

CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

Oct
2010

Thirty third year
of publication

www.wessex-sec.co.uk

From the Sump

Ah, the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, when the nights draw in so you can't read in the late afternoon without turning on the light. When the leaves patter down onto the wet path and make a skating rink for the unwary. The nip of frost in the air that makes your hands ache when you pick up a spanner off the bench.

Time to dig out the workshop heater & check the plug & lead BEFORE plugging it in kicks out the RCD. Do you use a mains lead lamp? I have the one my dad used to use and it is likely to be pre 1930 as it is nickel plated. I check it regularly & being of high quality in the first place it is absolutely fine. Last year I was concerned to note the regulations banning incandescent bulbs – but pottering about in the cheap store the other day I found whole shelves of them still on sale! Service proves them to be electrically fragile as the filament will break if you drop the lamp, but otherwise they are fine. Certainly better than reluctantly binning something useful and nostalgic!

Do you store your engines near the house? Is your shed secure? As I do every year, I suggest that if your people access is different to the way you get your engines in and out, you could do a lot worse than levering your heaviest engine across the doorway and taking its wheels off! That goes for the rest of your collection too. They are heavy great lumps of things to try and steal without the wheels and that may be all you need to persuade the thief to look elsewhere.

You could wirerope them all together. Many have convenient spokes in their flywheels through which to pass a wire rope and a crimped on shackle at either end connected together with a girth padlock is a fine deterrent. The nice people at Bristol Rope and Twine will run you one up whilst you wait & in stainless wire if you have deep pockets. They are useful at rally sites too in order to attach your engine to its neighbour for the benefit of both.

Finally, before the frost comes looking for cast iron to split, don't forget to drain both engine and tanks. Best to do it with the engine warm, turn off the petrol & run the carb dry, drain the coolant and the hot cylinder will dry out the last of the water.

Moving the Metal For sale

Fred Biggs is selling his chaff cutter exhibit.

Lister D on 4 wheel trolley. A free standing 2 pulley reduction gear. A "Dennings of Chard" 2 speed chaff cutter, mounted on wheels and driven by a 4 foot pulley! For sale as a going concern - £300 no offers please. Phone Fred on 01761 413020

Atco mower, Villiers type CYA two stroke engine. Was working when last used some years ago, dry stored since. All complete - fuel tank, carb, Villiers mag, kick start, etc. FREE to anyone who will collect it. Ring David on 01373 464808 (Frome).

3 Listers D's None are running, but the engines are complete with fuel tanks & mags 27/9/1939, N/o 154745, Spec 23D2H, 2hp, 1000rpm. Supplied to Gascoigns, Reading. June '47, N/o 1/10545, Spec 28DH 1 1/2 hp, 700rpm. 6/10/1938, N/o 146292 Spec 23 DH 1 1/2 hp, 700rpm. Supplied to Alfa Laval, Brentford. Two have vacuum pumps, the first on a Lister base the second with Alfa Laval pump. These are in redlead only. The third has been painted. I want £60 for the Lister base, pump & engine & £40 each for the other two engines.

Phone William Bennett 01749 830052

Lister D. 18DH. Sold to Lewis & Son, Kettering on 9/9/37. On a four wheel oak trolley. £90 ONO

Phone Phil on 01933 386800

Wood-effect 15" high glass lined barrels. Just the thing for a small cooling tank. £15 each

Both above, phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

WANTED

Open crank engine wanted. Anything considered

Phone Reg Swindon 07193850257

Set of four 6" or 8" iron wheels

Phone Richard Gill on 01934 517322

Electric motor 3 Phase fractional hp, lathe suds pump motor would be ideal. Phone Gerald Atherton, 01934 852670 or gerald.atherton34@btinternet.com

PLEASE NOTE

- In future I'll run ads for TWO months. If you want to run it again, you'll have to phone me.
- If you have given me an ad for publication and it didn't appear, Phone me – don't just leave it!

South Somerset SEC Sortout Sunday 14th November

At Yeovil Football Ground, Huish Park, Lufton Way,
Lufton, Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 8YF

Somerset NVTEC Sortout

Monday 27th December

Bristol Sales Centre, Easter Compton, BS35 5RE

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

Phone - 0117 964 6818

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

Featured Engine No. 45

by Kim Siddorn

The Merlin & the Speed Spitfire

Several people were very kind about my presentation about Roll-Royce piston aero engines at the April club night, so I thought I'd split the text into several parts so that all our members can see it - Ed.

It would be unrealistic to speak of the Merlin engine and not of the Spitfire and Hurricane. I'll come back to these aircraft in more general terms later, but it is worthy of note that as Western Europe plunged ever faster towards catastrophe, an attempt was made to break the World Landplane Speed Record, using a highly modified Spitfire I and a specially strengthened Merlin II. You would have thought we had enough to do as it was, but there you are! This engine actually generated 2,160bhp on test and showed the potential for development of the engine. Most of the modifications developed for this engine eventually found their way into production Merlins.

In the summer of 1937, the Merlin II was reliably producing 1,536bhp, almost one third more than the initial engine. Airframe K9834 was taken out of the line and fitted with this new motor. All unnecessary equipment was removed, the skin flush riveted and except around the engine, all the panel lines of the aircraft were filled. A standard aircraft ready for flight was carrying 28lbs of camo paint but K9834 was given a single coat of very expensive Royal Blue gloss paint. To reduce drag, the wing tips were rounded and the total wingspan reduced. A new high pitch small diameter wooden propeller with four blades was used in an effort to keep the tip speed subsonic. The windshield and the canopy were streamlined and the tailwheel replaced by a fixed skid. The modified plane weighed 5,446 lbs, nearly 390 lbs less than the standard aircraft!



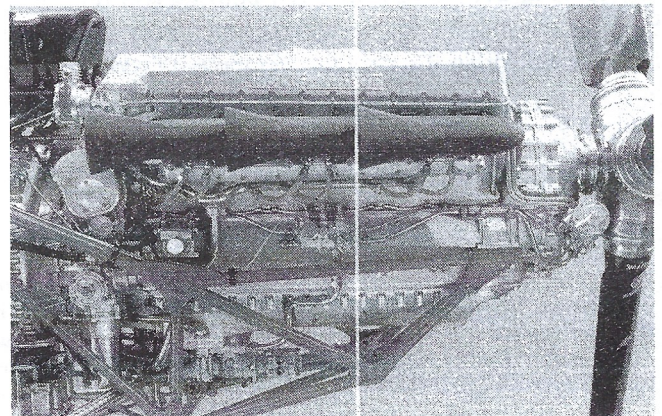
In November 1937, the factory squeezed 1,995bhp out of the special version of the Merlin, which would have been enough for the Speed Spitfire to reach 375 mph at low altitude. But at the same time, the Messerschmitt Bf 109 V13 was already able to do 378 mph! Now the Type 323 had to reach 383 mph, 1% more than the German plane, for the record to be approved. With further modifications and 2,122bhp, the engineers still hoped they could break the record. Mutt Summers first flew the Speed Spitfire on November 11th.

In February 1939, Harry "Bruin" Purvis managed to reach 407 mph at the altitude of 3,250

feet. At ground level the speed would have been slower, but still enough to beat the Germans. However, the British knew that Heinkel was about to enter the competition, so it was imperative to gain a few mph. It was decided to remove the big radiator under the right wing to improve aerodynamics producing 425 mph at low level. A new internal cooling system was designed which allowed the plane to fly the few minutes necessary to break the record. Work on the new cooling system had only just begun when the Heinkel He 100 set the absolute World Speed Record at 468 mph. Less than a month later, the Messerschmitt 209 achieved 469 mph, a record which stood for thirty years. It was finally broken on August 16, 1969 in the USA by a highly modified 3,100bhp F8F-2 Bearcat, at an average speed of 483.041 mph.

Of course this meant the end of the Speed Spitfire project. The plane was crated and later used as a static demonstration plane for the "Salon aéronautique" of Bruxelles in summer 1939. This could have been the end of the Speed Spitfire but in 1940, the RAF desperately needed combat planes. The type 323 was summarily re-equipped and fitted with a Merlin XII engine and a variable pitch three blade propeller. However, the modifications didn't allow any armament to be fitted inside the wings and the fuel capacity was also much lower than on a standard Spitfire. The only squadron that could have made good use of this hybrid plane was the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) based at Heston. The Speed Spitfire, with its smooth finish, still was one of the fastest aircraft in the world and Wing Commander Geoffrey Tuttle expected to be able to safely fly reconnaissance missions over France with it. Alas, he soon realized that he would have ran out of fuel twenty miles before reaching the British coast on it's return flight!

The Speed Spitfire finished it's career as a liaison aircraft and became the personal plane of the Commander of the 106 Photo Reconnaissance Wing, Air Commodore John Boothmann. Some said he flew over Normandy on June 6th 1944 to shoot pictures of the D-Day beaches, but this could well be a legend. Finally, K9834 - the 48th Spitfire ever made was unceremoniously scrapped in 1946 without having ever tried to break a record.



Calendar of Events

Key. Event – E. Club night - CN

Info, sort outs & crank ups, phone 01749 342671

Nov 13th **E. Enstone Sort Out**, Oxfordshire

Nov 29th **CN.** Guest Speaker:- Martin Phippard.

Carara Marble Extraction, Italy. Illustrated

Dec 5th **E. Crank up** at Nunney Catch 01749 342671

Dec 27th **E. Mince Pie Crankup**:- Court Hotel

Dates and venues may change. Check before driving!

Chairman's report *(printed as received)*

By Brian Baker

The club night at the Court Hotel on 27th September saw the members present provide their own entertainment with a quiz. I had compiled a quiz of 130 questions comprising of 13 rounds of 10 questions each on various topics including, history, geography, trees, plants, motoring, engineering, general knowledge, music, inventors etc. The nearest any member got to answering all the questions was Kim Siddorn, our editor with 74 correct answers. This won Kim the prize of ten pounds which he promptly gave to our treasurer to go back in club funds. Well done Kim for winning the quiz and many thanks for your generous gesture with your prize. I think the members present enjoyed the evening's entertainment which was a bit different to the usual guest speaker. Your comments on this would be appreciated by the committee as it gets harder by the year to come up with a programme acceptable by all the members. On Saturday 9th October about 40 members attended the annual supper and skittles match, this time at a new venue, the South Parade Club in Frome. It was a bit of a job to find but it turned out to be an ideal venue, with plenty of tables and seating in the same area as the skittle alley. The skittles commenced with two teams led by Jackie and Robin as captains. The skittles continued until 8 – 30 when Diane and Tony returned with the supper from the local chip shop, all nicely packed and piping hot. I had come prepared with salt and vinegar and tomato sauce which was promptly "borrowed" by some of the members. We all tucked in to the repast and when the debris had been cleared away we resumed with the skittles. After we had all played three hands the winners was announced, Jackie's team was victorious. The highest gent was Nick Shepard, well done Nick, (one of your family always wins this). The highest lady was Mandy Hains (Diane's daughter), they both received a bottle of wine, and the highest junior was Mark who received a bar of chocolate as his prize. After the skittles we had our usual raffle which contributed to club funds. Many thanks to Carol who did sterling work selling the tickets and helping me with the draw. Thanks also to the members who generously gave prizes. A very special vote of thanks goes to Diane and Tony who found this venue and organised the ordering and collection of the suppers, our grateful thanks to you both. Because of the success of this event I have asked Diane if she can book this venue for next year. I

would like to thank all the members who have contacted me expressing their condolences at the death of my brother Ray on the 27th of September, and many thanks to Robin and Jackie, Herb and Wendy and Keith Nash who attended his funeral on Monday 11th October at Yeovil crematorium representing the W.S.E.C. Robin rang me to volunteer to do an obituary for the newsletter for which I will be eternally grateful as I did not relish the thought of doing this myself.

Obituary

It is with sadness we learn of the death of Raymond (Ray) Baker, Ray passed away on the 27th August aged 86 after being in poor health for some years. Many older club members will remember Ray with his brother Brian at rallies and club events until he found his mobility getting more and more difficult. Ray spent some years on our club committee and at club rallies would spend the whole weekend sat on a chair at the pay gate doing all he could to be helpful.

He had an interesting working life. On leaving school, he started work in a cycle shop, progressing on to bikes with engines. At the end of WW2 he spent time in Jersey helping to dismantle the German fortifications and returning the island to normality. He had a flair for car body repairs and spraying and set up in business with Brian doing accident repair work until his retirement.

During this busy life, he helped to set up the Somerset section of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club along with Brian. At his funeral the Lady Vicar said Ray loved his family, his Village of Croscombe, and his garden - what a lovely accolade. Our condolences go out to his wife Joy and family. **Robin Lambert**

Shapwick School Art Day

By Tony and Diana Davis

On Wednesday July 7th 2010 we were invited to a special school in Shapwick village, which is about halfway between Street and Bridgewater just off the A39. I felt very apprehensive about this event, but was totally unprepared for what we ran into on turning off the road and into the school grounds.

The main part of the school was a very large old manor house complete with stable blocks and all the old staff accommodation are now converted into school rooms. We were told to set up our engines and machines on the well-looked-after lawns under the trees.

Now the part that I was not prepared for. During the day, after going into and around the displays and workshops within the school buildings then going around the collection of motorbikes and cars, small groups of students came to us. They would be in groups of 6 or 7, some accompanied by an adult or on their own. When I found the right

person to ask, I found out what this special school was all about, one teacher explained that these young people were all dyslexic.

I have to say I have never met such well-behaved children, all were very well-mannered, polite and it was a great pleasure to deal with them. All were very interested in what we had on display. I had my Kibbler running off Diana's Norman and spent most of the day letting the children come behind the ropes "one at a time" to pop Weetabix in the hopper.

Robin Lambert had a large fence post and a collection of Augers with wood tee handles on. This proved to be the most popular display as the boys and girls took a great delight in drilling large holes in the post, each one going red in the face during the operation, but they would not take off their coats. The post took on the appearance of having been pulled out of "No Man's Land" during some gun battle.

All who were owners of the outside displays were treated to an excellent roast dinner and sweet at 12.30. At 4.30 we were all ready to go home when were asked back into the school for a buffet tea and hot drinks, plus a short thank-you speech from a school representative.

All in all we had a grand day out and felt honoured to have been invited to a very different crank-up. Many thanks to Ed and Gloria. We hope to be invited back again next year.

I'd like to apologise to Tony and Diana for the delay in printing this report, it was my error entirely – Ed.

Robert's Open Day

By Kim Siddorn

Rising with the sun on 17th October, I put my Marvil powered "Dextor" hedge trimmer cart (my current Work in Progress) and a Villiers Midget Mk 3 in the car and set off to Severnhampton. I'd not been to this event before and I arrived just after 9.00am. Unexpectedly, they were still setting up and I was able to grab a good spot before they all went. It was basically a Cotswold SEC one day rally, taking place at a farm. Thus, there was plenty of parking and whilst the engine pen was on a slope, it was not enough to cause difficulty on the frosty grass.

During the day, a fair number of famous faces stopped to chat – Eric Brain, Geoff Challinor (Anson Museum) Patrick Knight, Jim Readings, Martin Dry, Roland Craven and Philip Thornton-Everson. These are just the ones that spring to my aging mind as I write and if I spoke to God and have left him out of the list I naturally apologise!

There was a good cross section of engines, ranging from the ubiquitous Lister D to a very well restored Ruston Hornsby 3hp AP. Geoff next to me had a range of Suffolk engines, all driving something – pump, alternator etc – and they made an excellent display. He also had a very rare Petter W1 (a damp A1 ;o)) except that it wasn't. It was an extremely rare WOV, one of a prototype batch sent to Australia and it is possible that this one was returned for repair. He

knows of no other in the UK. All told, there were 21 engines in the pen.

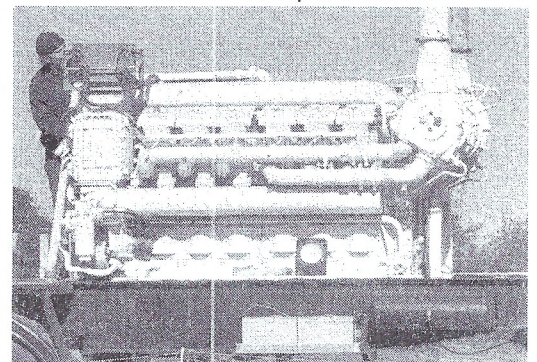
Of course, we need not have brought a thing as the real stars of the day were the serried ranks of engines in Robert's collection. The farm is old and a rabbit warren of old stone buildings concealing a large number of engines and related things. Many are unrestored, waiting in neat (if dusty) herringbone rows for their turn. I think if he concentrates, he ought to get them all done by the time he is 160!

Many of the engines were fired up and running for at least part of the day, including a 100hp hot bulb semi-Diesel Fielding, sitting in its purpose built engine house. A good deal of restoration has taken place including such major work as making patterns and having main bearing caps cast up to replace those stolen whilst it was in storage. However, little has been wasted on cosmetics and it sat there growling quietly to itself looking for all the world like it has been there for sixty years.

A number of tractors turned up and so did some horses. Unlike the humans, they did a fair amount of work pulling a plough up and down a long sloping field.

There was a scattering of classic and vintage cars but nothing desperate and in the afternoon, a number of interesting motorcycle turned up. A couple of Scotts, a vee twin AJS with a sidecar, a pre First War Phelon outfit and Moor, 1955 Triumph Tiger 100, a fire engine red Moto Guzzi flat single, an early twenties Ariel racer, New Imperial and others. A dozen bikes and a BSA three wheeler for good measure.

I've left the best to last – there was this VAST 60 litre, 1,000 bhp Paxman vee twelve Diesel on a lorry chassis, a generator engine from HMS Rhyl, a British Navy frigate that had been involved in the search for the Gault, the Rhodesian blockade and the Cod War with Iceland to mention but a few exploits. Air start of course and it was not keen, requiring a donkey engine to pump up the tanks repeatedly until eventually it filled the otherwise cloudless blue sky with a dense mist of unburned hydrocarbons, creating at a stroke a carbon footprint the size of a small own.



The weather could not have been kinder, the catering van was twenty yards away, the company was interesting and Robert's collection impressive – sincere thanks to our host. It was a very good day out and if you can wangle yourself an invitation next year make sure you get there!