

# WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB LIMITED

## NEWSLETTER

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### EDITORIAL

Next year is the 21st Anniversary of the Wessex Stationary Engine Club, and the month of January is the month it started all those years ago. I intend to publish a special Anniversary Edition of the newsletter in January to commemorate this important milestone in our Clubs history. I would welcome any comments, stories, recollections, anecdotes, in fact anything from the past twenty one years that I could use in the newsletter, so come on, especially the long standing members with knowledge of the club from the early days, lets have 'a blast from the past', help me make this special newsletter worth reading, and worthy of keeping for the next 21 years.

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Some of the rallies I've attended this year have really got "their act together" and improved drastically over previous years. One of these was the Selwood Club rally at Rode Bird Gardens. This year there was plenty of room for the engines, more exhibits in all classes, more trade stands and a well laid out rally field. Well done to Steve and Eddie and their Wives and the rest of the committee. I really enjoyed my weekend there. Another rally that was packed with exhibits and masses of general public was the Countryside Cavalcade on the Bath and West Showground at Shepton Mallet. It really was well supported. The only problem was I took along my Lister 'L', this engine had not been used for the last three years and I found a large quantity of rust had accumulated inside the petrol tank, after trying for quite a while to get it running, without success, I realised the only solution was to remove the tank and clean it out. To do this I took it to my workshop which was only a couple of miles from the rally site, where I washed it out and then finally cleared it out with an airline. Then it was back to the rally field, fit the tank, clean the pipes and pump, it then started and ran perfectly all the rest of the weekend. While all my spanner work was going on I had the usual audience, some of which have heard me say on more than one occasion, maintenance should be carried out in the workshop not on the rally field, so it was a case of humble pie for lunch, one was heard to say "I bet he will not mention anything about this in the newsletter", well I have. Another rally that was a vast improvement on previous years was the Backwell Rally, a really well laid out rally field with some very nice large engines, an auction on the Saturday, steam ploughing, horse ploughing, tractor ploughing, tractor pulling etc. A very enjoyable weekend, a credit to Denzil and the rest of his committee. I only hope these rallies keep up this standard for next year.

### OBITUARY

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club was saddened to hear of the sudden death of Charles Hudson. Charles who lived in Pulborough, Sussex was a member of the Wessex Club for a great many years. He will be sadly missed by all his friends in the stationary engine movement, as will his vast knowledge of stationary engines and things electrical. The Wessex Stationary Engine Club members would like to offer our deepest sympathy and condolences to his Wife Carol and Family.

CLAYMILLS EXPERIENCE.

Having just finished a wonderful camping holiday in Derbyshire, Gerald and I were making our way home. I was navigating and not unusual for me we ended up on the wrong road heading towards the A38 at Burton on Trent by a village called Stretton. We could see a large building with a chimney in the distance but did not take too much notice, however, we suddenly caught sight of a notice which merely stated Beam Engine Open, with an arrow pointed in the direction of the distant building. We hastily turned off the main road, along and over a railway crossing before driving alongside a very large brick building and a large number of interesting shapes hidden under tarpaulins. After parking we walked towards some small workshop buildings where a large gentleman with flowing hair and beard met us. This is Clay Mills Pumping Station we were informed - would you like to have a look around? And so saying we were taken towards a large doorway to one side of the building. It was very cold inside and our first sight was a pair of pumps the height of the building, which disappeared about 10 feet to the floor below. Still stunned we climbed a spiral staircase which lead into the main engine floor, it was awesome, like walking into a cathedral. There were a pair of flywheels on each side of the building, they have an impressive diameter of 24 feet and weigh 24 tons each. Our guide gave us some general information about the site. Clay Mills Pumping Station was completed in 1885 to deal with the sewage problem which was increasing due to the high concentration of brewing processes in the Burton area and the large number of people brought into the area to work. The station itself consisted of 4 Woolf compound rotative beam pumping engines located in two separate engine houses. The engines were built by Messrs. Girigan of Leicester at a cost of £20,000 and were capable of pumping 125,000 gallons an hour. The sewage was then pumped  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles away to a purpose built farm laid out over some 300 acres. Originally the pumping station was illuminated by gas lights, the remains of the brackets are still visible in some parts of the engine house. Electric lighting was installed during 1889-90, being produced by a horizontal single cylinder engine by Buxton and Thornley of Burton, driving a Crompton generator. A second generator was added in 1906 also to drive a Crompton generator. This time the engine was a vertical duplex engine built in Clay Mills own workshops. In 1921 there was an accident to engine "D" which was to result in minor modifications to all of the pumping engines. This accident occurred as the "D" engine was being started to assist with a high peak load, normally two engines were employed but during peaks a third engine was also used. In order to "introduce" the third engine the others were slowed down and the third started, then all three were run up to full speed again, however on this occasion the steam valve jammed fully open and the engine "ran away", breaking the brackets on the pump straight line motion linkage and also bending the wrought iron pump rods. As a result, the pump rods of all four engines were replaced with stainless steel ones, and the main steam valves were reversed making them subject to less wear and also allowing steam pressure to help close them. After 1923 Clay Mills own workshops performed all necessary repairs and modifications. Between December 1936 and April 1937 all five boilers were replaced with five new Lancashire boilers by John Thompson of Wolverhampton with automatic sprinkler stokers by Meldrum and Clayton, driven by a small steam engine, economisers were also added and resulted in the movement of the generating plant into a new building. Between 1950 and 1957 chemical treatment of sewage was being commissioned. The first phase of the sewage treatment works at Clay Mills was introduced in 1968 with the second phase being operational by 1969, when all the crude sewage was processed. The steam pumps were still used at this time to pump sludge up to the farm but by 1971 they were superseded by electric pumps. After 86 years of service the steam plant became obsolete and for many years the future looked bleak, with demolition always hanging over the site. Although after the shutdown many items were sold or removed to museums. The engines themselves were still kept "warm" by the site foreman. A preservation group was formed early in 1980 with a view to put pressure on the owners to preserve the beam engines and workshops. The site was then listed and the fabric of the building repaired with the help of funds from English Heritage and the owners Severn Trent Water. In 1993 the keys were handed over to Clay Mills Pumping Engine Trust to restore the engines and open them to the public. In April 1994 the generator engines were steamed again for the first time in 20 years. The whole engine house is huge, it seems larger due to the cast iron flooring plates which are latticed, so that when on the top floor you have a wonderful view some 54 feet down to the base of the girders.

Clay Mills Pumping Station is a jewel with huge buildings to house the engines and now with a newly restored chimney. The workshops are getting back a large number of engines and machines which had been previously removed from the site but are now being restored to their rightful place. Although 2 of the 4 beam engines are in a rather derelict condition, they are still restorable and the Trust hopes to be able to get them working as funds and volunteers allow.

Now whenever Gerald and I travel to Derbyshire we always call in to see how work is progressing. We have done some restoration ourselves - but that's another story. For anyone travelling in that direction Clay Mills is almost certainly a must to visit.

HAZEL ATHERTON.



COMMITTEE NEWS

On Monday evening September 6th, our President Robin Lambert, our Treasurer Jackie Lambert, committee member Ray Baker and myself visited Rowdeford School, Rowde, near Devizes to present the school with a cheque for the sum of £300. This was a donation from the profit from our rally that the committee decided we would give to a deserving cause. Rowdeford School specializes in teaching children from the age of ten to the age of sixteen who have learning difficulties. We were shown around the School by the Head Master Mr. Glen Darnell who had only taken over the post in April having moved down from Yorkshire. The School has about eighty pupils of which about a quarter are boarders. The main building is a large country type house, set in beautiful grounds which contain several portable portacabin type classrooms. Glen Darnell showed us inside one of these buildings which was brand new, with new furniture installed and with three brand new computers that had only been unpacked that day (the boxes were still there) it all looked superb, and I was rather pleased to think our small gift would go towards these learning aids to help disadvantaged children. Glen then disappeared and came back with three of his pupils who were very polite, very well behaved and extremely smart in their school uniform, I really was impressed. They posed with their new computers while Robin took some photographs which Glen hoped he could use to get some publicity for our Club. No one really knows what happens to money they donate to charity, a lot these days do not get to the source it is collected for, but when you go as we did, and see the worthwhile work done for children less fortunate than most, it really does confirm we made a wise choice for our donation this year.

B.J.B.

THE FULL QUART CRANK-UP

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On Sunday 28th September the annual crank-up was held at the Full Quart Inn at Hewish. With much better weather this year the rally was a great success, and full credit must go to the organisers Roy and Ivor Cox, Don Rogers and Roger Pike together with their ladies and other helpers. I believe they raised in the region of seven hundred pounds for C.L.I.C. well done lads. There were plenty of exhibits, with a good selection of stationary engines including that very nice Ransomes Wizard belonging to Philip Thornton-Evison. There were three various steamers all in full steam, a selection of tractors and classic cars, together with some static exhibits including a stand with a selection of well restored petrol cans and motoring memorabilia, and of course motor cycles. Roger Pike had his usual produce stall which was doing brisk business, Linda had a bric-a-brac stall, and not forgetting the ladies with their raffle stall with a magnificent array of prizes. The raffle wound up the day with many happy winners. All in all a very good day. Many thanks to the organisers.

RAY BAKER.

BACKWELL RALLY

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Backwell Rally was held this year on a different site which I thought was very good. The weather was superb, and with a very good array of exhibits including stationary engines, tractors, classic cars and commercials, motor cycles and steam traction engines, also a range of trade stands and car boot type stalls. In the adjacent fields were two Fowler Traction engines doing ploughing from either end of the field. Many enthusiasts with their tractors were showing their skills at ploughing, as were several teams of horses doing some excellent work. An auction was held on the Saturday with several hundred lots for sale, this proved to be very popular with many bargains to be had. This was a very good two day rally, congratulations to the organisers.

RAY BAKER.

MENDIP MAYHEM

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I think the Gods thought "no mayhem" for that lot as the heavens opened. The day had a bad start with the sad news of the death of Princess Diana. It just went from bad to worse with thunder and lightning and hailstones. Never mind, we had a splendid turnout considering the weather, and myself and our little band of organisers give a hearty thanks to all that turned out to support us. A very successful raffle took place with Mary and Brian Verrall at the helm, and with half a dozen car boots and the C.L.I.C. stall we managed to raise a healthy £226.44 for C.L.I.C. and the Wessex Club. We hope to see you all next year for a hopefully drier rally.

LINDA AND ROGER PIKE.

THE MARKET PLACE

- FOR SALE - Lister 'D'. Reverse Rotation. Complete as found - £25. Please telephone Phil Marshall on 01761 471461. (Mendip Area).
- FOR SALE - Instant Rally Outfit. Trailer 4ft x 3ft. Complete with winch, electrics, ramps, has 7 cwt Indespension units using mini hubs and wheels. Good condition - £150.
- Lister 'D' type. Sold on March 11th 1933 to Winget Ltd. of Warwick. It was used to drive a cement mixer. Restored on trolley. In good condition. - £60.
- Lister Junior ('A type'). Sold on July 19th 1938 to Chas. H. Gallop of Bristol. Found in a shed in Wick driving a saw bench. It is in as found condition, but is now on a steerable trolley. Good condition. £120.
- Both these engines have been stored in a dry garage for the last couple of years, so might need a bit of looking at. A good project for the coming winter months before the next rally season. Ring Chris Arnold on Bradford on Avon 866565.
- FOR SALE - Petter A1 - 1½ hp. Class 2 condition, good runner, would make a good saw bench or generator engine. - £40. Tel: Robin on 01373 463526.
- WANTED - Set of four cast iron 4" or 6" wheels, or two of each. Or phone number of chap with four to sell at Rode Bird Gardens Rally on Sunday September 7th 1997.
- Also as we are new to this Club and to stationary engines can anyone lend or sell us a set of Stationary Engine Magazines that covers the restoration of the Lister 'D'. Just to look at, not to work off of, clean return guaranteed, any help appreciated. Can anyone supply us with information of the "Johnsons Patent Drum Pump" No. 0964. This pump has a flat belt drive pulley, cast iron base, and all brass pump assembly as it is not a piston or diaphragm pump. I think it could be used for oil, but would it pump water?
- Please ring Tony Davis on 01373 464982.

STOLEN TRACTOR

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As Editor of Farm & Horticulture Equipment Collector I am often the recipient of items of information relating to a wide array of preservation topics, while attending this years Great Dorset Steam Fair it was brought to my attention the theft of a 1942 Fordson Standard tractor, registration number JVT 143, from RAF St. Athan, Nr. Cardiff Airport, Barry, South Glamorgan. The tractor painted in the typical Ford dark green has the serial number 909612. Should you be offered this tractor or can furnish any information relating to the tractors whereabouts contact Darren Wills on 01445 794787. This unfortunate incident should be taken as a warning to all enthusiasts that the security of our treasured possessions, is today, something we must all keep to the forefront of our minds.

PATRICK KNIGHT.

CALENDAR DATES

FAIRFORD AUCTION. NOVEMBER 8TH. FARMORS SCHOOL, FAIRFORD, GLOS.

ED BOLTONS OPEN DAY. 9TH NOVEMBER. AMERSHAM, ON A 404 WYCOMBE ROAD.

SODBURY SORT OUT. 15TH NOVEMBER. A46, NR. CHIPPING SODBURY.

CLUB NIGHT. MONDAY 24TH AT THE OLD DOWN INN. PETER DEVERALL. TALK ON PADDLE STEAMERS IN THE AVON.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 7TH. CRANK-UP AND BRING AND BUY AT THE OLD DOWN INN.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27TH - MINCE PIE CRANK-UP AT EVERCREECH JUNCTION.

CONGRATULATIONS

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The Wessex Stationary Engine Club would like to offer our hearty congratulations to Linda and Roger Pike on their Silver Wedding Anniversary on the 16th of September. We wish you all the best of health and happiness for the future and many, many more years of wedded bliss.

THANK YOU \*\*\*\*\* We would like to thank all our many friends for the good wishes we received on the occasion of our Silver Wedding Anniversary.

LINDA AND ROGER PIKE.