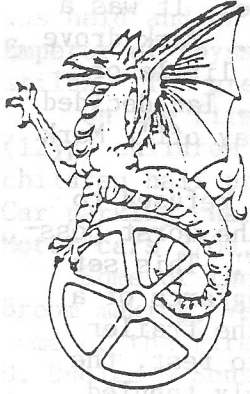


# WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 1993



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### CLUB VISIT TO PRISTON MILL, PRISTON, NR. BATH.

As a follow up to a very interesting talk on Priston Mill at the club earlier in the year the club arranged a visit to the mill on Sunday 4th April. About 40 members, friends and families gathered at the mill around 2 o'clock for a conducted tour scheduled for 2.30pm. Our host and guide turned out to be Peter Hopwood who had given us the excellent talk at the club night. Priston Mill is situated in a very picturesque valley, south of Bath. Members know Priston for the two rallies held each year outside the Ring of Bells at Priston, organised by Brian Box, fairground organ owner and enthusiast.

Priston Mill is one of the only commercial working doomsday water powered mills in the country. The site has been in continuous use since before AD931 and the unique Priston stone-ground flour is still produced there. King Athelstone of Wessex gave the mill to the monks of Bath Abbey in 931AD, they would have used it to grind local farmers' grain for flour and animal feed. Also local peasants who grew their own grain would have it ground free by letting the miller keep about  $\frac{1}{16}$ th of the flour for himself. The water wheel is overshot, this means the water is fed onto the top of the wheel from the mill pond by a channel called a launder. The wheel is constructed of iron and is about 160 years old, previous to this it would have been made of oak. The driving mechanism inside the mill was made by Anfield Engineering of Fordingbridge. This firm is still in existence. The driving cogs are made in the traditional material, apple wood.

The milling stones which turn at about 120 rpm need to be dressed about every two or three months and takes about two days, this is a very skilled task and is carried out by the miller. Years ago travelling millwrights made a living going around the then numerous mills applying their stone dressing skills. We saw the mill actually in operation, milling flour and Peter suddenly dashed over to a sack under a chute which was just about to run over. The end product looked to be an exceptionally fine wholemeal flour. This has a very ready market and is in great demand.

The mill is part of a large working farm of some 300 acres, a lot of the grain milled is actually grown on the farm. A thriving herd of approximately 130 dairy cows have to be milked twice daily. The farm is also busy with conducted educational tours of mill and farm. Wildlife is really encouraged around the farm, visitors can see large numbers of birds and animals including water vole, grey squirrel, fox, badgers, kingfishers, yellow wagtails, tawny owl, woodcock, mallard ducks, moorhen and many more species, also vast numbers of insects and butterflies.

A tractor with a purpose built trailer takes visitors on a tour of the farm for a small fee. In the farmyard is an old tythe barn which has been very tastefully been converted into a restaurant/coffee shop, aptly named 'The Granery'. I called in there for a coffee and for £1 you could have a cup of excellent coffee with as many free top ups as you wanted. Quite a few of our party patronised this facility and judging by the amount on fancy cream cakes etc. rapidly disappearing, a lot of diets went out of the window. We then paid a visit to the very well stocked farm shop, lots of goodies in here, jams, pickles, sauces, cheese, souvenirs etc. and of course the famous Priston stone ground flour. Many thanks to Peter Hopwood for giving such an informative tour, also for giving me his time answering my question to obtain information to write this report. Well all good things come to an end as did this visit.

One of the Wessex roving reporters signing off - BRIAN J. BAKER.

Early Saturday morning, with the Thermos flasks filled and the sandwiches wrapped to sustain them on the long journey, Ian and Mark set off from Frome, Mark's home. It was a nice dry morning, just made for travelling and they were to share the driving. Mark drove for a few miles then Ian took the wheel around Amesbury. They jogged on with little or no traffic to hamper their progress so cresting the hill just out of Amesbury, Ian decided to speed up the pace a little - to 50 mph. Well Maidstone was still a long way off! Mark shifted himself in the seat somewhat uneasily - after all it was his vehicle.

Suddenly, without warning, the Land Rover's inherent vague steering just refused to control the directional stability. Ian did what in retrospect was probably the worst possible thing but it was all he could think of at the time - he braked - heavily! This set the whole thing snaking violently. As it slowed, it snaked in ever increasing arcs of a circle, eventually taking up the whole width of both carriageways, dragging the trailer behind it, rocking from wheel to wheel. Just as it all seemed to be coming to rest, the trailer broke free from the towball but remained upright; the Land Rover slowly toppled over.....!

Those readers who have stayed with me so far and not got bored and turned on to the 'Classified Ad's' are probably, at this point, saying that all this is fiction, it is all made up. I can assure you it is all perfectly true so be warned. But I digress. Consider the scene - a normally very busy trunk road in east Wiltshire, a dry but bitterly cold February morning. A Land Rover lies on its off-side, its battery acid and engine oil mingling as it drains slowly down the gutter. Behind the vehicle and still connected to it by a pathetic umbilical cord, the 'safety' chain, is a largeish two wheeled trailer containing a 1908 8 hp Campbell oil engine in 'knock-down' form. The owner and passenger of the Land Rover has by now foolishly undone his seat belt and fallen with sundry tools, cameras, sandwiches etc on top of the driver who is cursing loudly and roundly! Eventually, disentangling themselves from each other, they managed to escape via the rear door, falling very shaken onto the road.

Almost immediately, as if sent by providence, a large articulated lorry appeared in view. The driver turned out to be a true 'Knight of the Road'. He stopped and proffered assistance before, as he put it, "Mr. Plod comes along asking all sorts of silly questions.....!". With very little ado the lorry pulled the Land Rover back onto its wheels, the driver was thanked profusely and he vanished as quickly as he had arrived. Ian and Mark, still shaking, re-attached the trailer and set about re-roping and rearranging the load which had shifted about a bit. Mark managed to thumb a lift from a passing car to the nearest garage (which was closed), to try and obtain some engine oil. Next door to the garage was a scrapyard where he obtained some oil of a high price and dubious quality. Meanwhile Ian had checked over the Land Rover for damage which seemed to amount to bent door hinges, a rather bent front wing, a loosened hard top and flattened roof gutter. The borrowed trailer lighting board was in three pieces but functioned perfectly.

As they had got so far and surprisingly, lost very little time, they decided to press on to Kent. A couple of miles farther up the road and quite near the oil-vending scrapyard, fate dealt our pair of enthusiasts yet another blow when, with a loud noise and a lurch which pulled the Land Rover up dead, the trailer shed its nearside wheel....! The wheel was extricated from deep in a hedge but upon examination of the hub it was found that not only were two of the studs broken but the others had bent and stripped their threads. Further perusal found the wheel to be buckled and the stud holes enlarged and elongated so Ian and Mark tried to fit the spare. This was no easy feat with the brake drum resting on the road but eventually the trailer stood once again on two wheels.

Final episode next month.

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS: Mr. & Mrs. Pearce and James of Trowbridge, Mr. & Mrs. S. Bartlett from Dinton, near Salisbury, Mr. C. Chinnock and Mr. C. Stephens of Wells and Mr. J. Maskell of Sudbrook, near Newport in Gwent.

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#### NEXT CLUB MEETING.

June 28th - Meet the members evening - Rally chat and general discussions.



AN ARTICLE WRITTEN DUE TO A WET GOOD FRIDAY SPENT AT HOME.

This years Wessex Stationary Engine Rally at Semington will be the 16th, but 56 years ago, just a few yards down the road at Hilperton, on May 26-29th 1937 the Bath & West Show was held and on the 2nd day it received a visit from the Duke of Kent, also present was the Emperor of Abyssinia and during the four day show 30,067 people passed through the turnstiles. The greatest distance travellers being some sheep from Australia.

On the first day of the show admission from 9am-2pm was 5/- (25p) and after 2pm 2/6 (12½p) children under 14 were half price. On the last day entry was 1/- (5p) and again children half price. Here are some extracts from the official catalogue which was 2/- (10p) Car parking charges, motor coaches over 14 seats 5/- (25p), 14 seats and under 2/6 (12½p), Motor cars 2/6d, Motor cycle and sidecar 1/6d, motor cycle only 1/-, cycles 6d.

Some of the interesting demonstrations at the show were - Poultry trussing, Scything, Broom making, Veterans sheep shearing competition and Junket making to name but a few also some of the firms that exhibited there were Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies Ltd., of Ipswich, B. Uncles & Sons (Engineers) of Bradford on Avon, Bamfords Ltd., of Uttoxeter, Alfa-Laval Co. Ltd., of Middlesex, The Wolseley Sheep Shearing Co., Birmingham, John Wallis Titt & Co., of Warminster, F. Pratten & Co., Midsomer Norton, H.J. Godwin Ltd., of Fairford and The Auto-Mower Engineering Co. Ltd., Norton St. Philip, Nr. Bath. Some of these companies are still in existence now.

G.C. Ogle & Sons of Ripley, Derby on stand 177 had for sale a Crude oil engine, semi-diesel 6hp priced at £54.00 and a 1½hp petrol engine for £20.7s.0d. Ruston Hornsby Lincoln stand 134 a petrol paraffin engine 6hp class AP with standard pulley and on skids, no price in the catalogue, Petters Ltd., Yeovil, Somerset, stand 124 a Petter Harmonic induction engine 16hp, stationary type 1,000 rpm - price £115. Petter Universal air cooled petrol stationary engine 2 hp £24. R.A. Lister & Co. Ltd., Dursley, Glos. stand 59-64 had a range of Lister Diesel and petrol engines between 1½hp and 18hp but no prices in the catalogue.

The charge for admission of Bath chairs to the show (including occupant and chairman) is on the first day 7/6 (37p), on the second day 6/- (30p) and on each of the last two days it was 4/- (20p).

BOB HALLAM (Wiltshire Correspondent).

Thanks for your article Bob, written whilst stuck at home on a wet Bank holiday waiting for the newly applied paint to dry on your windows, a contrasting report after your article on the 'Serg cart' but most welcome. ED.

CLUB RALLY 1993.

With less than four weeks to go to our annual club rally at Semington, lots of final preparation and background work is underway by our committee to 'fine tune' everything that needs to be done, so that all who attend will have an enjoyable weekend. Having had one rally on this "new site" it will no doubt be a tremendous help to them for organising this years event. Exhibitors will be able to arrive from MID-DAY ON FRIDAY and if anyone would like to help please make it known to any committee member whom I am sure will be most grateful.

Two new additions this year will be an auction, which will take place on Saturday morning, this will be a good chance to move on your surplus machinery and perhaps take home a bargain. Also on Sunday morning a car boot sale will be held in an adjacent field, where you may find even more bargains.

A parade of vehicles will take place in the ring and on Saturday evening a barbeque, plus entertainment will be in situ near the beer tent. The club stall will once again be selling lots of articles and we will be most grateful for any contribution to the stall, please bring along on the day or give to any committee member if easier.

For exhibitors and public who have not attended the Rally before and is not sure of the location the A.A. will be erecting signs on major roads and our own signs will be in the locality.

Just a final word on SAFETY... Do listen to any advice which may be given by our Safety Officer and remember that hazzards are not just outside the safety ropes but also can be within the ropes! Please take care when unloading and loading and make sure you are clear of any posts or ropes that may have been lowered before driving off.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend, hope the sun shines too.

ED.

DIARY DATES.

- 6th June - Huckyduck Carnival Club Annual Fun Day on Highbury Playing Fields - 2.00pm Stationary Engines - Contact John Searle on 0373 472206.
- 12th June - Frome Lions Club Summer Fete at Victoria Park, Frome - 2.00pm. Anyone who would like to take an engine to this event please contact Mike Geake on 0373 461298.
- 17th July - Clutton Carnival Club require about 12 stationary engines at their Fun Day at Clutton Football Field, a plaque and refreshments will be provided. Contact Roger Parsons on 0761 452565.
- 1st Aug. - Mendip Crank-Up and Car Boot Sale. Usual venue at Mendip Garage. Contact Bill Coombs on 0749 840868.
- 4th Sept. - Wellow Flower Show and Country Fair, Wellow, Nr. Bath. Stationary engines required. Contact Steve Routley on 0934 822988.
- 13th Nov. - Cotswold Oil Engine & Preservation Society's Annual Auction at Farmors School, Fairford, Glos. Sale commences at 11.30 am. Small lots first. For further details contact Mr. Carl Newton, Caretakers House, Farmor's School, Fairford, Glos. GL7 4JQ or telephone Cirencester 712302 (evenings).

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FOR SALE - International 3 hp low tension 'M' type. Class 2 condition - £400.  
1924 Lister 'L' type on original trolley, restored class 1 condition £200.  
All prices subject to negotiation - All enquiries phone 0225 704001.

FOR SALE - Gas Workshop heater - Brand new - never used. Input high 3.66 KW 12500 BTU  
HR low 1.83 KW 6250 BTU HR - £50 o.v.n.o.  
Ford Cortina 2.0 Ghia S. Reg. needs a new engine or sold for spares. No reasonable offer refused. Contact: G.J. Jennings - Meare Heath 860673 after 6.00 pm.

FOR SALE - 2 x 5.20 - 10 Cross Ply tyres - nearly new - Fits BL Mini wheels - £15 the pair. Contact: Stephen on 0225 754304 after 7.00 pm.

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FOR DISPOSAL FREE - Galvanised water tank for 7 hp Victoria - no bottom, but restorable, original tank. Contact Eric in first instance on 0761 452633.

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WANTED - Exhaust system for Lister 'D' type - Contact: Roger Parsons on 0761 452565.

WANTED - Old Photographs of anything to do with steam in Somerset. I would like to be able to take photo's of any suitable photographs that you may have. I can come to your house or meet you at a club evening, Contact Peter Holloway on Ilchester 0935 840370.

WANTED - All kinds of bits and pieces by The Bristol Wagon & Carriage Works - Books, old adverts to buy or copy, all things acceptable. Also does anyone know of the whereabouts of an old mangle made by this firm? If you can help with any of the following, please contact: Eric Brain, 5 Greenridge, Clutton, Nr. Bristol or phone 0761 452633. Eric would also like to thank all those who have responded to his previous ad.

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WANTED PLEASE - Rally reports for Zeals, Creech St. Michael, Speech House and Abbey Hill.  
Did any members attend these rallies?? If so how about putting pen to paper and telling us all about them.

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STOP PRESS - Has the report for the March club evening on Douglas engines got lost in the post????????????????????