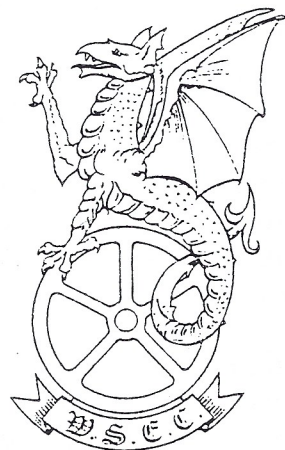


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

JUNE 2001

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NEWSLETTER



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******* EDITORIAL *******

The one event at the end of the rally season I always look forward to was the Annual Auction at Fairford, sadly this event is no more, the organisers have 'pulled the plug' on this event which always attracted hundreds of bargain hunters not only from this country but also from Europe because of repeated thefts of goods entrusted to them to sell in the auction. Last year we had the theft of engines from the Anson Museum, Nr Manchester, at a Wessex Crank-Up one of our members had a magneto stolen which was for sale by his engine. A few weeks ago several Wessex members attended a local event in Shepton Mallet, while loading his engines Dave Morris's wife Maureen placed her handbag on the front seat of their Landrover and covered it up, only to discover while loading the engine some thieving lowlife had stolen her bag. My next door neighbour has just had two motorcross motorcycles worth £8000 stolen from his garage in the middle of the night. Now to cap it all I have been informed that John Upton who invited our Club members to visit his engine collection and gave us such wonderful hospitality has had some items stolen from his engines recently, it could even have been during our visit. These miserable thieving lowlifes are probably regarded as engine enthusiasts, but they are nothing more than common thieves, all members should make notes of engine numbers, take photographs and put identifying marks on trailers etc. to identify your property should you also become a victim.

******* CHAIRMAN'S REPORT *******

With no rally to organise this year it has certainly meant less work for the Committee. I cancelled the last two committee meetings because there was nothing to put on the agenda. However we shall now start to plan next years programme of events and meetings. If any members know of a person or organisation that could give a talk on any subject please let me know. Because all the West Country rallies have been cancelled due to the foot and mouth it has made the smaller events such as Crank-Ups very popular. This proved to be the case at Nunney Catch on the 17th June, about 60 engines plus other exhibits were assembled and was probably the best Crank-Up yet. Gordon and Jackie were working flat out in the Café feeding everyone. Our Junior reporter Jonathon was going around all day with his notebook and pen, so hopefully we can look forward to a full report in next month's newsletter. The engines were judged by Bob Hallam and Gordon, the results will be in Jonathan's report. The cups, which are normally given at the rally, were presented by our President Robin prior to the raffle. Many thanks to Lesley Nicholson, who raised a total of £145 with the raffle, well done Leslie. Thanks also to Jackie who signed up 4 new members. A special thanks you to Gordon and Jackie for once again allowing us to hold our event at Nunney.
BJB.

******* NEW EVENT ***** NEW EVENT *******

A new event to take place of The Full Quart will take place on **SUNDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2001** at **THE SHIP AND CASTLE INN CAR PARK, CONGRESBURY**. Although mainly for stationery engines some tractors, cars and motorcycles will be welcome. Due to the limited space available it will be on a first come first served basis, to book your place ring Ian Skuse on **01934 834943 or 07778 496850**. This event will in future be known as **CRANKS AT THE SHIP**. (I don't know if Ian means engine cranks or the exhibitors as cranks, ha ha!. BJB).

MONDAY 30TH APRIL – CLUB NIGHT – A TALK BY REG DALLEY OF HIS LIFE AS A LOCAL SOMERSET MINER

Reg, a sprightly 85 year old miner talked about life down the pit in the Radstock area, prior to nationalisation on the 01.01.1947. Prior to this date all pits were in private ownership, Lord Hylton and Lord Waldegrave to name two owners locally. We were shown a diagram of New Rock Pit, 1038 feet deep and how the seams of coal were on a vertical plane and how you drove railroads underneath to enable you to undercut the coal away, each miner had to purchase his own tools with the exception of a shovel, picks had exchangeable heads and a man could wear out three pick blades per hour per shift, these old blades were re-sharpened on the surface and delivered down to the pit face for your next shift. In the early days men were lowered down the shaft on hemp ropes, one hand holding the rope, the other trying to stop you bouncing off the sides of the shaft. The infamous Guss and Crook was used by boys to pull a sledge holding 2 cwt of coal on all fours to a Putt, each Putt held half ton of coal, these were raised to the surface on a self acting incline, 1 full Putt could be raised by four empty ones descending, quite clever how this was done and cheap on the purse. Reg explained how Davey safety lamps were used, not for illumination but for ventilation, they indicated the quality of air and the presence of methane gas, mines always had two shafts, one for air being drawn down and the other for air going out, they also had canaries, these birds were still in use when the mines closed down. Accidents were very common, there was no such thing as Health and Safety in those days, if you complained about the conditions you could lose your job or at the very least find yourself losing out on overtime, also if you left the pit for another one, you were not allowed back. A lot of accidents were caused by falls and explosions, the coal dust was very explosive and could ignite with disastrous results, in Belgium 1104 miners were killed in one such explosion. The miners had no toilets or running water, Norton Hill Pit employed 600, the mind boggles to what you had to do to relieve yourself! Reg started work on a wage of 14 shillings per week plus each miner was allowed 3 cwt of coal a week, these were very good wages in those days, also the comradeship was excellent, you all shared the same hardships. The Somerset Coalfield was 256 sq. miles and consisted of over 80 collieries, each pit shaft was dug by hand with the aid of a windlass and could take years to sink. Pits were very expensive to create but once up and running could make their owners fortunes. In 1947 when pits were nationalised they became much safer places for the miner, Health and Safety rules were applied and a miner was free to complain if he thought things were not right with no fear of being victimised. Reg finished his talk, as he started, with another poem. All in all a very entertaining evening from a well preserved 85 year old (in original condition, not a repaint job!!!!).

***** OUR TRIP TO WEST DEAN, NR ROMSEY

With the rally scene, as bleak as mid winter, we took advantage of a kind invitation by Pete Upton to join a small band of engine 'nuts' for an informal 'crank' up and BBQ at West Dean, near Romsey. We arrived on Saturday afternoon, it was sultry and overcast, but we set up camp with the usual banter the surveyed our surroundings. Lush green pastures dotted with yellow buttercups, tree covered rolling hills that stretched for miles, a pretty village – it sits on the Hants/Wiltshire border, in fact the border runs through the middle of what used to be the local pub, The Red Lion, what a nightmare, who gets the Council Tax? Our site Ws Dean Hill, the local play area with a small estate near by, very pretty, very peaceful and picturesque, England at its very best. The may blossom and horse chestnut trees are in full bloom, the only sound was the screech of house-martins, I hadn't seen so many since I was at Infant School, our School always had masses. Everything was so peaceful, and we soon found out why – many of the houses brick built, with gardens; you remember them! Plots of land where you could grow veggies, flowers and still have room for a lawn! They stood empty, some as long as five years! The club house, which we had use of was well used, well stocked and cheap, and those rolling tree lines hills! BUNKERS!! Thousand of pounds of bombs, munitions and the rest, the only way you'd know, was the security and the locals who work there and live on the estate – No wonder there wasn't any vandalism!!!! Sunday night we took the road to East Dean, only a good stretch of the legs (1 mile) so it didn't take long and reached a delightful pub, The Old Brewers, where Terry and Shirley made us welcome. This refurbished premises is full of Curio's to delight while you wait for your well presented meal to arrive, roasts, salads, curries, what ever, plenty of it too and quite delicious, however the talking point was the loos – a must see – the gents (apparently) gave you Marilyn Monroe, flowers, aftershave, talc and condoms, and CARPET, while the Ladies, gave you Humphry Bogart, Elvis, John Wayne and James Dean (OH BOY!) as well as perfume, talc, hairspray etc., a visit takes twice as long while you soak up the atmosphere, well worth a visit when you're next down Romsey way. On Monday we strolled down into the very sweet, chocolate box village, wonderful, all thatched roofs, beams and yes roses round doors, red ones, a river meanders through with geese and ducks on, to complete the picture, all in all a really smashing break for us, as we love rural life like it was when we were kids, and this place really sums it up. Our thanks to the Uptons for an invite and the company of the others John and Polly, Mo, Glad, Sue and John, the others who's names I didn't get, we had a great weekend.

BARB & KEITH VICKERY

*** CRANK-UP AT NUNNEY CATCH TRANSPORT CAFÉ – SUNDAY 29TH APRIL ***

No snow this year (!), though a cold wind 41 engines were displayed, a Lister diesel Auto truck, two Ford Cortinas from the Bristol Branch of the Owner's Club, a Ford D series lorry and a Leukaemia Research Fund stand. Not a bad turnout at all! The star of the show, as it were, was an Austin 7 engines tractor, which had been built from scratch by the owner with only an old photograph for reference. It had 2 gearboxes to create High and Low ratios and a little quirk of this was that if both gearboxes are put in reverse it drives forward. My thought on this is to hope the next owner knows, as I had a vision of them driving straight through the garage doors! Many of the engines had items for sale in front and in trailers, such as silencers, petrol cans and exhausts. On the subject of petrol cans, there was also a collection of over 30 oilcans, all beautifully painted. As always people had brought along collections of engine plates and I think these look really good mounted on a board, and are also interesting for the general public I was particularly interested in Phil Marshall's 4.5 horsepower Czechoslovakian L.Benz (no relation to Mercedes Benz) and Spol. Built in 1915, in Monrovia, in the Czech Republic, imported in July 2000. It's a petrol hit and miss engine and is all original, in an as found condition. The story of how it came to England is a little long winded. Phil's friend Ian Samson, who lives in Surrey, has a friend in Belgium named Walter. Walter found out about this engine and brought it from Czechoslovakia to Belgium. It then came on a ferry to Folkestone, to Surrey and then to Somerset (Phew!!). The raffle was held at 2.30 with just over 40 prizes. My Grampy bought a 'Bernard type W19A' for £10 and I was given a Villiers 4 stroke and a Briggs and Stratton 4 stroke 3hp, off a Merrytiller garden rotivator. I was trying to get onto 'proper' stationary engines, but I couldn't turn them down for nothing and it'll give me something to do over the winter! The Bernard is a little different, as the carburettor is inside the air filter. It has the original paint, in French Army colours and seems just about ready for restoration. I enjoy this Crank-Ups, but I don't think they're quite the same as a rally. As I write the foot and mouth situation seems to be clearing up, but as the WSEC has already cancelled the rallies, it seems a little late. Hopefully all the Crank-Ups this year will all be this good, and then perhaps this rally season won't be too bad.

JONATHAN HOCKEDY, 13 - WSEC JUNIOR REPORTER

***** THE BRITISH ENGINEERIUM *****

Last Sunday I took Frances down to Brighton as a Birthday outing, to a Dolls House Fair. On the way there (after you leave the main A27 for the A2038 to Hove) we saw notices to 'The British Engineerium', and wondered whether this might be worth a visit if the main business of the day left time for it. I was not too sure, I tend to distrust made-up words like 'Engineerium', but the place had been mentioned in the 'Stationary Engine' and this collection is well worth seeing and should interest many a Wessex member if he or she should happen to be in that area. It is on the site of the old Brighton waterworks pumping station, open 7 days a week all year round except for a small period around Christmas. Opening hours are 10am to 5pm (last admission 4pm), and the magnificent beam engine is in steam on the first Sunday of every month and on Bank Holidays. Originally the station was built to supply water to the local district in the early 1870's, pumping water from a 180ft deep borehole, the well is oval in shape, 9ft by 12ft and I wonder why they dug it like that, wouldn't a round hole have been easier? The pump is beautiful, no other word for it, a late beam engine standing over the well, which pumped 150,000 gallons of water every hour. The beam is a wrought-iron forging, a much more satisfactory material for engine beams than the older cast iron (remember the patched beam at Kew?) or the even older wood. It remains perfect and undamaged to this day. It seems the works was shut down and abandoned in the 1950's and left derelict for about twenty years. Can't have done anything any good at all! A Charitable trust was formed to rescue all this, to restore it and form the exhibition. When I commented on the fine finish of the engine, the beautiful detail work on the machining of the parts, I was told that this engine had been designed by the young son of one of the directors of the builders Eastons and Anderson, his first independent design, and he was anxious to produce the finest work he could, rather as the old-fashioned craft apprentice had to produce his 'apprentice piece' to prove his ability and training. Happily, the four Lancashire boilers had been replaced in 1934, and survived the idle period without trouble, and seem to be good for many years more at their rated pressure. It was lovely to feel one of them still slightly warm from previous work, warm enough to make rusting unlikely, and to see wood ready for lighting and a barrow full of excellent looking steam coal waiting to be shovelled in. And there is more for that steam to do – the little engine driving the economiser gear and a lovely engine set up to drive the machines in the workshop by shaft and belts. That machinery is worth a tour by itself – I am told that as well as doing maintenance and restoration for the exhibits, about 95% of the Trust's income is generated from restoration work done for outside customers. Normally, the shafting is driven by a very elderly electric motor, but the steam engine was being used during the week to drive the enormous lathe because it could run really slowly to suit the delicate cuts needed on a old cast iron ring gear from a windmill. And there is much more to see! The finest assortment of hot-air engines in one place I have ever come across, and most interesting historical electric motors and generators, some of these lent by a descendant of Gisbert Kapp, that excellent inventor who worked so productively for the Crompton firm. The Giant's toolbox would be fine for mechanically minded children; several fine 5" gauge rail locomotive models, and an interesting 'freelance' 1930's single deck bus model, driven rather improbably by a Villiers motorcycle engine. Must sound a bit odd when its going! A steam road tractor Corliss-valved engine, a couple of motorcycles – the whole collection is well worth a visit, at £3 for a (pensioners) entry ticket.

ROB ARMSTRONG

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

SUNDAY JULY 1ST – CLASSIC VEHICLE RALLY, CHILCOMPTON, SOMERSET. Engines etc. wanted, contact 01761 470186 for further details.

MONDAY JULY 30TH – CLUB NIGHT. CRANK-UP AT THE COURT HOTEL, EMBOROUGH. Cup for the most unusual engine. Usual raffle, prizes would be appreciated. 6.30pm onwards, food and drinks available in the Hotel.

SUNDAY AUGUST 5TH – ANNUAL COACH TRIP TO SWINDON RAILWAY MUSEUM AND SHOPPING COMPLEX. Depart Nunney Catch 9am, fare and admission £8.50. Ring Jackie on 10373 463526.

SATURDAY AUGUST 11TH – CLUTTON FLOWER SHOW. Wanted stationary engines, tractors, classic cars and motorcycles, static exhibits etc. Contact 01761 470186 for further details.

***** STOP PRESS *****

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CANCELLED DUE TO FOOT AND MOUTH**

***** THE MARKET PLACE *****

LISTER 60 'L' 5 hp, M.L. flick mag, serial No 27495 £250. **PETTER 'M'** 5hp, serial No 78012, tank-cooled on trolley £250. **PETTER 'A'** 1.5hp, serial No 547345 (*free to Junior member*) **LISTER ENGINE TROLLEY**, original axles and wheels £100. **SAWBENCH** by Denning of Chard £50. **HEAVY DUTY TROLLEY** £20. **BLOCK AND TACKLE** by Mark Priest and Sons, Bristol, good working order £30. **HOMELITE** auxillary tank generator engine, 2 stroke £10. **J.A.P.** engine and generator in cradle £30. **2 PUSH HOES** £10. **FLAT BELT LACING MACHINE** £20. **RALEIGH MOPED** in bits but complete and spares £10. **SUZUKI G.T.** 250 complete but needs restoration £200. **OXFORD WELDER** 3 phase or single, good working order on wheels £50.

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***** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *****

Dear Ed,

Having just spent an enjoyable weekend in the company of the Upton family from Grately, I learnt from conversation with David Upton that his Father John is very upset to find that his hospitality has been very much abused by a despicable person or persons who have seized on the opportunity to remove items from his engines that are on display for us the enthusiasts to enjoy and marvel it. One mans collection which has taken a lifetime to build, only to be destroyed by some mindless, selfish B*****DS who need the Arab solution and have their B****Y hands cut off. I personally find this act despicable and totally unacceptable. I would like to make it clear that Mr Upton does not bear any malice nor is he accusing anyone individual or organisation, but he is very upset that his hospitality is being taken advantage of. I hope you edit this letter and maybe add a few words of your own, because this privileged opportunity may go the way of Fairford and that would be a great shame, I hope that no Wessex member was guilty of this act.

Yours sincerely,

ALAN VICKERY

(I dare not add my words Alan, as they are unprintable and do not appear in any dictionary; by the way I had to alter a few of yours slightly. ED).