

CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

January
2010
Thirty third year
of publication
www.wessex-sec.co.uk

From the Sump

I lead this month's editorial with the excellent news that Geoff Challinor, the driving force behind The Anson Museum and its Curator has been awarded an MBE in the 2010 New Year Honours List for services to Industrial Heritage.

He received a letter from Downing Street about six weeks ago asking if he would accept the honour if it was granted. He is absolutely thrilled as you can imagine and it has nearly killed Margaret having to keep it a secret until now.

He shares the privilege of an MBE with a wide variety of people, including Ian Millar, an innovative sheep & arable farmer in Scotland who has worked for the benefit of the livestock industry as a whole. Rose Gray & Lady Rogers, the Co-Founders of the River Café & leading figures in the London restaurant scene also receive MBEs as does Cath Kidston, one of the most influential & original UK designers in recent years.

I think it is very well deserved and I have never seen a man work harder. I'm sure you'll all want to join with me in congratulating him on this singular mark of recognition for his efforts.

I hope that someone is putting Paul Evans of Internal Fire up for one for next year!

The entry form for the Astle Park 1000 Engine Rally (26/27th June) is available now by post from Mr M.E. Barks, 'Hillcrest', Dovedale Road, Kingsley, Cheadle. ST10 2AD. SAE please!

There is a PDF on their website –
<http://www.1000engines.co.uk/files/EXHIBITOR.pdf>

Obituary

By Robin & Jackie Lambert

It is with sadness we learn of the death of Tony Andrews. Tony, who lived at Westbury Sub Mendip, was one of the founder members of our club and in the early days used to rally his engines along with his father, Wilf. He made a lovely set of juvenile swing boats that he would take to small fund raising events. He also was a keen helper with Carnival floats on the Somerset Carnival circuits. Our condolences go out to his wife Sue, his son Mike and his family.

Moving the Metal

For sale

"Ferm" wood turning lathe, type FHB940. On tradesman built timber stand. 5 turning speeds, 36" between centres. As new, buyer collects. £130.

Turning tools. 11 assorted+large & small callipers £50

Douglas 540cc 1949/50 engine on steerable trolley.

Not run for 3 years & dry stored. Buyer collects. £130.

All above, phone Tony Davis 01373 464982

Bamford EG3, 1946. Good runner. **Saw bench** for logging, fast & loose pulleys, good condition. **Petter** A1, rough. **Lister DK**, non-runner. **Lister D x 2** (1936?). One runs. (*Bindon Abbey, Dorset*)

All above, phone Frank on 01929 406212

Lister D. 18DH. Sold to Lewis & Son, Kettering on 9/9/37. Very well presented on a four wheel oak trolley. Phone Phil on 01933 386800 **NEW NUMBER** **Petter 8hp**. 1919, M type. Class One prize winner, totally rebuilt, reluctant sale. Best offer near £1.100.

Phone Eric Gay - 01225 754374

Lister D 1942. On nice two wheeled trolley. Runs well, very tidy. Plus near complete spare engine. £85. Phone Robin Gardener on 01373 465797 (*Wilts*)

JAP Model 55. The unusual vertical twin! & apparently unused. Easy starter. Very sexy finned manifold. Apparently in good order. Might swap for something small & interesting. £140.00.

Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

Stationary Engine Magazines. July '95 (257) to Dec '06 (393) in six official binders. £50.

"On Four Wheels". Complete in 11 official binders.

"On Two Wheels", 8 binders. All in good order.

REDUCED! £30 a set. Phone P. Riley 0117 932 4345

WANTED

Open crank Hit and Miss engine. What have you?

Keith Shephard: Phone 07803 210021 or email

keith@modeng.co.uk.

ABC engine. Particularly 1915 250cc Firefly but anything considered. Good price paid for the right engine!

Triumph twin WW2 genny or parts.

All above, Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

This column works -

an engine was purchased and a lathe sold here last month!

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

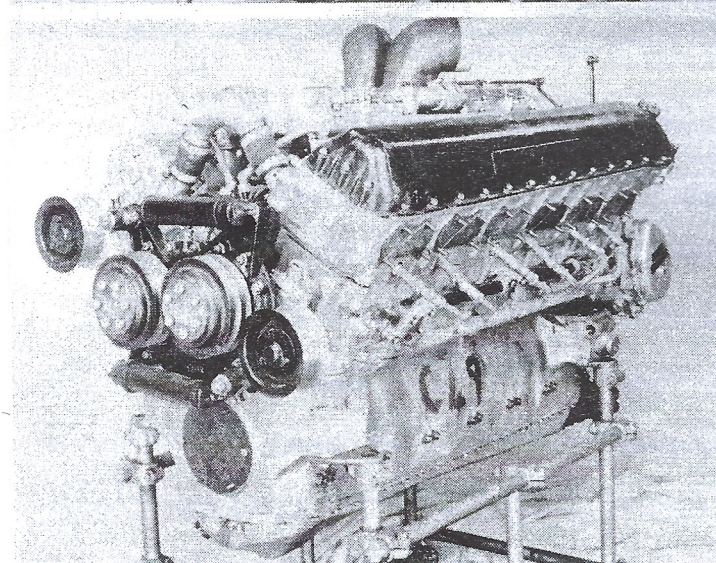
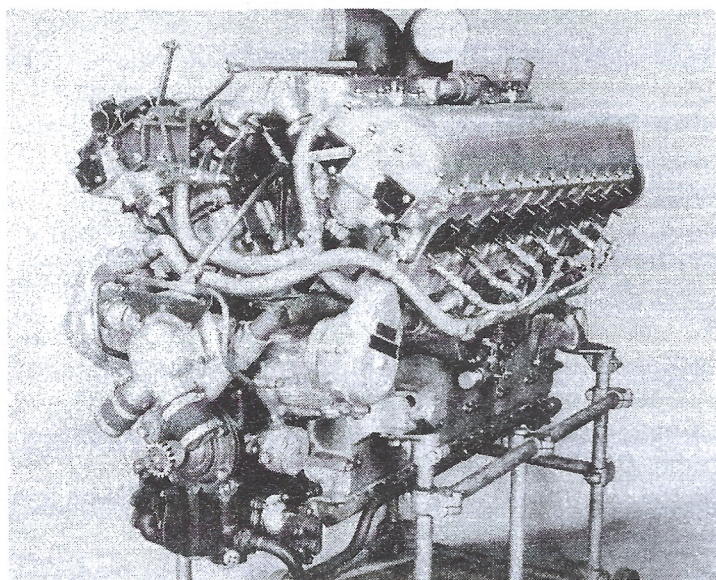
J. Kim Siddorn, 9, Durleigh Close, Bristol. BS13 7NQ or by e-mail to kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk.

Featured Engine No. 37

The Meteor Tank Engine - By J.K. Siddorn

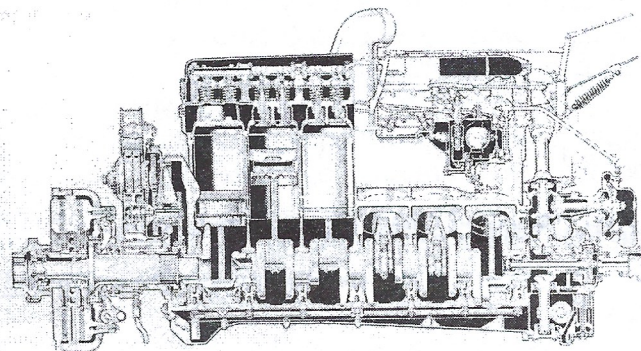
The state of our armoured fighting vehicles at the commencement of WW2 hostilities was parlous to say the least. The Army top brass were very resistive to the concept of a tank that went quickly and carried a big gun! Tanks at the time had licence-built (by Nuffield) American Liberty engines rated around 350 bhp and the home-built Meadows engine that gave approximately the same horsepower. Both were giving everything they had and were unreliable.

W. A. Robotham and his chassis design and development division at Belper were not involved in aero-engine work and took on the development of the tank engine from the successful Merlin aero engine, then in quantity production. An almost derelict site was rushed into use and retained its original name of Clan Foundry. Robotham was made Chief Engineer of Tank Development, and the Tank Division at Belper was involved with the overall design of four versions of the Cromwell tank.



The Rolls-Royce Kestrel was considered, but although it was smaller than the Merlin, it only offered 100bhp more than the Liberty and there was a finite supply of them available. Therefore, in a calculated gamble, it was decided that they would try to fit a derated Merlin into the available space in a Crusader

tank. With its supercharger hacked off it looked possible and castings were made and machined. To maintain interchangeability with the Liberty engine and a transmission line only 8" off the engine bay floor, all the ancillary devices such as the magnetos, water and oil pumps and everything else that stuck out below the crankcase-to-sump bottom joint were moved to the "back" of the engine. To save precious aluminium, cast iron parts used wherever possible. Other changes were made that reduced the overall height of the engine by 6".



Cross-section through Meteor Mk.III engine and clutch.

The Merlin's propeller reduction gear was removed and a clutch fitted to the end of the crankshaft. In order to drive the existing gearbox, and to comply with automotive practice, the engine's direction of rotation had to be reversed. Low-speed torque was improved by utilising the cam profile of a normally-aspirated Kestrel and the compression ratio was reduced from 6 to 5.5 to 1 to allow it to run on Pool petrol without pinking. Automatic ignition advance was fitted and the carburettor choke diameter reduced.

They went to great lengths to nonetheless ensure that many standard Merlin accessories were common to both engines. This paid dividends on several occasions such as in 1943 when an acute shortage of cylinder blocks was met by dismantling surplus older marks of Merlins.

Early production engines were soon giving a reliable 600bhp & later marks came close to 750bhp.

In a typical back-of-the-envelope deal conducted over dinner, Lord Hives of Rolls-Royce swapped Meteor engine production for the gas turbine that Rovers were working on.

In 1941 Leyland - who had an order in hand for 1,200 Meteor engines - were still advocating their own diesel tank engine, although it would deliver only 350bhp! Meadows produced some Meteors, but their small factory of 2,000 men was already producing 40 different types of engine. So Meteor production was done mostly at Rover's Tyseley plant and Morris in Coventry.

The first Meteor prepared for tank use was trialled in a modified Crusader in September 1941 at Aldershot. It was an instant success but some transmission problems needed sorting out as the drive line was now handling twice its designed limit!

Calendar of Events

Key. Event – E. Club night – CN

- Feb 22nd 32nd **Annual General Meeting.**
 Mar 6th **Event (E) Vintage Sort Out** Cranmore Station Yard.
 Mar TBA **E. Club Visit.** Kelston Sparks Collection
 Mar 29th **CN.** Guest Speaker: Peter Goodchild.
My Life As A Spy. Illustrated
 April 5th **E.** (Easter Monday) **Mells Daffodil Rally.**
 April 17th **E. Enstone Sort Out**, Oxfordshire
 April 18th **E. Crankup** at Nunney Catch:
 April 26th **CN.** Guest Speaker: Kim Siddorn.
Rolls Royce Piston Aero Engines. Illustrated
 May 24th **CN.** **Member's Night:-** bring ten photo's or slides on any subject. - prize for best effort.
 June 2nd **E. (Wed evening).** **D-Day crankup** Cranmore Railway Yard
 Bring something military if you can!
 June 19/20th **E. Wessex Midsummer Vintage Gathering,**
 June 26/27th **E. 1000 Engine Rally,** Astle Park.
 June 28th **CN. Member's Night,**
 Other Hobbies / Guess The Object
 July 26th **E/CN. Crankup:-** at the Court Hotel
 July 31st/Aug 1st **E. Kemble Rally**
 Aug 23rd **CN.** Guest Speaker: Henry Body
A Talk On Speed Records
 Sept. 18th **E. Camerton Village Day.**
 Sept 27th **CN Quiz Night**
 Oct 9th **CN.. Skittles & Supper Evening,** Venue TBA
 Oct 17th **E. Robert's Open Day.**
 Oct 16th **E. Vintage Sort Out** at Cranmore Railway station yard.
 Oct 25th **CN.** Guest Speaker, Roger Fowler.
The Burnham-On-Sea rescue hover craft
 Nov 13th **E. Enstone Sort Out**, Oxfordshire
 Nov 29th **CN.** Guest Speaker:- Martin Phippard.
Parara Marble Extraction, Italy. Illustrated
 Dec 5th **E. Crank up** at Nunney Catch
 Dec 27th **E. Mince Pie Crankup:-** Court Hotel
Dates and venues may change. Check before driving!
Mells Daffodil Day

Easter Monday 5th April 2010

A message from Robin Lambert for exhibitors attending the Mells Show. Entry Forms for Mells have gone out to all who attended last year. If anyone who received a form cannot make it, please let me know as we have more wanting to exhibit than we have space for. If I know someone has dropped out, I can slot a few more in, thanks. Ring Robin on 01373 463526. A small camping table was left at Mells last year & Robin will bring it with him this year. Are you missing one?

Social news

By Earwig

Happy birthday to Ken Rendall for 7th January.

Membership cards

A Word from the Treasurer

You are politely reminded that this might be your last edition of "Cranking" if you have not paid your subs, neither will you be able to vote at the AGM as only paid up, adult members can vote. Thanks to all those who donate stamps & cash to the club – they make a very welcome addition to our funds.

Chairman's report (printed as received)

I am quite concerned for the future of this club, despite having close to three hundred members not one of you have come forward to replace Arthur as club secretary when he stands down at the AGM in February. We also need new committee members to replace those who are also standing down. The club cannot survive unless we have a committee to run it. So I ask all members of this great club to consider taking the responsibility for the day to day running of the club and not take it for granted that someone else will do it year after year.

The last event of the year is always The Mince Pie crank up. For the first time we held this event at The Court Hotel, our new venue for meetings. The difference this year compared to last year at the Old Down Inn was like "chalk and cheese". Last year the pub never opened for trade or the toilets until eleven am onwards, they supplied the mince pies and sausage rolls which cost the club £140, (£60 more than the year before). The hassle that Eric and I had from Maxine over the car park went on all the morning, (and several meetings later). This year at the "Court" the hotel was open at 8-30am for hot drinks and the toilets, we were really made welcome by Sue and the staff, what a difference from the year before. We had previously ordered mince pies and sausage rolls for the event, these were brought out on four large trays, all piping hot, to be taken around by Eric, assisted by Oliver, I then asked Sue (the landlady) for the bill, she replied have those on the house, no charge to the club. How brilliant was that? Eric rang me up and asked if we were doing hot roast potatoes as in previous years as he would bring a microwave and generator to heat them up? Leave it to me I'll sort something out I told him. I wish I had kept quiet as I spent most of Boxing Day afternoon peeling a considerable amount of spuds and cooking them ready for the following day. Eric set up the microwave in his van and soon had the hot spuds handed around to the members who had braved the cold and turned up, these proved very popular and were soon devoured. Quite a good turnout of engines was on display in the very muddy car park, also a lot of members turned up just to visit. The Hotel was kept very busy all the morning serving hot drinks and drinks at the bar, One of our members ordered brandies for him and his wife and the barmaid didn't bother with a measure but poured it from the bottle, I swear it must have been at least a treble, he paid for singles. Sue allowed me to set up the raffle in "the Drawing Room", giving me a bottle of Port to put in the raffle. A large selection of prizes was on offer and thanks to Carol for selling the tickets it was a huge success. After the raffle was over the members loaded up and headed for home. The general opinion was that this was a very successful event to end our 2009 programme. **A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.** Ed – *There were some 20 engines & 50+ members present.*

Our Midsummer Gathering

By Eric Gay

2010 is on its way and the members of the sub-committee have already started work on the event. I have already had entries returned and I am looking forward to having a good show in 2010. We had 130 engines booked in last year and it would be great to have 200 in the field for our event this year. If you did not exhibit in 2009, why not come and join us as two hundred engines would be the largest gathering of engines in the south west.

It is not a rally for just for engines and last year we had the lot, Tractors, Cars, Motor cycles, Commercials, Horticultural machinery, and a wonderful woodworking display along with displays of models, bygones and even a barn owl.

Now Paul, Pete, Brian, Kim, and myself cannot grow this event for you without your help. We had a lot of it from you the exhibitors last year and again I thank you all for that. Please help us again this coming year and pass the word around. If you know anyone with any type of exhibit, please let me or any of the Midsummer Gathering committee know and we will write to them and send them an entry form.

I will be trying to get us some full size steam exhibits for 2010, so if any one knows any owners of any type of steam driven exhibits please let Eric know. We are also looking for an attraction in the ring for the Saturday and if you can help with this, again, please let me know.

Well, that's it for now. I will let you all know how things progress over the next few months and I wish you all a very happy New year.

Addenda. I've been asked by a long-standing club member to tell you all what we contributed to our Charity, the **Children's Hospice South West**. From the money raised from entry fees etc, the club made a donation of £250. At the rally itself, I was handed a very kind contribution of £50. Vintage Spirit Magazine gave us two prize packs in 2009 and one of them was added to the raffle held on the Saturday evening. The other was raffled at the Mince Pie Crank Up & raised a further £45. The club added a fiver, bringing the grand total to £350.00. This sum has been paid to the **Children's Hospice South West**.

Stockbridge Working Weekend – Sept 12/13th

By Keith & Barb Vickery

A fine, blowy weekend gave The Upper Test Valley Vintage Club the best show so far with a good mix of exhibits and many more stalls this year. Sadly, due to illness, the heavy horse section was down but hopefully it will be back up to strength next time.

Nearly 60 stationary engines in the line up gave a very good show & ran the entire length of the field. A big thank you to all who came but especially to members of the Wessex SEC who travelled up from Somerset and all points west.

Some people called and left a message on our answer phone asking for entry forms. Unfortunately, a few failed to leave their phone number or name and 1471 only works for the last number to phone!

Over 50 stalls filled the middle of the field and a couple of model steam traction engines were working away. 55 tractors took part in the ploughing match in the next field. 60 vintage cars and 5 motorcycles were most welcome – come again!

Thank you all very much for turning up. Without your support there would be no more shows – see you next season. *(I hope I've got most of this right. The report was in longhand and seemed to be a carbon copy. It was a bit difficult to decipher the last few lines ;o)) – Ed)*

My First Engine

By Eric Gay

How did this all start, what got me playing with old Iron and engines in particular. Well, like so many things in life it was by accident. I was going to the coast for a day out with Maureen and just outside Shaftesbury, stuck in a hedge was this notice just painted on a plank of wood and hanging on the hedge saying "Steam Rally". "Let's go and take a look for an hour then we will go on " says I. Well, this just happened to be the second Great Working Of Steam Engines At Stourpaine Bushes, so needless to say we never got to the coast that day, for even back then it was a great show and one needed all day to see the exhibits. I can remember the stationary engines at Stourpaine, row upon row and I got hooked. I wanted one of these popping, chuffing machines. I thought they would be beyond my pocket, back then I had no idea what they were worth & for some time it was just a dream - but a dream that did not go away. Well back then a collective sale (a good half a lifetime ago) was held at Semington across the road from the rally site, at times I would when I had time have a look round, most of the time just for nosiness, but one day I found A STATIONARY ENGINE, rusty, laid on its side with the crank shaft, (the bit where the starting handle fits) stuck in the ground.

I debated with myself weather to stay and bid or get off to work, the stay and bid bit won. The sale progressed till it came to the engine, I still remember the first bid, it was a bid of ten pounds, I could afford to go a bit higher and bid eleven, no one else bid – and I had my first engine!

A Ruston PT 1 -1hp & a right block of rust. Now, it's one thing buying an engine, but when one is alone and has to load it into the back of a van it isn't easy, I was a lot younger and fitter in those days, so into the van it went. It was about three weeks later that I had time to have a good look at what I had bought - never go self employed, you don't get a lot of free time. I had a good look at it, nothing broken, no cracks. "Better see if it has got a spark" out with the plug and yes, it had a very good spark. In went some oil and petrol - and out came some petrol it as it poured out of the float bowl. This was soon fixed by cleaning out the float bowl & reseating the float needle. float bowl reseal needle and try again, here goes. First swing, it fired & I stood there in disbelief, next swing and the PT was running, and it ran like a dream, 'Ur indoors had to see this, so I soon had Maureen outside the shed looking at this rusty lump of old iron running as if it was new.

The PT was cleaned of all its rust, painted in the right colours, transfers applied and a trolley made, I was now ready to go rallying and joined the WSEC, Trowbridge Park Monkton nine, Neston Park and many more events & the PT never let me down, I have never taken it apart & it has never stopped or broken down. I still have it and at times it comes out into the yard at the back of the house it is started up and I think back on all the good times I have had with many good friends over all the years if it was not for this wonderful hobby I would never have met so many great people and had so much pleasure in their company.