

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. OCTOBER 1984

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RALLYING WITH A DIFFERENCE

Most rallying is done with two feet firmly on the ground, but for Michael and I Yeovil Festival of Transport turned out to be far from that. A friend of ours, Christopher Davey, a leading pilot in his field, asked us to give him a hand over the weekend of Yeovil to fly his hot air balloon. This question to me was like a dream come true, as one of my ambitions was to fly in a hot air balloon, and I could hardly believe this was about to become a reality.

The ballooning events at the rally took the form of a competition with several hundreds of pounds at stake in prize money. The first competitive flight was on Saturday evening, but due to the bad weather conditions the flight was cancelled. But never mind it was good experience in how to get a balloon ready for flight and very good physical exercise. Sunday morning was the time for our next flight, weather permitting, and for this we had to be up and ready to leave the camp site at 6.30am. The morning dawned and it was foggy and we were informed we would not now be leaving the site until 7.30am, giving the fog time to lift and also time for breakfast. At the stroke of 7.30am we ventured forth to find a suitable field two miles from the show ground from which we could take off. The aim of the flight was to fly over the show ground and drop a marker inside the arena. The marker dropped nearest to 10.15am won a prize of £125 and the first marker to land in the show ground after 10am won £125. After much searching we found an area from where we were permitted to take off - this happened to be the driving range of the local gold club. First job was to lay the balloon out, connect 17 steel wires in a special order to the basket and prepare for inflation of the balloon! Michael's job was to help hold open the mouth of the balloon for the heat to enter. After 10 minutes of this he ended up with less hairs on his arm than when he started. My job was to wait and get in the basket when asked. After about 20 minutes we were ready and I climbed in the basket ready for lift off. Christopher gave the command and we started to float away. It was a magnificent feeling and so quiet except for the noise of the burner now and then. We started to plot our route to the rally field and by Christopher adjusting height we achieved our goal. Due to the wind current we were unable to pass directly over the arena and I just threw the marker when ready. Next we had to find a field to land. As the balloon approached a suitable field, the farmer came running out shouting it was alright to land. The landing was bumpy and it seemed ages before we could extricate ourselves from the basket and start to pack away the balloon. The retrieve party found us without too much difficulty and we were soon making our way back to the rally. Upon arrival we learnt we had won the first prize in both classes of the competition. The next race was in the evening and this time Christopher's wife flew and Michael and I went on retrieve. My job in the evening was map reader, while Michael drove, trying to get used to a gas converted Ford truck that was extremely lively on tight covers without the weight of the ballooning equipment for stability! It is one thing wanting to go the same direction as the balloon is flying and another trying to find a road! But our team effort was successful and we managed to find them soon after they had landed. Retrieving the basket was a simple task, but the wind had dragged the envelope (balloon) on to an extremely obstinate thorn hedge - Michael still bares the scares! On returning to the rally field, we learnt our team had again won first prize, but this time £500.

For many reasons it will be a rally I certainly shall never forget and I am still on cloud nine, maybe next year Michael will fly as well. But it is one rally we shall certainly not take an engine to as there is not enough time to run an engine, fly balloons and see all the delights of Yeovil Festival of Transport.

Jane Cannon

THE WHITE HORSE SHOW -UFFINGTON, 26/27th August

We arrived on Saturday afternoon in convoy with Reg and Mary Butler and Stephen. Eric Brain was already settled in and he waved us into our space. After we had pitched the tent it was time for tea, then the engine was unloaded, the missus was moaning and we could not get the engine to go. After some swear words we abandoned the engine until the next morning, finishing the evening with almost enjoyable barbeque.

Next morning, after discovering we had left our frying pan at home and borrowing Mary's, came the job of getting my Lister single flywheel A-type to start. We had many futile attempts and eventually decided that the magneto was at fault. Enquiries were made to other engine-men, one of whom said he would bring a spare mag the next day; with a new plug, purchased on the rally field, this enabled us to run the engine all next day.

A gymkhana was in progress on the Sunday, also Lawn-Mower racing and with the display of engines was a Robey Steam Mill Engine driving a generator which I had not seen before. Also present was a large early Wolseley engine of about 5 hp. Mike and Jane Cannon arrived on Sunday evening and pitched their tent, then the barbeque was lit up again - and the cans and bottled opened up. We all settled down to a good evening.

Monday was warmer and less cloudy than the previous day and we had a display of the Berkshire Vale Hunt. In another part of the grounds were the heavy horses and a carriage pulling competition.

On both show days were had magnificent displays of free fall parachuting by the Trailblazers Parachute Team and aerobatics by the Marlborough Pitts Specials using three aircraft although one was

missing on the Monday. (Not sure where the third one was, perhaps he had magneto trouble as well..!). Other Wessex members were Mike and Jane Cannon, with a Petter S-type; Eric and Ann Brain with a little Ruston Hornsby ZPR 2 hp; Jim Miller with a Ruston Hornsby APR 2½ hp; Reg and Mary Butler with a Wolseley WD driving a water pump.

Finally, the wife stopped her moaning, the engine was stopped after running quite merrily all day and the worst part of the day had come, time to pack up and go home after a very enjoyable weekend. Many thanks to Eric, Reg, Mike, and all the Swindon and Cotswold Club members for their valuable help and interest in getting my Lister to go.

Dave Clack (with some help from my Secretary, Mary Butler)

YESTERDAY'S FARMING - The South Somerset Club's 2-Day Event at the Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet on September 1st/2ns.

To say that Yestersay's Farming is a rally is somewhat of an understatement, it's a way of life to many of the members of the South Somerset Agricultural Pres.Soc. Their dedication and hard work was amply rewarded this year in a rally which was much improved on last year's, especially weather-wise. Horses featured again this year, regretfully they were not ploughing but even so, they were turned out to perfection. Craft stalls were situated in the Cheese Pavilion; again you could have bought anything from a wax owl to a book on fishing. As usual the engine fraternity was well represented, my favourite being Pete Holloway's National Gas ¾ hp of 1913.

At the award presentations, it was interesting to see the majority of the first class awards going to WSEC members, congratulations to them all...and to the Show Committee for organising an excellent event.

Chris Gulliford (The Fowler Man)

AND...

The South Somerset Club's 'Yesterday's Farming' was on Sept.1st/2nd. We arrived there at about 9 a.m. on Saturday and soon found our allotted places. We unloaded the engines and had a few words with other exhibitors. There was a lot to see there, vintage tractors, thatching competition, country dancing, and heavy horses. I thought the scarecrows made up by the children were very good and Brian Munt said they looked like the Wessex Committee. Phil Harris said they could probably organise things better than the Wessex Committee. (This bit of information could be construed as an offer by that gentleman to come on the committee and help do better!Ed.). The Shire Horses were well made up with their brasses shining in the sun. Wessex enginemen who attended were Messrs. I & A Cox, Alan Sweet, Phil Harris, Eric Brain, John Emery and Tom Randall who was not only exhibiting his Bamford in a patch of nettles to hide the non-original silencer, but was seen forming part of the musical backing for the country dancing; a man of many talents! It was a very nice rally but I was a bit surprised to find no stalls or Auto-Jumble.

Sunday was the best attended day of the weekend; it was quite packed; we collected our plaque about 5 p.m. packed up and headed reluctantly for home.

Bill & Eric Coombs

OUR FIRST YEAR'S RALLYING

I joined the WSEC 2 years ago and really enjoy belonging to it. 1984 has been our first year of rallying and we have thoroughly enjoyed it with one exception.

Our first rally this year was the Nailsea Rally in May at the Scotch Horn Centre where we arrived about 9 a.m. and unloaded the engines and pump. We kept our fingers crossed that all would be well but when we put the red dye in the water of our Wolseley WD11 driven pump to make it show better, the glands of the Lister pump leaked where the piston was pitted and red water flowed everywhere. Anyway, we ran it all day...and the Lister A-type too. A good crown of Wessex members were present in spite of the weather being cold and at 4 p.m. we were presented with our plaques and thanked for coming; a very good and enjoyable day out.

Later the same month we headed for Cricket St.Thomas Wildlife Park leaving home early because the two engines and pump, trailer, and all the various bits and pieces weigh a ton up behind the car and I like to drive steadily. We arrived safely, meeting Bill Foster, who told us that we had to park the car and trailer away from the engines down at the bottom of the field. Now I don't know how other members feel about that idea but I don't like it at all. It was quite a nice rally, however, with lots of good engines there, and once again, a high proportion of Wessex members. It was quite cloudy all the morning and rained heavily all afternoon, the plaques came around at 4 p.m. and even though I got really wet, I enjoyed the event and many thanks to Bill Foster for having us.

Our next event was the West Dorset Rally at Gore Cross, near Bridport, but we could only go on the Sunday because of work commitments. We arrived early and Bill Appleby gave us a hand to unload. The grass was very wet as we had a heavy dew but the sun soon came out. The rally was well set out with the exhibitors vehicles, caravans, etc. parked behind the engines, which I think is very nice especially as you can take cover when it rains. There was plenty to see and the day ended all too soon.

Our own Wessex rally was next on the 16/17th June but as it was held only 3 miles from home at Norton Down we didn't need to leave until quite late. There was a lot of engines already lined up so Eric and I got ours unloaded and soon had them started up. We were told that the Lion's Club were going to open the gates at 2 p.m. which seemed a pity as it was like only a half day rally. Never mind the sun shone really hot all day and the prizes and plaques were presented at 4.30; congratulations to all the award winners. We thought this was a really good rally especially with a site right on the main road.

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The following weekend, we went to another local show, Wings & Wheels at the Royal Bath & West Showground at Shepton Mallet. Most other exhibitors were already there when we arrived including all the cars commercials, tractors and so on. We had a walk around and saw plenty of our friends like Ron Torr and his wife, Henry Esain, and many more. It was a nice day with a lot of cloud but no rain; we saw Eric Brain ride by on Vice-Chairman Robin Lambert's motorised bike; he looked very comical as he was wearing a Home Guard tin hat.

On the 1st July we went to Hucky Duck Rally at Frome, where we met Rob Lambert, Bill Appleby, Claude and Marion Lowther, Phil and Audrey Harris and a few more. All the engines were soon running and while Vi and Audrey went for a walk, I fell asleep, waking up just as the Holcombe Majorettes were entering the main arena; very nice they looked too! Another nice rally and the weather was very hot.

On August 11th Eric and I headed for the Yeovil Festival of Transport, again organised by Bill Foster and his able band of helpers. All the exhibits were beautifully polished up and there were stalls and trade stands in abundance, doing a roaring trade. We went home overnight, leaving Phil Harris to look after our engines; next morning, after I had fed the ferrets, we were away by 7 a.m. having a very foggy journey back to the showfield. The sun soon shone through, however, and it was as hot as the previous day. This was our first 2-day rally, but even so, I didn't see half of it myself as all too soon it was time to pack up and head back to the Mendips.

Our next 2-day rally was the SSAPS Yesterday's Farming, again at the Bath & West Showground. Followed the next Sunday by the Science Museum Open Day at Wroughton, near Swindon. This was Sept.9th. Violet said she didn't want to come as she had some work to do at home. Eric and I twisted her arm a bit and she finally agreed to go. It was a 42 mile journey to the airfield and arriving at the entrance, we asked the way to hanger L4. After driving round a bit to come to hangers D3 and D4 were we were told 'just around the corner'. I did just that and came to hanger C3 feeling quite lost. Two chaps then directed us right to it, but we were told to unload our engines and bring the car back to the main car park. I told him 'not bloody likely' as it was miles away. Eventually, at hanger D4, some exhibitors were unloading their engines came across to us and said, your'e from the Wessex Club, you are up at the top side of the ropes away from us'. I don't know whether it was what he said or the way he said it but we had nearly had enough by then. Anyway, we unloaded and set up next to Reg Butler; it didn't seem so bad when we met someone we knew. In hanger L4 there were four rows of every type of tractor you could think of, next we got on a bus and for 30p we could go anywhere we wanted to all day. Four hangers were open to the public so we had a good look around and very interesting it was too. When we got back to the car, Reg Butler came over with an envelope addressed to Mrs. Emery containing 6 programmes and a plaque...yes only one plaque...and by then we had all bought a programme each! It seemed that other exhibitors had one plaque each, the Wessex Club had just one plaque! 'What shall I do with the plaque?' Reg said. 'Well it was addressed to Mrs. Emery, it ought to go to her' I replied. We went into the hanger and asked the chap at the desk and he said we didn't get any more, which was very strange as the Swindon Club and the Cotswold Club members had one each. Why treat us any different? I lost interest in the show from then on...it wasn't the plaque so much as being treated as though we had the plaque. It was a good place as a visitor but really poor from an exhibitors point of view. This was the exception mentioned in the opening paragraph, we enjoyed every rally we went to except Wroughton.

Bill Coombs.

(Bill's remarks regarding Wroughton are, unfortunately, echoing those of Wessex exhibitors in previous years. Strange, as they came to us for advice regarding the Stationary Engine side of things when they were first thinking of holding an Open Day...we have only ever had one plaque....Ed.).

THE AUGUST CLUB MEETING

This meeting was for members to bring along their slides and photographs to be shown using the Club's epidiascope and the projector kindly brought along by Michael Cannon.

The evening started with a look at some American engines and rallies, sent to us by Robert Donnelly from Devon; they depicted many engines not seen in Britain. This was followed by local engines and events including slides taken at Bristol Wine Fair Rally with many different steam locomotives en route around the city. These slides were taken by Claude Lowther and myself.

At 9 p.m. a break was taken to replenish our glasses and Herbie got busy selling raffle tickets which resulted in four people being very happy. First prize, a bottle of sherry, went to Audrey Harris; second, a set of glasses, won by John Wheelwright; third, a wire brush, to Mark Tilley, presumably it is now in Dawn's bottom drawer; and fourth, a picture frame, to Mary Bolas.

The show then continued; next came slides of the Club's visit last year, to the Crofton Steam Pumping Engine, which quite a few of our members attended. This was followed by some super slides taken at the GWR Sociey's Steam Open Evening at Didcot, these were taken by Michael Cannon using a 400ASA film as a try out, it produced excellent results.

After the slides came our Epi-whatsit-cope..! with President Tom showing Brian Munt doing some home plastering work at his home. What a contrast from Stationary engines, but it all caused a good laugh, especially one of Brian doing his 'Billy Graham' impression.

More photos, this time by Brian Verrall, took us to Blagdon Pumping Station, a 'dry' Stourpaine! (some year's ago..!), Wings & Wheels, Andover and Heddington and Stockley rallies, all with a nice selection of engines.

Many thanks to all who contibuted to make this evening, which went on till 10.30 p.m. and proved to be very entertaining.

Frome Rambler's Missus

THE CLUB EPIDIASCOPE was originally purchased as a means of projecting pictures at Club Meetings in a 'Vintage' manner. As recounted in recent Newsletters, it has always proved troublesome; both the mirrors and lenses having suffered the ravages of Old Father Time, and, even worse, the picture holder glass could never stand the heat produced by the lamp. We have, since the August meeting, traded the machine for one of more recent manufacture; this has proved satisfactory in the September meeting (even though it requires an Aircraft Hanger size shed to store it in...). Thanks to Brian Munt for negotiating the deal.

FOR SALE

Aldis 35 mm projector with single slide action, complete with large screen on a tripod. £20 the lot. Tel. Ray Earle, Langport 251758

Lister D. & trolley, Lister Junior, Petter A, Lister Water Pump. For further details tel. Terry Temlett, Weston Super Mare 512943

1947 Lister D on its original trolley with Lister H1 water pump and complete with 110 volt generator and panel. Rally condition. £125 ono, also four cast iron wheels, 12"x2½" complete with axles. £10. Mr.J.Bevan, 27 Devonshire Rd., Weston-S-Mare, Som.Tel. 416670

Lister Diesel 5/1 with small generator, reasonably complete with cooling tank. Please contact John Emery Te.(0761)52939. South Bristol area, £100 ono.

Small air compressor suitable for use with small engine, £40; ML flick magneto, £25; BTH twin cyl.magneto, £10. Tel. (0761)52633, Eric Brain.

WANTED

Engine for Honda C90 motor cycle, must be complete and in good running order. Phone Robin Lambert, Frome 63526

Two wheels, fast and loose, 8" dia.x 2½" wide with four spokes. Can swap fast and loose 10" x 3" wide with curved spokes. Pete Holloway, Meadowside, Halfway, Chilthorne Damer, Yeovil, Som. Tel. Ilchester 840370.

DON'T FORGET

Cotswold Oil Engine Preservation Society's 8th Annual Auction of engines, tractors, tools, cars, etc. at Farmers School, Fairford, Glos. on Saturday Nov.10th. Gates open at 8.30 a.m. sale starts at 12 noon. Information from Mrs. B. Cross, Pettersville, 2 Chelworth Rd., Cricklade, Wilts. Swindon (0793)751538.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

November 26th. 'Call my Vintage Bluff'. A guessing game using some strange objects from Grandfather's day. with Farmer John Forward from the 'Longhedge Collection', Corsley, Wilts.

December 8th. Dinner and Dance at the Masonic Hall, From, Som., Cheaper still this year at £5 per head. Dancing to the 'Farmer John' Disco. Tickets from Diana Emery, Odstax, Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr.Bristol. Tel. (0761)52939. Details were in last month's Newsletter.

November 18th. Winter Crank-Up at the Old Down Inn, Emborough. This is a Sunday event by popular request whatever the weather! Start at around noon in the slip road alongside the car park. PLEASE come along and support this event.

A very full programme of events has been arranged for 1985 including a Jumble Sale in March, Club Rally - June 22/23rd, not forgetting of course, the 'Cindy' film show at the January meeting. Full details next month.

We are pleased to announce that Mark Maybee had been finally cleared of leukaemia from which he has long suffered. Well done Mark, for your determination and courage. For the benefit of new members, it was Mark's illness which first prompted this Club to collect specifically for CLIC (Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood Trust) at its events.

We would welcome any member wishing to come onto the committee at the AGM to make their approach to Ian Skuse or any committee member as soon as possible.

STOP PRESS

Wessex first motoring event won narrowly by Fiat 126! Full report next month. This must have been our most poorly supported event since the Club began....equally, for those who bothered, it was one of the most enjoyable.