps. As usual the fun auction took place with a lot of humour, conducted by R. Hawkins & son of Tiverton, thank you Bob for the entertainment, Ray and his family dispensed hot drinks and mince pies to everyone while selling raffle tickets, raising funds for the childrens ward of the local hospital. Our thanks go to Ray Fisher and family along with Frank Lee who made this midwinter gathering possible.

SATURDAY 1ST JANUARY - TAUNTON.

On a bright dry New Years day a large collection of vehicles assembled in the Priorswood Industrial Estate in readiness to take part in the annual road run organised by the Somerset Traction Engine Club. Although the steam support was disappointing with only the Aveling Showmans 'Amelia' of Ron and Maureen Sams and a Sentinel lorry from Devon, together with a good selection of lorries, vans, pick-ups, cars, motorcycles, military vehicles and tractors both driven and carried on lorries. I think around of applause should go to the only lady who cycled the 5 miles in costume behind the Showmans engine - well done. The run finished at the usual watering hole, The Gardeners Arms where everyone taking part was treated to a hot pie by the club, while the exhibits were parked in the spacious car park and surrounds. Thank you S.T.E.C. for such a good start to 1994.

BRIAN LOVELL.

This concludes my travels for 1993 and wish everyone good luck and good health for 1994. Brian Lovell and Henry.

- FOR SALE - Bedford CF Flat bed Truck 3500kg 1979 - 11 months MOT, Completely rebuilt engine, six almost new tyres, towbar and electrics and 2 speed hand winch - £600. Tel: 0454 411487 evenings or weekends (Alveston area.)
- FOR SALE - Potato Bouter (Horse Drawn) - £25 ono Phone Derek White Frome 0373 472387.
- FOR SALE - 2 x 10" Iron Wheels & Axle - £2.  
Pulseometer centrifugal Water pump - £25.  
Water cooled compressor unknown make, no air tank - £25.  
'Haley' grindstone, all complete with fast and loose pulley 2'6" stone -£25.  
Ward Haggas & Smith Lathe 3' centres 24" gap 8" above bed screw cutting, includes all change wheels & tools, 1½hp single phase motor, weighs ½ton is 7' long x 2'6" wide, in very good condition, no wear, a bargain at £100.  
For all five items above please contact Mr. Gavin Moore on Frome 0373 812058.
- SWAP - ½hp Leek Gas engine Class 4 condition for a 1½hp Hopper cooled Petter 'M' couldbe class 2 or 3. Please ring Kerwin on Truro 0872 73388 in first instance (Engine not in Cornwall.)

THE GREAT DORSET STEAM FAIR - 25th Anniversary Show.

Its hard to believe that this show is now 25 years old, casting my mind back to 1976 when I first exhibited here and previous years as a visitor it makes you realise how time passes us all by and many would no doubt argue as to whether the magnitude of this event has actually been beneficial to the main theme of 'Vintage Working'. I actually spent three days on site as a visitor and never saw all that was on offer so a visitor for one day only would have no chance of viewing everything.

After arriving in the public camping area on Wednesday with Bill and Marg, we reckoned it would be best to make a plan of 'attack' as to how to cover this event and we decided to start with the autojumble and stall area, well we spent all day Wednesday and half of Thursday here as there was so much to see and turn over, quite a few bargains to be had especially if your good at haggling (Bill's forte) my prize find was a 5" diameter lump of bronze bar to make some cylinder covers for my stationary steam engine, I have been looking everywhere for this to no avail but here is 'everything' if you can find it. One of our club members found a Hot Air Engine amongst all this gear and no doubt we will be hearing more about this in due course.

Thursday afternoon was spent around the stationary engine enclosures and a good selection of engines were on display including engines owned by no less than twenty two Wessex members. Their engines included makes by Ruston & Hornsby, Wolseley, Petter, Fowler, Fairbanks, Bristol Wagon & Carriage Works, Hartop, Blackstone, Lion, Bamford and a Glasgow sleeve valve engine. Close to the stationary engine section was Tim Macaires stall, who assisted by Patrick Knight were kept busy as people viewed all the engine spares, books and publications on offer. The Stationary Engine Magazine also had a stall close by with lots of back issues for sale, for those who missed earlier copies.

'The how twer done in grandfathers day' working exhibition is always very popular and a stroke of bad luck happened to one of the working stationary engines, it was a Ruston & Hornsby open crank diesel engine and the rod which operates the lubricator became loose and eventually parted company with the eccentric, this in turn allowed the eccentric to travel around with the side shaft and become trapped against the engine block, this bent the side-shaft and broke some teeth off the two gears at the flywheel end of the side shaft. Quite a disaster as you could well imagine, enough to make you want to pack up and leave, but not this engine owner, off back home he went found some steel bar, milled some keyways on it built up the gear teeth with a special welding rod and I'm told he had the engine up and running next day, a truly marvellous feat of engineering and perseverance.

The fairground was one of the largest I have ever seen here, the famous line up of Scenic Showmans Engines must have been a record as they were placed into three lines to fit them all in. A new system of underground water pipes with standpipes to the rear of the Loco's must have been a big improvement to keep the engines topped up and saved the poor old water bowser a lot of work, although it was still used for the more out lying engines. One engine owner who was providing power for a large ride told me he kept a hosepipe running into his belly tank at a constant trickle to keep up demand as the engine was working so hard.

The evening entertainment and beer tent was built a bit like a barn construction, with a PVC skin stretched taut over all the metalwork and was so long it almost stretched out of sight. Lots of top bands entertained mammoth audiences and if this was not your cup of tea you could visit another tent for a Rock & Roll or Country & Western music night. Back to the daytime - the horticultural section was kept busy as all the mini tractors and rotovators did their job tilling the soil as did the tractor section and steam ploughing engines and I noticed that the exhibitor camping was in its usual place removed from all the machinery, which may have been a bit hard on those who can't walk to far, but it would have looked out of place within the show. The model tent was first class, with lots of live steam models running outside the tent, crafts were here by the hundreds, three large marquees were bursting at the seams with every craft you could imagine and my purchases in these tents were a bottle of Callow Hill Apple & Brandy Wine (a peace offering for Jackie, perhaps she missed me for the three days I was here, or perhaps she didn't!!!!) and a scarecrow puppet that popped out of what looked like a very large ice cream cone and could be twiddled with a stick to do almost any action (this was for my grandson) and any other big kid that would like to play with it.

To sum up one could possibly write ten pages on what there is to see here and bore everyone silly but it was probably one of the best shows that I have attended and will be hard to better, if you have never been, try it, but select from the programme what you want to see and head in that direction or you will be distracted by so much you may become disappointed at not viewing what you came to see.

ROB.

CLUB SHOP - The time has come to restock our Club Shop and at present we have on sale Key Rings, Tax Disc Holders, Car Stickers, Note Pads, Badges and Sweatshirts all carrying the club logo. If any of the members have any ideas as to what they would like to see for sale on the shop, please contact Steve Routley on 0934 822988 or at club meeting.