

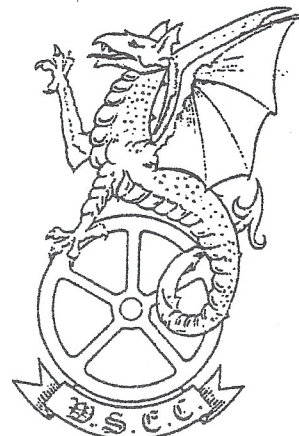
WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

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NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

This is the time of the year when the committee has to start thinking about club activities for next year. We have already compiled a comprehensive programme of events, meetings and visit's, this is thanks to the efforts of Arthur our secretary who seems to have an endless list of guest speakers etc. It is also time to think of the committee who will run your club for the following year. Two committee members are standing down at the AGM so we will be looking for two new members to serve on the committee for 2006. Members must realise that unless someone serves on the committee there would be no club, so I ask you all give it some thought and help run the club. If you wish to serve just give your name to me or any committee member.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Every "Sort-out" we have had at Cranmore seems to be better than the one previous. The "Sort-out" on October 22nd was the best yet. Despite the wet start the site was soon filled with sellers setting up their stalls and a steady stream of buyers continued through the morning. The café opened around 9am and quickly filled up doing a roaring trade. These sort-outs are the easiest events for the committee to run, no entry forms, no ropes to set up, no hassle, just stand at the gate and take the money and go around the stalls to collect the rent. We give half of the money collected at the gate to the Cranmore Railway for allowing us to use the site, and the club has the other half plus the money taken for the stalls. The first meeting at the Old Down since the new owners took over went down very well, the new landlady was rushed off her feet serving the members with drinks before the meeting started, so I think they were pleased with the trade that the meeting generates. A good audience had a very good evening's entertainment from guest speaker Les Davis giving a slide show and talk on The Mendip Hills and surrounding area. Les certainly knew his subject, the fact that he is a warden on the Mendips probably contributed to this. The usual raffle followed, with the table full of prizes which seems to be the norm now thanks to the generosity of the members who regularly brings prizes.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

The club members would like to wish a very happy birthday on the 22nd November to our Junior Reporter Jonathon Hockedy on reaching his 18th birthday. We all wish you the very best on reaching this important day in your life, may you have many happy returns.

The club would also like to extend birthday greetings to Maureen Gay who celebrates her birthday on the 3rd of December. Happy birthday Maureen, and I hope our Vice Chairman treats you to the birthday treat you deserve. Another member celebrating his birthday is Colin Baker, who will be celebrating his on the 8th December. With a bit of luck I might get a drop of Jack Daniels. Cheers Colin.

WEST WILTSHIRE SHOW

The West Wilts Show is held every alternate July in Trowbridge Park, an attractive setting right in the heart of Wiltshire's County Town. Three purpose built exhibition halls provide space for a wide range of local business and organizations, while dozens of other exhibitors take up space elsewhere in the park. To the north of the site is the main stage and arena, where a full programme of music and entertainments ran for all of the three days of the show. The five towns of West Wilts each had a large marquee, also the village of Dilton Marsh. In the Civil Hall, which is on the edge of the park, the Rotary Club hold an art exhibition, lots of paintings by a local artist which they hoped to sell. Hall A had the usual crafts seen at so many shows, Trowbridge Horticultural Society's flower show, and twice a day, the Garden Monthly Road Show, a question and answer session which is featured on HTV. I didn't attend these so I missed my opportunity to shine on TV. Hall B – Business and Lifestyle – the programme stated. In this hall you could experience a water-bed, buy clothes, beauty products, chocolate, and have your back manipulated, book coach travel, cruises and days out. Perhaps the back treatment should come after the coach holiday! There were several stands featuring electronics, computers and mobile phones, I passed them by quickly. Our district and county councils were there so that gave us a chance to complain about proposed developments or the lack of them in Trowbridge. The Primary Care Trust were offering blood pressure and glucose tests, so I thought I would get tested, I found that all that complaining had not put my blood pressure up! Talking to the nurse who did my test, I established that she was a midwife, and she told me about her most traumatic but afterwards amusing delivery. It was fairly late on her shift when a very large African lady arrived on her own with an equally large suitcase and was installed in the delivery suite. She kept saying she was not staying long as she was getting married tomorrow. She unpacked a long white dress and matching shoes and that was what she was going to wear tomorrow. There was no sign of any bridegroom, but she insisted she was not going to miss her wedding the next morning so they had better get on with the job in hand. The staff were beginning to doubt her sanity. When the midwife came on duty the next morning she was in time to assist with the delivery. Still insisting she was getting married that morning, the lady got up and started to get into the wedding finery to the horror of the staff. They told her she couldn't leave so soon after a birth, but she would not take any notice. About mid-morning two men arrived dressed for the occasion to collect the bride. The staff tried to get the registrar to come to the hospital, this failed, so it was decided the midwife would have to go with the bride. Carrying a large bag of emergency equipment the midwife squeezed into the back of a small car, with the large bride and they drove to the registry office. She was surprised to see a very large crowd of guests and she sat at the back trying to look inconspicuous, one white face and one very large bag. Afterwards the groom and guests all departed to a reception, while the bride went back to the hospital with a very relieved midwife. We enjoyed looking around the town's marquees and the art exhibition. It was a really good day out, for which there was no entrance charge.

Margaret Simmons.

***** FOR ALL THE GIRLS *****

When I was in my younger days I weighed a few pounds less,
I need not hold my tummy in to wear a belted dress.
But now that I am older, I've set my body free;
There's comfort of elastic where once my waist would be.
Inventor of those high heeled shoes my feet have not forgiven
I have to wear a size nine now, but used to wear a seven.
And how about those panty-hose? They're sized by weight you see,
So how come when I put them on the crotch is at my knee.
I need to wear these glasses as the prints were getting smaller:
And it wasn't very long ago that I was so much taller.
Though my hair has turned to grey and my skin no longer fits.
On the inside, I'm the same old me, just the outside's changed a bit.

THE MARKET PLACE

FOR SALE International M type. Circa 1924. On trolley. Restored. £450. Bamford Corn Mill £60. Godwin Self Oiling Pump G.W.O. Restored. £80. For further details ring Phil on 01761 471461. Bath Area.

MY FIRST CAR

My first car was a 1935 Austin 7, dubbed by the manufacturers - - The Austin Ruby, (so obviously female) and retailing at around £120.- and retailing at around £120. I got mine in 1960 when I was 21 and she was 25. She was languishing at the back of an Arthur Daley type used car sales yard. Very dusty but with remarkable sound body-work in dark blue, she bore the registration no GL 2004 and looked in need of a good home. The dreaded MOT tests were just coming in and "Arthur", realising that she would soon need a bit of expensive TLC, let me have it for £25, which was about two weeks pay. Actually the net price was £24-17-6p because later I found half a crown under the seat. I came from a non driving, non car owning family, not particularly unusual at that time, but it did make it a bit difficult to get started. It was quite common practise for lads in my situation to get an old banger, stick on the L plates and then get a mate who had passed the test to sit alongside while you went kangarooing and gear crashing your way along until your mate, (usually a mature and experienced driver, aged all of 19 or 21) decided that you were about ready for that all important rite of passage - the driving test. It was never a good idea to turn up for your test in an un-roadworthy vehicle so I booked some driving lessons with a local driving school at the exorbitant price of 17/6p an hour, I was lucky to have a patient and understanding young instructor who got me up to the test standard in four lessons. A fifth lesson was then booked which also included the pre-test drive and then the test itself. The driving school car was to me the last word in luxury in the shape of a new Ford Anglia - the model with a raked back window - which fans of the TV series "Heartbeat" will have seen as a police car chasing baddies across the Yorkshire moors. Among it's many refinements the Anglia had hydraulic brakes. Unaccustomed as I was to brakes that actually worked, I nearly catapulted the instructor through the windscreen on my first lesson. By some miracle I passed the test at the first attempt and so my motoring career was launched. The words "God help us all" were heard muttered in various quarters. I was living at the time with my parents in a very hilly village near the very hilly City of Bath. The family home was half way up (or halfway down if you prefer) a long and very steep hill, so I could not go anywhere without either a steep climb or a steep descent. Ruby was a very heavy smoker and wheezed a lot, (poor compression due to bad valves). She therefore struggled a bit on the ascent. She also had cable brakes which were over-stretched and pulled unevenly, so any descent was not suitable for those with a nervous disposition. It was possible to buy little gadgets to help take up the slack on the cables but at about 5/- each, I thought these were a bit of a luxury. Motoring threw a strain on my economy. If my memory is right petrol was 3/6p (18p) a gallon plus 2p for a shot of "Reddex" - I never found out why Reddex was necessary. Road fund licence was £12 per annum and insurance on a third party fire and theft basis was about £16 p.a.. Historians might be able to correct me on some of these figures for 1960/61. The biggest worry was the MOT test, because the cost of getting the brakes, lights, and steering up to test standard often exceeded the value of the car. A friend's dad very kindly renewed the exhaust valves, did a de-coke and then substantially rebuilt the engine, only charging me for the parts used. This improved Ruby's performance no end and she almost gave up smoking. The work had become a task of immediate importance as shortly before, Ruby had completely given up trying to climb our hill. I had to abandon her at the bottom and walk home. I took the bus to work the next day and then in the evening I walked back to the car and persuaded a nearby farmer to tow me home with his tractor. He took a bit of persuading and bribing as he had been up since 5am with a difficult calf and was about ready for his evening meal. He seemed rather bad tempered! The dodgy brakes were never properly cured. One day I had my mother and grandmother on board and rashly decided to take a short cut home by descending the notorious and strangely named Brass Knocker Hill near Bath. This drops at an alarming gradient of about 1 in 4 directly onto the busy A36. If you don't stop in time you stand a good chance of getting mashed. I didn't realise that the combined weight of my beloved passengers would put so much strain on Ruby's delicate braking system. I therefore spent a very frightening few minutes pressing the brake pedal almost through the floor whilst at the same time bearing up on the handbrake with the left hand in order to stop it's determined attempt to turn left which it always wanted to do when I put the brakes on. By the grace of God I just managed to "Halt at Major Road Ahead" with inches to spare. My passengers seemed blissfully unaware of their brush with death, although Granny did say she thought she could smell burning and Mum said I looked a bit hot. After about 2 years of eventful motoring Jill could hear wedding bells so Ruby had to go. I sold her for £25 to a colleague having first ensured that there was no more half-crowns left on board. The final parting was very sad as I slipped quietly away and out of Ruby's life forever. Nostalgia isn't what it used to be!

BY THE WILTSHIRE MOONRAKER

Of all the articles I have had to type up for the newsletter over the years I can't think of another that has been so humorous as this one, I can relate to it as I also learnt to drive in an Austin Seven. I think it is absolutely brilliant and I think the "Wiltshire Moonraker" should take up writing novels, I'm sure he would have no trouble getting them published. Editor.

A LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

In reply to Andrea Feeney's plea for an explanation of "getting the pip", when I was a boy growing up in Thame Park, in Oxfordshire, I was a bit more forceful in demanding that my grandmother explain the detail of this strange saying. Although she only said it to my sister, to us boys, it was explained as getting piles when we sat on wet grass or cold concrete. Why should girls have it explained differently to boys, I wasn't to find out until nearly adult-hood! We also had onions as big as footballs, and huge carrots and parsnips, and wonderful cabbages and lettuces. I know the reason for those, in fact the smell will live with me until I go to my grave. Every morning before school, granddad used to get me to help him empty the bucket from the outside loo, into a trench in the veg garden. He would carefully cover each offering, and slowly work his way over this fallow piece of garden in readiness for the following spring, when that particular area would be planted out, and another area would get the same treatment! Best manure in the world, he would say. To this day, I always cut the last few inches off the end of carrots and parsnips!!!!!! When I was in England in August, I went back to my boyhood home, and checked on the gardens. Sadly they were all overgrown, but where the veg garden was, the undergrowth, I swear, is twice as high as where the lawns were. I hope it is not too cold over there for our club members, we are just coming into our summer, shows and rallies are just starting. If any Wessex club members are visiting New Zealand in the next few months, just give us a ring, 067618250 and we will show you a good time with heaps of vintage visits. Stay for a few days at Rusthaven,, you can sleep with the engines or in a proper bedroom if your fussy. The beach is only a few hundred yards away, and Mount Egmont is only six miles up the road from here.

Cheers from Peter Janaway.

RUSTHAVEN

OPUNAKE

NEW ZEALAND

It was certainly a surprise to me to receive this letter from Peter all the way from New Zealand. At least it shows me that that someone reads the newsletter. My nine year old grandson Oliver was pleased as well as he collects stamps, so the stamp from Peter's letter is now in his album. Thank you Peter, I hope this is the first of many.

<<<<<<<<<<<<< DATES FOR YOUR DIARY >>>>>>>>>>>>>

SUNDAY DECEMBER 4th. “ANTI-FREEZE” Crank-up at Nunney Transport Café. The usual winter gathering of engine’s, displays and bits for sale. Any exhibits welcome. The café will be open for the usual hot breakfasts and lunches, hot drinks etc. The usual grand Christmas raffle will be held, any donations for prizes will be most welcome. Let’s have a good turnout of members for this very popular annual event.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 27th. “MINCE PIE “ Crank-Up at Nunney Catch Transport Café. This is the last Wessex event of 2005 so let's have a record turn out of members and engines. Please note there will be no cooked food available but hot mince pies will be served as usual and hot drinks will be for sale. Any exhibits and bits for sale will be most welcome. Don't forget the date, turn up. Both these events are possible due to Gordon and Jackie allowing us to use this brilliant venue, a very big thank you, to both of you, from all the Wessex members.

MONDAY JANUARY 31st Club night at the Old Down Inn. The first in 2006. Guest speaker Mike Horler of Heavy Horse fame giving a presentation and talk on MY LIFE WITH SHIRE HORSES. This sounds as though we are in for a very entertaining evening. The usual raffle will be held. It's an ideal opportunity to turn up and renew your membership for 2006.

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

There's a mole on my neck that's growing a hair, when I was younger it wasn't there.

A lot of things changed since I've grown older, like my fallen arches and this hump on my shoulder.

Yesterday I noticed a twitch in my eye, and spots on my hand that resemble a fly.

I used to be able to party all night, but now, to stay awake until five is a fight.

My breasts used to be quite firm and pert, now I have to be careful they don't drag in the dirt.

Gravity surely has taken its toll, what was once on the surface is now in a hole.

The backs of my arms are wobbly like jelly, and I found the remote tucked under my belly.

I used to eat steak but now I can't chew it, growing old gracefully, - I don't think I can do it.