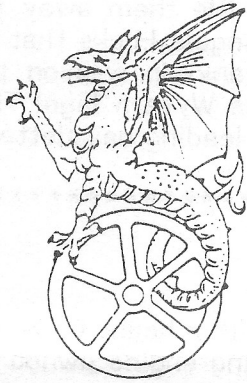


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1985

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A VISIT TO THE BRIGHTON ENGINEERUM

No engineman's holiday in Sussex would be complete without a visit to the Engineerium at Brighton, and so it was that our family found themselves on their way there this August.

The Museum is housed in a Victorian pumping station not unlike the one which the Club recently visited at Blagdon. The first hall we entered housed a large selection of model steam engines of every conceivable type and size ranging from a tiny oscillating engine less than an inch high, to a triple expansion engine sixteen inches in height. Also on display were about a dozen hot-air engines driving water pumps or small generators, one interesting example from India drove a fan. The centre-piece of this hall was a 16 ton Corliss horizontal engine in steam, beautifully restored and running with a gentle thump, thump, thump! This steam lullaby sent my mother-in-law off to sleep whilst she sat waiting for me to catch up.

From the first display hall, we passed into the boiler-house. The four boilers were complete and one was fired up. Little hand operated railway waggons were provided to move the coal from the bunkers to the hand-fired boilers. From the boiler-house the visitor is directed to the Number 2 engine house. The Number 2 engine is a fully restored beam-engine and pump built in 1876 by Easton and Anderson, also in steam during our visit. The restoration of the pumping station started in 1975 and is yet to be completed. The Number 2 engine remains in situ and awaits restoration before going on public display. The building and machinery stood idle for 21 years before its rescue.

On our way out to the car park we stuck our noses round the door of the workshop and were privileged to be invited into this area which is not generally open to the public. The workshop is beautifully equipped with a small steam engine to drive the overhead line-shafting coupled to several lathes and a milling machine. The workshop undertakes contract restoration work for other museums and has a full time staff of three, plus many part-time volunteers. Several interesting projects were lying around in various states of completion. The Engineerium is open every day from 10.00 to 17.00 and costs £1.80 (children £1). The engines ARE IN STEAM EVERY Sunday and bank-holiday. Telephone number Brighton 559583.

Jeremy Adams

DINNER AND DANCE

This popular annual event takes place this year at the Masonic Hall, Frome, Somerset on Saturday, December 14th at 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. start. The cost of £5.50 and is by ticket obtainable from the Secretary, Jane Cannon, 19 Eagle Road, Batheaston, Bath, Somerset. Hurry please, as we need to know the numbers as soon as possible. Entertainment is by our old friend John Forward with the humorous 'Farmer John' Disco.

The menu is as follows:- Choice of Beef, Tomato or Vegetable soup, Turkey with usual selection of seasonal vegetables, mincemeat or apple pie, cheese & biscuits, tea or coffee. Selection of table wines at extra cost. Free glass of sherry of your choice available at the door as you enter.

All this for only £5.50.....! Non-members welcome at the same price.

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Difficult to swallow.....?

We often wonder what happens to the Newsletters which Claude Lowther posts religiously every month following the monthly meeting. Do members really read them and then file them away for posterity to turn them into collectors items? We have been told by Ray and Angela Hicks that no sooner had they read the October edition and had noted that the Autumn Crank-Up was on the following Sunday, than their dog duly digested the entire copy, leaving only the Wyvern logo! This really only shows that dogs given a chance to express a preference for any of the leading newsletters, says that the Wessex one goes down best!

FULL QUART INN 'CRANK-UP' Organiser's Report

The day of the fifth 'Crank-Up' dawned and lo and behold, we were blessed with a beautiful sunny day. Exhibitors started arriving early; last to arrive was the K7 Fowler ploughing engine owned by Colin Waite, one manoevered into position the Crank-Up got into full swing. The public supported us very well with the car parks bursting and the verges of the main road in both directions full of parked cars.

Sixty stationary engines, twenty tractors, cars, motorbikes, a steam roller, scale model traction engines, fair organs, Dean Forest Railway Fire Engine, etc. filled the pub premises.

The Grand Draw had 45 prizes; all of which were donated. Gerald Harris donated a Lister D to be auctioned which made £12 and ended up in South Wales. The Pike children with their Jumble Stall raised £12.77, a super effort by these children - well done!! Tony Andrews' Swing Boats made £10, Somerset Vintage Farming Society, £15 - just a few of the many donations.

The CLIC Treasure Chest, by the way, over this season collecting at rallies made £169. The Crank Up draw, donations and Treasure Chest added together made a grant total of £564.77. Derek, Eileen and Mark Maybee's CLIC stall made this season £212.60. Final Grant Total: £777.37 donated to CLIC. Once again, many thanks to one and all who donated, exhibited or helped in any way to make this Crank-Up worthwhile; we are most grateful for your support. The coal for the steamers was donated by Paul Greedy Western Fuels and the Dean Forest Railway.

Roy Cox

MONTHLY MEETING - 29th October. Dinky Toys and Die-Cast Models, a talk by George Hatt

Monday evening at the Old Down Inn. People arriving with boxes and plastic bags all containing the treasure of childhood. Soon several tables were covered with displays of Dinky and other die-cast toys which our speaker Mr. George Hatt, was inspecting with great interest.

A very nice Fordson tractor with spade-lug wheels and plough caught my eye; it was owned by one of our younger members, Mark Maybee. Robin called 'hush' and proceedings began with George giving a most interesting talk ranging over the whole history of die-cast models right up to the present day.

There is no record of the first die-cast toys or who made them; it is possibly Britains who started it all with hollow castings of lead figures, farm and zoo animals. In 1920 Tootsitoys from the USA were most prolific, but it was Frank Hornby who really set the wheels rolling. In 1933 the first real road vehicles appeared; two cars, lorry, tank, and tractor available individually or in sets. In April 1934 the term 'Dinky Toys' was coined and over the next six years such models as Bentley, Humber, Rover and Armstrong Siddley appeared with some commercials. These commercials of the pre-war years command most attention possibly because many of the names and trademarks no longer exist.

Because of the intervention of World War II, pre-war toys command a high price today; production of all Dinkey Toys ceased in 1940 and the whole Meccano factory went over to war work. However, by Christmas 1945 Dinky was back with fifty different models on sale and by the 1950's they were so far out in front that they became complacent - Matchbox and Corgi came onto the market and Dinky slowly died; in 1981 it passed away.

In the last five years, collecting has had a marked increase, not only in road vehicles but in toys in general.

During the second half of the evening, Mr. Hatt answered questions from our members and we all inspected the models he had brought along. The laugh of the evening came when he valued three commercials, still in their original boxes, for over £200; the owner had turned down a fiver earlier that same evening! I wonder why!

Herb took a well deserved rest from the raffle which was run this month by Mr. and Mrs. Munt. The winners being Maureen Gay, clutching a bottle of wine, Ivor Yeo with a box of chocolates (now Sylvia knows the secret of the Black Magic Box.....) and Jackie Lambert with a car-cleaning kit. We

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will all be round with our cars to Beechwood Road soon.

Thank you George Hatt for a most enjoyable evening - and to Bob Hallam for fixing it up at very short notice when the speaker billed for the evening on the same subject couldn't make it.

Eric Gay

CLUB COACH TRIP TO THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

We boarded the coaches at 8.00 a.m. on 12th October at the Old Down Inn car park to depart at 8.15 a.m. Next stop was Bath to collect more Wessex members and off we headed up the M5, stopping at the Tewkesbury Service area for use of the toilets and cafeteria. Half an hour later we boarded the coaches once again to resume our journey and soon we were in the heart of Birmingham. Arriving at the Museum shortly after 11.30, we quickly made our way into the main hall where we were welcomed by the Curator who told us where we could find various stationary engines. (At this point, secretary Jane Cannon, was worrying that a 'head count' revealed that 2 less people had arrived at Birmingham than had left Bath; were they thumbing it up the motorway from the Services? No, it was a mere mathematical miscalculation. Thank Goodness!). The Engineering Hall was crammed full of many interesting items including a huge Orchestrian Organ of 1898. Many gas-engine models, a Hornsby Akroyd Oil engine of 1893, an Aveling & Porter steam roller 1892, Ruston Proctor portable engines, a lighthouse optic, and many large and small engines and generators. To the left of the engineering hall was the locomotive hall which housed a huge steam locomotive the 'City of Birmingham', as well as a Foden steam lorry of 1904 and a Burrell steam tractor. In the centre of the hall was a huge bottle making machine and also a model water-driven ram pump.

In the James Watt building was a Smethwick Beam Engine of 1779, the oldest steam engine in the world. Throughout the museum were various stationary engines, including hot-air engines by Rider, Heinrichi, Bailey and Robinson; Crossley, Griffin, Tangye, and Ruston Hornsby gas engines; three Gardner engines, one of which was a size 0 gas engines and the others diesels; all these were dwarfed by the M.A.N. diesel with 12" bore. Other makes we were more familiar with were Amanco Hired Man, Crossley 1030, Bernard Conord, Briggs & Stratton, Alco, Kohler, Fairbanks Morse and Petter, while not listed but lurking in the workshop was a Lister D-type painted blue. (Brian Verrall was overjoyed to find a Wallace Glasgow - not the same as mine!) Rob Lambert's curiosity as to what the engine was under the tarpaulin upstairs was relieved when the attendant removed the cover to reveal an Armstrong Siddley diesel under restoration). Other interesting exhibits were a Wolverine petrol engine, a Lea Francis sleeve valve engine, and an early Cadillac engine converted to stationary use.

The aircraft section housed a 1944 Spitfire and a 1943 Hurricane, also a good selection of aero engines, while just away from this section was a mock-up of an early machine shop which could be set in motion on request. The transport section was comprehensive, covering such cars as 1898 Benz, 1912 12 litre Benz, Bean, Lanchester, Austin Atlantic, 1923 Austin Seven and the Railton land speed record holder Mobil Special, holder of the record from 1947 to 1964. Also there were motorcycles 'thru the ages' and even a tram car. We then moved on through the science section which included stress optics, stroboscopes, Leonardo da Vinci's model replicas, radio, radar, loud speakers, telephones, and even a collection of pens and writing equipment.

Many exhibits could be set in motion by the viewers and also there were many visual aids to explain how things worked.

We spent an enjoyable 5½ hours at the museum and on the adjoining canal side where an obliging narrow boat was steadily working its way up the locks and all too soon the coaches arrived to pick us up for the return journey.

In summary, a Saturday enjoyed by all; I can't wait for the next trip.....!

Ashley Gold

Our scheduled stop on the homeward journey was to be at the Holdford Arms on the Tetbury Road, just off the A46. We had booked two coachloads in for snacks or meals as required. When we arrived it was **DISASTER!** The manager had failed to enter our booking in his diary. Similarly he had failed to enter the caravan rally which was in the field behind the pub! There was simply no food or staff to cope. The landlady was most inhospitable and not even apologetic. By unanimous vote we made our departure 'en masse', turning away at the same time a BMW loaded with well dressed businessmen who also were seeking a meal to break the journey. Ironically, as we pulled out of the car park, a large notice declared 'COACHES WELCOME....!' From the look on the landlady's face as we left it would have well been in the manager's interests to have come on with us - they must have lost £200 worth of trade that night.

However, as Ashley said; a very enjoyable trip by unanimous vote and a day which even the Holford Arms found impossible to spoil!

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CLUB NEWS

Lapel badges are available at the reasonable price of £1 from any committee member at Club meetings or any Club event. Windscreen stickers are also available from Brian Munt at 60p each.

Please note that Gerald Atherton has been co-opted onto the Committee. Gerald has been a very active Committee member in the past and we welcome him back to use his valuable experience in the running of the Club.

The Annual Club Jumble Sale is provisionally booked at St. Petters Church Hall, Westfield, near Radstock on Saturday, March 15th. This will give you plenty of time to hoard all your unwanted junk ready to sell for Club funds on the day.

We are pleased to announce that the 1986 Wessex Rally will be held at 'The Secret Underground City', the recently open to the public World War II underground ammunition dump at Monkton Farleigh, near Bath, just over the Wiltshire border. This has proved a very popular tourist attraction this summer and has to be seen to be believed. It was featured in these pages early last year in a small report following a visit by the Editor and Secretary, Diana Emery, with their spouses! The date for this event is June 14/15 1986.

Apologies to Dave and Doreen Stickland for omitting their names from the list of members who attended the Trowbridge Car Boot Sale - like the rest of us, Dave thoroughly enjoyed the day, both socially and financially.

Entry forms for the 1986 Bath Festival of Steam are available from Mr. Maple, Bath Sports & Leisure Centre, North parade, Bath BA2 4ET.

Wessex Public Liability Insurance is currently under review; we are in touch with our insurers to clear up a few points which have arisen as we detailed in last month's Newsletter.

The South Somerset Agric. Pres. Club are running a coach trip to the Model Engineering Exhibition at the Wembley Exhibition Centre on Sunday, 5th January, leaving Yeovil at 7.30 a.m. and returning at 6 p.m. Wessex members and friends are welcome and tickets are £7.50 adult, £6.50 OAP's, and £5 children. Contact Paul Hurt, Yeovil 71835 (money in advance please before the 1st December).

We hope to hold an Inter-Club skittle match and social evening with one of our nearest local clubs, the South Somerset Agricultural Preservation Society, early in the new year. Full details will be available as soon as arrangements have been finalised.

Congratulations and Sincere Best Wishes for your future happiness to Tony and Angela Jones who were married at Shepton Mallet on November 23rd. Tony will no doubt find that his 'restoration skills' of painting and carpentry; to say nothing of his 'rallyfield skills' of cooking and tea-making, will now be really put to good use!

WANTED

Governor-side flywheel for Petter M-type, 3 hp apple top engine. Eric Gay, 21 Rutland Crescent, Trowbridge, Wilts. Tel. Trowbridge 4374.

FOR SALE

Lister Junior 3hp A-type, 1942 industrial engine driving 110 volt generator on trolley, ready to rally c/w lighting board and bulbs. £160 ono. John Wheelwright. Bristol (0272)550585

Ruston Hornsby 2VWA Diesel, twin cylinder, air cooled 26.5 BHP at 2100 rpm. Suitable for generator or narrowboat. Absolutely **BRAND NEW!** Will haggle downwards from £400ono. Ian Marsh, Wolfson Laboratory, University of Bath. Claverton down, Bath. Tel. Bath 61244, xtn. 675.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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|---------|--|
| Dec. 14 | Dinner & Dance at Masonic Hall, Frome. Tickets £5.50 each |
| Jan. 27 | 'Rallying in Holland - a film and slide show by Brian 'Forson' Lovell; also this is the meeting when annual subs. are paid up; but more about that next month. |
| Feb. 24 | Annual General Meeting. A chance for you all to come along and perhaps air your views on various aspects of the running of the Club and also to elect a new committee. Remember - you can only vote at this meeting if you are actually a fully paid-up member. If you feel that you would like to come on the committee and help in the running of your Club, please let the Chairman, Robin Lambert, know as soon as you can. |