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Jan 2015
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The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

From The Sump

I am now in possession of the returns from the recent vote on what percentage of our nett profit from our annual Wessex Midsummer Vintage Show we should give to charity. There was a return of 41 forms of the approximately 200 sent out with the November newsletter by the requested date, 15th December. This represents a percentage of about 20.50% of our adult membership. In matters of this kind, industry reckons that postal returns of 11% to 12% is normal, so it is good to see that our membership is interested and responsive to our club's life.

In addition, there were 16 people who collected their Newsletter at our Meeting at The Court Hotel and were not supplied with a voting form. This was sent to them separately with a request of return by 20th. Of these 16, 5 have been returned but one recorded no vote.

The total percentage figure was 680 which when divided by the number of returns (41) gives an **average of 16.58%.**

The numbers of votes cast were as follows.

Zero%	-	1
5%	-	10
10%	-	10
15%	-	4
20%	-	5
25%	-	4
30%	-	7

At the January EC meeting, members of the committee were not in favour of averaging the percentage as I had assumed would be the case. Therefore, they will need to decide how best to deal with the difficulty presented by the tie between 5 & 10%!

Turning to an entirely different matter, in late December, I received the annual quote for our insurance premium from our broker. It seemed to me that the quote of **£907.50** was rather high so I wrote to him, setting out clearly what we actually do. As a result, he looked into the issues I raised and has found us a lower quotation of **£665.50**, saving the club **£224.00**.

Of course, I had done this without consultation as the premium was due on 1st January. I have been in touch with the Hon Treasurer, Karen Gumm, and payment has now been made. This was met with the committee's approval at the January meeting.

Moving the Metal For sale

Anvil, mid size, weighs just over 8 stone with leg vice that fits in anvil slot £100.

Ladder, aluminium, 18 rung, double extension - will extend to 27 feet. Hardly used. £50.

Both can be collected from me or I can deliver at the Cranmore Sort Out. Contact Robin on 01373- 463526.

Lister A, 1925. Single flywheel, on a lister trolley. Full working order. £350.00. Phone 01458 210929

Petter M. 1934, Apple top, 4hp. On a trolley driving a generator and complete with Lighting board.

Ruston Hornsby 1.5hp. PB6, Choice of two. One on a trolley, t'her not. Never had them running, barn find condition.

International Harvester Co. LA engine, needs TLC! No trolley, barn find condition.

EMCO Lathe, 5". With milling attachment. Loads of tools and kit, very good condition.

All open to offers.

Phone Phil Coombs, Gurney Slade. 01749 841220

A large collection of about 40 old milk bottles all with dairy names on them. Suit someone with a dairy based rally exhibit or collection. No reasonable offer refused. Proceeds to Radstock Museum. Buyer collects from Midsomer Norton. Phone Tom Randall 01761 418926 or email tom.ramdall@dsl.pipex.com.

Big slate charging panel four foot tall, three feet wide, instruments, rheostats etc. All original and unmolested £230 or near offer. Phone Kim Siddorn, below.

WANTED

A fuel nozzle for a **3 hp Petter M**. Phone Roger 01722 416949.

Lister L type, fixed head. I need the following parts;- Camshaft gear or complete camshaft, valve access plugs in cylinder, 2 gaskets for above, carburettor and governor linkage. Magneto, drive chain and chain cover. A water pump suitable for circulating water across the screen cooler.

Any of the above would be of great help to restore this very old engine. I'd consider buying a donor engine if necessary. If you can help, phone Bob Alexander 01225 766211.

Suppliers

Recommended Bearing Supplier – very helpful!

Solent Bearings, Unit 20&21, Test Valley Business Centre, Test Lane, Nursling, Southampton, SO16 9JW
Phone - 02380 667100. www.solent-bearings.co.uk

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

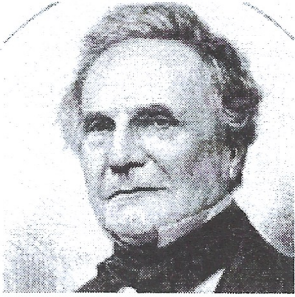
Phone - 0117 964 6818

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

Featured Engineer Number 7

Charles Babbage, FRS. 26/12/1791 – 18/10/1871)

Father of the computer - From Internet Research



Babbage was an English polymath. A mathematician, philosopher, inventor and mechanical engineer, Babbage is best remembered for originating the concept of a programmable computer.

Considered a "father of the computer", Babbage is credited with inventing the first mechanical

computer that eventually led to more complex designs. His varied work in other fields has led him to be described as "pre-eminent" among the many polymaths of his century. Parts of Babbage's uncompleted mechanisms are on display in the London Science Museum. In 1991, a perfectly functioning difference engine was constructed from Babbage's original plans. Built to tolerances achievable in the 19th century, the success of the finished engine indicated that Babbage's machine would have worked.

Babbage was one of four children of Benjamin Babbage and Betsy Plumleigh Teape. His father was a banking partner of William Praed in founding Praed's & Co. of Fleet Street, London, in 1801. In 1808, the Babbage family moved into the old Rowdens house in East Teignmouth. Around the age of eight Babbage was sent to a country school in Alphington near Exeter to recover from a life-threatening fever. For a short time he attended King Edward VI Grammar School in Totnes, South Devon, but his health forced him back to private tutors.

Babbage then joined the 30-student Holmwood Academy, in Baker Street, Enfield, Middlesex, under the Reverend Stephen Freeman. The academy had a library that prompted Babbage's love of mathematics. He was brought home, to study at the Totnes school: this was at age 16 or 17. The second was an Oxford tutor, under whom Babbage reached a level of education allowing him to enter Cambridge. Babbage arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge, in October 1810. He was already self-taught in some parts of contemporary mathematics; he had read in Robert Woodhouse, Joseph Louis Lagrange, and Marie Agnesi. As a result he was disappointed in the standard mathematical instruction available at Cambridge.

Babbage, John Herschel, George Peacock, and several other friends formed the Analytical Society in 1812; they were also close to Edward Ryan. As a student, Babbage was also a member of other societies such as The Ghost Club, concerned with investigating supernatural phenomena, and the Extractors Club, dedicated to liberating its members from the madhouse, should any be committed to one.

In 1812 Babbage transferred to Peterhouse, Cambridge. He was the top mathematician there, but did not graduate with honours. He instead received a degree without examination in 1814. He had defended a thesis that was considered blasphemous in the preliminary public disputation; but it is not known whether this fact is related to his not sitting the examination.

Babbage quickly made progress. He lectured to the Royal Institution on astronomy in 1815, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1816. After graduation, he unsuccessfully applied for various positions, and had little in the way of career. In 1816 he was a candidate for a teaching job at Haileybury

College; he had recommendations from James Ivory and John Playfair, but lost out to Henry Walter. In 1819, Babbage and Herschel visited Paris and the Society of Arcueil, meeting leading French mathematicians and physicists. That year, Babbage applied to be professor at the University of Edinburgh, with the recommendation of Pierre Simon Laplace; the post went to William Wallace.

With Herschel, Babbage worked on the electrodynamics of Arago's rotations, publishing in 1825. Their explanations were only transitional, being picked up and broadened by Michael Faraday. The phenomena are now part of the theory of eddy currents, and Babbage and Herschel missed some of the clues to unification of electromagnetic theory, staying close to Ampère's force law.^[24]

Babbage purchased the actuarial tables of George Barrett, who died in 1821 leaving unpublished work, and surveyed the field in 1826 in *Comparative View of the Various Institutions for the Assurance of Lives*. This interest followed a project to set up an insurance company, prompted by Francis Baily and mooted in 1824, but not carried out.^[26] Babbage did calculate actuarial tables for that scheme, using Equitable Society mortality data from 1762 onwards.

During this whole period Babbage depended awkwardly on his father's support, given his father's attitude to his early marriage, of 1814: he and Edward Ryan wedded the Whitmore sisters. He made a home in Marylebone in London, and founded a large family. On his father's death in 1827, Babbage inherited a large estate (value around £100,000), making him independently wealthy. After his wife's death in the same year he spent time travelling. In Italy he met Leopold II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, foreshadowing a later visit to Piedmont. In April 1828 he was in Rome, and relying on Herschel to manage the difference engine project, when he heard that he had become professor at Cambridge, a position he had three times failed to obtain (in 1820, 1823 and 1826).

Babbage was instrumental in founding the Astronomical Society in 1820. Its initial aims were to reduce astronomical calculations to a more standard form, and to circulate data. These directions were closely connected with Babbage's ideas on computation, and in 1824 he won its Gold Medal, cited "for his invention of an engine for calculating mathematical and astronomical tables".

Babbage's motivation to overcome errors in tables by mechanisation has been a commonplace since Dionysius Lardner wrote about it in 1834. The context of these developments is still debated. Babbage's own account of the origin of the difference engine begins with the Astronomical Society's wish to improve *The Nautical Almanac*. Babbage and Herschel were asked to oversee a trial project, to recalculate some part of those tables. With the results to hand, discrepancies were found. This was in 1821 or 1822, and was the occasion on which Babbage formulated his idea for mechanical computation. The issue of the *Nautical Almanac* is now described as a legacy of a polarisation in British science caused by attitudes to Sir Joseph Banks, who had died in 1820.

Through the Royal Society Babbage acquired the friendship of the engineer Marc Brunel. It was through Brunel that Babbage knew of Joseph Clement, and so came to encounter the artisans whom he observed in his work on manufactures. Babbage provided an introduction for Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Continues next month

Calendar of Events

key. CN = Club Night. E = Event

Jan 26th CN. **Strange Things & Strange Stories** - Eric Gay
 Feb 23rd CN. **Annual General Meeting**
 March 7th E. **Vintage, Bygone & Antique Sale** - East Somerset Steam Railway, Cranmore, BA4 4QP
 March 30th CN **Weapons Of The Past** - Kim Siddorn
 April 6th **Mells Daffodil Day** - Mells, Nr Frome, Somerset
 Application form from - Brian Verrall Tel: 01934 743460.
 April 18th. (Sat) E. **Spring Sale.** at Oakley Airfield. HP18 9JX.
 info: Mrs. Anne Harris 01367 810415
 April 19th E. **Engine Running Day** - White Horse Country Park, Coach Rd, Westbury, BA13 4LX
 April 27th CN. To Be Announced
 May 3rd (Sun) E. **Lambourn Woodlands Country Show**,
 Contact Stephanie - 01488-683023.
 May 16/17th E. **Shillingstone Rally**, very popular, book early!
 Contact S Burden 01747- 822834
 May 18th E. **Emergency Light Aircraft Around The World** - Dr. Andrew Steel. (*Early because of Bank Holiday*)
 June 20th - 21st E. **The Wessex Midsummer Vintage Show** - Semington, nr Trowbridge, Wiltshire
 June 21/22nd. E. 31st **1000 Engine Rally**, Astle Park. Cheshire
 June 29th CN. **My Life In Motor Sport** - Prof Andrew Graves.
 July 18/19th. E. **Much Marcle Steam Rally**. Rye Meadows near Ledbury. HR8 2LX Phone, Mrs Dot Pullen, 01531 633664
 July 27th CN. **Crank Up** - The Court Hotel With Bread & Cheeses Supper
 Aug 24th CN. **My Time On Ark Royal** - David Griffiths
 Sept 28th CN. **The Hawker Hunter Fighter** - Grp Cpt John Heron
 Oct 26th CN. **My Life In The Fire Service** - John Bullock
 Nov 7th. E. (Sat) **Autumn Sale.** Oakley Airfield. HP18 9JX. info: Mrs. Anne Harris 01367 810415
 Nov 30th CN. **Lights At The Court Hotel** - Bring an engine driving dynamo or genny in the afternoon and then model show in the evening with silver soldering demonstration & supper
 Dec **Christmas Party** - Court Hotel (Date To Be Announced)
 Dec 27th **No Christmas Crank Up**
 All the above dates are subject to alteration and changes will be announced in the newsletter

Mells Daffodil Day 2015

By Brian Verrall

This event will take place on Easter Monday 6th April and we are in the original field as in previous years. Club members will receive an entry form with their newsletter. When applying, please include a stamped addressed envelope for the return of passes.

After thirty years plus, Robin has decided to retire from the administration work entailed with this event. As of this year, I Brian Verrall, will be handling all entry forms, passes etc. I can be contacted at 2, Norville Place, Lower North Street, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3HH. Tel: 01934 743460.

Robin, you have done a grand job in the past. I thank you for that and hope I can keep it up.

Letter from Mary Butler Jan 2015

To Members of the Wessex S E C

I wish to give you all my sincere thanks for the lovely Bristol Blue Glass, a gorgeous dish and the two engraved paperweights.

I first started typing the newsletter to go to the printers. I remember the first one very well indeed. I was typing it on my Imperial portable, which was given to me when I was about 15 years-old. (I still have it).

It was July 1988, Reg and I were at Rushmoor Rally in our caravan with me tapping away. The article that has stayed in my mind all these years was an article about hydraulic Ram pumps by Jeremy Adams.

I then stopped the typing and took on the distribution. It was a lot of work each month but gave me great pleasure. It was a godsend when stamps and envelopes didn't need licking any more. That was my monthly glue fix, rewarded by a bag of Maltesers to take away the taste.

When I moved home two and a half years ago my life took a new road and some changes had to be made. Retiring from the newsletter was one.

Once again many thanks for the glassware, I will treasure it.

Yours Mary Butler.

Social News

Eric Gay says - It was good to see Keith Nash with us after his recent stay in hospital at Bath, stay well Keith and we all wish you well.

Birthday greetings must go to Dot Watts and Rueben Smith, both having reached their ninetieth year, may we wish you both every good wish for your birthdays.

Now I did forget last month to say that our Linda has had an operation on her knee, the poor girl is up and about but not running quite yet so form us all get fit soon as I need you to run round that rally field.

Now one more member that has been in hospital for an operation is our dear friend John Paget. We all hope that everything went well and that John will be back with us at our events and club evenings at The Court.

Earwig says very best wishes to Geoff Davies as he starts his dialysis and to Bill Coombes who is not at all well.

Chairman's Report

Now Tuesday the 9th of December saw the members of the committee gather at the Court for our monthly meeting, I have to tell you all that at this meeting one of our long serving committee members resigned and left the meeting. This is a very sad state of affairs and in my humble opinion should never have happened. I can only say that this was due to the voting form sent out with the newsletter. (*I mildly observe that Eric was the person who actually put the forms in the envelopes!* – ED) This has caused a great deal of discontent and I have had many phone calls on this matter

I will now move on to lighter matters as you will have seen in the last news letter we have arranged a Engine running day at the White Horse Country Park

Nr. Westbury, on the 19th April, (I had one of me funny turns and wrote West Wilts Country Park - this is incorrect.) I can now confirm that the West Wilts Society Of Model Engineers will be running steam trains and other delights for you on the day. This event will be well advertised in the local press and other places so I hope you will come along so we can make this event a success - who knows it may become an annual event.

Preparations are well in hand for the 2015 Wessex Midsummer Vintage Show at Semington. Most things are already booked, Field, Marquee, Catering, entertainment, Ice cream, Fair rides, and much more. All I must ask is **please come and give us some help**, not only before the show, we had wonderful help last year before the event, but it was left to just a very few after the show to pack up, clear the site and put things into store. I appeal to you now, please plan to spare us an hour or two of your time to help us clear the site.

Now it has been very seldom in my life that I have been what you call lucky,, but of late, lady luck has smiled on me. Just the other day the phone rang, "Mr Gay? I found your name on the Wessex Web site. We have a Lister 'L' type engine that we wish to sell - what's it worth?" Well that's the usual question I get asked. Well, I won't bore you with the details, suffice it to say that it now resides with one of our new members.

My luck came when I was also told that a small lathe was also for sale. Now my Colchester is quite a large machine, so to be offered a small lathe I became very interested. We travelled down to a very - strange place they call Bristol, and I bought the very nice as new lathe. As we were talking about the Lister, I noticed on the floor at the back of the garage a fairly large steam engine, covered in dirt and grime and then three other smaller engines. I was asked if I would like to buy them how much I asked, we have to clear this garage workshop of all this seeing that you bought the machine how about £.....? I am not going to tell you the price that was asked, just to say that they now have a new home in Trowbridge, and the buyer of the Lister was given 5 hot air engines - yes, you read it right given. Lady luck smiled on us both, I am now off to buy a lottery ticket wish me luck.

The Mince Pie Crank up

By Eric Gay

With Christmas day over along came boxing day and of course the 27th was going to be our annual Mince Pie Crank up, It was time to put on my chefs hat and apron. I cooked one hundred sausage rolls and a hundred baked potatoes, along with the mince pies, went and borrowed my friends generator, loaded the micro-wave and other bits and bobs into the car ready for Saturday the 27th.

We arrived at the Court Hotel at around 9.30 but only two club stalwarts had turned up with engines. We waited hoping that others would turn up with engines as the event was advertised as "The Mince Pie Crank Up" but this proved a vain hope. It was a nice day too, sunny and dry; a little cold but we have run this event in far worse conditions.

Later more members did come along without engines, this cheered me up as it did mean that we could have a get together in the Hotel, and this we did along with running our usual Wessex raffle. I would like to thank all those that did take the trouble to come along if it was not for you good folk it would have been a disaster. This is the second crank up at the Court that has not had the support of our engine exhibitors, this matter will now be put before the committee for them to vote on as weather we continue with this type of event at The Court Hotel.

I am not prepared to spend my time, money, and fuel and then having to dispose of all the food we prepared for the expected turn out of our members. If this is not the sort of event you want, let me know and I will do my utmost to give you what you do want! Just pick up the phone I can assure you all I do not bite.

Having lost one of my valued committee members, I now must appeal to you the club members, We need Committee Members for with out a committee you will soon be without a club. Please don't leave it to someone else, come and join the committee. WE NEED YOUR INPUT it is not arduous it takes around 3 hours a month at the meeting, you will not be involved in letter writing as we do all that. We just need help and suggestion to keep the Wessex Stationary Engine Club Ltd., up and running. Ideally, the committee needs new members before the AGM in February.

I would like to wish all members and friends of The Wessex Stationary Engine Club a very Happy and peaceful New Year.

The Pre Christmas Party

By Eric Gay

By the time you read this report Christmas will have come and gone and I hope that every one of you had a very merry time, we now look forward to the year ahead.

December was a very busy month with our first ever Christmas Party at The Court Hotel, this was a huge success with exactly fifty club members filling the room and we all had a great time. I thank you one and all - it makes it all worthwhile when a plan comes together. A special thank you must go to Oliver & Alan our entertainers for the evening you did a magnificent job **THANK YOU BOTH ONCE AGAIN.**

Sue put on a great buffet and every one got well fed, so to you Sue thanks for all you do for us when we come along to the Court, not only for evening of the 8th December, but for the other times throughout the year that we use your Hotel.

It was very nice for me to receive many phone thanking me for arranging the party, I am told I have to do it all again for next year, watch this space.

A Personal Note

By Kim Siddorn

I have served on the Wessex SEC Executive Committee and been a Director of the club since January 2007. Whilst intending to continue as newsletter editor, I have resigned from the committee as of 24th January 2015.