

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. MAY 1984

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THE CLAVERTON PUMP

The basis of this article is extracted from the leaflet 'The Claverton Pump' issued by the K & A Canal Trust, by courtesy of Mr. D. Dudden.

The waterwheel powered pump at Claverton near Bath is an important industrial monument, unique in its application to British canals. It was built to supply water to the nine mile length of the Kennet & Avon Canal between Bath and Bradford on Avon, including the flight of locks lowering the canal down to the river level at Widcombe. It is situated in the Avon Valley on the site of a grist mill and is placed between the river and the canal itself; the pump raises water 48ft to the canal from the river. Designed by John Rennie, it was erected by Fox of Bristol along with an unknown millwright and began operation in 1813, three years after the canal was completed.

Apart from a slight modification in 1844, the pump ran without, other than routine maintenance, until the Great Western Railway (who had by then owned the canal for half a century), made new hatches for water control at the head of the millpond and rebuilt the waterwheel in 1902/3. They added a centre bearing and pedestal giving additional support to the massive axle-shaft, thus giving the wheel its present appearance of being two wheels, side by side.

The pump ceased to function in 1952 when a floating log jammed the wheel, stripping a number of the wooden teeth from the main drive wheel. The cost of replacing the damage, backlog of maintenance, etc. made the decision to install a diesel powered centrifugal pump inevitable, so leaving Rennie's great waterwheel to rust and decay.

However, in January 1969 the engineering students from the newly created Bath University nearby under the supervision of Mr. John Butt began active restoration as a voluntary project in conjunction with British Waterway's Board and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust. 2,500 Man hours later in 1972, when interest had started to wane, the work was undertaken by direct labour under the leadership of Mr. Derek Dudden by Trust volunteers. With these dedicated helpers, including a few still enthusiastic students, and after a further 9,000 man hours of often dirty and heavy labour, the magnificent machine was set into motion again after 23 dormant years.

The coupled breast-shot wheels, each 17'6" in dia. and each 11'11" wide, drive through a 171:1 reduction steam engine pattern beams coupled with 18' rods to 2 18½" dia. pumps. Watts linkage is employed and the machine is capable at 5r.p.m. of the wheel to raise 98,000 gallons of water per hour.

This pumping station is open every weekend through the summer in a static condition, but is also seen at its most impressive working condition on fixed dates. For 1984 these are as follows: May 27/28, June 23/24, July 21/22, August 25/26, September 29/30, October 27/28. Opening hours on all dates is 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

The team of four manning the station are most pleasant and helpful and give sensible answers to all the many questions; we recommend this as an excellent afternoon out.... Oh yes, and the Diesel engine is a Lister FR 3-cyl. of the early 1950's, radiator cooled.

Emerson Brantingham

ABBEY HILL STEAM RALLY - Easter Bank Holiday Weekend

Abbey Hill Rally really came into full swing around 10.00a.m. The hot dry weather had attracted people from near and far with engines, stalls, and a fair. The show was enjoyable for every one from youngsters on the fair-rides to the older folk chatting and reminiscing alongside the huge variety of stationary engines.

A count of 20-ish steamers rolled around the ring in full swing whilst the stationaries chugged away in the background. Although the number of engines equalled the number of cars, I specially noticed that the engines created more public interest. The stalls were all set for summer selling but I'm sure a few more junk and auto-jumble stalls would have gone down a treat.

A fair number of our Club members were present at this fairly central rally, which, probably due to the weather, started the rally season off with great promise; let's hope it lasts until Stourpaine!

Finally, thank you to Terry and Shirley Heath for all their hard work in making this 3-day event so very enjoyable for all the exhibitors.

Tina Lambert

CONGRATULATIONS.....AT LAST

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club extends its heartiest congratulations and sincere best wishes for the future to that popular stalwart of the rally-field, Tony Jones, who announced his engagement to Angela Ellis of Frome during Easter.

W.S.E.C. JUMBLE SALE - March 1984 - a more comprehensive report

With a 2.00 p.m. start to the sale, there were thoughts of a lie-in, at least from the Chairman; but NO! he was unable to attend having to go to work. So with all my jumble and the help of Gerald and Ann Harris' car, we arrived at St. Petter's (sorry ... my misprint...!Ed.) Peter's Church Hall, Norton Radstock. We were just in time to see Chris Rogers taking the orders for fish & chips, so after a quick lunch we unloaded our 'bargains'. We passed a queue of customers in the corridor, hoping to catch the best items first and we opened on time to very brisk business. The tables had to be often topped up with the clothes which seemed to find their way easily to the floor! During the afternoon we had a short hard burst of hailstones, just to let us know that winter is still with us.

We were refreshed later by cups of tea made by Jackie Lambert who was enjoying her first big role as Treasurer. We also had our usual raffle, this time run by Steve Tomlinson and assisted by Bod Hallam. Prize winners were Rob Lambert, a stool; Marg. Appleby, hankies; Diana Emery, soap; Sylvia Yeo, a rabbit. Many hands were still at work helping load Don Rogers' van with all the left-overs and we left the hall as tidy as we found it. Thanks to all the helpers, Tom, Rob, Bob, Gerald, Stuart, Ivor, Eric, Rod, Don, Jeremy, Mark, Ann, Ann, Jan, Stephanie, Diana, two Margs, Chris, Sylvia, Jackie and anyone else I forgot.

Stuart was the closest in the guess the takings raffle at the end; the grand total was £94.01, so he went home with a 'Pound in his Pocket'. This was a good fund-raising effort and thanks to all who gave up their spare time and their jumble.

Mrs. Carol Skuse

THE MARCH CLUB MEETING - 'The Narrow Gauge Railways of North Wales' presented by Michael Cannon

The Clubroom at the Old Down Inn was packed to hear Michael's talk, illustrated with slides of the history of these various railways.

He commenced with the Welshpool & Llanfair, built as an agricultural line to link these areas with the Cambrian Railway in 1901. The gauge was 2'6" and the contractor John Stachan. Next he showed slides of the Vale of Rheidol Railway which was started at around the same date but in 2' gauge, to carry tin and timber traffic down to the Aberystwyth main line station. It has 3 specially designed locomotives, Gwain Glendower, Llewellyn and the Prince of Wales. Another, Edward VII, was withdrawn in 1932 when the passenger service was closed.

The Snowdon Railway was built purely as passenger service traffic; it was started in 1886 using a 2'7½" gauge climbing from the terminus at Llanberis to a height of 3560' at the summit.

Next we saw the scenic line and its engines which runs from Portmadoc to Blaenau Ffestiniog and which originally served the slate mines in that area. This opened in 1836 as a 2' gauge horse drawn tramway and was abandoned in 1946 with the demise of the slate industry, only to be rescued by a specially formed preservation society in 1954.

The Sian and Fairbourne Railway on the coast was similarly built to the same gauge using 'horse-power' for mixed freight and passenger traffic but was changed to 15" gauge when steam was introduced. 4 Locomotives now provide the motive power; two 2-4-2's, 'Sian' and 'Katie', a 4-6-2 Pacific and a 4-4-2, 'Count Louis'.

Finally, Michael showed slides of the Talyllyn railway, opened in 1866 as a slate line using a combination of horse and cable power. When steam took over, it used a 2' gauge and a passenger service commenced. In 1951 a preservation company bought the line and the increasing popularity of the Cambrian coast as a holiday resort brought a new form of prosperity to the line.

Michael was thanked at the break by the Chairman, for his most interesting and well researched talk, and Herb Gane emerged from the dark recesses of the bar to do the monthly raffle. Unfortunately, what with Easter and the excitement of the first rally of the season at Abbey Hill, not forgetting the trip to Twickenham and the streaker, the raffle prize winners names have been mislaid! After the intermission, Michael produced some more slides taken unobserved at rallies; these showed various members of our Club in compromising, often embarrassing positions. This rounded off a good evening quite nicely and gave everyone a good laugh. Thanks to everyone for attending and supporting Mike's excellent show.

Ian and Carol Skuse

THE CLUB RALLY - will be, as previously announced, on the 17th June. This is not now very far off and the Committee have been busy organising and liaising with the Norton-Radstock Lions Club, who are our hosts once again this year in connection with their Family Day. Intending entrants will soon, if not already, have their return slips giving site information. It would be greatly appreciated if entrants could conform to the guidelines set out on the returns; this will help organisers and entrants alike, on the day.

Last year it is believed that a few visitors got into the field without paying by announcing they were 'with an engine'. In order to eradicate this and placate our hosts, this year each entrant will receive a printed car pass for his vehicle. Please display on your vehicle in a prominent position; should you require further passes for a support car, these will be issued on YOUR REQUEST and AT THE COMMITTEES DISCRETION. Otherwise you will be requested by the Lions steward to pay full admission. If in any doubt, contact the Secretary on Temple Cloud (0761) 52939.

THE CLUB RALLY (cont.)

We hope you will enjoy our rally and the Lion's Family Day - bring your own good weather and we can't go wrong!

As usual at the Rally we shall be having our Club Stall to help defray some of the promotional expenses, so any donations of bric-a-brac, etc. would be most welcome. Please hand any items you may have to any committee member or just bring it along with you to the rally.

Seven 'delegates' from the Committee held a rally site meeting on May 2nd at Norton Down. Unfortunately, this coincided with the day which it was ordained that the hitherto-mentioned fine weather decided to break and the meeting was held between thunderstorms. The field was shared by 34 excellent Friesian calves whose persistent inquisitiveness finally got the better of the WSEC contingent. The signs of their presence scattered about the grass did nothing for Claude Lowther's suede footwear, also a resident of the adjoining housing estate felt forced to enquire if we were planning to build houses in the field in the near future. On hearing that we were merely a Stationary Engine Club, he looked quite relieved....obviously unaware of the 'fall-out' problems caused by even one or two Petter M-types. The performance of the evening was by our Chairman whose Toreador act with rolled umbrella in one hand and Lion's site plan in the other, as he fought our bovine companions off from nibbling the Vice-Chairman's SEB waterproof jacket, was as good as an audition for 'Carmen'. Alas, the tribulations of being a committee member.....!

THE LISTER D-TYPE

There cannot be many WSEC members, indeed engine enthusiasts anywhere, who do not own or has owned, one of these reliable (YES - reliable, Tom Randall...!) little workhorses. Although mundane in appearance, rarely is there a rally without one in some form or another; there are quite a few variations for the knowledgeable enthusiast to discover. All this knowledge, most of the detail variations, can be found in the latest edition of 'The History and Development of the Lister D-Type' by David Edgington; this edition is a much improved and enlarged version, so much so that anyone already in possession of the earlier book would be well advised to keep up-to-date by speculating the modest sum of £2 (post paid). Please quote S.E.Ref.18 when ordering; obtainable from D.W. Edgington, Lodge Wood Farm, Hawkeridge, Westbury, Wilts. Better value than a gallon of four star petrol at around the same price...!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

KERNOW Old Vehicle Club are holding their popular Wadebridge Rally on July 14th/15th at the Royal Cornwall Showground. Forms for this are available from the committee so any member on holiday in the Duch-y around this date and can fit an engine into the camping trailer or whatever, will be most welcome. Plenty of camping space, hard roads for ease of access, stalls for Mum to spend all the holiday budget, etc.etc. Further details from Kerwin Harris, 30 Hillcrest Ave., Truro, Cornwall. Tel. (0872) 73388.

WATCHET Carnival Club Rally is on Sunday, 1st July; intending entrants can get full details and entry forms from Brian Palmer, 7 Eastbury Rd, Carhampton, Minehead, Som. This promises to be an enjoyable event in a most beautiful part of the West Country. Please give it your support

WESTONZOYLAND Pumping Station recently restored late last year, will be in steam on June 23/24 August 4/5, August 26/27. It is open to visitors but not steaming on the first Sunday in every month, April-October, from 2-5 p.m.

THOSE who missed the Club trip to Crofton Pumping Station last year may like to know that the Steam Days are 26/27/28 May, in conjunction with a boat rally, 30 June/1 July, 25/26 August, 29/30 Sept. 27/28 Oct.

CRICKET St. Thomas Rally, May 27th. Spend an interesting weekend in a wild life park with some engines. Bring the family.

YSTRAD Mynach Rally, Aug.4/5. SAE please to Gordon Jones, 48 Manor Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, Gwent.

YEOVIL Festival of Transport, Aug.11/12. Enquiries to Bill Foster, Four-Ways, Sandley, Gillingham, Dorset. SAE please.

NATIONAL Express Festival of Transport, Whitchurch Park, Bristol. Details SAE please from B.A.Triggell, 32 Beaufort House, Strawbridge Rd., Lawrence Hill, Tel.Bristol 556276.

PETTER only Rally, Aug.25/26, combined with the Egham and Thorpe Royal Annual Show, at Runnymede, Surrey. SAE to Bill Foster, as above.

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

BLEADON Steam Country Fayre, July 28/29. Details from Mrs. C. Henderson, 44 Alma Street, Weston-Super-Mare, Please include SAE.

CHEDDAR Rugby Club Pig Roast & Social Evening, July 28 (evening). 20 or so Stationary engines are required; if anyone is interested please contact Brian Verrall on Cheddar 743460 or Pete Willan on W-s-M 25556. Plaques will be given.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS (cont)

WINGS & Wheels at Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, June 24. Entry forms from Alan Pugh, 16 Wickham Way, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

'YESTERDAY'S Farming, Sept. 1/2, run by the SSAPC at the Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet.

THE GREAT Dorset Steam Fair, Sept. 14/16, known otherwise as Blandford, or Stourpaine, amongst other things.

CLUB EVENTS

- June 16/17 **W.S.E.C. Rally** in conjunction with the Norton Radstock Lions Club at Fosseyway, Norton Down, Nr. Radstock. This year we hope to have a very much better site than last year but the same weather...! Enquiries to Sec. please with SAE.
- June 25 **Evening Crank-Up** at the Old Down Inn. This is a popular 'mini-rally' which always attracts a crowd of spectators. No plaques, etc., just a b...y good engine evening with a pint in your hand. Come early, get a good spot.
- July 30 Those of you who annoy the Editor by calling GEARS 'cogs' should make a point of coming along and enjoy hearing Gerald Atherton explain about the different types of gears and their manufacture. To finish out the evening there will be an engine slide show; if you have any which you would like displayed, please bring them along.
- Aug. 20 **Members epidiastroscope show**. For any member to bring along rally photographs to be shown. Anything welcome.
- Sept. 24 **Illustrated talk 'Corsham Stone Mines Museum'**, (History of Bath Stone Quarries by Paul Weever).
- Oct. 29 Some years ago we had an evening trip to the Campden Works Museum at Bath; this proved very popular and we have been asked many times to repeat it. Cost of entry £1 approx. with a possible group reduction. Meet at the Museum 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Full details nearer the date.
- Nov. 26 **"Call My Vintage Bluff"**, a guessing game by Farmer John Forward of the Longhedge Collection, with a multitude of interesting objects from the dim & distant past.
- Dec. 8 **The Club Annual Dinner & Dance**, again this year at Frome by popular demand.
- Jan. 28 Perhaps we will leave you all guessing a little while longer as to the entertainment for this meeting, but one thing is certain - there will be a packed Club Room with the majority of the men at the very front nearest the screen....!
- Feb. 27 **Annual General Meeting**.

FOR SALE

PETTER Atomic Diesel, curved spoke flywheels, 15 hp, similar in appearance to Bill Duffy's which is usually at Yeovil Festival of Transport. Class 3, good oily condition having had but one family ownership since 1939. Offers around £150, buyer collects. Mr. Mayhew, Mayhew Marine The Barge 'Halo', Cumberland Basin, Bristol Docks, Bristol 277107 (24 hr. answering) Intending viewers not familiar with the City of Bristol will find it halfway between the Nova Scotia Inn and the Pump House Pub.

LISTER A29, 3½ hp, runner but needs restoration; Bentall Root Cutter and a Bamford No. 4. Cake Breaker. £45 the lot. Ashley Gold, Tel. Axbridge 732591.

TWIN Cylinder Lister 10 hp. Rad. Cooled, about mid-1930's? mounted on a 4 wheeled trolley and quite unusual. Mr. Payne, 22 Windmill Road, Glastonbury, Somt. (Isn't this like one mentioned in Mike Stokes' article on page 1 of last month's Newsletter?).

WANTED

GILES Cartoon Annuals, Nos. 1 to 7 incl. Nos. 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 31. Any Arthur Ransomes? preferably with the original dust jacket. Tel. Eric Brain on Temple Cloud (0761) 52633.

Collector seeks enamel advertising signs.. Any theme, any reasonable condition. Tel. Temple Cloud (0761) 52766.