



# CRANKING

November  
2007  
Thirtieth year of  
publication  
**www.wessex  
-sec.co.uk**

## The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

### From the Sump

It would have been an unusual trip across the USA for a man of my tastes to not find a stationary engine or two. There was the vertical twin Fairbanks-Morse at Mount Wilson observatory, the Wisconsin vee four pump by the side of a reservoir miles from anywhere, a barn full of Jim Dunmeyer's iron toys and even a big steam engine looking for all the world like vast Stuart Turner Number 1!

"Moving the Metal" is very popular, four engines, a pump, grindstone & chaffcutter selling last month & a long-sought after magneto purchased. Stuff is advertised for one month and I ring the vendors before "Cranking" goes to press to confirm sale or no sale, offering them a further month if required. It is hard to contact some people though. Please do try to call me if you sell the thing you've advertised. If space is at a premium & I've not heard from you, it will only appear for one month. This month, there has been a bit of a clearout, older ads being removed with people looking to re-advertise in the spring. This service is FREE to members - why not have a poke about in your shed over the winter & turn those unused items into handy-sized drinking vouchers? Finally, to speak of adverts, this little gem graced in a recent edition of the Oldham Evening Chronicle.

*"A branch of the local RSPCA is offering free neutering and spaying to anyone on benefits."*

Don't all rush at once ....

Generally speaking, people have nothing but kind remarks in respect of this publication. However, I've heard some comments that there isn't enough news in the newsletter. Well, I print what I'm sent, so it is up to all of you to send stuff in.

Having missed the Cranmore do, I went to the Enstone sale on 10<sup>th</sup> November. It's only about 70 miles from Bristol and a nice run out on a pleasant day. It was a lot bigger than on previous occasions with a wide range of stuff for sale from tractors to raw materials, sewing machines to stationary engines. I saw a vertical Hartop for £370 in very incomplete state & an unusual aircooled Stuart Turner model 'K' single cylinder fourstroke minus cowling caught my eye but not my wallet as at £400 it was about twice my estimate of its value.

### Moving the Metal

#### For sale

**Drummond lathe.** Good condition, bench mounted with 1/4hp motor. £80.00 - phone Gordon 07941 724625

**WANTED - "Stationary Engine " Magazine.** Now only missing 16,17,18,19,24-34,36. Have early copies to swap!  
All above - phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

Lister D's were holding their (expensive) end up, but a Kelvin twin cylinder marine engine - on a trolley complete and ready to go - was sold before the sale opened for £125. The vendor also had a Petter M & A.N. Other engine, all bearing a bit of masking tape & "sold" at 8.05am.

I came home with a couple of half frame cameras and some WD electrical stuff.

#### Security

As engine prices continue to spiral and power tools become ever more common, a well-equipped workshop and engine house become a tempting target for thieves.

Firstly, make sure you are adequately insured. In pursuit of which, take several photos of each engine, record the serial numbers and special features on the back and put them in a safe place. You could lodge another set in a sealed envelope at the bank & send a set to your broker to go in your file. You might be able to extend your house insurance to cover them, but special purpose and agreed value insurance is also available.

When you've got your spanners etc on the wall boards and tidied everything, take several photos of it all. It will make any insurance claim a lot easier. Practical security is the best aim. Don't leave power hand tools in the workshop, keep them in the cupboard under the stairs etc. Fit good locks on the doors. It is a really good idea to have two separate locks. For instance, a cross bar and padlock obscuring the mortise lock, means they have to get the bar off before they can even begin on the door.

*(Continues on page four ...)*

Articles, cartoons, photos etc are always very welcome - this is not a one-man band, but an expression of all our thoughts and experience. Submissions can be handwritten, (if brief), typed or word-processed - it is the content we're after, not the grammar or spelling, so please don't feel your efforts will be ignored. The editor reserves the right to change, edit, augment or lessen your

Deathless Prose and asks all to note that opinions expressed in this newsletter may or may not represent club policy

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## Featured Engine No. 11

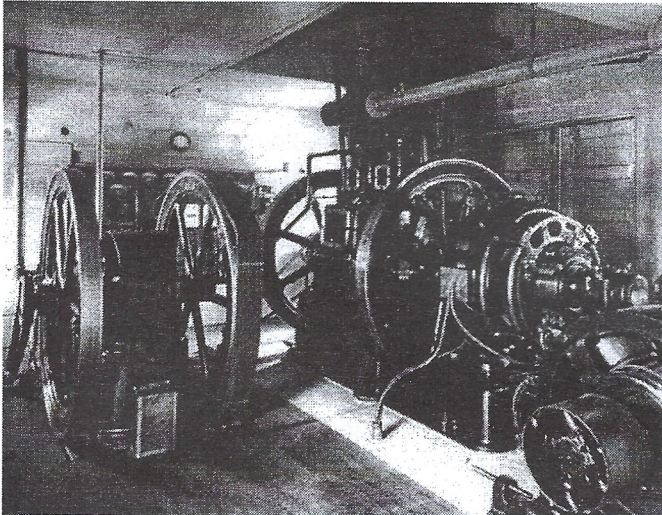
The Fairbanks-Morse vertical twin at the Mount Wilson Observatory, California.

By

Kim Siddorn

Whilst in the USA in October, Hazel and I were privileged to have a private conducted tour of the Mount Wilson observatory. Aside from the scientific instruments – still very much a modern, working establishment – Larry Evans and his brother Ken fired up the big stationary engine that used to supply all the power for the observatory. It was a most enjoyable day out and we are most grateful to them both. Much of the copy and most of the pictures here are mined from their website.

The Mount Wilson Observatory is located in the mountains above Pasadena, California at an elevation of just over a mile. It is the home of two large telescopes that were each the largest in the world at the time of installation and remains an active and modern scientific research site. In 1908 the 60 inch diameter mirror telescope was put into operation and the 100 inch instrument in 1917. The area was first used for astronomy in 1904.

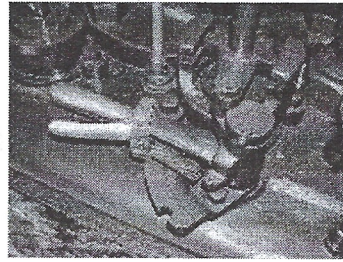


An early photo of the installation.  
The horizontal 25hp F-B (left) has long since vanished

The original wooden power house housed a 15 hp. Witte engine belted to a 7.5 KW AC-DC dynamo. The fate of this engine is unknown. In the autumn of 1912 the subject of this article was installed in the concrete generating house in which it still rests. It was the third generating plant at the observatory and is direct-coupled to a dynamo rated at 40 KW at 125 Volts D.C. The substantial building has protected it from the elements and vandalism for ninety years. Over the years, more devices were added the place is quite crowded!

In September of 1999, Larry and Ken Evans with their friend Mike Jones were able to renovate the 1911 50 hp. Fairbanks Morse Type RE engine. The engine was basically sound and no mechanical work such as bearings, rings, valves, etc. needed to be done. Naturally enough, lubrication, fuel supply, ignition, cooling and starting did need servicing or

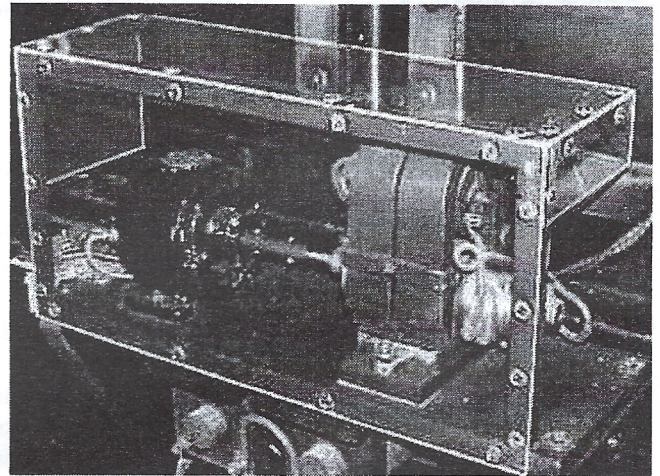
modification. Many original stores were still to hand and they even found the original spare set of igniters shipped from the factory with the engine. In February of 2000 it ran for the first time in 30 years.



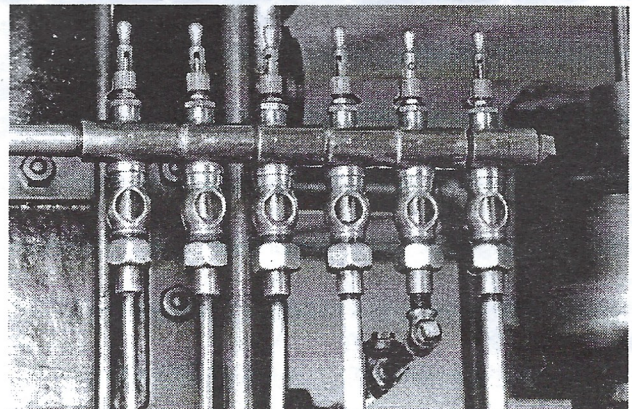
Starting is by compressed air and a lever alters the timing so that one cylinder becomes a compressed air motor until the other cylinder fires. A quick sleight-of-hand shuffle by the skilled operator

changes it into a twin cylinder engine again and it accelerates smoothly away to its governed speed.

The exhaust note is something to be heard in the cool mountain air, the summit of Mt Wilson being far above downtown Los Angeles. Air and light pollution is something of a problem, but being so high, much of the haze is well below the usable horizon of the big telescopes.



The ignition system is worthy of special comment, being a low-tension rotary generator powered by its own electric motor. The spark in the cylinders is – as mentioned – by igniter not sparking plug. Although set up as accurately as the equipment allowed, it was still possible to discern a difference in the report from each cylinder, each stroke being clear and separate.



The oiling system is comprehensive and sight glasses are provided along with separate controls.

<http://oldengine.org/members/levans/mtwilsonfm/>



## Calendar of Events for 2007-8

Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> **Event.** Crank Up at Nunney Catch  
 Dec 27<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Mince Pie crank up, Old Down Inn.  
 Dec 30<sup>th</sup>. **Event** Ivybridge & DVC crank up nr Plympton. Phone Pam 01752 335347  
 Jan 28<sup>th</sup> **Club night.** Guest Speaker:- Ashley Jones. An illustrated talk on the history of Pickfords  
 Feb 25<sup>th</sup> **Club night.** 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.  
 Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. **Event.** Spring vintage jumble at Cranmore railway station yard.  
 Mar 24<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Mells Daffodil Rally  
 Mar 31<sup>st</sup>. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Keith Shepherd. An illustrated talk on "35 years in the iron foundry industry and still learning"  
 Apr 12<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Sodbury Sortout, Newbury Show Ground. Bookings, 01454 323109  
 Apr 13<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Spring crank up at Nunney Catch.  
 Apr 19<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Enstone Sortout. Enstone airfield, Oxfordshire. Bookings, 01367 810415  
 Apr 28<sup>th</sup> **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Richard Harris. An illustrated talk about BBC outside broadcasting vehicles past and present.  
 May 10/11<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Braemare House – club visit, engines wanted. Contact Eric Gay.  
 May 19<sup>th</sup>. **Club night** Members Evening. Bring along ten photo's or slides on any subject. There will be a prize for the best effort.  
 June 4<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Wednesday Evening Crank Up:- At The Old Down Inn  
 June 14/15<sup>th</sup>. Club Annual Rally – more news later  
 June 30<sup>th</sup> **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Rob Armstrong, An Illustrated Talk "Cleaning Up Ranskill"  
 July 28<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Evening Crank Up:- At The Court Hotel, Chilcompton.  
 AUGUST 18<sup>th</sup>. No Meeting  
 AUGUST 31<sup>st</sup>. No Meeting  
 Sept 29<sup>th</sup> **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Colin Baker. A digital presentation on a vintage theme.  
 Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. Skittles and supper evening at Butler & Tanner, Frome.  
 Oct 18<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Winter vintage jumble at Cranmore railway station yard.  
 Oct 27<sup>th</sup>. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Mike Rowland. An illustrated talk on The Clifton Suspension Bridge.  
 Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Enstone Sortout. Enstone airfield, Oxfordshire. Bookings, 01367 810415  
 Nov 24<sup>th</sup>. **Club night** Guest Speaker:- Tony Scammells. A presentation and talk entitled "Just a little something".  
 Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Winter Crankup at Nunney Catch.  
 Dec 27<sup>th</sup>. **Event.** Mince Pie Crankup at the Old Down Inn. ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION.

### The Dorset Adventure

By Eric J. Gay

*Concluded from the October edition*

Now, no doubt you have all read the story of the showman's Engine "Philadelphia" in Vintage Spirit Magazine and others. I saw this engine at its first Rally not long after her restoration by John Newton of

Hungerford. She was built in 1912 and delivered to Wareham station to the order of Joseph Smith and put to work straight away driving a set of gallopers. Later the engine moved to Fordingbridge & she worked in showland in this area until the outbreak of war in 1939. Requisitioned for war work, she spent the war year working in agriculture with contractors William Everett of Gussage All Saints. She was used until 1948 when she was laid up beside a barn and then pushed inside and there she stayed until for the next 48 years. Discovered in 1966, it was not until 1999 that Mr Newton was able to buy the engine, by then in a very poor state. The story of the rebuild is well worth reading I will end by saying that this engine is a real credit to John and Brenda Newton. I will not bore you with any more talk about the showman's engines except to say that Saturday night saw 62 Showmans Engines lined up and working in the Fair Ground Area.

Again the area known as the play pen was a hive of activity from early morning until it was dark. I like to see the heavy haulage engines working & pulling various loads, the largest being a train engine a 2-8-0 of around 114 tons - some load. One of the heavy haulage engines "Old Tim", (named after her driver for many years, Tim Massey) is a splendid engine not yet refitted with her crane, but still a wonderful restoration. Old Tim was built in 1910 and supplied to Screen Bros. of Oldbury Birmingham it then started a life of very hard work, she became a well-known sight around the Midlands hauling boilers, castings, and anything large and heavy. With her crane and powerful winch, she would go to steel works, foundries, and workshops to lift & move heavy equipment. During WW1 she worked day and night with two crews for the war effort. Worn out by 1926, she was rebuilt and repainted at Burrell's works and worked hard for Screen Bros. until the end of the 1950s. After passing through many owners, she was bought in 1991 by her present owner, David Alien of Gillingham Dorset & in 1994 saw the start of a very extensive rebuild,

Another fine engine is Britannia. Brought back from Australia in 1960, the engine was later bought over the phone by Mr. Robert Coles sight unseen out of Steaming magazine. It has been totally rebuilt and is still owned by Robert Coles & Sons & Daughter - I wonder if daughter still has the clock she won at Semington Rally all those years ago.

I have only scratched the surface of the Great Dorset Steam Fair, I for one would not miss it and if God is on my side I will return next year, If you have never attended this show why not give it a go, as a visitor or why not come along and exhibit your pride and joy for the five days. Next year, we hope to arrange a party for stationary engine owners – I'll try to let you know if this happens. If any Wessex-Members want any information or help concerning the steam fair give me a ring. I am always willing to help and this goes for anything else concerning stationary engines or The Wessex Stationary Engine Club.



### Committee news

At a recent meeting, the committee discussed the question of whether to increase our insurance indemnity from the present £2M to £5M. This is because some event organisers have been refusing entry unless the exhibitor has insurance for the larger amount. After a lengthy debate and a vote on the subject, the committee decided as from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008 we will increase our Third Party Liability cover to £5M. This will nearly double our insurance premium. Coupled with recent price rises in postal charges, this means that the membership subscriptions will have to increase. As from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 the subscriptions will be £13 for a double and £11 for a single, with Junior subscriptions still only £1. This is the first increase in subs for over three years and it is still very good value for money compared to a lot of other clubs. **BJB**

### Chairman's Report

By Brian Baker

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September saw about 38 members visit by coach the Internal Fire Museum at Tanygroes, Ceridigion, Wales. This was certainly a long way to travel as it took about four hours to get there and about five hours for the return journey, but the museum really was something else, the beautifully displayed engines, all up and running was a joy to behold. I don't intend to elaborate on this visit as a full report by Michael Jennings will be appearing in the newsletter soon. The only disappointment was that we were not able to fill the coach, despite our high current membership.

Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> was the annual social evening and skittle match at Butler and Tanners Social Club at Frome where about sixty members and friends gathered for this very popular club event. The two skittles teams were captained by Jackie and Robin with some very high scores hit, also some very low ones. The eventual winners were Ray Chandler, highest scoring man and Carol Skuse was the highest scoring lady. Eric Gay managed to get the lowest score and Oliver Baker was the highest Junior. Robin's side were victorious with the score of 258 and Jackie's side scored 244. After the skittles Tony and Diana collected the suppers from the local chip shop which arrived beautifully packed and steaming hot. It was quickly dished out to the hungry members to polish off. This is always a very popular event because it allows members to get together for a natter and catch up on the gossip etc without the hassle of running and looking after engines. To round off the evening we had the usual grand raffle, I would like to thank the members who assisted me with this, also a very big thank you to a lot of members who contributed to the prizes.

Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> was Sortout Day at Cranmore Railway Station. This turned out to be a nice sunny morning for a change that saw a really good selection of stalls selling a very wide variety of goods including a nice selection of engines. A steady stream of buyers kept busy the volunteers manning the gate, and the café was packed to capacity

supplying food and drinks to all the visitors. This is a brilliant venue for this sort of event and long may it continue.

The monthly meeting at The Old Down Inn on October 29<sup>th</sup> had Roger Newman give an illustrated talk on narrow gauge railways in France and Austria. The scenery and the extremely steep tracks these railways had to climb was nothing short of amazing. It was a very good presentation put on by a very knowledgeable speaker. The usual raffle followed the talk with lots of very desirable goodies on offer to the lucky winners.

This is the time of the year when we are planning ahead for next year. As two long-serving committee members are not standing again, we are looking for new people to help run the club. If any member would like to join the committee and help run this magnificent club please let me or any committee member know.

### Social news

Our best wishes to Dot Watts of Worle for her 87<sup>th</sup> birthday on 27<sup>th</sup> December.

*(Continued from page one .....)*

Can the door simply be removed from the frame? Could the hinge pins be driven out easily?

Look at the workshop as if you were trying to break in having lost your key – if it can be done in five minutes, your toys are at risk!

Bar the windows with steel bars or flexible steel mesh that will not break even when it bends.

Now to the engines themselves. Remove anything attractive (like oilers) and separately expensive (like magnetos). Stationary engines are heavy great things, but we conveniently equip them with wheels, the better that the light-fingered may wheel them away! Easy solution, jack them up on blocks and take the wheels off – it will only take a few minutes. Keep the wheels and the jack in a separate place. In another building would be best, but out of sight in a cupboard is much better than nothing. Even if they find them, it will take precious time to sort out which ones go where, jack the engine up and refit them. Block doorways you don't frequently use with your heaviest de-wheeled engines. Fit all your trailers with trailer locks. Don't leave spades, crowbars, picks and sledgehammers in unlocked garden sheds.

The longer you can delay them, the more twitchy to be away they will get. The harder it gets to steal your things, the more likely you are to keep them.

Paranoid? Well, alright, I might be, but it is a wicked old world that we live in. Just think how devastated you would be to find the door wrenched open, all your hand and power tools stolen and – worst of all – the engine you have spent months renovating gone.

You know it makes sense .....