

# CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

October  
2009

Thirty second  
year of  
publication

[www.wessex-sec.co.uk](http://www.wessex-sec.co.uk)

## From the Sump

I've been involved with engines for the whole of my adult life & spent many years in the motor trade, so I am not easy to fool when it comes to talking to garage mechanics. Just as well ... I took my BMW in for its MOT last week to a place that I'd frequented for fifteen years off & on. It failed on worn track control arm, back axle control rubbers, two new number plates and both front and rear suspension levelling valves leaking. Enquiries showed that the suspension valves were £400 each & it was two DAYS labour to fit them, deeply buried as they are in a complex vehicle. Around £1,600. Gulp.

My son-in-law suggested we ought to get a second opinion and, loath though I was to spend another forty quid on a car I had most reluctantly mentally consigned to the breaker's yard, I thought it was worthwhile. Upon his recommendation, I went to KwikFit, somewhere that I would never normally have considered. Track control arm, back axle control rubbers, new front number plate and a small rubber on the exhaust. Never even mentioned the suspension valves, leaking or not. Not even an Advisory Notice. It cost me a very reasonable £250 to get the work done & £25 for a retest. Pass. Hurrah!

When I thought about it, the first garage told me the case hardening had worn off the front brake disks when I had the pads changed there recently. Case hardened cast iron? I thought not. Anyway, if you have a nasty shock of this nature, get a second – and unprompted – opinion.

Last month, there was a successful attempt upon a World Speed Record at Edward's Air Force Base in California. "Inspiration" (excellent pun!), a steam powered vehicle broke the record set up with a Stanley Steamer in 1906 when it contrived to cover the Measured Mile at a sprightly 127.7 MPH. The officially recorded average of an up and back run was 139.84MPH with a top speed of 151.085MPH and the British-born driver Charles Burnett III was suitably pleased.

Powered by 300hp twin stage steam turbines, the three tonne, twin finned record breaker is made of carbon fibre composite and aluminium with a space-frame chassis design. It howls like a gas turbine and is – naturally enough – painted in a fetching shade of British Racing Green. Constructed by a team established in Lymington under the patronage of Lord Montague of Beaulieu, the vehicle represents ten years of research and work by a dedicated team. It is a triumph of original thinking and British engineering.

However, as it took 2.5 miles to reach its top speed and two miles to stop with its road wheel brakes being augmented by a parachute, I cannot see a production version appearing on the school run anytime soon.

## Moving the Metal

### For sale

**Drummond Lathe.** 1917, Has an interesting history. Needs to be seen and no reasonable offer will be refused. Phone William Bennett – 01749 - 830052

**JAP Model 55.** The unusual vertical twin! & apparently unused. Easy starter. Very sexy finned manifold. Apparently in good order. Might swap for something small & interesting. £140.00.

Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

**Stationary Engine Magazines.** July '95 (257) to Dec '06 (393) in six official binders. £50.

**"On Four Wheels".** '75-'76. Complete set in 8 official binders. £40. All in good order.

Phone P. Riley 0117 932 4345

### WANTED

**ABC engine.** Particularly 1915 250cc Firefly but anything considered. Good price paid for the right engine!

**Triumph twin WW2 genny or parts.**

All above, Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

**This column works -**

**Something sells here every month!**

## Special notices

Five current members of the Executive Committee are retiring this year, most of whom have served the club for many years in this capacity. Therefore, we are looking for new blood and seek nominations to the committee from the membership. You may send applications to me or to Hon. Sec. Arthur Smith, Coombe Castle, Heytesbury, Warminster, BA12 0EA in order to get them on the voting slip before the meeting so that applicants may benefit from Postal Voting.

### Postal Voting at the AGM

Please note that the committee has changed the rules slightly for next February.

- It was put to the committee that it's only common sense to be able to identify the voter. Therefore, voting slips will in future carry name & address lines.
- If you vote by Postal Vote and then find you can attend the meeting, your vote will be destroyed unread so that you may vote by a show of hands as required by the Constitution.

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 should be preferably typed or word-processed or even handwritten, (if brief), - 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

J. Kim Siddorn, 9, Durleigh Close, Bristol. BS13 7NQ or by e-mail to [kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk).



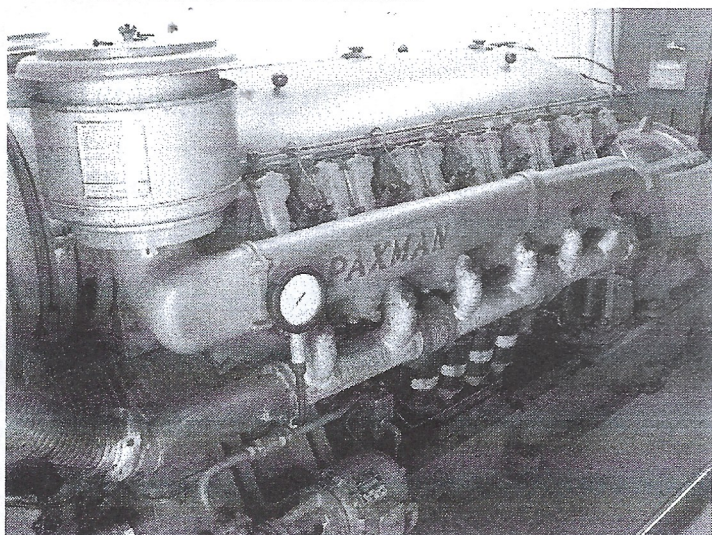
## Featured Engine No. 34

### The Paxman YGA air cooled Diesel

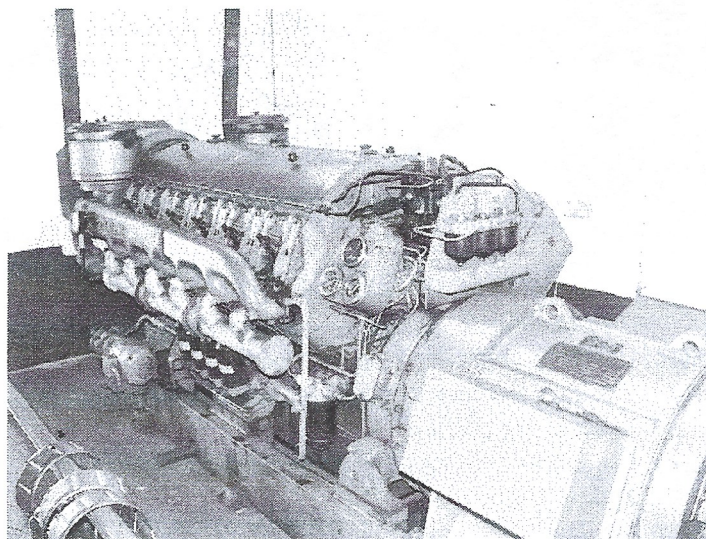
By Richard Carr

**Note:** The YGA was also known as the Vega, not to be confused with the later Vega launched in 1986.

The YGA was Paxman's only air-cooled diesel. The Company started investigating the feasibility of developing a large air-cooled engine around 1953/54. Design of the YGA was apparently mainly the work of Václav Laciny and Roy Goodridge. It is believed that Mr Laciny had worked on air-cooled engines with the Tatra company in his native Czechoslovakia before coming to England. A single cylinder test unit first ran in January 1957, and an eight cylinder development engine in June 1958. Three different designs of cylinder heads and barrels were produced before the final design evolved. Details of the engine were released in 1959 with plans to commence deliveries early the following year. A running example was exhibited at the World Oil Fair, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1959. The engine was also put on show at the German Industries Fair, Hanover, in May 1960. It was the largest industrial air-cooled diesel then available.



The individual cylinder heads and barrels were one piece aluminium alloy castings with hardened and tempered cast iron cylinder liners shrunk in. The 1959 publicity literature promoted this engine as being suitable for a wide variety of applications such as rail traction, oil drilling equipment, power generation and driving pumps and compressors. One of its obvious advantages was dispensing with the need for water or oil cooling radiators. Early models used to crack along the cylinder/block flange and this was resolved by using long studs which extended through to the cylinder head. It was not a long lived design as the engines were so noisy. To cool a 12 cylinder engine, while keeping it sufficiently compact, the fan had to run at high speed and consumed about 60 hp. The high pitched noise it produced was amplified by all the fins on the cylinders and the air ducting that surrounded the engine. The resulting sound was like a jet engine, making the YGA unacceptable for most applications.



Two 12YGAs, driving 200kW alternators, were supplied for emergency power generation on the P & O liner Canberra (launched 16 May 1960). The ship had to rely on the stand-by sets for propulsion during its maiden voyage when a major fire in the engine room disabled the main generators. An 8YGA was trialed in a Ruston-Bucyrus excavator. Another 8YGA, rated at 220 bhp was installed in a tanker barge, "MV Weasdale H", built by John Harker of Knottingley and launched in 1960. In this the engine was for main propulsion with belt drive between the engine and propeller shaft. Some NATO portable generators, suitable for airlifting, were driven by YGAs.

A 12 cylinder YGA was installed at Ffestiniog Power Station in North Wales to drive the emergency stand-by generator. The power station, commissioned in 1963, was the UK's first pumped storage hydro-electric facility. The engine has been removed from Ffestiniog and taken into preservation at the Internal Fire Museum of Power at Tan-y-groes, West Wales where it arrived on 2nd February 2005. Built in 1960, it remains in very good order and has only run for an estimated 200 hours. The engine was run for the first time at the museum on a crankup day held there on 12th October 2008. It was run about half-a-dozen times under the watchful eye of Alex Walford and ran well, being taken up to 1,500 rpm.

The last ten years of the active service of a 12YGA first supplied to the East Worcestershire Waterworks was used to drive an Automatic Mains Failure generator at Freemans of Newent's poultry Gloucestershire processing plant. Decommissioned in 2009, Freemans generously donated the engine and its MacFarlane generator to the Anson Engine Museum. At Newent the engine had been run every couple of months and when retired was still in good working order after 1,400 hours running. It arrived at the Anson on Monday 25th September 2009, complete with its original control panel and special tools, some of the latter still in their original protective wrapping. Thanks are due to Freemans of Newent for agreeing to donate the engine to the Anson so that it could pass into preservation. (Ed – Photos are of the YGA at Internal Fire.)



## Calendar of Events for 2009

Nov 14<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Engine Sort Out, Enstone, Oxon.

Nov 30<sup>th</sup> Club night (COURT HOTEL). Guest Speaker:- Keith Shephard, THE ENGINE MAKERS OF WESSEX

Dec 6<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Winter Crank Up at Nunney Catch.

Dec 27<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Mince Pie Crank Up, The Court Hotel (**Note change of venue**)

ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO ALTERATION

### Social news

By "Earwig"

Happy birthday to Arthur Smith on 19<sup>th</sup> & Bob Hallam on 24<sup>th</sup> October. I'm not saying what age Bob has reached, but Robin's bit about licenses might be important to him.

A special thank you to Diana & Tony Davis for organizing the skittle match at the Royal Oak pub at Corsley. It all went down very well.

### Chairman's report *(printed as received)*

In 1977 when the club was formed, the Old Down Inn was chosen as its headquarters for meetings and committee meetings as it was central to the area that members lived. After 30 years at the Old Down we have been told we are no longer welcome there as we do not purchase enough from the bar to make it viable for the business. We always clear up after the meetings putting the chairs back etc and Oliver and Henry usually collect up the empty glasses and takes them back to the bar, they collect a considerable amount each time so I do not know why Maxine says we do not patronise the pub. The October meeting on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October, with guest speakers Bob Burgess and Colin Dipper giving a talk entitled "Traditional English Folk Music" will be the last meeting at the Old Down. However all is not lost, thanks to member Fred Biggs who knows the owner of The Court Hotel at Chilcompton we can now hold our meetings and committee meetings at this venue. The first meeting at the **Court Hotel** will be on the **30th of November** when Wessex member Keith Sheppard will be giving a talk on **ENGINE MAKERS OF WESSEX**; yes it really is a talk about engines. For members who have not been to the Court Hotel before it is just down the road from the Old Down. On behalf of the club I would like to thank Fred Biggs for getting us this venue at such short notice and sincere thanks to Sue the owner for making us welcome. I can only add please patronise the hotel bar to ensure our long time future there.

The September meeting at the Old Down Inn had guest speaker Dennis Chedgy giving us an illustrated talk on Radstock in the 1930's. Denis has given us brilliant talks in the past, always from memory, not from notes. When I mentioned the fact he didn't need notes he said tonight is different I have got notes and I'm worried it will not work out. The notes he had was a written account of the childhood from the 1930's of a woman from Radstock. Dennis narrated these memories of the author from her childhood, illustrated with remarkable slides of Radstock at the time, they were of the

mines, slag heaps, shops, buildings, vehicles, taken all around Radstock, a lot has since been demolished and replaced by other buildings. This was a superb evening's entertainment by a very accomplished speaker and I'm sure it was enjoyed by all the members present. Dennis told me this author has done about half a dozen more of these diaries and now he knows this talk definitely works we might see him back again. The evening finished with the usual raffle which was well supported. That's it folks I'll look forward to seeing you in November at the **"Court"**.

### Vehicle driving licences

By Robin Lambert

Chatting amongst ourselves as we so often do at club events and on the rally field and with many of us, getting into our retiring years the subject of driving licences was brought up as to what we could drive and could not drive after reaching the age of 70. I mentioned that I had read somewhere that a chap on reaching the age of 70 had sent his driving licence away for renewal and when it came back several groups on his licence had been removed and he was now restricted to what he could drive, this may or could be a problem for members who drive heavy vehicles and tow weighty trailers, a recent article explaining this is mentioned in another magazine from which I quote.

If you pass your standard car driving test before January 1<sup>st</sup> 1997 you should automatically have category C1 on your licence which allows you to drive vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes. At the age of 70 you will have to reapply for your driving licence but category C1 will not automatically remain on your licence. In order to retain this category you need a D4 medical form which has to be completed by a Doctor, the form must be sent along with your licence application unquote.

So could this be a problem for any of us who have heavy tow vehicles and pull weighty trailers? It seems that there are different sets of rules for those who passed their car driving test on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> 1997.

So not wanting to stir up a can of worms it may be worth our while checking out exactly what our GVW are likely to be on reaching the grand age of seven zero.

**Ed** – I checked the DVLA website and Robin is entirely correct and I cannot add or improve upon his assessment of the situation. If you would like to stare at the paragraph, you can see it here [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/NeedANewOrUpdatedLicence/DG\\_4022086](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/NeedANewOrUpdatedLicence/DG_4022086)

Well done to Arthur Smith and Liz who are doing a splendid job of collecting money for Help the Hero's by parading their second world war Jeep in various carnivals and shopping precincts.



## Gremlins Strike At St Agnes!

By Robin Lambert

Around a dozen of W.S.E.C members once again made the long trip to this three day Cornish Rally. This is now almost become an annual pilgrimage for many of us as its a good chance to extend this visit into some holiday time after the event. The stationary engine steward always puts us together in the engine pen which is all nice and cosy as if you have a problem or two many heads are better than one particularly if they are your friends.

Well, this year most of us had our share of problems starting with myself when our little 1.1/2 Ruston Hornsby P.B started to spit back through the carburettor. I thought it has to be some carbon under the inlet valve, so with the help of William Rogers (a big strong lad is Will) the engine was tipped over on to its back and the valve cover was removed, exposing the valve stems. A few twists with a pair of long nosed pliers borrowed from Andrew Dry & we managed to grind the carbon into the valve seat - or perhaps dislodge it - curing the problem.

So, with my problem solved, despite David Hallett saying it was a Saturday & Sunday engine and never liked working on Fridays, the Gremlins then spread to David's engine. He has a horizontal Norman Twin complete with generator which stopped and started intermittently over the three day event. Further, his 12 volt generator would sometimes produce 42 volts so a few problems here needs sorting out! Don & Will's big 10hp Ruston ran like clockwork all weekend at a steady 200rpm and never missed a beat. Roy Cox's little R & H ZPR was fine, the engine bug leaping past these two and landed on Les Ricketts 4hp R & H model AP which had a bunged up fuel line and a dodgy mag. These problems were soon overcome as Les had a spare mag in his van. This wasn't to be the last of the W.S.E.C's problems, when Mike Snooks little Villiers generating set started to be problematic and his cure was to remove the spare plug and dry out the cylinder with fresh air.

I am not sure if all this waiting around proved to be too much for Ann, but she nipped off for a quick look around the stalls and came back four hours later! It was nice to see our Cornish member Kerwin Harris, we only meet up once a year and he is such a jovial chap I always feel much better for meeting him. We had a surprise visit from Linda & Roger Pike all the way from Chilcompton, now there's dedication, over a 300 mile around trip. I hope they enjoyed the show, their arrival on Friday was rather damp as the sea mist and occasional drizzle made conditions a bit slippery for vehicles moving around. It was announced that this was to be the last rally on this site as the show would be moving next year to the Stithians showground near Falmouth.

Aside from the Great Dorset Steam Fair, this show must have the most full size steam engines in attendance, I would have thought there must have

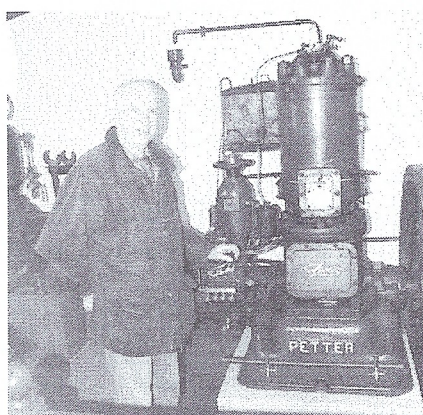
been more than fifty, ranging from traction engines to rollers plus showman's engines and Sentinel lorries.

The model tent was once again huge with some fine exhibits and chatting to one exhibitor he asked where I had come from and asked me if I knew Reuben Smith from Cheddar who used to exhibit there. He went on to praise Reuben for his engineering skills and the quality of his models, so Reuben its time you exhibited here again, your old mates are missing you.

To close, I must tell our readers about the boob of the weekend, David kindly offered to tow several club member's trailers to the engine pens for loading up after the show and haul them back to the camping area with his 4x4. This was a lovely gesture, as it saved some of us unsiting our campers. He made a few trips and when I was walking back through the camping area,

David was about to hitch a large trailer on to his truck. "Can I give you a hand with your trailer?" I said - "It's not mine." "It's yours." said David. "No, it is not." I said and we made a rapid exit as things could have got a bit difficult and a lot of explaining would have been necessary !!!!!

### Petters at Internal Fire



Following on from Robin's article about moving the engines from The Petters Collection from David Edgington's farm, I have pleasure in stealing this photo from the Internal Fire website showing David alongside the

freshly recommissioned 36hp TX Atomic. David said *"It was heart-warming to see the Atomic finally running after being in store at Lodge Wood Farm for over thirty years. Keeping these engines--the Harmonic, Handyman, Atomic Twin Marine, the large 50hp VJ, and of course this TX Atomic---safe, dry stored, and in the country of their origin, has been of major importance to the preservation movement. The fact that are now safe, together, and will very soon be operational again, is a great credit to Paul Evans and the Internal Fire team of technicians."*

### The Cranmore Sort Out Oct 17<sup>th</sup>.

By Kim Siddorn

On a fine, warm & sunny morning, the Faithful came together in the Cranmore Station Yard to celebrate their beliefs ;o))

It was crowded, lots to buy & sell - I s-o-o-o latched after a Kohler four cylinder genny complete & running on a trolley & in its working clothes with the best part of another for spares. Only £350 too & as far as I know he took it home! Too big for me ....

I bought a neat little Indian genny & lamp made in Poona of all places, did a stint on the gate, met friends & had fun. A very successful Wessex SEC event by anyone's standards - next one 6th March.