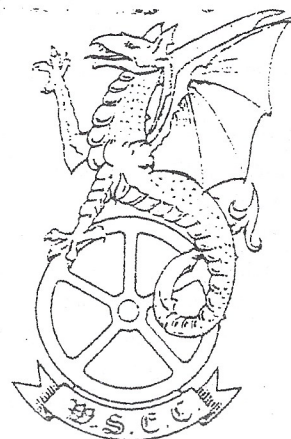


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

JANUARY 2005

*The Editor : Brian Baker
27 Wickham Way
SHEPTON MALLET
Somerset BA4 5YG
Tel: 01749 342671*

NEWSLETTER



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EDITORIAL

I would like to wish all members and readers a very happy new year. I would like to think the year for WSEC members will be a very busy and eventful one with the programme of events, meetings, trips etc that we have mapped out for you. I look forward to meeting you all at these events and once again a very successful and prosperous new year to you all.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The last Wessex event for 2004 was the Mince-Pie crank-up, held at The Old Down Inn. The event started off with a bit of a snag, the pub was shut, and Bill the landlord had gone away. This was despite telling us we would have access to the toilets and an electricity supply to power our microwave to heat the mince pies. However he had a manager in residence to look after the pub and I persuaded him to give us access to the facilities we required. I had previously asked for a good turn out for this event, and I certainly got one. We had a really good entry of engines of all shapes and sizes, and we also had a steady stream of members and visitors looking around the impressive display of engines. I had spent several hours the day before cooking numerous sausage rolls and roast potatoes, these disappeared with alarming haste once they had been heated in the microwave, also on the menu was 200 hot mince pies. (When my wife got up she wondered where the microwave had disappeared to.) We had a very good raffle to round off the day, Jackie was busy taking membership renewals, so club funds had a bit of a boost. I would like to thank everyone who helped make the day a success selling raffle tickets and helping with the food, especially our Vice-Chairman Eric who was really busy operating the microwave. (well he is an electrician). I look forward to our events in 2005 and I can only hope they are as successful as the ones in 2004. A happy new year to all our members and readers.

NEW MEMBERS

I would like to welcome the following new members to The Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Mr Les Rickets from Winterbourne, Bristol. Mr & Mrs P Chant from Midsomer Norton. Mr William Lambert from Fleet in Hampshire. Mr Nick Larcombe from Street, Somerset. And last but not least Mr & Mrs Brian Munt from Stockwood, Bristol. Brian is rejoining after a lapse of a few years when he was a very active member of the WSEC committee. (Please note Brian we have a vacancy at the moment.) We hope you all have a long and happy membership with this great club.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2005

Membership subscriptions for 2005 are now overdue. If you have not renewed your membership you are now no longer covered by insurance and you will no longer receive the newsletter. Membership is £11 for a double and £9 for a single, junior members under 18 years old pay just £1. please send your renewals to Jackie Lambert 15, Beechwood Avenue, Frome, Somerset. BA11 2AX. Make cheques payable to WSEC LTD

THE McLEAN MILL – A SUPERB CANADIAN HISTORIC SITE

Yes, I know Canada is a long way away – but if you ever have the chance to visit the Alberni valley on Vancouver Island, don't miss it! When Francis and I were discussing a three week holiday in Canada this year, the mill seemed one of the possible attractions. A steam driven lumber mill which had worked in the middle of a forest from 1926 to 1965, and was now being actively preserved and restored would be interesting – but the really good booklet from the British Columbia Tourist people clearly said that the summer working days of the mill machinery and the steam train rides would be over by the time we got there. So we almost didn't go, and what a mistake that would have been! We followed the yellow circular saw signs to the site, thinking just to stroll around the area. But we were delighted to see a large tour-bus in the car park, and to see what was obviously a guided tour in progress. We tacked ourselves onto the tail of this group, they were all quiet, well dressed and beautifully behaved, but oh! so old! Behind the group trailed the bus driver, like a muse proclaiming tragedy in an old Greek play, muttering "we're already an hour and a half late, I dunno how we c'n make up the time, we'll miss the ferry" and so on. Neill, the curator of the mill site, got the message and finished off the tour in double time. Once the driver could herd his charges back onto their bus, I was able to ask a question or two. I suppose I must have been the first person that morning who was really interested in the mill and machinery – anyway, Neill was kind enough to give me my own personal tour of the site. The McLean family started logging and set up the R.B. McLean Lumber Co in 1926. trees were felled by hand, hauled by a steam donkey winch to a log pond where they were stored until needed. The log carriage, originally powered by a second-hand ship's winch engine, transfers the logs to the mill. Two big circular saws 50" and 54 " diameter, driven by an overhead shaft from the main steam engine (dated 1890) slab the logs into timber. Transfer chains take these to the edger to convert them into boards. Further down is the trim saw to cut timber to length, and at the far end is the planer. The cut lumber was stacked by type to dry, to be dipped in a chemical bath to prevent mould growth, and to be shipped out on rail cars or road vehicles. There is a lovely small locomotive on site, powered by a small gasoline engine, for pulling the rail cars out to the main line. Steam was raised in a single boiler with an enormous firebox which burnt the sawdust, bark, chips, and waste. There can't have been quite enough power, because a steam tractor had been parked in front of the mill to power the planer on the floor above. It all changed in 1951 when "the hydro" came to the area, the public electricity supply generated by the Stave Falls power house, a beautiful 1912 hydroelectric power station. (This too is a fine place to visit, but that's another story). The boiler was damaged beyond easy repair by being carelessly closed down and abandoned. Electric motors then powered the mill until closure. The machinery is being reordered and restored. Several large second-hand three phase motors have lately been acquired, and the next fundraising exercise will be to get enough electric cable to allow all of these to be fitted around the site, to run the woodworking machinery individually as may be needed. Everything is present to produce sawn and planed wood in whatever size is required, and the sale of this would be a useful income. There are competing demands by wildlife to affect the area. When we were there, a beaver had moved into the log pond and was busy building his dam, which would have stopped the mill's work. Salmon need to climb up the river to spawn, so a fish ladder is built by the side of the main stream. And, for the ecologists amongst us, there is the important question of renewal of the felled trees. Originally, trees were felled and the forest allowed to regenerate naturally. But you don't get the original mainly single growth of Douglas Fir, a whole assortment of trees appears as secondary growth. A national campaign to repair this damage all over the country has been set up, and at the McLean mill you can see the 100 millionth Douglas Fir which has been planted to replace the damage done by past logging. It is near the front of the site, a lovely healthy tree about six feet high now, looking just like a top quality Christmas tree from Sainsbury's. But Neill tells me that this monument isn't quite what it appears to be. When the hundred-millionth baby seedling was planted, they organised a celebration, a party for the local great and good. It must have been a lively occasion; as he left one of the guests managed to reverse his car over the baby tree and crushed it. It seemed better not to make a fuss over this accident, so the damaged tree was dug up early next day and replaced with the hundred million and one'th seedling. But that night, the hungry rabbits came and stripped every one of the young, tender needles from the branches of that tree. On day two, this tree (which would have died of course) was removed and replaced by the hundred million and two'th seedling, surrounded and protected by three feet of plastic sheet guard. The tree is still, of course, labelled "Hundred Millionth"!

ROB ARMSTRONG

WANTED*****WANTED*****WANTED

Now that there are no rallies or events to report on I am getting a bit short of material for the newsletter. I would welcome any reports of events you went to in the summer, any recent finds, any restoration projects on the go, any family news such as births, birthdays etc. The only way I can put out a decent monthly newsletter is if I get enough content to make it interesting. So come on pick up your pens and surprise me. BJB.

<<<<<<<<< THE SPIRIT OF BROOKLANDS >>>>>>>>>

Mention Brooklands and I recall all the pictures I have seen of supercharged Bentley's racing around a steeply banked track. When the museum opened in 1991 it went on our "must go and visit one day" list, not knowing what the museum would contain. "One day" arrived this August and we made our way to Waybridge, hoping that it would be signposted from there. We were in luck, the brown signs were very clear. On arriving at Brooklands we were slightly disappointed as there didn't seem to be much there. We expect museums to either be ornate Victorian buildings or modern steel and glass structures, this appeared to be a collection of wooden huts, a large club house and a couple of dilapidated hangers. First impression proved to be misleading as these were the original buildings which had been restored and held a fascinating collection of vehicles, information and memorabilia on 30 acres of the original racing circuit, and features the most historic and steepest section of the old banked track, and the 1 in 4 test hill. Brooklands was the world's first purpose built racing circuit, constructed for a local land owner, Hugh Locke King in 1907 in 9 months by an army of labourers. Incidentally he was one of the first employers to pay his men by the hour at 6d per hour. The concrete track was 100 feet wide and 3 ¼ miles long, when including the winning straight, and the maximum height of the banking is 28 feet 8 inches. This was all constructed with horse, steam, and man power, quite a feat, could we better that today with all our mechanical equipment? We started our museum trail at the historic Club House, which was built for the opening of the track Here Brooklands Automobile Racing Club (BARC) members could enjoy the lifestyle of which Brooklands was to become famous. One BARC slogan was "The Right Crowd and No Crowding" This was elitist but reflects society in the early 20th century. The Barbara Cartland Room, in pink of course, was a reading room for the Lady members, and on display are many photo's and trophies that they would have competed for. Also in the club house there is an excellent tea room, serving hot lunches and light refreshments for your pit stops. The Malcolm Campbell shed built between 1926 and 1931 now houses fine examples of Brooklands racing cars, including the famous 23,970cc Napier Railton which held the outright track record at 143.44 mph, this is a very large car. At the other end of the scale the Riley Special which took the 750 cc class record in 1931 and the Clive Jones Morgan Three Wheeler which took 37 world records in the 1930's. The caption on the latter car tells us that at a race in 1931 the Morgan team experimented with pits to driver radio contact. Not surprisingly it didn't work very well because of the high level of noise! In the racing lock-ups which were built as garages for the mechanics and drivers there are a number of interesting racing motorcycles, a history of bicycle racing at Brooklands, and the nationally important Raleigh Cycle Exhibition. LBB motors used the ERA shed as a showroom for English racing cars in the 1930's, this now houses the 'Fastest on Earth' exhibition, which features cars, models and displays about the World land speed records. The shed built by Robin Jackson to tune and maintain racing cars now houses the Grand Prix Exhibition. The first ever British Grand Prix was held at the track in 1926, and there are cars from 1920's up to a 1996 McLaren MP 4-11 show car. Brooklands was also the birthplace of British Aviation, being the first place an Englishman flew in an aircraft of his own design. They have a fine collection of over 30 aircraft representing 80 years of aviation from A.V. Roe's first flight to Concorde (in pieces at the moment!) but you can go into several of the aircraft. The track was requisitioned during WW2, trees planted on the track to act as camouflage and at least two major buildings were erected on the track itself. In one they house the Lock Ness Wellington Bomber 'R for Robert', conserved but only partly restored so that you can see how it was constructed. One of the teams of aviation volunteers are working on a Brooklands built Hurricane. In the other building you can see the Barnes Wallis Stratosphere Chambers and the museum's collection of aero engines. The airfield is currently under development by Daimler Chrysler UK as a centre for Mercedes Benz UK. There will be a Heritage centre with a Mercedes museum, a technical centre and demonstration circuit. It is hoped that there will also be a 500m grass runway to enable light aircraft to fly to Brooklands, thus continuing the aviation connection with this unique site. There is so much to see, information and history to absorb that we found it impossible to complete the tour, but we had an excellent day and look forward to visiting this interesting site again. The Spirit of Brooklands lives on. Why not put it on your 'must visit one day list'?

MARGARET SIMMONS

OBITUARY

MR STEVEN WILLIAMS 1947 – 2004

It is with regret we record that WSEC member Steven Williams died peacefully at his home after a short illness on 18th December 2004. Steven was interested in all forms of preservation having attended many of the early rallies in the 1950's with his Father and Grandfather who drove the showman's engine 'Lord Nelson' when it was travelling in showland. Stevens first love was motorcycles, having raced his 500cc Velocette Venom in the 60's, he also took part in long distance around Britain rallies on a couple of occasions, he also toured Europe extensively. In the last 20 years he collected, restored, and rallied stationary engines, his collection was predominately Fowler engines. Steven will be missed for his exceptional knowledge of things mechanical and his dry wit. Our sympathies are sent to his wife Ivy, brothers and Sister.

<<<<<<<<< THE MARKET PLACE >>>>>>>>>

FOR SALE Four wheel chassis from old mobility scooter. 4ft x 2' 6" approx, 12" wheels, ideal for garden trolley, £20. Petter Air Cooled engine. Complete but not running £30. Ring Dave for further details on 0117 949702. Bristol Area.

FOR SALE Back copies of Stationary Engine Magazine. June 1981, Oct 1981 to Oct 1983 Jan 1984 to Mar 1984, May 1984 to Sept 1984, Nov 1984 to May 1985, Aug 1985 to Nov 1985, Jan 1986 to July 1986, Sept 1986 and Oct 1986. £40 the lot o.n.o. I do not want to sell separate copies. One Lister Sheep Shearing Machine with clippers, age about 1920. £40. One Lister small hand sheep shearing machine about 1930, with clippers, £40. One DIAMANT corn grinder on stand, can be turned by hand or machine, £30. For more details ring Pete Willan on 01934 516606. Weston Super Mare area.

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

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 12th Selwood Clearout at Zeals Airfield, Zeals, Wiltshire. For details ring 01373 466846.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23rd Crank-up at Hazelbury Mill Pub nr Crewkerne, just off the A30 Yeovil Road. This is put on by South Somerset Club. For details ring John Patten on 01460 242039. or just turn up.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 28th WSEC AGM. This is the 27th Annual General Meeting of our club, let's have a good turn-out for the most important meeting of the year. This is your chance to have your say if you wish to raise any topic with the committee, remember the committee are only there because you elected them, they serve the club on your behalf.

SATURDAY MARCH 5th WSEC SPRING SORTOUT at Cranmore Railway Station. Pitches still only £5. Buyers £1. Turn out your sheds and garages and turn your junk into hard cash. Café open for food and drinks.

GET WELL SOON

The club would like to wish a speedy recovery to member Adrian Grant from Frome who is recovering at home from recent surgery on his spine. We wish him well for the future but I don't think we will see Adrian lugging large engines around for a while. Adrian, best wishes from all the members.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

The club would like to wish many happy returns of the day to Liz who had a birthday on December 22nd. Sorry these greetings are a bit late Liz but Arthur has only just told me about it. He didn't tell me how old you were so I will have to put you in the over 21 category.

CHAIRMAN'S EMAIL ADDRESS.

brianjohn.baker@tiscali.co.uk

A couple of months ago I bought a new computer, the only thing I usually use it for is to compile the monthly newsletter. I normally do not have the time to spend hours on it like some people do, surfing the net etc. However with this new machine I have set up an Email address which is printed above. If you have items you wish to be included in the newsletter perhaps you could try out my new found technology to see if it works, if it does not I shall revert to my biro. Talking of biro's, I had a phone call at work from a female salesperson trying to sell me a fax machine, what's a fax machine I asked her, we've only just started to use biro's here, she promptly put the phone down. Henry, who is only ten years old had a laptop computer for Christmas, he hasn't switched it off since, he has his own Email address and he spends some time most evenings on the internet, he sometimes points out things I'm doing wrong on my computer, I think most parents nowadays rely on the kids to tell them how to operate these new fangled gadgets. B.J.B.