

# Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. JULY 1983

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## A HURRICANE AND LIGHTNING

It has always been said that the main topic of conversation among the English is the good old weather, our wonderful weather. This year it has probably been discussed far more than ever before, and with just reason... if only we could export it! But if you think you've had problems, I bet I can beat them, in fact I am beginning to think the weather has a grudge against me. Perhaps it doesn't like the new style of S.E.? Anyway we went to Italy on business cum holiday cum engine look..did we find any? Alas you will have to wait for the thrilling tale to appear in that other journal of wisdom. After visiting numerous smaller towns we went to Florence, but the crowds, Stourpaine on a hot Sunday afternoon is nothing like it, millions of tourists fighting to walk on the two foot wide footpaths - you never walk in the road in Italy, that is unless your life assurance is paid up to date. So we decided to leave all these Nippons with their Nikons, and utterers of 'Gee, Swell', etc., and catch a train to the nearest coastline. The only train for this three hour trip was a 'locale', the dreaded Italian local with wooden seats...rather like a mobile church. It was crowded with students, as one would expect when such a journey cost a meagre 90p or 2,100 lira! Their footwear was of great interest because I had never seen so many makes of plimsolls, or sneakers as I prefer to call them. I wondered if there was such a thing as an Observers Book on plimsolls, if not, there certainly is plenty of scope!

When we arrived at the coast the weather appeared to be on the change and sure enough rain had arrived by the next day. We wondered around the harbour, and as I leaned from the jetty in an endeavour to read the nameplate of a marine engine, something caught my eye. Right under my nose, just under the surface of the water, dozens of large horrible jelly fish hovered with beckoning tentacles. Stick to stationary engines I thought, they are safer!

Than night the weather had its first go at us. A terrifying hurricane struck the resort with such force that, I was told the next day, nothing like it had happened for more than 30 years! As we lay in bed the large wooden shutters over the windows were torn open, and the noise of the howling wind was only exceeded by that of seemingly hundreds of rattling window shutters. As it increased we heard several bedroom doors opening, we wondered of residents were abandoning ship', it certainly must have really frightened them.

The next morning we left before 7.00 a.m. and made our way to the station, although the wind had dropped, the rain was still with us. We were somewhat please as well as relieved to reach Milan as we shared a compartment with a muzzled Alsatian dog and a student who was mad on Land Rovers - when he found we came from 'Land Rover country' it was a case of 'my hero' and 'wanta stroka my doga'.

One week later, back at Lodge Wood Farm, the weather smote (thats a good word) us again. This time it was no laughing matter as lightning struck the house with such force that it is a wonder it wasn't burnt down.

The list of damage is far too long to mention, and the list would look shorter if it contained just the UNDAMAGED items. The chimney took the main strike, it's top and the TV aerial dropped through the garage roof. The meter board in the garage took it badly and the trip switch blew apart. Several ceiling roses were blown from their positions as were light switches, furthermore, the cooker and central heating boiler suffered damage. Even a pair of 6 volt batteries on a shelf in the garage were split in two. The alternator in my gen-set is also damaged, although how badly has yet to be determined. The flash passed through the bricks of the chimney, melted the central heating liner and used same to reach the boiler and garage. The wiring in the loft had to be seen to be believed, a scene of miniature explosions, burn marks and black inch long strips of cable. Truly a frightening thought.

The moral of this must be, make sure your house contents are covered against lightning strike, and make sure the value is high enough.

Normal service has now been resumed at Lodge Wood Farm, although we are still waiting for the replacement of several electrical items. The S.E.B. and various local tradesmen who came to our rescue within minutes of the disaster cannot be praised enough.

David W. Edgington

## THE MONTHLY MEETING, MAY 23rd

After a nice drive from Bristol on, believe it or not, a mild DRY evening; yes I repeat again, a mild DRY evening, we arrived at the Old Down Inn to be greeted by the usual band of enginemen. It was nice to see everyone at last WITHOUT their wellies on! It was also nice to see so many wives at the meeting. Ian, the Chairman, opened the meeting in his usual humorous way. The slide show was about the annual Dutch Rally, presented by Grahame Escott and Pete Steele of the Devizes Club.

Pete started by telling of the cost of the return trip, also telling of the trouble they had with the Customs Officers over in Holland and back in Britain. It was a most enjoyable talk and slide show, helped along by Terry Heath who had represented the UK at this rally quite a few times in the past. Well done all three! Pete said that they took many more slides but they didn't all come out satisfactorily. We also saw a few slides of Cyril (Smith) with his new mobile home. We can't wait to see him towing it to rallies behind his Indian motorcycle.

During the interval Herbie did the raffle draw. First prize, a bottle of wine, was won by Mr. Crew; second prize, a box of chocs, was won by Mike Bailey; and the third prize, a book on gardening, was won by Andy Gale.

After the interval, Graham showed us more slides of stationary engines, traction engines and, the love of his life, vintage buses.

The meeting closed at 10.45 p.m. and all the way home, guess what? - it still wasn't RAINING...!!!

Sausage Machine Munt

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CALEDONIAN CORNER

At the Border Vintage Agricultural Association Rally at St.Boswells, the rallyfield was changed around at the last minutes because of a 'dampness' problem! However, it faired up on the Sunday until the public were all safely in. The ground was soft but most people got in position with little or no real trouble and soon there were engines popping, banging, spluttering and even swearing! I saw one, an Allen engine, with the owners looking at a big-end cap in their hands but all can't have been too bad, a false alarm I suppose, because it ran OK all the rest of the day and won the cup.

Late in the day we had a thunderstorm but no-one seemed to care. My own engines ran well, except for my Petter M type, which was stuck on our low-loader in the tractor area. There were present at the rally, 140 engines, 37 tractors, 18 cars, 15 motorcycles, 3 steamers, horses, models, implements, and 28 trade stands. The exhibitors shared 11 trophies between them and we had 2950 visitors to the show, which, you must agreed wasn't bad, considering the weather.

I must add that 2 weeks later at the Dumfries and Galloway Rally, my Petter M did what all Petter M's are famous for...but not too badly!

Andrew Mercer (Berwickshire)

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HARRY CHAMPION

We are sad to report the death, in June, of Harry Champion of Chippenham, Wilts. Harry was one of the real characters of the Stationary Engine world, to be seen at rallies far and wide, especially Stourpaine which he loved to visit. His Lister D, Petter A, J.A.P. and his dogs were to be encountered most rallying weekends and he always found time for a chat. His contributions to this Club Newsletter helped many a time to fill a sheet when most needed and although latterly circumstances forced him to be unable to rejoin the W.S.E.C., he gave us much support and we are grateful to him.

Harry was a kind-hearted man and this Club, indeed the whole Stationary Engine movement, deeply mourns his passing.

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CLUB SALES

The Club has a variety of promotional articles for sale to members and other wishing to purchase them as follows:

W.S.E.C. lapel badges. Available from Ian Skuse or Robin Lambert, price £1 each plus the appropriate postage. They will also have them on the Rally-field, save yourself the postage!

Tee Shirts. Available from Tony Jones at approx. £3 each in a variety of sizes. Why not let Tony size you up and help you with a fitting at any Rally-field or Club meeting. These are navy blue with the Club logo in the form of a yellow brass plaque on the most prominent part. They now supercede the Wessex Wyvern on a Flywheel style as certain Wessex ladies tended to give the Club a bad name by displaying the flywheel in a very wobbly fashion....!

Car Windscreen Sticker. This is the latest of our 'wares' coloured the same as the lapel badge with the Wyvern of Wessex (NO, NO, NO, it's NOT a Dragon, or a Griffin, or our Chairman for that matter...) around a flywheel and the Club title on a scroll. These are very reasonably priced at 60p each plus postage, of course, and are available from Brian Munt. Hurry as this is proving to be a fast seller. Brian is hoping to use them as sausage skins, don't give him a chance, BUY NOW....



USEFUL ADDRESSES

Chairman	Ian Skuse, 12 Southlands Way, Congresbury, Bristol (Yatton 834943)
Hon. Secretary	Diana Emery, Odstax, Wells Road, Hallatrow, Bristol (Temple Cloud 52339)
Newsletter	Eric Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Bristol (Temple Cloud 52633)
Tee Shirts & Misc.	Tony Jones, 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge, Wilts. (Trowbridge 5351)
Sales	
Treasurer & Membership	Stuart Ashman, Moorledge Farm Cottage, Chew Magna, Bristol (Chew Magna 2655)
Vice-Chairman & Misc. Sales	Robin Lambert, 15 Beechwood Avenue, Frome, Somerset (Frome 63526)
Raffles	Herb Gane, 45 Welsford Avenue, Wells, Somerset (Wells 74402).

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DIARY OF A WEEK'S HOLIDAY IN NORTH WALES

Friday, 27th May: Hip! Hip! Hooray - we are going on holiday. Busy packing short trousers - long trousers - summer dresses - winter woolies - sunglasses - wellingtons, etc. Later afternoon it begins to rain again, who cares, we are going on holiday - not to a rally. Have some tea, load up the van, collect caravan, we are on the road. Engines safely tucked up in the shed for a week - oh how I am going to enjoy myself, no engines for a whole week...or so I thought! Journey going well, not too much traffic - just going around the outskirts of Gloucester - oh look, Steam Rally signs, (Highnam Park). "If we had brought the engine we could have spent the weekend here" said Reg. Reply - "not on your Nellie, we are on holiday".

Saturday, 28th May: Journey to Bala completed, passed the day just lazing around.

Sunday, 29th May: How about a ride on the Bala Lake Railway? Yes that will be nice, Sun shining lovely when we boarded the train. Pleasant ride along the side of the lake, very peaceful. The track is about 4½ miles long to Llanuwchllyn, on our arrival it had started to rain. As we left the train, some bright spark spotted a notice advertising a display of Vintage Motorcycles, so off we go in search. Motorcycles so found and what else? Two Norman engines, one Fowler, and another of unknown make. These belonged to Mr. G. Steer of Barnsley. I'm still thinking we are on holiday.....!

Monday, 30th May: We are going to a farm park today. Dogs, puppies, cats, chickens, goats, ducks everywhere. "Dad, look at these engines". There were three Petter A1's and a Wolseley WDII in varying conditions. (Oh to be on holiday...!).

Tuesday, 31st May: Today is Stephen's day, we are off to a Military Museum. All very interesting as all the vehicles were housed in an old cavern, and what else did we find? - can you guess? - a Petter twin air-cooled engine. Next port of call was a ship converted to a sports and games room. We visited the engine room, you could not hear the guides voice over the noise of the engine. 'Now what have we here? - small Stuart Marine engine'. By this time I am really tearing my hair out, I thought I was going to have a holiday away from engines...!

Wednesday, 1st June: Today brings news of another visit to a farm park - this time at Tal-y-bont. This collection boasted a few Lister D's, a three-wheel tractor, all on loan from Listers, farm implements, cars, motorcycles, bits and pieces but no animals. Also there was a Black Maria once used by HMP Parkhurst, on sale for £200, (the car was for sale, not the prison,!). We all had some lunch and then on to the Maes Artro Tourist Village, near Harlech. This sounds all very nice, I was thinking; model village, aquarium, shops, candle maker, old Welsh street, all under cover in sheds. At least we really are on holiday with no engines. Then the thunder roared, lightning flashed and the heavens opened. We dashed for the shelter of our van to wait for it to clear. After about half an hour, we were able to continue our walk-about only to find that the electricity had failed and everything was in darkness...the only occasion we could have done with an engine and generator, none was available. I just can't win....!

Thursday, 2nd June: Today we are going to the Ffestiniog Railway which runs between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog. A lovely trip, well worth the money with breath-taking scenery and, in places, a terrifying drop down the side of the track. I'm so pleased to say that we did not see one solitary stationary engine...!

Friday, 3rd June: Today is the last day of our holiday (or week long rally!), so we are going to the Gloddfa Ganol Slate Mine. It is pouring with rain so we decide to go down the mine first. This is really good, full of adventure and excitement - again no engines. The chambers were blasted out of the mountain by miners working the slate cliffs by candlelight. (Not the sort of chamber found under Victorian beds...!). We then proceeded to the Railway Centre which is full of restored and unrestored narrow gauge railway engines and carriages; and.... OH NO!... engines, there just had to be. Our day would not have been complete without them. All the nameplates had been removed so I was made to spend hours there just helping guess the make of the engine, a dozen in all, large and small. I protested; I'm on holiday, I don't want to know about engines. "We'll go and have a look at the Quarryman's cottage when we have identified these last three". (Groan). The cottages proved to be fascinating. No.1 has been furnished in the style of the

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late 1800's, No.2 depicts the days of the Great War and No.3 was a Quarryman's home until the late 1960's. Then it was off to the Craft Centre and Slate Works to see men at work, cutting the slate and splitting the slabs. All very interesting. Time has come to return to the camp site and prepare for tomorrow's long journey home after and enjoyable week's holiday (even though it was just like a Rally to me!).

Mary Butler

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FOR SALE

Petter A type, complete for spares, broken crankcase. Offers to P. Wilshire, tel. Evercreech 830346.

Blackstone 9 hp. Reader steam engine, mech.O.K., vertical double acting type; Miscellaneous Dobey McInnes lubricators, etc. Rob Stewart Tel. 0594 32051 after 6.00 p.m.

Austin Big Seven 1937? £150; Fordson High Major 1947, £200; Commer TS3 chassis & cab.: offers; Herbert Lathe 7' by 2', plus cutting tools and spare chuck jaws, £60; Saw Bench, £20; 2 Lister D types, £10 each; Heavy duty winch suitable for tractor or breakdown truck, £50; Wide wheels to fit Triumph Spitfire etc. 5½Jxl3 steel £25; Pete Kite, Compton Dando 305

Ruston Hornsby 3PB on trolley, good rally condition; Bamford EG4, 4 hp at 800 rpm, in good order. All at sensible offers to Ray Earle, 12 Riverside, Hanham, Bristol Tel. 0272673016.

Spring Injection Blackstone engine, single flywheel, 56 hp., complete but in pieces and including air bottle, guard rails, and two cooling tanks; Offers to start at over £300, purchaser collects. Phone Nick Perry to view, Tel. (88) 830230 or contact Tony Jones, Trowbridge 5351, after 6.30 p.m. (if you're lucky..!).

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#### SERVICES

Trailer Hire and made-to-measure trailers, contact Ian Cradock, 100a The Knap, Hilpertont, Trowbridge. Tel. 62198.

Shot Blasting, Bead Blasting, Metal Spraying, try Jerry Baber, Advanced Metal Treatments, West Wilts Trading Estate, Westbury, Wilts. Tel. (0373) 823879.

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

"The Full Quart Inn Crank-Up"; this popular annual event will take place again this year at Hewish on the A370 Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare Road on 2nd October. Details from Ivor or Roy cox at most rallies or any Club meeting.

The next Club meeting at the Old Down Inn will be a talk and slide show on the SS Great Britain restoration project. If you have struggled to restore your Lister B type, come along and see how you would have tackled this one....! The speaker is Mr. R.J. Bradbury of the SS Great Britain in Bristol Project, the date is the 22nd August, NOT, repeat NOT the LAST Monday in the month, due to the Bank Holiday.

Club coach trip to Crofton Beam Engines is on November 13th. Leave the Old Down Inn at 10 a.m. promptly with an 'en route' pick up at Trowbridge at 10.30 a.m. We shall also visit the recently restored Windmill at West Wilton, nearby, it promises to be a good trip, the coach is already booked so please contact Diana or any Committee member with number of seats required, or for further details.

National Vintage Tractor Club two-day ploughing match is at Backwell Hill, Lulsgate on September 10th and 11th. Details from Gerald Atherton, Mill Farm, Station Road, Flax Bourton. Nr. Bristol.

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#### STOP PRESS

WANTED: Jockey wheel with jack for trailer. Ivor Yeo, Chyventon, Smitham Hill, East Harptree, Somerset. Tel. West Harptree 604.