

CRANKING

July
2008

Thirty first year
of publication
www.wessex-sec.co.uk

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

From the Sump

For whatever reason, it seems to me that twenty one engines at the annual rally of one of the biggest stationary engine clubs in the country is a surprise. There are several reasons that might be examined, clashing with the popular West Bay rally, the rally site being in the south of our membership demographic, the ever spiralling cost of fuel – I'm sure you can think of other equally pressing reasons. For myself, I was working that weekend & my task took me to Chester & smart though I may be, I cannot be in two places at once!

I see parallels here with my other hobby and it is – in my humble opinion – at least possible that as we arrange a number of crank ups, two half annual sales and a speaker every month at club night, the membership feels fairly well "connected" to the club. Perhaps they feel that the extra effort and expense involved in attending an annual rally is just one more thing to do in a busy year – I don't know, just guessing really. However, A.N. Other club might have very few crank ups, infrequent speakers and a well attended rally simply because the membership relishes the "see and be seen" aspect of their annual event. Whatever the reason or reasons, we need to find out.

I know that I am not alone in believing that it is time we took stock & asked the membership directly what they want in an annual rally. It is easily achieved so long as a sufficiently large sample reply when the question is raised because whatever the consensus of replies tells us, that is what we must do.

On a completely different tack, I've been away for nearly a month filming on location in Yorkshire. Sounds great – how exciting: except it rained relentlessly damned near every day. On one memorable day, I prepped and rigged a Viking ship replica on a reservoir in the North Yorkshire Dales. There were five of us and although mildly moist, it wasn't raining that much as we set off to row across the lake simply for the fun of sailing back. About a mile downwind, we turned the ship and got her under sail just as a monumental downpour filled the air with water, making holes in the lake where the drops fell. Despite reasonable outer layers, I was soon soaked right through. water running down mv

Moving the Metal

For sale

Lister B 1935. Unrestored, not seized. No mag. £80

Amanco 2 1/4hp. 1916-1922 (gooseneck striker) model. Unrestored, not seized, complete with LT mag. On original(?) skids and later wheels. No fuel tank. Throttled governed (not hit and miss). £450

Petter M-type 5hp tank cooled. 1922-1930. Restored and running many years ago, now in bits but complete. Has a cracked flywheel on one side and other problems. However, it does include a professionally rebuilt BTH mag. Suitable for rebuild or possibly to break for spares. £150

Wheels and axles, 2 sets suitable for very heavy engine.

All above, phone Steve Teuber in Poole. 01202 700689 or 07974 798111.

steveteuber@waitrose.com

ATCO Ride on Lawn Mower. Free to a good home – please someone take it away! .

Phone Ken on 01373 826265 (Near Frome)

WANTED Oil filler/drain for Ruston PB 1.5hp.

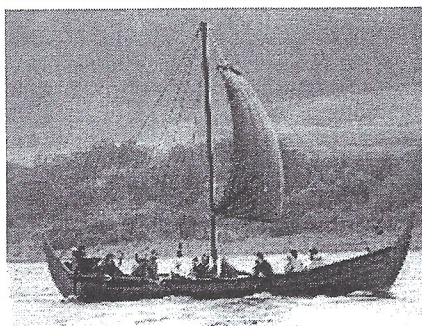
Phone Richard Gill 01934 517322

"Old Glory". Stack a foot high 80's & 90's – tenner.

WANTED "Stationary Engine " Magazine. Now only need 16, 17, 18, 24-34, 36. Have early copies to swap!

All above, phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

chest under my tee shirt. The only bits that were dry were my feet! However, we sailed on, there being precious little cover on an open ship under sail. That was day one & we rowed and sailed every day for a week, the high point of the work for us.



You can see the fruits of our labours in February of next year in two ninety-minute episodes on Channel Four. I'll tell you the title in due course.

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 can be handwritten, (if brief), typed or word-processed - 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

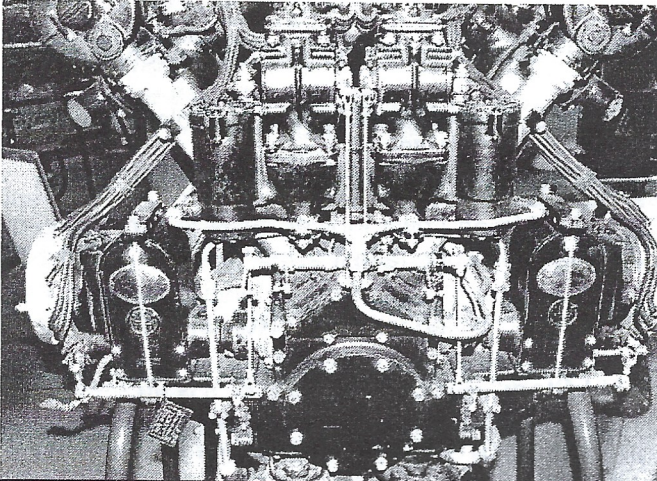
J. Kim Siddorn, 9, Durlough Close, Bristol. BS13 7NQ or by e-mail to kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk.

Featured Engine No. 18

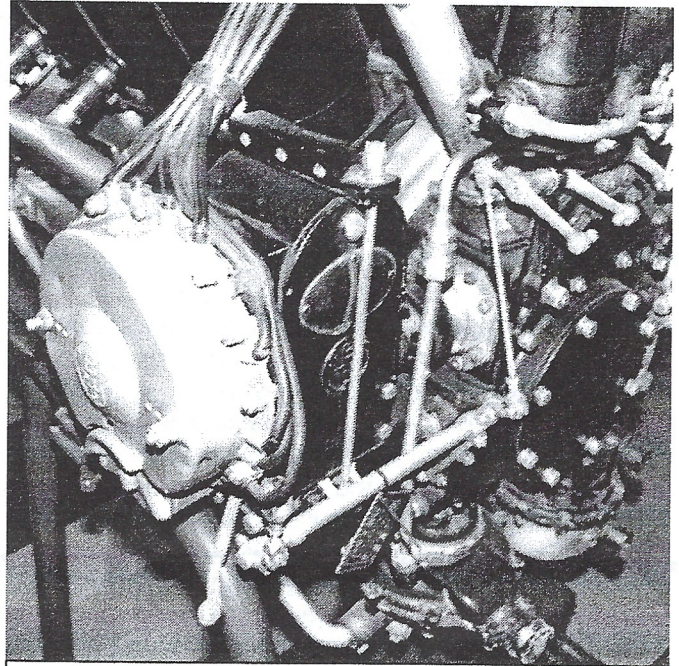
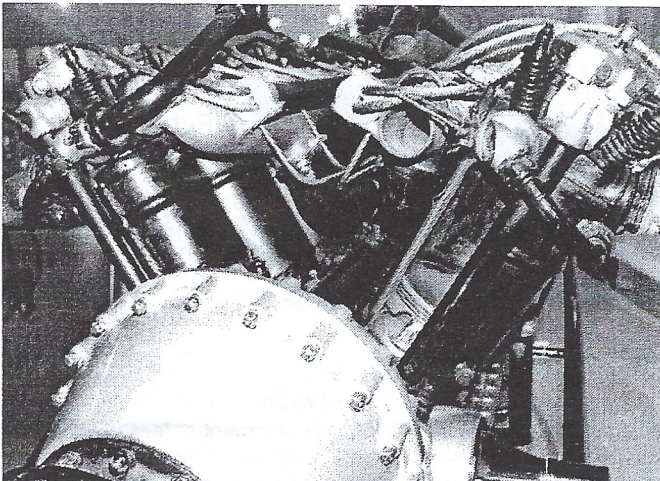
Rolls-Royce Condor III aero engine by Kim Siddorn

I had occasion to visit Rolls-Royce in Derby on business last week & had an hour or so to wander around the Heritage Centre at Wilmore Road. It is well worth a visit should you be in the area.

I was interested to note that the Condor was the engine which introduced various features which became the norm on in line vee 12 engines & thought it merited a short article here. The Condor was a 600hp development of the Eagle that saw service in the Great War & was used to power a number of military aircraft. The design was a liquid cooled V12 engine with the cylinders inclined at 60 degrees and the valves driven by overhead camshafts. The Eagle first ran in 1915 & it had a bore and stroke of 4.5 inches by 6.5 inches (115 x 165 mm) giving a 20 litre capacity. The whole engine weighed 408 kg (900 lb) producing 360 hp (268 kW) at 1800 rpm. Production ran until 1928 by which point 4,681 had been built. There is an example of this engine in the Science Museum, London.



Above, the back of the Condor III. Note the massive BTH magnetos & the complexity of the carburetion & external oil piping. Below, the partly sectioned front end. The inlet trunking is between the cylinders, the exhausts run out from the port on short straight pipes to join a larger exhaust.



Here, the port magneto with its aluminium distributor cap

The Condor was first run in 1917 and just missed war service as hostilities came to an end in 1918. By 1921, the engine had progressed to the Mark III version and this variant saw the introduction of blade-and-fork conn rods and a spur gear reduction drive for the propellor. The cylinders were still separate from each other and fabricated by hand in a number of specialised processes. The water jackets were thin to allow a certain amount of direct cooling and the coolant circulated under greater pressure than was common on other similar engines.

The camshafts were driven off the back of the engine from the ancilliary drive gear case. A normally aspirated engine, the huge carburettors were fitted at the rear of the engine. It produced 650 hp at 1,900 rpm & it had a bore and stroke of 5.5 inches by 7.50 inches (139.70 x 190.5 mm) giving a 35 litre capacity and a compression ratio of 5.3 to 1.

The engine weighed 1,380 lb (626 kg). Total peacetime production ran to only 327 units and production ceased in July 1927. It was used in the inter-war years in a number of aircraft including the Blackburn Iris I/II/III flying boats, De Havilland DH.54, Hawker Horsley bomber, R100 airship & the Short Singapore I/II flying boats.

Calendar of Events for 2008

Aug 3rd (only) **Event.** Sodbury Sort out at Wroughton Classic car show. Phone 01454 323109.
 AUGUST 18th. No Meeting
 AUGUST 31st. No Meeting
 Sept 14th. **Coach trip** to the Black Country Museum.
 Sept 20/21st. **Event.** Vintage gathering at Lillypool Farm, Shipham, Nr Cheddar. Engines sought
 Phone Colin for details 01934 743411
 Sept 29th **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Colin Baker. A digital presentation on a vintage theme.
 Oct 11th. **Skittles & supper evening** at The Royal Oak pub, Corsley near Frome
 Oct 18th. **Event.** Wessex Winter Sort out at Cranmore railway station yard.
 Oct 27th. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Mike Rowland. An illustrated talk on The Clifton Suspension Bridge.
 Nov. 8th. **Event.** Enstone Sortout. Enstone airfield, Oxfordshire. Bookings, 01367 810415
 Nov 24th. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Tony Scammells. Talk entitled "Just a little something".
 Dec 7th. **Event.** Winter Crankup at Nunney Catch.
 Dec 27th. **Event.** Mince Pie Crankup at the Old Down Inn. ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION.

Social News

We'd like to mention: -

Welcome to new members Mr & Mrs S Coles, Austin & Michaela from Weston- super- Mare, - Mr Geoff Uphill from Hinton Blewitt, - Mr & Mrs Peter Cosens, and Mr & Mrs T Udell both from Coombe Bissett.

Black Country Museum Coach Trip Sept14th

Another friendly reminder about the coach trip. Please don't leave your booking until the last moment as seats are selling fast. Please note that the £10 we are asking at time of booking only secures your seat on the coach.

Chairman's Report *(printed as received)*

I cannot understand why over 50 of you entered our annual rally at Haynes Motor Museum and only 21 of you turned up. This is a pathetic response from a club with a membership around the 300 mark. If you do not want events of this nature perhaps you would be good enough to inform us, as it would save the committee a lot of work. Talking of committee's you might be interested to know that only FOUR members of the committee graced us with their presence. It's an absolute disgrace when senior officers of the club would rather support other clubs events instead of showing loyalty to their own club. I only hope members will remember this when at the next AGM these officers will be up for re-election. Their names are available on request from me. You will see from my report on the rally the members who did loyally support the club enjoyed the weekend and as Chairman I would like to personally thank you for your support. The monthly meeting at The Old Down Inn on June 30th was well attended to be entertained

by club member Rob Armstrong, giving one of his talks on de-commissioning an explosives factory, (how Rob finished his career without blowing himself up is beyond me). This was a very entertaining talk which I believe an article on it will appear in due course. **B.J.B.**

WSEC Annual Rally. Haynes Motor Museum, 14/15 June *(printed as received)*

For once the weather was perfect. The site was excellent, the grass had just been cut by the museum staff, and it only took one hour on the Thursday for Robin, Arthur, and myself to set up the site with the pins and ropes ready for the off on the Saturday. Once again members had free admission to the museum; this would have cost £7-50 if you had to pay to get in. Arthur had over 50 engines booked in, and I was puzzled as only 21 engines arrived on the Saturday and exactly the same amount on the Sunday. This is a pathetic response from a club with over 300 members. **(See Chairman's report).** Despite this small entry we had some very nice engines on display. Phil Marshall had his splendid Ruston Hornsby 5hp, Bill Combes displayed his nicely restored 2 ½ and 1 ½ hp Ingeco's. Martin Coombes 1923 P1070 6 ½ hp Crossley was another nice large engine. Steve Baker had a Lister "B" and pump, and a nice display of three vintage bicycles. Geoff Davis brought along his lovely Guy Otter lorry, with a Apple Top Petter and an Amanco mounted on the flat bed of the truck which was towing a very nice fairground organ, what an excellent exhibit. We had several displays, John and Di Emery had the display of vintage plugs, Brian Munt had a selection of model boats. Henry and Oliver had 168 models on display, including 55 ice cream vans belonging to Henry. Oliver had just acquired a Mamod steam engine that he kept firing up during the weekend, (cost me a fortune in Meths). We also had several cars including an Aston Martin and Colin Bakers nice Morris 8 tourer. Committee member Keith Nash turned up with three engines on a large trailer, a Wade Drag Saw, a 4 cyl Coventry Climax, and a rare American engine – a 4 cyl Waukesha, made by the Wisconsin Motor Company. All in all this was a good weekend, enjoyed by the members who took the trouble to turn up, and I was personally thanked by most of them for an enjoyable weekend. We held a good raffle on the two days which boosted club funds. The Sunday raffle was a bit different than usual as it consisted entirely of bottles of drink. This was due to the generous gift of bottles of whisky given by committee member Keith Nash, and member Martin Coombes who turned up on the Sunday and gave me a case of 12 bottles of wine to use in the raffles. On behalf of the club I would like thank you both for your generous gestures. It only took a matter of minutes on the Sunday afternoon to dismantle the site and clear up, a bit different from the past when I got home on the Sunday evening around nine or ten- o- clock completely exhausted. This time home in time for tea. **B.J.B.**

Cleaning Up Ranskill, a talk by Rob Armstrong

By Eric Gay

I and many members at The Old Down Inn new we were in for a wonderful evenings Entertainment. As Rob has talked to us before about his life working as an explosives specialist. Rob has a great sense of humour and this always makes any of this evenings with us great entertainment and June the 30th was no exception.

Rob told us of a job he was asked to do at Ranskill, an explosives factory in north Nottingham near the Yorkshire border. Its use was mainly For the manufacture of rocket fuel, nitro glycerine, gun cotton and a few other ingredients that can if not handled with a bit of care make a big bang. Well, it was around 1942 when some bright spark in Whitehall had the thought that we just might be winning the war, and Ranskill was an unnecessary drain on the war effort. When the job of stripping the factory and cleaning up was first voiced to Rob he was not over enthusiastic, but with the offer of nice bungalow close to the factory and the firm promise in writing of a job at Bridgewater, Rob and his then wife headed for Ranskill and the bleak lands of north Nottingham, Not Much better the Siberia according to Rob. When the factory had been at output 7,000 people had been employed on a site of 750 acres.

First job was to dismantle a 6" pipe that carried explosive sludge around the factory this substance now lay in the bottom of the pipe and had to be disposed of. Enter Mr. Fitter with open ended spanner to start to remove the flanged joints of the pipe work. After many years of being in place the nuts just did not want to come loose so out came large hammer and chisel, and the fitter started to cut away the bolts " OH PLEASE STOP" or words similar were used by Rob with the odd expletive or two thrown in for good measure, A trip to a nearby tool store and high quality ring spanners were obtained and work then progressed. Once apart, the pipe work could be cleaned of Explosive some being washed out and destroyed by small charges added and the set of and other parts being burned out on wood fires to make sure this was doing the job.

Small bits of lead covered telephone cable were added to the fire as a temperature guide. The heat required to melt the lead was higher than that needed to completely burn the explosive compounds. Other parts of the job did not quite as well, the mixing plant, like five ton bowls with paddles set at right angles would take a bit of sorting out. With explosive mixture still in the nooks and crannies It was a case of blowing them up, as to take them apart was going to take forever, so the sums were done and a charge was laid in the first of the Mixers, there being forty in all. Up went the charge out went the lights! There followed an interesting time as bits of metal and roof fell around them. It transpired that not all the mixing bowls were the same & rather more explosive had

been used than was needed – pity the building was intended for further use

New charges were made up and set, but before they were fired the work force foreman had a little job to do down the road. The bang had broken the glass in a summer hoise owned by a local retired Army officer. Glass for the summer house & flowers for Mrs Officer & all was well.

Rope blankets were then placed over the remaining mixers, weighting around 4cwt each this helped to keep the charge going the right way, it took a day to destroy each mixing vat this way, 40 days in all, stripping them down washing out and the destroying the explosive residue would have taken a very long time indeed getting on for a year and with a budget of around £10,000 this would have soon been used up.

Work progressed with the cleaning of Ranskill even the boiler chimneys were blown up by Rob, It would have made Fred Dibnah proud to see how well those stacks fell with very very few of the bricks being broken. With all the work cleaning away the stuff that went bang done it was then up to the other workers to clear way the general rubbish. It was here that the only real accident happened and this was to a dumper driver. He was in the habit of jamming open the governor on the dumper and standing up when driving, he failed to see an old 1" iron pipe between two buildings and he was decapitated. a sad end to the job.

Well, that's roughly the story of Ranskill, Rob instilled a great amount of humour into the tale only as he can, and it was a great evenings entertainment, Thank you very much, Rob from both myself and the other club members present.

Collett Park Show, Shepton Mallet June 14th

By Tony Davis

This annual event turned out well with fine weather and a large public turn out. There was a good collection of engines, but we missed our mate Andy Vincent & we hope he gets well soon. There was a big turn out of model boats on the lake & this made an interesting display.

There was a nasty accident during the trampoline display when a young lady came off the side of a very high trampoline & fell to the ground. It took me a while to make my way through the ringside crowds & she didn't move in all that time – I hope it wasn't too serious.

Another little drama took place at the Portaloo's. A young lady was quite tearful and embarrassed as whilst using the throne she had dropped her phone! Some twerp suggested that if someone rang her number it would give her some idea of just where it lay. My interest in helping a damsel in distress strangely faded at this point & I never did find out just how the phone was retrieved.

Our thanks to Ted Durbin for setting up a super day out.