

# Wessex Stationary Engine Club. *Newsletter.* MARCH 1983

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## HOW TO WRITE ABOUT NOTHING

Nowadays I rarely meet any engine enthusiasts when I go out, but that's quite understandable because I rarely go out unless it's during the day when it's strictly on business. However, during that lengthy, dare I say 'too' lengthy Christmas to New Year recess, I was exploring the intricacies of a certain antique cum junk establishment, when a voice boomed out....'you won't find any engines there Mr. Edgington!' But strange as it may seem, as I turned to face my 'recogniser', his eyes and mine focused on an apology for a steam engine which was lying with some junk under a counter. My 'recogniser' (as I must call him because, not only is he, I think, a member of this Club, but I have to admit to not knowing his name!), so, as I was saying before I rudely interrupted myself (in fact I am always doing it - that is interrupting myself when I am writing. I expect others do it as well. It is so simple to get off the subject especially when writing articles which require a lot of research. One reads this and that, and consequently forgets the subject, especially when certain facts come to light before one's very eyes - yes like a box of matches!). So, as I was saying, there we were, my recogniser and myself, looking at this steam engine.... now there I go again, repeating myself this time, and how easy it is to do. You see, you start writing on one subject, then because of some interruption, you part from the subject matter and go off on a kind of tangent. When finally you return, assuming your reader is still with you and has not changed to something more suitable like Gas Engine Magazine, you have to repeat all previous mentioned facts, not only to refresh the reader but to refresh yourself! Anyway, there we were, this 'recogniser' and myself and Doreen.... oh, yes, Doreen was with me, didn't I mention that...typical, I am always interpolating (that means adding spurious words to .... sorry, 'spurious', yes that means 'non-original', yes I use the word spurious quite a lot, one has to when one imports continental car spares, because sometimes the parts don't come from the actual maker..well yes they do come from the people that actually made the part we import but.....never mind, I seem to be becoming lost in my own verbosity.....now that's another thing, it's so easy to become lost like this and have to flounder (yes, like the fish) in order to find the subject, I often find, when writing, that one reaches a place (yes, like that fish as well!), a sort of point of no return when the subject is gone, lost in the passing of time.

Anyway, there I was, this 'recogniser'...who shall remain nameless for reasons previously stated...any myself, looking at this steam engine. Do you like steam? I have always had a 'thing' about steam, it appears that people either like it or loath it, one comes across few hetero's, we have a couple in the Club. Anyway everyone to his own, we should all collect what we like and paint it how we like, without the feeling of being 'got-at'. Talking of being 'got-at', my memory seems to be playing up nowadays...or at least I think it is, especially after reading my 'Dinner & Dance Poem' which appeared in its entirety in the Jan. Newsletter. I had a distinct feeling that we have another interpolator in our very midst, I am certain it had been suitably modified...sort of a raised compression and twin carbs, etc. I now know how people feel when they write a letter to Editor, and say something like 'Yur wadsthee think aboot they thurrrr geesers from thick Wessex Club'...when the letter appears, it reads 'What do you think of the members of the Wessex Club'. The original writer thinks...'Did I write that?'. Rumour has it that the Newsletter Editor writes 90% of the articles and just adds members names to them, the members don't complain because they feel they really should write something. Rumour also has it that your Newsletter Editor writes under the guise of all those funny names, you know, the ones that make you wonder who the \*\*\*\* they are...names like 'Jerry Hopper', 'Who con-Rod' (who did I wonder?), 'Fly-Ball Gov'. It is also said that he writes the ladies section, after all we all wondered who 'Double-Burners', or 'Stocking-Clad Japy' really are! After all he may even be writing this very article under 'another name', if the article is longer than four lines, then you know he has added to it!

So, to cut a long story short...you might be saying, if this is a sort story, how long is a long one? Yes I do tend to ramble (no I said 'ramble' not 'Randall') on a bit, after producing well over 100 issues of THAT magazine, one tends to forget what one has previously said, done, thought and written...and, at times, who one really is! So, as I was saying earlier, there we were, my 'recogniser' and I, both looking at this terrible steam engine, and here is the crux of the matter, we.....

(This passage is really nothing more than a lesson in writing about nothing. Our Newsletter editor lacks material because people have nothing to write about, well, write about nothing at all. I am sure he would appreciate it).

David W. Edgington

THE JANUARY CLUB MEETING - Jan.31st 1983

This meeting commenced with a very large number of people present. They were greeted in the Clubroom by a very inviting coal fire which Gordon Marshall, the Landlord, so kindly provides for us. Ian Skuse, our Chairman, opened the meeting reminding the members that the annual subscriptions are now due, as well as informing them of the date of the Jumble Sale. He then introduced the speaker, Chris Harvey, of Bristol, who was representing the Crofton Society with a talk on the Crofton Beam Engines. Firstly, he explained how the pumping station was built, to serve the Kennet & Avon Canal with water, as it is situated near the Canal's summit level, six miles from Marlborough. The Canal, which is 81 miles long, was opened in 1810 to link London with Bristol, via the Thames at Reading. Then he explained how the pumping station obtained its water from Wilton Water, a lake nearby, fed by several local springs.

The pumphouse itself was originally constructed in 1802, and John Rennie was commissioned to purchase two Boulton and Watt beam engines, the first having a wooden beam, a 36" piston and an 8' stroke; the other having a cast iron beam, a 42" piston and also an 8' stroke. The second engine did not operate until 1912. In 1843, the station was equipped with a new boiler and in 1845 the No.1 engine was converted to the Cornish cycle. Later, in 1846, the 36" No.1. engine was replaced with a Sims combined cylinder engine, installed by Harvey & Co. of Hayle. This engine had a cylinder dia. of 42". In 1851 the K & A Canal finally succumbed to railway competition and the ownership of the property passed to the GWR. The Canal then became the poor relation with little attention being paid to development and maintenance. In 1896 there was a catastrophic failure of the No.1 engine; it was then that the railway company realised its responsibilities in keeping the Canal open and overhauled the 1812 engine. At the same time the Cornish boilers were replaced by new Lancashire ones, 27' long and 7' 6" in diameter. Both engines were then in regular use until 1952, the 1812 one until 1958. The chimney was then declared unsafe. The K & A Trust bought the site and the engines were silent until 1970; in April that year Sir John Betjeman released the steam pressure into the cylinders for the first time in 12 years.

During the evening Chris went into great technical detail, aided by his slides, certainly this was a most professional talk; one can only admire the Crofton Society and its members for their dedication to the task of preservation.

At the interval Ian Skuse presented the Landlady with a quality Pen & Pencil Set in appreciation of her hospitality; at the same time he made a surprise presentation.... to our hard working Club Secretary, Diana, in appreciation of her endeavours, with a super pot of flowers. The evening was then rounded off with another of Herbies famous raffles. Prize winners were Ann Harris, set of chisels; Brian Davies, bottle of wine; Bill Coombs, box of chocolates, and box of soap; Dave Wilder. Thank you Chris Harvey for such a super evening and the the members to loaned the projection equipment to make the evening possible.

Generating Jones

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HARRY'S MISCELLANEA

In volume 17, no.9 of Mayfair there is an article and photos of vintage tractors. The South Somerset Club once featured in this book with engines. I thought of writing to the Editor and telling him of the Wessex Rally. Why not have a Wessex Beauty Queen Competition, I can nominate several ladies...??! My van is off the road at the moment so I have to walk to town and back, some four miles. I need a sponsor for this season's rallies. Is it true that the Wessex Club is starting a 'Matrimonial' Agency following Tony's ad. in recent Newsletters? I have sent him some girls' names, he could become the 'Sheik of Trowbridge'.....!

Harry Champion

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1983 COMMITTEE

There will be a full report on the AGM in next month's Newsletter, but as requested at the meeting here is a list of your Committee and their addresses:

Chairman:	Ian Skuse, 12 Southlands Way, Congresbury, Nr. Bristol
Vice-Chairman:	Robin Lambert, 15 Beechwood Avenue, Frome, Somerset
Secretary:	Mrs.D.Emery, 'Odstax', Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr. Bristol
Membership Sec. & Treasurer:	Stuart Ashman, Moorledge Farm Cottage, Knowle Hill, Chew Magna, Nr.Bristol
Raffles Secretary:	Herb Gane, 45 Welsford Avenue, Wells, Somerset
Social & Events Secretary:	Tony Jones, 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
Newsletter Editor:	Eric Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Nr. Bristol
	Michael Cannon, 19 Eagle Road, Batheaston, Bath, Somerset
	Gerald Atherton, Mill Farm, Station Road, Flax Bourton, Nr. Bristol



Mark Tilly, 3 Telcrot Close, Corsham, Chippenham, Wilts  
 Jackie Lambert, 15 Beechwood Avenue, Frome, Somerset  
 Claude Lowther, 5 Tamar Drive, Keynsham, Nr. Bristol  
 Brian Munt, 41 Gilda Crescent, Whitchurch, Bristol

Any of the above persons will be only too pleased to answer any of your queries about any aspect of the Club; or at least point you in the direction of someone who may be able to help.

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#### THE WESSEX GARDEN PARTY

Will be held this year in the 8th, 9th & 10th July in Tony Jones garden at Trowbridge and will be run as follows:-

Friday evening, 8th July, will start the weekend off, with a Disco - The DY Disco Show from 7.30 to 11.00 p.m. Tea & Coffee will be available and possibly a Fish & Chip Van.

Saturday & Sunday, 9th & 10th July, will be general days, open to the public, running from 10.00 a.m. daily to 5.30 p.m. Saturday and 5.00 p.m. Sunday. It is hoped to have about 100 stationary engines along with many other attractions to include a large number of mechanical music exhibits, a display of old cycle lamps, and the West Wilts Society of Model Engineers will run their 5" gauge steam railway.

Saturday night's entertainment will start at 7.30 p.m. and finish at midnight; tickets in advance will be £2. This year we are proud to present to you the Bod Rondon Trio for the very first time at the Wessex Garden Party; along with the Dee 'Y' Disco Show, and during the evening we will hopefully have a special guest appearance of one of Wiltshire's great guitarists who will be accompanying Dave, the singing shopkeeper. We will have, of course, our usual skittles and darts tournaments (hopefully the lights won't fail this year). No Garden Party would be complete without 'Kooky' the Clown and his many tricks and surprises. Reg and Mary Butler will again be joint 'chefs' for the evening, cooking on the barbeque along with the many hard-working Wessex ladies, I hope! They haven't been asked personally yet! Herb and Wendy Gane will be doing their thing with the dreaded Wessex Raffle and there are many other attractions in the pipeline.

Sunday, as well as being a general open day, will be an exhibitor's recuperation and natter day when the public will still be admitted free and the collection box ever open.

So, PLEASE give this event your FULL support and help us make the money donated to CLIC raised at last year's event, look like 'small change'.

I look forward to seeing you all at 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge in July; form for entry in last month's Newsletter.

Tony Jones

PS. Exhibitors will be able to arrive anytime on the Friday and ALL offers of assistance will be very much appreciated, before, during, and after the event.

Thank You.

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#### IN PASSING

Crofton Engines lift, on each stroke, one ton of water through 40 ft. at a rate of approx. 10 to 12 strokes per minute. The beam in the No.1 (Boulton & Watt) engine, weighs 6 tons, and on the No.2 (Harvey) engine, weighs 4½ tons. Average coal consumption is about 1¼ tons each engine per working day.

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#### SALES AND WANTS

For Sale Crossley 1040 3 bhp, E/C, with Hills Mag., on trolley. Good cond. Class 2. Offers Generator, 110 volt DC. 18 amp. 430 rpm. Class 3. Very heavy.

For Swop Amanco Chore Boy, 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hp, unusual petrol/kerosene, runner, Class 3 for Fairbanks Morse 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> or 1½ hp. 4 o/c in similar condition.

Enquiries for the aforementioned to John Emery, 'Odstax', Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr. Bristol. Tel. Temple Cloud 52939.

For Sale Lister D type, as found. £15. Lister 5 hp L type, on trolley about 1925. Roy Cox, Weston-super-Mare 419826.

For Sale Pulley for Lister 5 hp, £5; Petter A type, with Lister Domestic water pump as a unit on wheels, unrestored, good project for a young beginner to our hobby, £20; Cast iron wheels with axles, 12" dia. £3 per pair; Clifford Rotovator with attachments. (Bouter, Duckfoot hoes) 2 stroke Villiers engine, useful old tool or to restore as rally exhibit. £60. Alan Sweet Tel. Pilton 586.

For Sale Brand new pair of Indespension Units for Mini wheels. 4cwt load complete with hubs. £35 o.n.o. Derek Maybee. Tel. Blagdon 62795.

For Sale Lister BK Petrol/Kerosene, restored. £70 ono. Wolseley WD11, on trolley, restored ready to rally. £40 ono. Andrew Burdge, 16 Greenhill, Neston, Corsham, Wilts. Tel. Hawthorne 810243.

- For Sale** Breaking BMC J4 van. All parts cheap. New kingpin complete with bushes. Offers. Tap & Die set, BSW, BSF, UNF combined. 32 pieces hardly used £8; Jerry Can, 4½ gallon, £3. Harry Champion, Cherry Patch, Sheldon Corner, Chippenham, Wilts.
- For Sale** The following C-section pulleys: one each size, 10" x 2 groove; 9½" x 7 groove; 10" x 4 groove; 8¾" x 4 groove; 9" x 3 groove; 9" x 5 groove. A-section, 18 x 3 groove. Selection of taperlock bushes to suit or to bore out to fit. Flywheels, pair of Lister J type, 24" x 3½" face x 1¾" bore. Pair 24" x 2½" face x 1½" bore all straight spoke. Air-cooled engine, possibly a Wisconsin? driving a Rapier 2" pump centrifugal (NOT Centrifugal....? Ed) type as a unit. Offers for any or all the above to Mike Long, 41 Water Lane, Tiverton, 254146, Devon.
- Wanted** For Petter M type 1½ hp. Silencer and carburettor. Peter Holloway, Meadowsides, Halfway, Chilthorne Damer, Yeovil, Somerset.
- Wanted** Information or photostat of early Campbell Oil Engines with the governors mounted HORIZONTALLY on side shaft. About 1909 period. Parts required, piston and con-rod. Apply to Newsletter Editor in first instance.

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#### CLUB EVENTS

- April 9th** Kennet & Avon Canal Boat Trip. Leaving Bradford on Avon Wharf at 2.00 p.m. promptly. The last trip, as detailed in the December issue of the Newsletter, was thoroughly enjoyable. There are only 40 seats so if you haven't already booked, send £1.50 per head to Mr. Tony Jones, 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge, Wilts as soon as possible. This is a 5 hour trip to Semington and return. Bar and other refreshments on board. All passengers and other are invited back to Tony's garden afterwards to a Barbeque at a small charge of 50p.
- April 29th** Club Evening Meeting. A talk by Mr. Dry of Bristol on Diesel Engines has had to be cancelled. Instead Rod Dring will be putting on a Video Show.
- May 23rd** 'Going Dutch', a talk on the pleasures and pitfalls of rallying in Holland, last year. By Grahame Escott and Pete Steele.
- June 27th** Crank-Up and Bring & Buy Sale in the Old Down Inn car park, start at 7.30 p.m.
- July 8th,** The Wessex Garden Party weekend at 59 Marsh Road, Trowbridge.
- 9th & 10th**
- July 16th & 17th** The Club Rally. This will take place this year at Radstock in conjunction with the Midsomer Norton & Radstock Lions Club. Early negotiations are still proceeding, so book the date and wait for a full announcement as soon as details are finalised.
- July 25th** A Club evening visit to John Huish's collection of machinery, mostly steam, oil and gas engines at Worle, near Weston-Super-Mare. Very easy to find, meet outside the Nat. West. Bank in Worle High Street at 7.15 p.m. for a prompt 7.30 p.m. start.

The August, September and October meetings have yet to be confirmed but will include another pre-recorded slide and sound show from the USA by courtesy of Verne Kindschi, whom members may have met at the last Longleat Rally.

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#### THE BRISTOL DOCKS RALLY

This popular event is specially laid on for our Club by South Bristol Tech. College in conjunction with the Institute of Plant Engineers. This year it is on the weekend of May 14th & 15th at Bristol Industrial Museum on the quay-side at the City Centre. Entry forms were given out with last month's Newsletter; entries are limited to the first 50. Entrants are requested to try to be in position by 11.00 a.m. each day. Engines can be stored quite safely overnight in the Museum.

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#### THE 'GREMLIN'S CARNIVAL CLUB'

Hold their Sedgemoor Vintage Rally on the 21st & 22nd May on the Old Morganian's Rugby Club ground, Bath Road, Bridgwater, Somerset. Each exhibitor will receive a cast brass plaque. Engine entries to Dave Squire, 17 Grasmere, Bridgwater, Somerset. Tel. 57229.

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**STOURPAINE** - 'Great Working of Steam Engines'. The latest date we have been given is the 16th, 17th & 18th September. The Stationary Engine steward is Mr. J. Patton, The Old Police House, Spettisbury, Blandford. The original date given, clashed with Blandford Carnival; Jefferies, the auctioneers will now have to alter their sale date...!!! Thank you Harry Champion for this information

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**NEXT MONTH:** The AGM report. Remetalling White Metal Bearings (seeing that it is very topical at the moment...!!). More dates for your diaries, etc.....Plus ANYTHING else which YOU, yes YOU, yes YOU, yes YOU, YOU, YOU, send me.....!!