

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. MARCH 1984

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***** THE ENGINE BITES BACK - OR 'WHO HAS THE LAST LAUGH?'

During my early childhood in 1950 my parents rented a small cottage in the St. Catherines Valley, east of Bath. The cottage, called South Lodge, was one of two which were part of the large estate of St. Catherines Court. The estate consisted of a 35 room Tudor Manor House, formerly the Priory of Bath Abbey, a church, a farmhouse, a tiny one-roomed school, four farm workers cottages and about 230 acres of land.

Power for the estate was supplied by a 150 volt DC generator which was run by a large Ruston Hornsby oil engine with an outrigger bearing on the crankshaft. This was installed in what is still today called the engine room situated next to and attached to South Lodge sometime in the early 20's. The size of the engine is not known but judging by the pedestal that remains and the flywheel well I would estimate it between 18 and 25 hp. Whenever the engine started the whole house would shake and one day after the engine had been started by the resident gardener, who was also the engine attendant and general factotum, I ventured into the engine room to discover whether this noisy monster that vibrated my toys and disturbed my playtime was brave enough to stand up to a tiny toddler such as myself. My courage was shattered in one revolution of the huge flywheel (well it was to me then) and a loud exhaust bang sent me running terrified into my father's arms. Never again would I go anywhere near that horrible 'thing' in the engine room.

My parents moved a year later and memories of huge noisy, smelly monsters were soon forgotten as I grew up. As my interest in stationary engines became more apparent a chance to visit St. Catherines Court enabled me to enquire of the contents of the engine room, only to discover that the engine and generator were smashed up and taken away for a few shillings by the scrap man in the late 1950's when mains electricity arrived.

Well that is a story we all know rather too well and that particular engine room was forgotten about until last summer. In the beginning of 1983 St. Catherines Court was bought by the actress Jane Seymour and since I was responsible for the maintenance of the clock and the bells of St. Catherines Church, I got to know the estate manager quite well. During this time my interest in engines became known to him and my tales of the monster in the engine room amused him. On the eve of the Club Rally this year I got a telephone call from St. Catherines Court saying that while cleaning out one of the outhouses a piece of slate had been discovered with dials and switches and things on it and was I interested. Saturday morning saw me driving to Clandown where the engines were unloaded ready for the Rally with slightly more haste than usual. Saturday afternoon saw me at St. Catherines Court up to my knees in all conceivable kinds of rubbish desperately searching for any more of the 'monster' of the engine room. Unfortunately all that there was was the switch board which was all complete except for one glass from the volt meter - it even still had mercury in the cutout switch! The board after cleaning and rewiring will be connected to my Tom Senior Superior and generator and I consider myself very lucky to be able to still use a piece of stationary engine equipment that I have known all my life. As I said at the beginning, who has the last laugh?!

Michael Cannon

***** A WINTER'S (CAUTIONARY) TALE. The Recovery of a Campbell Engine. The Fourth & Final Part of a True Happening

The Campbell Lamp-start engine of about 1909 having so far had a perilous journey from where it was recovered near Bath, to its place of restoration in Maidstone, Kent was towed on its damaged trailer to the home of a well-known engineman, David Hunt, near Salisbury. Near David's home is a trailer hire firm. The plan was, to hire a trailer and trans-ship the engine from the damaged one, tow the engine off up to Maidstone, then return to collect the damaged one, which, now empty, would not pose such a big problem to get home.

On the road to David Hunt's house, Mark had to keep stopping to slacken off the brakes on the trailer which were badly overheating, but eventually the trailer and its load were safely parked. During the next week, Ian phoned the local trailer hire firm who agreed to hire them a trailer for a reasonable sum. The next weekend they arrived to collect the trailer and were met in the office by a young lady who, after hearing that Mark came from Frome with a bank in Bath and that Ian came from Maidstone also with a bank in Bath, was a bit dubious about hiring out their trailer without someone to act as guarantor. "Perhaps you know someone hereabouts or in the village" she asked (the Village in question being in the wilds of S.Wiltshire..!). "Well" said Mark, "we only know David Hunt". "Oh, that alright then" she replied "he's my husband"! So that must be your old Campbell engine in our drive...!"

The load was trans-shipped onto the hired trailer and the new lighting board attached. This time the crank-case and flywheel were loaded near the centre of the trailer wheels, and the sundries used to balance the noseweight. The journey was then completed without further incident and later that weekend my severely crippled trailer appeared back home on my drive. How this came about still remains a complete mystery to all of us concerned because not only was it

found that three out of the four wheel bearings had completely broken up but the axle itself was bent. In each case the bend was BETWEEN the inner and outer bearings which would seem an impossibility. The trailer was eventually repaired using stub-axels from a defunct Morris 1800 in order to have some future degree of parts accessibility, and the engine...? Well, that is still pending restoration in Maidstone; does anyone know of a 6½" dia. piston suitable for a Campbell lamp-start engine? One from a Field Marshall tractor might suit.

The moral of this lengthy tale is clear. No matter how suitable your towing vehicle, the trailer MUST be loaded correctly and having the correct noseweight is paramount. It is not just sufficient to rope and block the load securely, as it was proved that the Campbell was; also the maximum speed for towing must be stuck to. The whole subject of trailer regulations is thoroughly confusing, to say the least and the new regulations of 1982 and again the further regulations coming out in 1986 make it even more so. A leaflet from the Motor Caravan Club's magazine last year, summarises it thus:- 1. Any unbraked trailer must have its max. gross weight in Kilograms, clearly marked in a conspicuous position. This weight will depend on the structural limitations of the trailer itself. 2. Any trailer with a max. gross weight of more than 750kg. whenever constructed, must now have brakes fitted. (And hydraulically damped couplings). 3. Any unbraked trailer with an unladen weight of more than 102kg. can be towed only by a vehicle that weighs at least twice the trailers laden weight. 4. After Oct. 1986, all unbraked trailers of whatever laden weight must comply with the 2 to 1 weight ratio. Easy, isn't it???. Does YOUR trailer comply with the current regulations?

Ern Brassplate

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

This letter was received last Christmas but, regrettably, was mislaid in the Editor's 'filing system'

Dear Eric,

Please put the enclosed note in the Newsletter. We just wish to say a very big 'thank-you' for a very enjoyable evening spent at the Dinner/Dance, for the beautiful flowers you gave me for my birthday the same day, and to Michael and Jane Cannon for their hospitality during a lovely weekend. Wishing you all a very happy new year.

Bob and Jean Donnelly, Kingsteignton, Devon.

Apologies for the delay Bob and Jean, it seems that my capable hands referred to in your letter, are perhaps not so capable as they may seem....

INSURANCE

Would members please note that the 1984 Insurance Certificate ensures Public Liability Indemnity up to £500,000 valid from April 1st 1984. Up to March 31st the previous indemnity of up to £250,000 applies.

REPORT OF THE 7TH AGM OF THE WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB - 27TH FEBRUARY

The meeting was opened by the President, Tom Randall. Apologies were received from Mike Hodgson and from Stuart Ashman who would be arriving late. The Minutes of the previous AGM were read and signed having been proposed by Phil Wookey and seconded by Gerald Atherton as being a true record. There were no matters arising from these minutes.

President's Address. Tom said it had been a pleasure to preside over a Club with such a eventful and pleasurable calendar. He commended the Club on its varied activities and, as he had hoped, the Club Rally combined with the Midsomer Norton and Radstock Lions had been a successful new venture. It had been unfortunate that the date had clashed with a local cricket match and the site, altered at the last moment, had been remote. It was hoped a similar rally would take place this year on a site nearer the town which would attract more public support. Various trips organised during the year had been fully booked and enjoyed by all. Monthly meetings were always interesting and varied which resulted in good support. The Dinner/Dance last year was an occasion enjoyed by almost one hundred of our members.

The Newsletter had continued to be full of interesting material thanks to the Editor, Eric Brain, and all those who had submitted articles. The Newsletter Competition was won by Mary Butler for her article which appeared in the July issue. The President presented her with her prize of a year's free Club Membership for her family. It was hoped the competition would encourage others to put pen to paper during 1984.

Chairman's Report. The Chairman thanked the President for his address and was glad he had enjoyed his first year as President. During the year Club Meetings, trips, rally and the Dinner/Dance had all been well supported and Ian thanked the members for their support and for attending this AGM. The Club Rally, being combined with the Lions had lifted some of the work load from the Committee and he was sure, with a better site this could be even more success.

It was important that interest in the Club was kept during the 'out of rally season' and trips on the canal and to Crofton had helped to do this. Both being enjoyable, interesting and entertaining.

Donations to CLIC had once again increased this year thanks to Roy and Ivor Cox and Tony Jones for the events they organised during the year. The Chairman wished everyone a safe and happy rally season.

The President thanked the Chairman for his report.

Treasurer's Report. Balance sheets were distributed and Stuart explained the figures to the meeting. A healthy balance of £678 was shown. Herb Gane was to be congratulated on the success of the raffles. A small profit had been made at the Rally and the Dinner/Dance and the trip to Crofton had been subsidised by the Club.

Car Stickers, Tee-Shirts and Lapel Badges were all available for sale. Our Insurance Policy would be increased on April 1st to cover any claim up to £500,000. A higher premium would obviously be necessary.

The President thanked the Treasurer for his superb set of figures and explanations. Stuart was now retiring as Treasurer, a position he had held since 1978. The President thanked Stuart for all his work and presented him with an embroidered picture of his National Gas Engine. Stuart thanked the Club for this and for the help he had received during his term of office.

The new committee was now elected (names and addresses appear elsewhere in this issue).

A.O.B. The Bristol Docks Rally which originally was organised by Eddy May for the Industrial Museum and the South Bristol Tech.Coll. was to be discussed by the new committee with a view to the Club organising it this year. A date should soon be available. Club Rally. This would probably be with the Lions again this year on June 17th but firm arrangements were still to be made.

The President closed the meeting thanking everyone for their attendance.

During the evening Mr. Herbie Raffles had been his usual busy self. Your Secretary won the first prize of a bottle of wine (and very good it was) and your Chairman won the second prize of a bath towel (a must for rugby players). Because someone cried 'fix' the next prize of a giant Toblerone was won by non-committee member Derek Maybee (hope your wife enjoyed it?) and the last prize of a dozen eggs went to Mary Verrall ('fix' again). Many thanks for your continued support and I look forward to the rally season and meeting those of you who are unable to attend our monthly meetings.

Diana Emery

DO YOU KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE?

As reported above the committee of the WSEC remains largely as last year; not necessarily a good thing perhaps but no new names seemed to be forthcoming. Hopefully, this in itself can be construed as a vote of confidence in the existing committee within which, minor detail changes have taken place. Herewith then is the 1984 list of offices:-

CHAIRMAN: Ian Skuse, 12 Southlands Way, Congresbury, Mr.Bristol. Tel. Yatton 834943. This is Ian's third term of office; he admits to finding it a bit of a daunting task at first, but as can be seen by the dashing style of his public speaking lately, he is now well into his stride

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Robin Lambert, 15 Beechwood Ave., Frome, Somerset. Tel.Frome 63526. Robin is the natural successor to Ian, he is responsible for much of the hard practical work at the Club Rally, sales of Club badges, etc. organisation of the Dinner/Dance, etc.etc.

TREASURER: Jackie Lambert, Address as above. Jackie is well-known for her regular willing contributions to the Newsletter, her management of the Club stall at rallies, helping to hand out Newsletters at monthly meetings, and generally being very busy wherever 'the ladies touch' is needed, such as the Jumble Sales. Robin tells us she has a very firm hold on the purse strings so Stuart had handed over the job with every confidence....!

SECRETARY: Diana Emery, 'Odstax' Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr.Bristol. Tel.Temple Cloud 52939. Diana is ever busy on the Club's behalf. She dishes out the Newsletter at the monthly meetings writes all of the Club's correspondence, keeps the Chairman on his toes at committee meetings co-ordinates the supply of food at the Club Rally evenings, and performs all the little tasks that other people forget. On top of that she still finds time to look after three oily males in her household.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Eric Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Nr.Bristol.Tel.Temple Cloud 52633. Responsible for most of the errors and omissions in the Club's monthly news-sheet. Just keep the articles coming in; every contribution gets printed sooner or later.

NEWSLETTER MAILING OFFICER: Claude Lowther, 'Garthside", Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr.Bristol. Tel.Temple Cloud 52714. Claude has recently taken over this onerous task; licking 100 or more stamps and envelopes each month is not much fun so the members who can take Newsletters from monthly meetings for WSEC member-neighbours/friends, will help Claude more than somewhat (and save the Club money.....!).

RAFFLES: Herb Gane, 45 Welsford Ave., Wells, Somerset. Tel.Wells 74402. Herb is the longest full-term serving committee member and has raised many hundreds of pounds for the Club funds. With his wife, Wendy, he produces the posters for the jumble sales and is responsible for the publicity stickers for Club events.

BRIAN MUNT, 41 Gilda Cres., Whitchurch, Bristol. Tel. Whitchurch 836214. Brian sells the Wind-screen stickers of which he organised the design and purchase soon after joining the committee. He helps Herb with the raffle and is, himself, a great FUN-raiser generally. Who will forget the 'Munt Magic Lantern Show' last November?

BRIAN VERRALL, 2 Norville Place, Lower North St., Cheddar. Brian was co-opted onto the committee last year following the resignation of Gerald Atherton. He is already making a regular worthwhile contribution to the committee.

STUART ASHMAN: Moorledge Farm Cottage, Knowle Hill, Chew Magna, Nr.Bristol. Tel. Chew Magna 2655. Stuart has been juggling the WSEC books now for some six years, during which time we have always remained solvent. However, work commitments have forced him to give up the Treasurer's job although he will remain as a very useful member of the general committee.

TONY JONES, 59 Marsh Rd., Trowbridge, Wilts. Tel Trowbridge 5351. Tony has been responsible for many of the evening meetings over the past few years; whenever we seem stuck for a speaker Tony pops up with one of his 'vicars'. We all remember those Garden Rallys at Marsh Road, all the hard work was done by Tony; he alone raised hundreds of pounds on behalf of the Club for CLIC; even to displaying an Organ (fairground....!) at Xmas in Trowbridge Town Centre. He sells WSEC T-shirts, badges and stickers at most rallies.

MIKE CANNON, 19 Eagle Rd., Batheaston, Bath. Tel.Bath 859536. Mike was responsible for co-ordinating the purchase of the Computer labels for mailing purposes. He had also been busy organising an evening trip to the Campden Works Museum in Bath, has given us some excellent illustrated talks including the one this very month, and has generally played a very active part in the running of the Club.

JANE CANNON, as above. We welcome Jane onto the committee; she has always helped the Club in many ways; from assisting at the fund raising events to helping pick up the litter and coil the ropes after the Club Rally. She was responsible for the embroidered picture which was presented to our retiring Treasurer at the AGM, and often finds time to 'do a write-up' for the Newsletter.

The Committee intend to serve you well during the next 12 months, please give them your support

WHAT'S ON?

June 9th/10th. West Dorset Tractor & Engine Club Rally at Gore Cross on the Beaminster-Bridport Road (A3066). SAE please to F.J.Butt,153 St.Swithins Rd.Bridport.Entries close 11thMay

August 18th/19th. National Express Festival of Transport, Whitchurch Park, Bristol. Details SAE please, from Mr.B.A. Triggell, 32 Beaufort House,, Strawbridge Rd., Lawrence Hill, Bristol. Tel (0272) 556276.

August 27th(BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY). Corsley Flower Show, Nr.Frome. If you can bring along an engine you will be most welcome but contact Robin Lambert first on Frome 63526.

July 28th/29th. Bleadon Steam Country Fayre. Entry forms from Mrs.C. Henderson, 44 Alma St., Weston-super-Mare. Please include a SAE.

CLUB EVENTS

April 30th	A film show by the Shell Oil Company
May 19th/20th	Bristol Docks Rally. NOTE:This is a revised date and is NOT as originally given. Details - see entry form with this issue.
May 21st	NOTE; This is not the last Monday in the month due to the Bank Holiday). Car Boot Sale at the Old Down Inn. Bring along some of your unwanted 'treasures' and sell them to your mates!
June 25th	Evening Crank-Up. This is a popular annual Club event, bring along an engine and join in a mini-rally; no entry forms, just turn up.

July onwards events are omitted from this issue due to lack of space.

FOR SALE

Lister A 29, 3½ hp, runner needing respiration; Bentall Root Cutter and Bamford No.4 Cake Breaker. Ashley Gold. Tel. Axbridge 732591.

1½ Honda E300 240/12 volt generators, needs re-assembling. £35 the lot. Mike Hodgson, Tel. Keynsham 2696.

Trailer Hitch, Doublelock Bradley, 20cwt. 50mm ball c/w 7-pin Lucas socket and plus, flasher conversion kit, triangles etc. all in original new packing. Tel. John Butt, Bristol (0272) 674395 and £25 will secure you the lot. Bargain, not to be missed especially if you are directly mounting an engine onto a road trailer. Delivery can be arranged via the editor to a Club meeting if required.

WANTED

Lister water pump for restoration. Mr.Roberts,9 Sunnymead,Oakhill. Tel.Oakhill 840626.

Two 12" dia.cast iron wheels. Tel. Bill Coombs, Oakhill 840583 (evenings).

STOP PRESS

June 16th/17th. Wessex Stationary Engine Club Rally at Midsomer Norton. Provision date - pencil it in your diaries - will confirm as soon as possible.