

# CRANKING

June  
2008  
Thirty first year  
of publication  
[www.wessex-sec.co.uk](http://www.wessex-sec.co.uk)

## The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

### From the Sump

I've been very busy recently and have not picked up a spanner nor been near an engine in weeks. So I was determined to have a day off and visit the Astle Park 1000 Engine Rally. It is just over 150 miles for me in Bristol & as in previous years I drove up on Friday evening, arriving at about 1030pm. I set up some stuff to "book my spot" and spent a cheerful Saturday exhibiting my Stuart Turner flat twin. Kevin and Carol Phillips & Keith from WSEC were also there with their Victorias running all day. A number of internet friends found me out and it was good to renew old acquaintance. Heavy rain was forecast, but I took a gazebo as you are now allowed to do & anyway it was not as bad as it was forecast.

As usual at Astle Park, there were some very unusual engines, all the engine pens being full. I was especially impressed to see a small early inverted engine that seemed to be a Troublesome Beast, going as often as it was stationary!

Some were slow to get their covers off, but by early afternoon when it had been dry for an hour or so, I think every engine was running – or at least on display. I didn't count them, but I bet there were **four hundred** engines present. Both Internal Fire and The Anson were represented with some impressively large engines, there were a number of models on display and the well organised Club Shop had a good selection of engines and related machinery on sale. In broader interests, there were a good number of Trader's Row stalls, fifty or so motorcycles and a similar number of tractors – "the biggest display in the UK" the man on the PA said.

At 5.30 I wrapped everything up and decamped to the Anson Museum along with about two hundred other enthusiasts and Geoff Challinor and a surprising number of enthusiastic volunteers ran around starting engines. As usual, there have been a number of improvements and additions, buildings extended & improved, the car park was better surfaced and larger & the "to be looked at" section bigger than ever. As I said to Geoff, it isn't that they've done something in the year since I was last there, they have done so much it is hard to keep up! Previous visitors will probably recall the big

### Moving the Metal

#### For sale

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

Phone Ken on 01373 826265 (Near Frome)

**LISTER D**, On wooden trolley with rubber wheels, complete, runs well, needs sprucing up: £80

**ONAN** O5AJ-224PM. 28 volt 500 watt generator set in cradle. Matt green, meters, runs fine: £80

(All in Shepton Mallet area)

All above, phone Richard on 01749 343876

**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

**This column works – two trailers and four engines sold here last month**

**Let's have your engine and similar stuff that you have for sale up here for a month before putting it in SEM – you might see it at rallies if sold locally!**

twin cylinder steam engine at the end of the side building. This is now being extended & the steelwork is already in place and they have every hope of getting the various steam engines stored in that building up and running before the end of this year – another milestone passed.

In particular this year, I noticed the growing number of very early engines and these alone would make the trip worthwhile for anyone with a certain amount of oil in their blood. The inverted and little known Bisschop, for example. Of great simplicity and air cooled, this engine of 1870 was quoted as "5 manpower" but consumed town gas at an enormous rate, some 11 cubic feet an hour on full loads.

And so home, arriving at around 1.00am.

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](mailto:kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk).



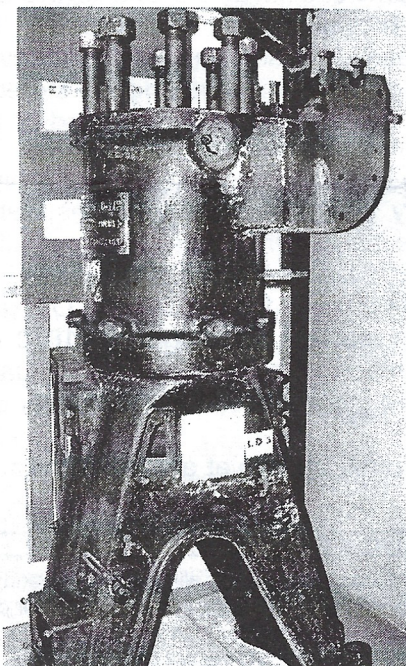
## Featured Engine No. 17

### Mirrlees, Bickerton & Day 50hp oil engine

By Geoff Challinor at the Anson Museum

This engine was originally built in the early 1920's with air blast injectors, but was later converted to solid injection. The crankshaft is stamped October 1920 and the compressed air bottles are marked 1925, the serial number being 39077.

Before being donated to the Anson Museum, the engine was at the thermodynamics laboratory of John Moores University in Liverpool where it was used to demonstrate simple testing techniques. The engine was originally supplied to Liverpool College of Technology in Fontenoy Street. The college subsequently became Liverpool Polytechnic and the engine was moved to the Byrom Street site in 1966. The move and the recommissioning were carried out by Mirrlees National Ltd in late January 1967. During the commissioning work, several problems were encountered and among the correspondence about these is a record of crankshaft deflections taken during tests and a set of engine test figures taken by a Mirrlees engineer (prior to the move in 1965). The engine was used regularly until 1987 when workshop records show that extensive repair work was carried out. However, the running hours were low compared to an engine used in an industrial or marine context. The engine was not working in the spring of 1991 when it was noted that the crankshaft bearings needed work and some concern was expressed about the crankshaft alignment. The engine needed extensive cleaning including the lubrication system, & the fuel system needed refitting with a new service tank. Work was carried out during 1991 and the engine was run on several occasions before being returned to service. It was used extensively between 1992 & '98, mainly demonstrating simple techniques involving indicator cards and calculations.



On the 20th May 1998 the engine was started to ensure the air bottles were fully charged whilst no students were present. The operator was standing on the raised engine platform. Whilst running at normal operating speed and under no load except for the compressor, one of the small end bolts was seen to fly out of the open crankcase. Causing several

sparks. Although the fuel was shut off immediately, the engine was fitted with a very large flywheel and normally took some minutes to come to a stop. Whilst the engine was running down, the other small end bolt failed and the piston and connecting rod thus parted company. The engine was still rotating at a substantial speed with the connecting and piston banging together within the cylinder, causing the piston to repeatedly strike the valves. Just as the engine came to a stop, the conn rod contrived to wedge itself between the bore and the piston, punching a hole in the liner & into the waterjacket.



The engine was dismantled and measurements taken. The difference between the deflection takes in 1967 and 1991 was put down to a combination of engine wear and settlement of the cement base upon which the crankshaft bearings were mounted. The two sets of results were very similar which indicated that there had been little damage to the crankshaft during the accident. The conclusion was that one of the small-end bolts had failed due to fatigue. The scribed line on the bolt, may have acted as a stress raiser. Assisting the fatigue process. If the small-end bolts had been tightened and fitted correctly, fatigue failure should not have occurred & this casts doubt on the maintenance work carried out in 1987.

On the bright side, an unmachined liner has been discovered at the Mirrlees factory, a suitable piston located and the conn rod may very well be able to be straightened, allowing this important engine to be run once more.



### Calendar of Events for 2008

July 6<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Bristol & SGSEC annual rally, Contact Mr Williams 01454 413647  
 July 12<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Croscombe Fun Day – see below.  
 July 28<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Evening Crank Up at The Court Hotel, Chilcompton.  
 Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> (only) **Event.** Sodbury Sort out at Wroughton Classic car show. Phone 01454 323109.  
 AUGUST 18<sup>th</sup>. No Meeting  
 AUGUST 31<sup>st</sup>. No Meeting  
 Sept 14<sup>th</sup>. **Coach trip** to the Black Country Museum.  
 Sept 20/21<sup>st</sup>. **Event.** Vintage gathering at Lillypool Farm, Shipham, Nr Cheddar. Engines sought Phone Colin for details 01934 743411  
 Sept 29<sup>th</sup> **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Colin Baker. A digital presentation on a vintage theme.  
 Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. Skittles & supper evening Royal Oak, CORSLEY Nr Frome  
 Oct 18<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Wessex Winter Sort out at Cranmore railway station yard.  
 Oct 27<sup>th</sup>. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Mike Rowland. An illustrated talk on The Clifton Suspension Bridge.  
 Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Enstone Sortout. Enstone airfield, Oxfordshire. Bookings, 01367 810415  
 Nov 24<sup>th</sup>. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Tony Scammells. Talk entitled "Just a little something".  
 Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Winter Crankup at Nunney Catch.  
 Dec 27<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Mince Pie Crankup at the Old Down Inn. ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION.

### Chairman's Report

What has happened to the reports of rallies and events that members used to send in of events they attended? You all attend various events put on by this and other clubs, but none of you send the editor any reports of them. Come on, get out your pens, and let the membership know what is going on. The May meeting at the Old Down Inn was down on the usual attendance, due I think to being a week early because of the bank holiday. However the members present were entertained by the photographs, slides, and discs that members brought along to be shown on the screen. The Crank-Up at the Old Down Inn on Wednesday June 4<sup>th</sup> was well supported by engines, a couple of cars, and Kevin Phillips superbly restored Mk 1 Land Rover. Maxine the landlady put on a barbeque for us, with hotdogs and burghers at reasonable prices, all in all a good event. I have kept the report on these events brief hoping someone will do a detailed report on them.

**ENGINES WANTED** Croscombe Fun Day. July 12<sup>th</sup>. Midway between Shepton Mallet and Wells. Boot Sale stalls, B.B.Q. Live Music, (including Oliver playing with the band). Just Turn up. 10am – 4pm. Any queries ring me on 01749 342671.

60<sup>th</sup> Birthday wishes to Mary Butler for the 26<sup>th</sup> June

### Social News

*We'd like to mention:-*

Happy birthday to Carol Phillips for the 8<sup>th</sup> July. Won't mention age – but another ten years to bus pass!

### Black Country Museum Coach Trip Sept 14<sup>th</sup>

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. There is a discount for coach parties & we'll inform you of the negotiated price when we know how many of us there are.

### Bitton Station crank up – 31<sup>st</sup> May

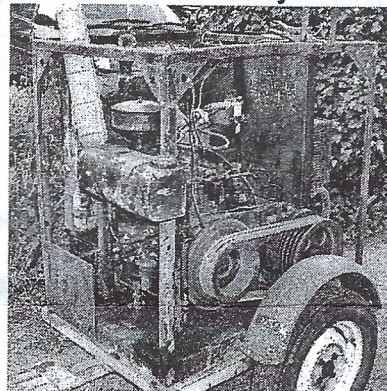
This small event needed only a few engines & was very much a try out to see how things went. There were seven of us and an equal number of engines. We might have had room for two or three more, but that's all. It went very well with visits from various Wessex stalwarts.



I was completely taken aback to discover that as the station is on the Bristol to Bath cycleway,

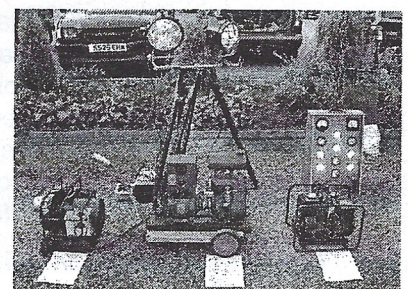
quite a few people stop there for a breather – and there we were! There were people to talk to all day long and the station master was pleased with the addition to his Diesel Day, the train being pulled by a Ruston shunter. Thanks to all for coming and particular thanks to Carol and Kevin Phillips for arriving with rope & stakes and saving my bacon!

### D-Day Crank Up – 4<sup>th</sup> June



About fifty people came to the crank up at the Old Down Inn bringing with them some twenty engines of all shapes and sizes. Quite a few had brought military engines – and some unusual machinery was present. An early Coventry

Climax whirled away driving a mains generator, the trailer-mounted unit being as found & a tribute to its manufacturers. An APU from a B25 bomber also hummed quietly to itself and Nigel Gorringe (thanks for the photos, Nigel) turned up to his first Wessex event with three meticulously restored WW2 gen sets.





## My Mate - Old Deadly. Part 2

By Eric Gay

T'wer not long after he fell off the Enfield, that Old Deadly got stopped by the Old Bill "Like, he said to we lads I had not done anything wrong, so what the 'ell were they stopping I for" Well, it were not for any wrongdoing, but to congratulate him on his good riding. This went straight to Old Deadly's head and the very next day he put in for his driving test. Big Sister near split her sides saying "You 'ent got no chance: you wont pass." So a few weeks later off he went to take the test and within twenty minutes he was on his way back to Trowbridge with a bit of pink paper carefully folded in his riding coat pocket. He left the "L" plates on the bike & when big sister got home seeing the plates still on the bike she started "I told you you'd never pass" and she began to cackle, but this soon stopped when Old Deadly pulled out the pink slip and stuck it under her great beak, that shut her up real quick,

it was not long after he passed his test that he started to dabble with the spanners and this is how he got the name of Old Deadly, Now don't get I wrong because he had a real gift, if any of us lads had any trouble with a bike he could fix it and do a damned good job, he never had any training but learned a bit from his old dad as he was a mechanic - but Old Deadly had the knack.

At weekends it was off to road race meetings, grass track, or scrambles & all was going well until one evening Old Deadly was going back to work. It was around 6-30 when disaster struck and he was involved in a right good smack but it was not his fault in any way. He was riding down back street in Trowbridge when a chap came straight across the cross roads on a 250cc Ducati, the front wheel of the Ducati went between the front forks and the frame of the Enfield & Old Deadly became airborne. In those days right on the cross roads was a pub called "The Brewery Tap" Old Deadly went head first into the front door and ended up part in the pub.

Bruised and battered and the Enfield a sight worse, Old Deadly was inconsolable - his lovely Enfield all broke and battered. The bike went to Jack Plowright of Mill Street for repair and weeks passed. "Can't get a new tank" said Jack and this went on for weeks, until Old Deadly got cross, It took a lot because he was a calm lad most of the time, but he wanted his bike now! In those days Enfield had an engine works in Bradford-on-Avon and another works at Westwood & someone should have warn then that Old Deadly was on his way.

It was three days later that Jack Plowright got the new tank and Old Deadly was back on the road. The Enfield was now sporting a chrome, silver and blue lined petrol tank, new front wheel, new forks, mudguard and handlebars and with a bit of love and care from himself it was again in fine fettle.

Oh - what about the other driver? He got a stiff fine and a driving ban.

## Breamore Manor House & Countryside Museum - Vintage Rally May 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>.

By Eric Gay

It was just by chance that I got involved with this year's vintage weekend at Breamore House, I was speaking to Phil the curator of the Museum about a possible venue for the club & he asked me if I would like to organize an event. Seeing that I had no other rally to arrange, I said yes although I knew that the date clashed with Castle Combe, so I was pleased when entry forms began to roll in from members and good friends. It was not long before I had an entry of over forty engines, plus model traction engines, cars and even old type dumper trucks, plus some young chap from Wells riding round on a vintage bike or two whilst caring for his stationary engine (thanks Steve).

My good friend Pete Gear, talked me into taking the 8hp Petter Junior Safety Oil Engine to the event, Pete has a Mk1 Land Rover and access to a large trailer, so Thursday evening saw us loading the Petter, this being the first time the engine had been to a rally in twenty years as I've no trailer, no room to keep one and no towing vehicle. Friday dawned and with Sue (Pete's Wife) at the wheel of the Landy we arrived at Breamore at around midday. I was greeted by Phil and told that I was in charge for the weekend and I had a free hand to do what I wished. This was more than I could have hoped for. We had a very good turn out of high quality engines and all working for most of the time over the two days, engines ranging from Crossley, Petter, Amanco, Bental, Lister, Ruston Hornsby, Wolseley, Banford etc. My Petter 8hp complained a bit until I cleaned the fuel pump - and then it ran all weekend with no trouble, the only trouble is her owner its the old ache & pains are getting to me.

I ran the raffle on Saturday & had a wonderful evening with the B.B.Q - a few more people would have been nice, but those that did come along had a good evening, with two Wessex Members keeping us in fits of laughter (thanks lads, you helped make a good evening and a very big thank you for all your help Sunday afternoon. Over the weekend we raised a bit of Money for the South West Children's Hospice

On Sunday I was introduced to Mr. Hulse, the owner of the Breamore Estate. He thanked me for the effort we'd all put in to make this year's event such a success. So to all of you who supported this event **MAY I SAY THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH.** Same next year God willing.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September, the Museum will be holding a one day event and engines are sought - just turn up - and you can stay Saturday night too.

To end, I must give a mention to Eddy Giles the Artful Bogder, Demonstrator of the Art of Pole Lathe Turning, On Sunday he had an apprentice, a young Wessex lad the and by the end of Sunday he was well versed in the art of the pole lathe.

There is a lot to do at Breamore, House, Church, Museum, Maize and other attractions. Go and have a look if you are in the area.