

Wessex Stationary Engine Club. Newsletter. SEPTEMBER 1983

The contents of this Newsletter shall not be reproduced without prior permission and due acknowledgement to the Wessex Stationary Engine Club. All rights are reserved.

RALLY TRAGEDY

"It is with deep regret we record the death of a well-known and popular rallyist after an accident sustained at a recent local rally. Several members of the public were also injured and it is understood that claims are being made due to alleged negligence....". Thankfully this is merely author's licence, but I wonder how long it will be before the Editor has to publish such a note in reality? Although the 1983 rally season is almost over, incidents observed on the rallyfield suggest it may not be too far away. "Oh, that doesn't apply to me" - I can hear that phrase being echoed around the whole movement but, sad to say, it does apply to YOU you know.

I wonder how many of our engines would meet the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act; not many I would suggest. Most engines have unguarded Flywheels and out of hundreds of engines I have examined, only one has its driving belt protected with wire mesh. Imagine the result of getting one's arm caught in the spokes of a flywheel revolving at umpteen revs! Yet the 'open-crank boys' still perform internal surgery while maintaining full speed ahead. If our engines were used in industry today there would be an immediate strike of all the operatives and quite rightly so.

But it is not only our engines which are suspect, some of the owners seem to be intent on injuring themselves. Maybe that doesn't matter but the other people around him do matter. A couple of Sundays ago, an engineman was seen to top up his petrol tank from a 2 gallon can, unfortunately spilling some in the process. All the while he was seen to be puffing away on his cigarette - Big Bang? No, but there could have been, and it's easier to stub out the 'fag' first and then use a funnel. At the same rally, a large and lumpy Fairbanks Morse was seen being loaded back onto its trailer. Hefty assistants pushed it up the ramp which was constructed of inch timber with no side guides. While the ramps bent dangerously, only the urgent cries of an interested bystander saved the situation when the trolley-wheel was within a quarter of an inch from coming off the ramp. The result could so easily have been bent Fairbanks Morse and squashed engineman. Moral....use metal channel, heaven knows - it's cheap enough! An even more tragic event was reported where helpers were pushing a car plus trailer loaded with some engines, out of the mud. The car eventually found grip and shot away, whereupon the helper slipped and fell and the loaded trailer continued right over the prostrate helper. He sustained real injuries which was bad enough, but it makes me cringe to think what might have been. Again, a simple moral - don't get between the vehicle and trailer, better still, pull them out separately if at all possible.

We should not overlook the simple things either. Have a look at your toolbox and I'll guarantee that you will find at least one screwdriver with a damaged or worn blade. Square it up now or next time you try to undo that stubborn screw you'll end up with a gashed hand. The same applies to spanners, don't use that worn old A/F on that Whitworth nut or not only will you knacker the nut but any amount of swearing will not sooth those damaged knuckles.

Another observation, have you noticed how many enginemen complain of backache? It is not all due to their demanding and amorous night-life either, it's because they don't lift heavy objects in the correct manner. Bent knees and a straight back will avoid those slipped discs and strained muscles, think about it or the wife, girl-friend...or both, may complain.

Safety is incumbent upon us all, not only for our own personal well-being but also for the public who visit our rallies. Final point - have you examined your insurance policy lately? To be valid, it requires that you, and that means WE, take reasonable care, otherwise that means YOU may end up paying that claim for £250,000 which the insurance company would otherwise meet. Be warned, in unthinking hands our engines can be as lethal as a shotgun..... Happy and Accident-Free Rallying.

Claude Lowther

EDITOR'S NOTE: In last month's Newsletter, the author of the above article alluded to 'yours truly' as having received his Fireman's Badge or some such similar quip. This was because I too, recently involved myself in what, in retrospect, could have had VERY serious consequences. I was testing my 3½ hp Fairbanks Morse prior to visiting a local rally to be held the following day, when, without warning, it burst into flames. This was on my drive at home, the engine was tethered in my trailer, a five-litre can of petrol also caught fire, so briefly did my shoes and trousers. Quickly smothering these latter items, I grabbed the fire extinguisher from the garage which put out the engine and most of the trailer; the flames by then were at least ten feet high! I reached for the kitchen extinguisher only to find it was inoperable. Prompt action by my wife in fetching bowls of water for me to soak old curtains in to smother the still blazing can of petrol eventually contained the blaze but had I followed by original intention of starting the engine INSIDE the garage, it would have been

a very different story. How many of YOU think of fire before running an engine in your garage? None of you I bet!! How many of YOU have even got a fire extinguisher? I can tell you a few who have after I told them of my experience.

Most of the burnt wood on my trailer had now been renovated but the scars are still there for any member wishing to see for himself... and the tarmac of the drive still looks a bit different in one place..near the burnt mark all up next door's wall! As Claude has said - this will one day happen on the rallyfield, with no fire extinguisher available. GET ONE - £22 is cheap when you think what it could save.

CLUB VISIT TO JOHN HUISH'S COLLECTION OF ENGINES AT WORLE

Did anybody turn up at the Old Down Inn on Monday evening of the 25th? If so, who doesn't read their Newsletter, because nearly 40 of us met outside the National Westminster Bank in Worle High Street. At the rear of most banks there is a neat little car park with painted white lines, window boxes and burglar proof windows, but in Worle things are different. Gilt edged security bonds and the secrets of the bank manager's wardrobe give way to a deposit of 20 or so stationary and not quite so stationary engines with a selection of generators, switchboards and pumps for good measure, all owned by John Huish.

The engines, mostly in as found condition, were not the type to be rallied by the faint-hearted as I expect most of us would have had difficulty in lifting the piston and con-rod on many of them! The most powerful engine on show was a triple-expansion marine engine exhibited at the '1000 Engine Rally' at Longleat followed by a 44/48 hp Crossley type FOE2. The various makes of internal and external combustion engines were as rare as the collection itself. These included examples from George Waller & Son of Stroud, Fielding of Gloucester, several interesting types of oil and gas engines from Crossley's, a single cylinder horizontal steam engine from Griffin's of Bath which looked as it it had been built in a redundant lathe bed, and the engine that made many people prod, stroke, feel and gaze was a gas engine "made" by Walter J. Coward of Bath.

One of the Crossley's was an N-type gas engine that worked in the malt factory of Hugh Baird & Sons in Bath. This particular engine to me held a special interest as this was the actual engine that kindled the facination and love for our hobby in me as I used to watch this engine working on my way home from school in the early sixties.

The large 24 hp Fielding was complete with full air start equipment which was interesting in its own right. The air bottles were charged by a Blackstone air compressor which was a horizontal petrol engine, the vertical part of which was the compressor, on the makers plate was inscribed Blackstone No.1 motor. A certain Blackstone enthusiast from Wedmore was seen to return to this little gem several times and when asked why replied 'I want to get a good picture in my mind so that I can dream about it in bed'.

We were allowed to browse at our leasure and the ever willing John Huish answered the many questions we put to him. As everyone walked around the collection new items of interest were discovered between numerous pulley wheels, belts, condensers, boiler feed pumps, flywheels and the different sizes of flyball governor at the sight of which one lady club members was heard to say 'Eric, what are those for?'....!

A most interesting evening which everyone enjoyed, especially judging by the comments overheard over a drink at the Full Quart at Hewish and I feel sure a return visit at some further date would be welcomed with much enthusiasm. Finally, on behalf of the Club I would like to thank John Huish for his hospitality and allowing us to invade his privacy.

Michael Cannon

OVERHEARD at the Club Rally...."What is a Victoria?" Well, lady member from Wiltshire, what answer is there to that but 'We were not amused...!'

YSTRAD MYNACH RALLY - AUGUST 6th & 7th

This rally weekend started with a 70 mile plus trip down to South Wales, having hitched a lift with Reg, Mary and Stephen Butler. On arrival at the site in Ystrad Mynach we were all welcomed by the show secretary, Mike Stokes. After settling in, Friday night ended with the usual gathering of the Wessex cider 'suppers' and eventually we all staggered our way up to the fish & chip shop, getting many weird glances from the local mountain fraternity. On Saturday morning it was revealed that Mike Stokes had put on a really friendly and well organised show, even down to the daily milk deliveries for the exhibitors; all the engine compounds were very well roped off indeed, with the stakes at 10 ft. intervals, just as I think they should be.

The Wessex exhibitors present were Don and Christine Rogers with their much rallied 2½ hp 1912(?) Bulldog, Roy, Carole and Mandy Cox with their very original Amanco and restored Lister H2 pump, Gerald Harris, Ann and the Boys with their twin-wheeled 5 hp Wolseley WLB'8 of 1952, Brian 'Sausage' Munt and the Queen and Julia with the 'hybridised' Fowler PA 1½ hp, along with the sausage factory, the Butlers, of course, and their 'reimported

from Kernow' 1944 Wolseley 'smooth-pot' and Climax pump, and finally, much later on in the evening came Chairman Skuse and Carole and family, along with the Popping Petter.

Saturday evening started with a sheep roast, barbeque, and lots of entertainment from our Club comedians; lots of things took place that apparently I can't remember....I only wish I could, if all I hear is true! Eventually I did manage to get to bed, only to find my sleeping bag already taken (not stolen But occupied, I mean..!). No doubt by now the jokers responsible will have already enlightened all the membership as to its contents.

Sunday dawned with brilliant sunshine yet again, the crowd being smaller than on the previous day, what else do the Welsh folk do on a Sunday afternoon? Well, they pack the kids off to Sunday School for a start...!

The other engines at the show worthy of a mention were a rare Blackstone No.1 compressor engine, 1927, unrestored and owned by Emerson Salkeld, an erstwhile Wessex member from Newport; a Lister GI of 7 hp, built in 1940 and driving a nicely restored corn-mill owned by Mike Stokes; a lamp start Pollock, 1890, 5 hp belonging to Mr.N.T.Lechmere from Hereford; and the Petter Handyman of Gordon Jones and R. Davies. Also in the line-up was the nicely sounding Petter S type of Ray Swann from Gloucester, this was rated at 12/14 hp and was built in 1927. There was also a nicely restored 6 hp Powell open crank engine, built in 1916 and, last but by no mean least, a Lister 4 hp built in 1910 and classed as a size 4 owned by K. Merritt of S.Glamorgan. Other exhibits at the show included a small tractor and old transport line-up with the Super Scammell Showman's Outfit of A.J. Jones (no relation!) from Ludlow, lots of cars and a few motor cycles. All in all, the weekend was a really smashing rally for spectators and exhibitor alike. Many thanks to Mike and his hard working committee for their held and kindness, and of course for the super cast-brass plaque. I'm sure the members of the W.S.E.C. that were present will all be looking forward to returning to the Land of my Fathers for yet another glorious weekend again next year and may Wales rest in peace for another 12 months; it will take that long for the laughter of Messrs. Munt, Rogers and co. to cease echoing around the Valleys.

Generating Jones

THE WESSEX GARDEN PARTY

This popular charity event hosted by Tony Jones in his garden at Trowbridge, was blessed with what must have been the hottest weather of any weekend this year. We were greeted by our host, who was wearing the now famous and much copied Bermuda shorts making their debut. A change from last year to accommodate even more engines and people was the adoption of the field over the hedge from Tony's garden, both for camping, caravans and the overspill of the larger engines. Last year it was suggested that the engines had ousted the fairies from the bottom of the garden, this time it was 'trolls' as there was the 'ricketty, racketty bridge' of the fairytale spanning the hedge to provide access to the field and the delights of the K & A canal-side walks. Various lighting sets added to the fairytale atmosphere with bulbs hung all around the apple and plum trees. All the usual Wessex crowd were present - and even some of the less regular, but equally welcome members were to be seen in the crowd at the Disco on Saturday evening. Engines were plentiful and varied, ranging from Phil Harris' large Blackstone to John Emery's little Barker. Even the editorial Emerson-Brantingham was running reasonably well after its shameful showing the previous Monday at the Crank-Up. Whilst on the subject of red engines, the late model Amanco of Stuart Ashman was blushing somewhat more than its original colour, probably due to its hasty, 'on-the-day' strip-down by our Treasurer's paternal mechanic, Ted. An interesting variation on the cooling tank theme was on the Petter M-type of Mr. Bonner; his cooling tank contained, not only water, but a mini radiator which was cooled by an electric fan driven from a generator off the engine itself! Full marks for ingenuity but absolutely zero for non-originality!

A splendid bit of public relations work on the part of our Vice-Chairman, Robin Lambert was, when two distant neighbours called to 'complain' about the noise - or were they using that as an excuse just to be inquisitive? Robin promptly gave them free admission whereupon, after a brief 'recce', they returned home to fetch the rest of the family.

During a lazy Sunday, most of us tried to shelter from the sun whilst the 'mad dogs and Englishmen' headed by Ian Skuse and chauffeured by Ian Craddock with the Perkins Major and trailer, set off for the local hostelry.

All too soon it was time to defy the Trolls, get the engines back over the aforementioned bridge and head for home after a really splended weekend in the heart of Wiltshire. As was revealed last month, the grand total raised for CLIC was in the order of £335, what a magnificent effort and a credit to Tony for all his hard work, organisation, and, above all his magnificent hospitality. I bet he was glad when all the crowds had dispersed and he had Jenny all to himself...!!

Ern Brassplate

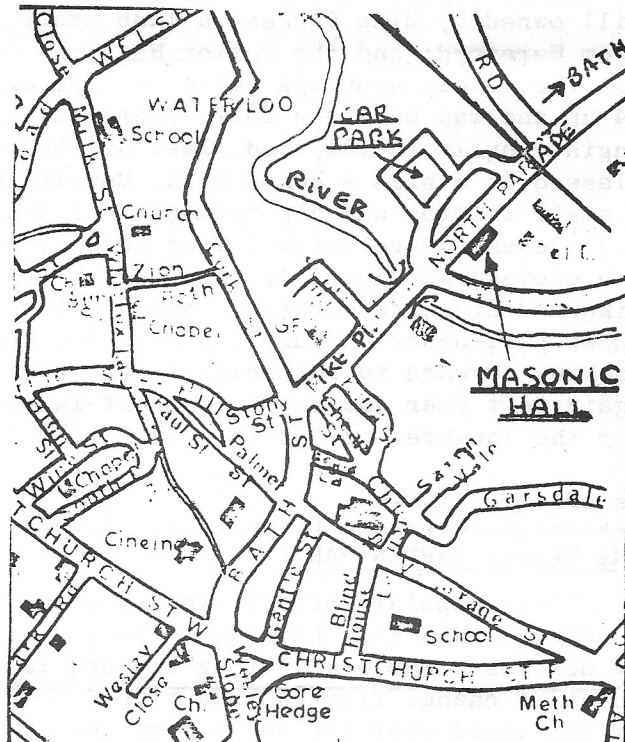
COACH TRIP

With last month's Newsletter was a return slip for booking for the Club trip to view the Beam Engines at Crofton on their last working weekend of the year. We also aim to visit the restored working windmill at West Wilton which is close at hand. The coach will leave the Old Down Inn, Emborough at 10 a.m. promptly and will aim to pick up the Wiltshire area contingent at Knee's car park, Court Street, Trowbridge at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, 13th November 1983. The cost of the coach will be £2 per adult, children under 16 of Wessex Club members will travel free of charge. Entrance to the Steam Pumping Station will be £1 per adult, 50p per child; entrance to the Windmill will be 60p per adult, 20p per child, payable on arrival. We hope to negotiate a group discount on these quoted prices. Bring your own food, although refreshments will be obtainable at Crofton. Enquiries to Mrs. D. Emery, 'Odstax', Wells Road, Hallatrow, Nr. Bristol. Tel. Temple Cloud 52939. Book before October 31st. Do it NOW.

CLUB DINNER AND DANCE

Saturday, December 3rd is the date to remember for this year's Dinner/Dance. Entry forms are attached so send as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. The venue is, yet again, by popular request the Masonic Hall, Frome, Somt. The price this year shows a slight increase but we have managed to secure the ever popular 'Farmer John' Disco and Country Entertainment for your after dinner pleasure. Yes folks, all for a mere £5.50 per head, to include a welcoming free sherry at the door to set the mood, a good meal, some after dinner speeches and, of course, the Wessex Raffle. Arrive at 7.30 for an 8 p.m. start.

The small map alongside is for those not familiar with Frome town centre.

FORTHCOMING EVENTSCLUB EVENTS

- Oct. 31st Another of the popular Verne Kindschi audio slide shows. Engines at rallies across the Atlantic, presented on Verne's behalf by Tony Jones.
- Nov. 28th The Munt Magic Lantern Show. Full details still in the pipeline...or do I mean Sausage Machine..?
- Dec. 3rd The Club Dinner/Dance, this will, as usual, be the only Club meeting in December.
- Jan. 30th The Trowbridge Camera Club with a Slide Show featuring Steam Rallies, Fair Organs and related items.
- Feb. 27th Annual General Meeting.
- March, 26th Michael Cannon with a Slide Show "The Narrow Gauge Railways of North Wales".

OTHER EVENTS

National Vintage Tractor & Engine Club 2-day ploughing match is at Backwell Hill, Lulsgate Nr. Bristol on Sept. 10th & 11th. Full details from Gerald Atherton, Mill Farm, Station Road, Flax Bourton, Nr. Bristol.

October 23rd: Dean Forest Railway Steam Day, Norchard Centre, Lydney, Glos. Engine entries to Mr. J. White, 59 Claverton Road, Yatton. Tel. Yatton 833879. Closing date extended to 2nd October.

FOR SALE

Lister D-type starting handle, £2. Tel. Dave Clack, Trowbridge 61987 after 7 p.m.

Two speed chaff cutter, hand type by Harrisson MacGregor and supplied by The Bristol Waggon & Carriage Works Co. Ltd., also Bamford Root Cutter, same supplier. For Sale, exchange, or W.H.Y. Gerald Aterton, Flax Bourton 2393.

Crossley 1040 E/C engine on trolley, ready to rally. Tel. John Emery Temple Cloud (0761) 52939
Corrugated iron sectional garage, 9ft x 18ft, also engine trolley on iron wheels approx. 4'6" x 2', offers for each to Dave Heal, Tel. Temple Cloud 52359.

WANTED

Lister D-type exhaust. Contact Dave Clack Trowbridge 61987 after 7 p.m.

Complete stationary engine of any type around 1½-2 hp but MUST be complete and running. Maximum price offered £40. Contact Tony Jones, 59 Marsh Rd. Trowbridge, Wilts.