

Mike Jennings who won the Christmas quiz has kindly donated his "free subscription" back to club funds, on behalf of the club thank you Mike for that very generous gesture.

By Junior Club member, Jonathan Hockedy

ROBIN

The winner who's name was drawn out at the January Meeting at the Old Down Inn was **Michael Jennings**, he receives a free membership of the club for one year. Well done Mike.

SUNDAY APRIL 17th. MEET UP AT 10 am.

CLUB INSURANCE

***** NEW MEMBERS *****

***** THE MARKET PLACE *****

*****EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY*****

SUNDAY APRIL 17th. Club visit to The Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop. Please see separate advert for details. It needs ten members to turn up to qualify for group discount.

"WHAT GRANDPA DID....."

William Stevens Biggs was born at Ruckley Ford, a small hamlet near Foxcote, Radstock, in 1858, he started work as a miner at Foxcote pit, and later took a job as a postman. Although he lived at Radstock at this time his base post office was at Dunkerton, which meant an early morning walk of some five miles before he started his delivery round. His round was the village of Priston and district – another three miles from Dunkerton before he even started his delivery round. No doubt William was a very fit man, (we have heard rumours he was also a ladies man!). Whilst in the employ of the Post Office in those early days, he must have heard that the intention was for contracts to be awarded for the collection of mail to and from various post offices. The contract was for the mail to be collected from the Mendip villages and taken to Radstock and put on the 10-00 am train to Bath and so to the sorting offices ready for the local postmen to deliver the next day. The rounds which my grandfather and his sons did were as follows: The Farmborough Round: Leave Radstock, start Farmborough, Timsbury, Tunley, Dunkerton, Peasedown St John, Radstock S&D Station. The Coleford Round: Leave Radstock, start Coleford, Holecombe, Stratton on Fosse, Chilcompton, Midsomer Norton, Radstock S&D Station. Ston Easton Round: Leave Radstock, (a horse was stabled at Ston Easton for this round), start Ston Easton, Chewton Mendip, Emborough, Gurney Slade, Oakhill, Radstock S&D Station. To accomplish these rounds and return to Radstock by 10 am must have required a very early start to the day as the horses had to be fed and watered prior to their work. All this was before motor Transport was in use. In 1918 Grandpa was the first person in Radstock to own a motor van – he bought a Model T Ford. I expect my father and my uncles who helped with the rounds had a few words as they drove the van! When I was 16 and contemplating a job my mother instructed me to get a job with the post office because they were good employers and had given my grandfather full employment until his contract ended in 1933 – he was then 75. from that date I assume the post office had enough vans to take on the collections as they do to this day. Not long after the acquisition of the Model T Ford a singular incident occurred. One winter morning Grandpa was delayed on his round and was late in arriving at Radstock station. My uncle realising this and knowing that the mail must at all cost get to Bath on time – hitched up the pony and trap and waited for his arrival. Just as the train was leaving the station and the gates opened Grandpa arrived at the station with the mail. He had missed the train! They off loaded the mail bags into the trap and uncle Gilbert set off for Bath at a fast pace. The journey to Bath from Radstock, as most will know, is a very arduous one. The long haul up the hill to Peasedown, down again to Dunkerton, up again to Burnt House and down again into Bath – 8 miles of torture, (I know because I used to cycle it every day when I first started work with the post office). On arrival at the sorting office in Bath, the pony all lathered and steaming after it's hellfire journey from Radstock, my uncle apologised to the Mail Inspector for the late arrival of the Radstock mail, to his astonishment the Inspector informed him that the rest of the mail from the Radstock train had not arrived yet at the sorting office! The inspector could hardly believe that Molly had beaten the train to Bath, and said she was the finest piece of horseflesh he had ever seen. During his lifetime my Grandfather achieved minor standing in the district as he was : Member and Chairman of Radstock U. D. C. 1894 – 1933. Member of the Board of Governors at Clutton Institute, and Justice of the Peace. It was during his term of office as a J.P. that an interesting incident occurred. Returning to Radstock from Chilcompton post office – no doubt at his usual fast pace – in his Ford van, whilst negotiating the "S" bend outside Chilcompton Vicarage (and it is still to this day a dangerous bit of road) he hit a pony and trap going in the opposite direction. This was being driven by a local butcher who, from local knowledge, was often the worse for drink, resulting in the trap and the butcher ending up the other side of the hedge. The butcher (Mr G. Gould) took Grandpa to court, but being the J.P. on the bench that day he had to stand down whilst his case was heard. Mr Gould won the day but we do not know what the fine was. Many years later, when I visited my lady friend at her home for the first time, I made the mistake of saying to the old gentleman sat by the fire (her grandfather) "I suppose you might have known my grandfather, Mr Gould?" "Know un – I'll say I knew un" said the rotund octogenarian, "the bugger once knocked I in the hedge up Compton with his van and I took un to court!" Grandson and grand-daughter have now been married for nearly fifty years. Grandpa now aged 85 decided to end his days at Clutton Institute – where he had been one of the governors. He took up residence and died two days later on 1/6/43.

FRED BIGGS

***** BIRTHDAY GREETINGS *****

The club members would like to wish many happy returns of the day to Brian Verrall who was 65 on the 17th February. Brian was for many years on the committee and was the Chairman before me. Congratulations Brian, make sure you make good use of that bus pass.

CLUB NIGHT MONDAY 31st JANUARY AT THE OLD DOWN INN

BANKNOTES OF THE WORLD

At the first meeting of the year we had a full house, (hope we get this many at the AGM.) Our guest speaker for the evening was none other than our Junior Reporter Jonathon Hockedy, who is usually seen at most club events with note pad and pen writing his reports for Brian. With the help of his granddad (the man in sandals) they had the epidiascope and screen set up, plus articles and books on banknotes on display. He started his illustrated talk with the common five pound note, he gave a short history lesson about Elizabeth Fry who's picture appears on the reverse side of this note, she married Joseph Fry the founder of Fry's Chocolate, she died in 1845 bankrupt, from giving her money to needy causes. Paper money was invented by the Chinese about 800 AD taking over 700 years to reach Europe, the oldest known banknotes dates from the period 1368-1398. Sweden first printed banknotes in 1661 to replace copper coins devalued by war, these soon became very popular. He displayed banknotes from Tibet, Antarctica, Romania, Russia, China, Japan, Iran, Brazil, Turkey, New Zealand, Armenia and Nagomo-Karabakhskaya, yes there really is such a place, another interesting fact was, that during the first Gulf War the Americans dropped lots of leaflets, on one side was a copy of a 25 dinar note to attract the attention of the Iraqi soldiers, on the reverse side was a message stating that this was a safe conduct pass offering the chance to surrender, instruction were as follows; 1- Remove the magazine from your weapon, 2- Sling the weapon over your left shoulder with the muzzle pointing down. 3- Raise your arms above your head. 4- Approach our positions slowly. Hold this pass in your hand above your head. If you do this you will not die. You will be treated well and someday return to your family. P.S. beware of **MINE FIELDS** along the border. When mentioning the early French banknotes, Jonathon displayed on the screen from which he translated the writing on the side which was a warning to counterfeiters that this crime would result in a one way ride to the guillotine, he also explained the more modern technical advances in the fight against counterfeiters. The Second World War produced so many interesting banknotes that this would be a subject by itself. Jonathon told the story about the devaluation of the German Mark, in 1920 100 mark notes were issued, but by 1922 10,000 mark notes were needed, in 1923 the situation just got worse. Ordinary people were forced to fill wheelbarrows with notes just to buy a loaf of bread, and workers had to be paid twice a day, before prices went up again. Soon notes were being issued for millions of marks, but still money was virtually worthless, the exchange rate against the pound went into billions, we were shown a photo of a woman burning banknotes for heat as this was cheaper than using them to buy firewood. Inflation is still a problem in many countries. Brazil for instance has changed currencies 7 times over the last 50 years. Turkey knocked six zeros off their lira on the 1st January where the exchange rate had been around two and a half million lira to the pound, the largest note was 20 million lira, using their new currency 1 million old lira will equal 1 new lira. In Zimbabwe with inflation running high most people have resorted to bartering, it seems we have come full circle from merchants bartering thousands of years ago, through wars and liberations, changes of governments, new countries, new currencies, inflation, back to bartering again. Knowing that Jonathon only started his collection in 1998 he has certainly gone to great lengths to research his subject. Thank you Jonathon for your first attempt at entertaining us, thanks also to your mum and dad for helping to run the raffle.

ARTHUR SMITH

******* JUST FOR FUN *******

QUIZ – THE WAY WE WERE IN 1957.

How much did the following cost in **OLD MONEY** in 1957.

1. A pint of milk. 4d or 8d or 10d or 1/-
2. 6 eggs. 4/8 3/3 2/7 or 1/6.
3. A pint of beer. 1/4d 2/6d 3/3d or 4/-
4. A bottle of whisky. 37/6d 25/0d £2/3/0d £2/10/0d.
5. A television licence. £3. £5. £10. £15.
6. A basic rate postage stamp. 2d. 2 ½ d. 3d. 6d.
7. What was the inflation rate? 3.7%. 7.5 %. 10.1%. 1.5%.
8. Average price of a new house. £2,330. £4,640. £10,770. £8,000.
9. Who was the Prime minister in Oct 1957? Macmillan, Wilson, Eden or Home.
10. Which country asked us to remove our military personnel. Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Cyprus.

The answers to these questions will be in next months newsletter.

The quiz was compiled by **Margaret Simmons**.

EXTRACT FROM A CLUB NEWSLETTER SOME 15 YEARS AGO

A MEMORY JOGGED

Reading our Vice-chairmans 'A Tale of Two Petters' in the January newsletter brought memories flooding back to me to the day I accidentally stumbled on this large hoard of stationary engines tucked neatly away in an old wooden barn in a village not far away from Warminster. I was working in this Wiltshire village and needed to talk to a local farmer, I called at the farm house and unable to find anyone in, did the usual thing and had a look around his yard and dairy and a few outbuildings hoping to find him. I peered through the doorway of this old wooden barn and there they were, a line of old engines that almost stretched the length of the building, my pulse rate quickened as I began to take in exactly what I was looking at, not daring to put a foot over the threshold for being caught in what after all was private property - I continued to search for the farmer. Eventually I found him and after the business side of things were discussed it was time to mention what I had spotted in the barn. Oh yes he said, I've collected those things for years, buying them up at sales etc., and they are just taking up too much valueable space, I ought to get rid of them. 'I can help you with that' I said, 'all I need is details of what you have and your telephone number!' Well most makes of engines were represented and the list was placed in our newsletter and then began the trek by W.S.E.C. members to view the collection. A lot of members came to view and buy - some even came in their lunch break. (Yes I know you did because I saw you and how you got back to Bath again in your allocated lunch break I'll never know)

After several weeks the barn was almost emptied all but for a large 8hp tank cooled Ruston & Hornsby Model AP, this lovely old open crank engine just could not find an owner, probably because it weighed about 14 cwt, and most engine men don't want large heavy engines but more on this engine later as this story could have a happy ending.

At this point of time I did have a few different makes of engines in my own collection which included a half share with my mate Bill in a 8 hp Ruston & Hornsby which is why I never got interested in this one, but one engine that caught my eye or least half an engine was a pair of flywheels and a rusty old crank case that was preventing the barn door being fully opened, it belonged to a 5 hp Bristol Wagon & Carriage Works "Victoria", when it was my turn to chat up the farmer he told me it never belonged to him but his friend owned it and dumped it there several years ago!! armed with his friends phone number I eventually tracked him down to a village in Dorset, he told me he thought he knew where all the missing parts were, but was not sure if he wanted to part with it. Eventually probably to get me off his back he did decide to sell and then began the task of finding all the missing parts - the magneto was found near Bournemouth, the cylinder head at Verwood, on collecting this I discovered a nice little Ruston & Hornsby 1½/2 ZPR but thats another story! The water tank and woodwork was found at Sixpenny Handley which now meant that I had all the bits. The main problem with restoration was removing the exhaust valve as the cast iron cap would not undo, it was solid, the only course was to very carefully drill as much of it away as possible and gentle tap away the rest with a tiny chisel and then make a new cap. When assembled the old engine ran very well and still does, as many club members will know I've resisted painting it (despite free offers of paint) just to have one engine that looks as it once did during its working life and not like one that has just come out of the showroom. Another twist to this story was how I came by the trolley to sit the engine on. About five years prior to finding the engine I was passing by a large heap of gravel outside a bakers shop in South Brewham and just visible was an old iron wheel poking out of the gravel, I asked in the shop if they wanted to part with it and the baker said that somewhere under the heap is three more plus the trolley if I would like to dig it out. Next day this I duly did and yes you have probably guessed it, it was a Victoria trolley, I never thought then that I would ever find an engine to go with it.

What happened to the 8 hp Ruston & Hornsby you may be thinking, well I was talking to an old engine friend from Hampshire who along with me was watching a lovely 8 hp Ruston & Hornsby running at Stourpaine many years ago, and he remarked how nice it was running and how he fancied one of them, well that evening we travelled down to Warminster to see if the big engine was still there - it was - and he duly purchased it and did a very good restoration job. What I thought was funny was the farmer came to Stourpaine show the next day to collect his cheque and having been presented with it thought it was £50 short, luckily I was on hand to remind him that he had been asking £200 not £250 and he rather sheepishly said 'Oh alright then.'

ROBIN LAMBERT.