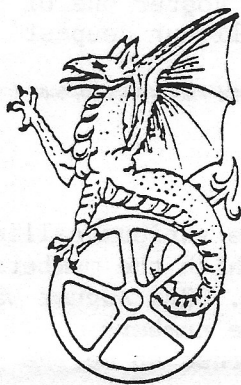


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1988

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THE SPANNER.

Thank you to the South Somerset Agricultural Preservation Club for the copy of their newsletter duly received. Thanks too for the two complimentary tickets to Yesterday's Farming but due to the recent postal troubles they unfortunately did not arrive until after the event. Which leads me conveniently to the general subject of newsletters.

The WSEC distributes copies of our Newsletter to approximately a dozen other similarly orientated clubs. I suspect they reciprocate by supplying us with copies of their newsletters - but what the heck happens to them? I don't see them, yet I have a suspicion that some are received by members on behalf of the club and retained for their own personal enjoyment. To my mind this is just not on. Obviously these newsletters cannot be circulated to all WSEC members but I do believe they deserve a much wider distribution than at present.

I would suggest the following. All complimentary newsletters be received at a central point and they be made available to Committee members at their monthly meetings. A circulation list of members who wish to see these newsletters be then compiled on the understanding that they are only retained for 24 hours before being posted on to the next member on the list, with participating members paying the postage. The member on the head of the list going to the foot next month to ensure some fairness.

Come on Committee let's get ourselves organised. If a volunteer is required I'll have a go to get it off the ground.

While on the subject of newsletters Brian Verrall showed me a copy of the Manawata Vintage Machinery Club's newsletter. Mana where, you say, Palmerston New Zealand of course. Terry Chapman of the Club was a recent visitor to WSEC and I note his title is "Club Captain". Don't you think that's a much better title than Chairman. How about it Mr. Munt?

From the same source I learn that the Wellington (NZ) Vintage Machinery Incorporated have built themselves a machinery shed in which they hold their meetings, undertake restorations and use as an engine store when space at home is limited. The project is financed by the issue of \$100 Debenture Stock to it's members. What a cracking good idea. Perhaps it would not be practical for us, as I suspect land values may be different down under. Perhaps however we could rent suitable premises somewhere. Nowadays with farmers being encouraged to take their land out of production, there is a barn or similar that is surplus to the owners needs. Is the idea worth pursuing? Your views would be welcome.

A change of subject. I estimated that WSEC members between them own well over 500 engines. Most of which never see the rally field while even fewer earn their keep. I have only been able to locate two which work for their living, Denis Hodges' Bamford EV3 and Bert Petty's Amanco both of which drive saw benches for their petrol. Doesn't that strike you as strange, now of course someone will prove me wrong.

Arthur Smith's arrival in the dusk at the Shepton Mallet show caused some consternation I'm told. Not only did his trailer tow away a goodly length of guard rope but also managed to demolish a fellow exhibitors toilet tent. Thankfully not occupied at the time. It is suggested exhibitors take note until Arthur's navigational radar has been recalibrated..

Cheers,

Claude Lowther.

CONDOLENCES

It is with sadness we record the recent death of Joyce, the wife of Bill Foster one of the WSEC's longest members. The Officers and members of the Club extend to Bill our deepest sympathy at what must be a grievous loss.

CLUB ACTIVITIES.Club Meeting - 22nd August - Members Night.

"Bring along your slides and films to show the rest of the membership the various rallies that you have visited and enjoyed". This was fairly straightforward and one which the members enjoy - or at least they would if people had remembered to bring their slides. 22nd August was admittedly a bright day, one of the few we had in the holiday season, when the numbers attending could be expected to be lower than usual, but only some 30 or so turned up on the evening.

Brian Munt had brought a slide projector and opened the meeting with the words "Now who's got some slides to show?". There followed a distinct pause, until Vic Walton spoke up "Yes" he said "I've got some here, but only 36". The projector was duly set up, the lights dimmed and Brian took over. There was one slight problem however, Vic couldn't remember which of the slides were taken at the WSEC Cheddar Rally and which had been taken at Castle Combe. We were told to look for distinctive features - we did. Rapidly the film show became the Rally with the blue or yellow ropes; eg Cheddar had yellow ropes around the engines while Castle Combe had blue. Easy when you know how. Much discussion and merriment ensued as the whereabouts of each rally was identified using this simple formula.

Vic had taken some interesting slides. Petters, Amancos, Villiers, Blackstones, they all made their appearance. One particular slide showed Mike Cannon and friends attempting to start a large Petter "S" type. In the next slide they had succeeded, but the slide was a little on the dark side. Our President was heard to comment that the smuts from the Petter "S" had blocked the light, roars of laughter greeted this and it was some moments before order was restored.

By 9 o'clock the film show had finished, Herbie was unable to do the raffle due to harvesting and general chattering and drinking continued. The meeting would have broken up then but the Cam Valley Morris Dancers came in asking if they could use the main room to rehearse in. We stayed on and had an enjoyable half an hour watching the Dancers go through their routines. Their energy is incredible, Morris dancing is very strenuous and they certainly danced with enthusiasm. A pleasant way to end our Members Evening.

However Members Evenings belong to YOU the members, it's your chance to show the rest of the Club the things you have enjoyed, the serious and funny moments, not forgetting the engines, at the various rallies throughout the year. So come on, get those cameras clicking and videos whirring, it takes very little effort and can be incorporated into a worthwhile members evening. If we don't "pull our fingers out" the evening will be replaced by something else. Don't let this happen for next year, let's have dozens of slides to choose from.

A big thank you to Vic for bringing along your slides and a commendable thank you to Brian for turning what might have been a fiasco into an entertaining evening.

HAZEL GETSOM

CLUB DIARY

Monday 28th November. Mr. Ernie Walker of the CEGB Control Room, Bristol will give a talk on the operations of the National Grid System and the generation of electricity at it's power stations. He will illustrate his talk with overhead slides and follow it with a video presentation. It has all the prospects of being an interesting evening.

Sunday 4th December. The Anti-Freeze Crank Up at the Old Down Inn, Emborough. So don't put away those engines just yet, brave the elements. You never know we might even get some sunshine.... More details will follow, but book the date now.

There will not be another Club meeting during December, as perhaps you will need reminding that Christmas comes but once a year and that happens during December... However we can look back at another interesting year of meetings, some maybe more so than others, but one thing has remained constant. That is the good company. Well done to the Committee and what have you in store for us next year I wonder.

RALLY REPORTS.THE DOUGLAS CAVALCADE 21st August.

Looking for a different rally to attend? I found myself invited to the 60th Anniversary Rally of the London Douglas Motorcycle Club to which I was asked to bring my 350cc Ex WD Flat Twin. The rally took place in the Park at Kingswood on the Sunday. The previous day had seen the motor bikes riding around the Kingswood area on the old Douglas test route, so everyone knew it was on. For those who might not know the Douglas factory was based at Kingswood, so it was like having a Lister rally at Dursley.

I was not the only stationary engine man on the scene as I found Gordon Cleall, Iwan Jones and John Rogers all armed with various Douglas singles and twins. We were all placed in a large marquee and told not to run our engines so this gave us a chance to look around at the bikes on show, all built between 1907 and 1957. Some shiney and polished while others were rusty but all were running. Also on show were some of Douglas' lesser know products like manhole covers, hand rotovators and a British Rail platform truck powered by a 1920 flat twin engine.

After a break for dinner we all agreed that engines should be seen running so we asked if we could take our machines outside and start them up. After showing insurance we were allowed to do just that. Within five minutes we had emptied the tent of spectators. The rest of the day was spent reminiscing with the men who had built the engines for a living and by all accounts enjoyed it. A pleasant day was had by all.

BRIAN REAKES.

THE TENCREST RALLY 7th August.

Can you remember when Summer came this year - let me remind you. The 7th August was the hottest day of the year, with temperatures in the high 70's. Cool wasn't it hot, but wasn't it grand. Someone must have smiled kindly on Bill Coombes, Phil Harris and Brian Verrall who on that day organised the Tencrest Rally and Car Boot Sale. Mind you, it very nearly didn't happen as when Bill rang the Tencrest Garage a week before to finalise arrangements they didn't know what he was talking about. Since his first contact the garage had changed hands and the new owners were unaware of the scheme. Still all worked out in the end with Mr. & Mrs. Ward, the new proprietors making us very welcome.

Thirty-one engines were on show, together with Mr. Pointing's tractor and Ron Torr's model showmans. Some were their tempermental selves with Herbie Gane's Bulldog running out of spark, while Bob Hallam's 1926 Crossley just wasn't trying. Perhaps the heat had something to do with it as even Mr. Punch wouldn't perform although his organ worked manfully. (I wonder do I really mean that?) It was interesting to see some engines in "as found" condition but running well. Dave Clack was showing his Bamford "as found", as was Henry Essain's Lister L type that has been in his family's possession since 1920. I only wish we could all work as well at that age. John Emery had his "Blue Anon" on show (John you must give the engine a name, it will solve a lot of reporting problems) while Mr. Emery Senior had his Amanco Hired Man and pump working well.

The associated car boot sale did good business too, with prices being reasonable many of those attending picked up some bargains. Phil Harris was selling an interesting American hand seed drill but perhaps it was gold plated and I couldn't see it. Despite Phil's sales patter we could not reach an agreed price without me increasing my overdraft, so I had to refer him to Sotheby's. Altogether there were 17 stalls, the charges for which raised £51, all of which the organisers passed to WSEC funds. Thank you folks on behalf of all members.

The raffle was really something with 43 excellent prizes, many of which had been donated by Bill's colleagues. A fair number of the prizes were of the bottled variety to, but I don't know if that is any reflection on Bill's powers of persuasion, but there may well have been a few hangovers for the lucky ones. Brian Munt organised the draw with Mrs. Ward presenting the prizes. All told the raffle together with the proceeds from the CLIC stall and other donations raised £224.40, all of which was donated to CLIC. A very worthwhile effort.

I for one, and I am sure I am not alone as others express the same opinion, prefer these one day events to the other mighty marathons. But I suppose we are lucky to have the choice. For the second year the Tencrest Rally produced a good day out thanks to Bill, Phil and Brian together with grateful thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Ward. Here's hoping that this will become a regular event in the rally fixture list.

C.H.L.

STOP PRESS.

FOR SALE. Lister A 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ hp, needs restoring. £15. S/H J.A.P. and Villiers spares. Roy Pointing
Tel. Shepton Mallet 4222, after 11.00 pm or early morning.

IMPROVISATION

Nothing delights an Englishman more than having to improvise and viewing the Cheddar Rally with it's most ingenious stationary engine conversions. I was reminded of some improvisations carried out over forty years ago on the other side of the world.

The date was 1944, the place was the jungle of Burma where the Indian Army division was smashing into the Japanese Army to capture the ancient city of Mandalay. The state of the game was that the tired Workshop Companies, toiling along behind the advancing troops, had reached the west bank of the Great Irrawaddy river, only to be met with the happy greeting that the General wants "An armoured motor boat that the Jap's can't see, can't hear and can't sink - and he want's it tomorrow".

Now about the last thing an Infantry Division, which has been on air drop for months and started out stripped down to the essentials has, is a motor boat of any sort; and in the middle of a ruddy great sea of jungle at that. However to compensate for this, what it did have was a much greater fear of it's fierce little Welsh General than any Jap or combination of same.

Given this powerful inducement, improvisation was the right word and after an all night conference in the workshop (at which some extraordinary proposals were made) we did agree on the least fantastic and started it to satisfy our slave driver boss.

We had three tracked Bren Gun Carriers which had been converted to recovery vehicles, (as the only things which would haul the light trucks and field guns through the jungle roads) and one of these was to be the battleship.

Latex rubber from the trees was plastered on everywhere to make the carrier hull watertight. A framework of heavy bamboo, lashed (noughts and crosses wise) on top of the hull, carried (three each side and one front and rear) empty forty gallon petrol drums; these had been parachuted down to us from the Dakota aircraft which were our supply line and which we had used as water storage once the petrol was used up.

This set up provided the vehicle flotation and the drums could be ballasted with some water to float the waterproofed carrier low down and almost level with the surface of the river.

Propulsion came next and by welding deep skirts of sheet steel (I sacrificed a water trailer to get the sheet) along each side of the track mudguards and by fitting deep metal hoods over the front of the tracks almost to ground level, we could trap columns of water between track and mudguard. Rotation of the tracks drove this water forward onto the hoods and down to emerge as a continuous powerful jet. The nose of the 'boat' lifted to the thrust which then passed underneath and 'lo and behold' we had jet propulsion. Once the V8 Ford engine opened up to full bore we had some real way on the boat.

The 'can't hear' silence part was easy as by extending the exhaust pipes over the back of the craft deep into the water a very acceptable noise level was produced.

Suffice to say that 'an armoured boat' was produced as requested and, at night, with barrels flooded just right, the craft was difficult to either see or hear at any reasonable distance. It did work on many projects and became the "flagship" of the 19th Division fleet of three warships.

The General was delighted - at least I think he was - as this was one of the few occasions when he did not moan at me and blame me for "those damned dirty mechanics who are always slowing down the Division".

The last criteria, that of "they can't sink it" was NOT met, due to serious misunderstanding. WE knew the Bren Carriers was not supposed to sink, "THE BOAT" felt the same way, but no one had told the Japs who, once they woke up to what we had done, proceeded to shell hell out of the entire countryside and our funny motor boat in particular (some people have no manners).

But the story of the sinking of our flagship and it's subsequent recovery from the bottom of the Irrawaddy is another story of improvisation.

Tony Adlington.

THE MARKET PLACE.

FOR SALE. Because of lack of use the Club's Epidiascope is now surplus to requirements and is being offered for sale, Offers are invited. Further details may be obtained from the Chairman, Brian Munt.

FOR SALE. Petter 'A' 1946 vintage, 3½hp. £20 ono. A good end economical restoration project. Details from Mr. Garraway, 31 Charlcombe Lane, Bath.

FOR SALE. Reproduction silencers for Petter 1½hp M Type, Rugby ballhopper and tank cooled engines. Price £30 unmachined or £40 fully machined, plus £5 carriage. SAE for details to, Graham Corry, Alyn Foundry, 14 Ffordd Lerry, Wrexham, Clywyd, WN12 8JB.