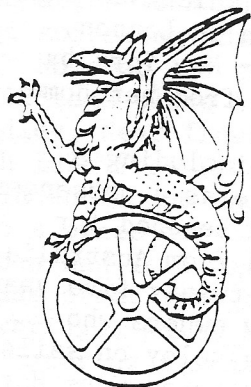


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1991.

Please send newsletter material to:-
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A RARE ENGINE DISCOVERED

On arriving home after a weeks holiday in Cornwall, which included the St. Agnes rally, it was with great interest that I read a letter from club member Barry Hitchings, who has recently found what would be most engine collectors dream. I'll let Barry tell you about it.

Dear Robin,
I have recently acquired an interesting and early stationary engine which features permanent lamp hot tube ignition.

I would imagine members of our club would be interested as the engine is of Somerset origin. I located it via an advert in the 'Stationary Engine' magazine, it has never been rallied, and turned up three years ago in Kent. It is a Petter Patent Horizontal Oil Engine, number 244, and is around circa 1898.

For those with back issues of 'Stationary Engine' issue 129/8 shows a photograph of No. 320 which is circa 1901. Issue 117/4 shows No. 346 which is circa 1903. On those figures mine would appear to be around 1898, presuming similar production runs of the 1901-1903 period.

We all hope to one day find a rare engine. In this case the previous owner did. He was on a building site three years ago and was asked to demolish a shed, but first dump the scrap metal inside. Needless to say, he was an engineman and was duly given the scrap. After a paint job the engine continued its rest until the owner, not having rallied it, decided to sell it on. Fortunately I responded to his advert in 'Stationary Engine' issue number 210, and a dash to Kent secured it, so that it will make an appearance in Somerset after over 90 years.

The engine is in reasonable condition and will require little mechanical work to make it sound. A good paint and line out job will bring it back to its former glory. I hope it will be ready for the 1992 rally season, but it will appear at Yesterdays Farming on the 7/8th September. All the best. Barry Hitchings.
(Well done Barry, everyone hopes to locate an unusual and rare engine, and you certainly have. Look forward to seeing it in 1992) ED.

TENCREST CRANK-UP August 4th

This years crank-up at the Tencrest Garage was again held in fine weather, there was an excellent turn out of Wessex S.E.C. members taking part, to include 36 engines, 2 steamers, 1 organ, 4 cars, 1 caravan, 4 motor cycles and selections of Mamod models, oil cans, model boats and farming bygones.

The car boot section under the watchful eye of Phil Harris raised a total of £72.00. This money goes to Wessex S.E.C. funds, well done Phil, a very good effort.

As is usual all proceeds from the raffle go to C.L.I.C. and this years total of £225.50 was raised by Bill Coombes and a little help from myself (BV). A further £4.66 came from the collecting pot in front of Anne Day's little organ, giving a total of £230.16 which will be added to the takings at the Full Quart crank-up at the end of September.

On behalf of Bill Coombes, Phil Harris and myself (BV) I would like to thank the proprietor of Tencrest Garage for the use of his land, so that this popular event could again take place and our thanks to everyone who donated prizes and helped with the raffle and lastly everyone who supported us by turning up and making this a very worthwhile day.

BRIAN VERRALL.

CLUB EVENING 29th July - BRUNELS OCEAN LINER

Mr. Bradbury of the Great Britain Trust started the evening off with a talk on the remarkable life of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, as an engineer, he is best known in the Wessex area for the Box tunnel, The Great Western Railway and the Suspension Bridge which was built after the Great Britain. His idea was that people would board a G.W.R. train in London, travel to Bristol, get on a ship and sail to New York, so travelling London - New York by G.W.R. Unfortunately after a row with Bristol Council the ship never sailed from her home town but instead from Liverpool.

The slide show that followed showed early history of the Great Britain including a picture taken by Fox Talbot on the launch day and the ship in its varied life as a passenger ship to America in the 1840's. When she ran aground in Ireland and remained beached for several months, after refloating she became an immigrant ship sailing to and from Australia, carrying prospectors and farmers outward and wool back to Liverpool. After twenty five years of this duty she was getting old, even for this trade so she was sold to new owners who removed her boilers and engines and turned her into a freighter, now relying solely on sails. She carried coal from England to San Francisco and returned with grain back around Cape Horn. Finally one winter unable to round the Cape she returned to the Falkland Islands, her cargo sold off and the ship bought as a floating store for the islands wool industry. After half a century as a warehouse she was towed to Sparrow Cove and beached, until Project 70 rescued her and brought her home in an epic salvage voyage, she was rebearthed in the very dock in which she was built.

After a short raffle the story continued with the start of the well documented restoration. A lot of talk and some disagreement has taken place over the style and the way the work should be done. It was agreed that she would be rebuilt as she was on her maiden voyage, work started by cleaning the hull with a mixture of high pressure water and air which removed the rust and dirt but did not harm the good iron plates. The weather deck has been rebuilt along with all the deck fittings, so far five of the six masts, the bridge and the bowsprit have been installed, a copy of the propeller has been made and fitted. A replica engine sadly made of wood and aluminium is being built in the dock side workshop, after its construction it will be dismantled and rebuilt in the ship's engine room. All this work has cost, at present £3 million pounds and there is still a long way to go. Next thing to be rebuilt is the dining room which will operate as a restaurant and so help raise more money to keep the work going on. At the end of the evening most people agreed that the restoring of engines or ships takes a lot of time, money, enthusiasm and a bit of foresight.

Raffle winners were Phil Wookey - Socket Set. Dennis Hodges - Screwdriver. Ted Routley - Tins of Beer.

BRIAN REAKES.

GRAMPIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM

We had seen this museum advertised in a copy of 'Old Glory' and during our two weeks holiday in Scotland at Easter decided to travel over and have a look. The museum is situated in the village of Alford, near Aberdeen.

All the exhibits were very nicely set out and included a Marshall Steam Roller - 1923 and living van, a Ferguson Tractor used by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1958 to reach the South Pole, a Stellite 9.45 hp car built in 1919 and was made by a subsidiary of Wolseley of Birmingham from 1913 to 1919. Playing at intervals was a 1923 Mortier Dance Organ which soon had the children dancing. A very nice model of a Sawmill which had won a bronze medal at the 1932 Model Engineer Exhibition in London. Two other forms of transport that we liked were a Dursley Pederson Bicycle made in Gloucester and a Swift car - 1926 made by Swift Sewing Machine Co.

We also visited the Doune Motor Museum not far from our base, there are some superb cars there, polished to the highest standard possible. The gentleman who takes care of them is very proud of his charges and loves to talk about them at length.

There is a Transport Museum in Glasgow but we did not have time to visit. Spent most of our time travelling from one place to another as everywhere is so far apart, but you see the most beautiful scenery.

For the last week in March the weather was like summer - no need for coats. The second week was very mixed, with rain, snow and sun but who cares we had a lovely time.

THE BUTLER FAMILY.

MONDAY 28TH OCTOBER - Club Meeting at The Old Down Inn.

MODEL EVENING Bring along your favourite model's (Blonde and two legged welcome). This is always a well supported event for members to show and display their prize collections.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The club social evening organised for the 9th November at the Cave Man, Cheddar has had to be rearranged owing to notification by the management that the building is to be closed for renovation work and all bookings have been cancelled. Yet another bombshell dropped on our long suffering chairman Brian and once again at very short notice.

However our committee has decided that they will not be beaten and our social evening will still take place but at a different location. It will be at the Peace Memorial Hall, North Bradley, Near Trowbridge on Saturday 23rd November, 7.30 for 8.00 o'clock. A sixties evening with Idle Fret (the group we had at Cheddar) and the tickets will be £2.50 per adult, children 12 and under free. Food will be Jacket potatoes with a ploughman type meal. There is also a prize for the best fancy dress, so all you young and old rockers dig out your old trapes and lets have a party. We hope to have a bar provided by the local village pub. Please order your tickets as soon as possible from Shirley at 18 Church Lane, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Wilts or Jackie at 15 Beechwood Avenue, Frome, Somerset, as this will help with the catering arrangements.

YELLOW FLOWER SHOW AND COUNTRY FAYRE - 31st August.

A very enjoyable afternoon out, by all concerned, with stalls of all descriptions as well as the craft tent there was model aircraft, live falcons and owls, camel rides and various goats and sheep. GWR FM were also there with their road show with music, fun and games for the kids to enjoy themselves.

Six engines attended - my Lister 'D', Ted Routleys' Lister Junior 1½ hp, new member Adrian Grant with Bamford EG1, Jeremy Adams and his Centour Gas Engine, Mike Bevan with his Amanco Fired Man 2½ hp. All in all we had a very nice time although it would be nice to see more engines at this event next year to represent our Wessex Club to which Louis Gumm would like to thank the Wessex and all engines for attending this event which Jeremy Adams use to help organise on behalf of our club, a job that I am pleased to take over.

STEVE ROUTLEY.

I recently had a new display sign made up for a 8 hp Ruston & Hornsby engine and alot of people have shown an interest in the sign, so I thought I would give the firm a plug that made it for me. The sign has approximately fourteen words on it in old style gold lettering on a green background and is 15" x 10" on weatherproof board and cost around £7.00. Good value. I thought it would also make a nice Christmas present if wives and girlfriends are reading this. Mirage Signs can do most colours and styles of lettering to suit your requirements. ED.

FOR SALE

7kg gas cylinder, would make a good air receiver, £10.00 Can deliver on club night. Telephone:- Ray Earle on 0458 251758.

HELP WANTED

A request for information on a Pitts Oil Engine has been sent to our Secretary Shirley. If any Club member can throw any light on the contents of Mr. Kent's letter he will be most grateful.

Dear Mrs. Gale, After having read about your engine rally in 'Old Glory' magazine, I am writing in the hope that either you or one of your members may be able to help me. We have a relation in New Zealand, who has a 'Pitts' Oil Engine which he regularly shows around the South Island of his country. He is virtually in love with the machine and has written to ask us if we could find out about its background. We have been to many places and written dozens of letters to different people, but alas, nobody seems to have ever heard of it, hence this letter to you. We have established that the firm that made the engine was Pitts Engineering, 159 Queen Victoria Street, London E.C. but letters sent there have been returned 'gone away'. I will be most grateful if you would perhaps ask a member or two if they have any knowledge of the engine. I am beginning to wonder if it is a one off! I just have to keep trying. Thank you for your time. Yours sincerely, Mr. G. Kent, 16 Western Avenue, Penton Park, Cherstey, Surrey KT 16 8QA

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A HEART FELT LINE OR TWO

I have taken up my pen or in this case my typewriter (I can't use a pen), to say how I see the rally scene at this time. I have been taking a long hard look at what is going on, on the rally field and I am not happy at what I see. I believe we go to rallies to help put on a show, not only for ourselves but for the public also. But when I see 34 stationary engines in a line with not one owner in attendance I become concerned not only from the safety aspect alone but for what the public think. If I was at my first rally or my 999th and wanted to ask a question I should like to know that someone was in attendance to give me the answer.

I have heard many times the old nag "no public came around the engines", can you blame them when all they see is a green lump with spinning flywheels and no owner in sight. If you can't talk to people at least please do a history board and put by your engine, even if you have no history of the engine you can do a write up on how it works and what it can drive. If you spend a bit of time by your engine and are prepared to put in a bit of effort it can be very rewarding both in meeting people and in a practical way. For example through talking to one old 'codger', I ended up with two engines, one a bit rough but the other a goer and in good condition. So at your next outing, put a bit more in and you might get alot more out.

I will now tell you of two of the most nonsensical stupid things I have seen on a rally field, only through the grace of god was no one seriously hurt. Maureen and I were walking around a large rally field in early July, it was start-up time, about 9.30 to 10 o'clock when we came upon a model traction engine being fired up, gas torch in fire box to get wood and coal burning, we stopped to have a look at the model, when the owner started to spray his engine with WD-40 we were lucky the blast shot away from us all. I hate to think what could have happened as I was in oily overalls. So think before using any spray can, even on a stationary engine, no fire in them you say, but what about the mag. and plug? it sets fire to petrol and it can set fire to a spray can. Horrible happening No. 2, same rally, engine driving pump, owner trying to remove drive belt with engine running. I said to the boss 'Hes going to be in trouble in a minute' true enough the pipe he was using to dislodge the belt was snatched down between the flywheels and our gallant engine man was thrown over the top of the engine. He was lucky he still had his hands and all his fingers. So please for your own sakes think before you act, I want to see you all on the rally field not in a hospital bed - or worse.

So, now it must be time for me to shut up, but I hope for all our sakes my few words don't fall on deaf ears, enjoy your days out but give a thought to the public, tell them what it's all about and maybe someone else will get bitten by the engine bug.

ERIC GAY

CLUB VISIT TO BRISTOL WATERWORKS - BLAGDON PUMPING STATION on the 19th August 1991.

Thirty members were in attendance on a fine and sunny evening, the first thing to see was the large trout in the old open suction tanks immediately in front of the pumping station.

The imposing red brick building below the embankment, formerly housed for compound beam engines (steam) built between 1902 and 1905 by Glenfield and Kennedy of Kilmarnock. Two for each wing of the building. In 1949 two of the beam engines were replaced by electric pumps and the remaining engines were preserved as a museum feature. In 1984 one was fitted with an electric motor to demonstrate the principle of beam engines in operation and that is what you can see working today.

Details of the engines are as follows:- Wolf compound rotative pumping engine with a working horse power to each engine of 170 hp, speed at 17 r.p.m. working on a high pressure cylinder 21" diameter x 5'3" stroke with a low pressure cylinder 34" diameter x 7' stroke. When the two engines were working they consumed 8½ tons of coal every 24 hours with a pump output of 107 gallons per stroke with a daily output of 2.6 mg against 235' head. The flywheel diameter is 20' and weighs 20 tons, with a beam length of 34' and weighs 17 tons. The mechanical efficiency is claimed to be 90%.

What a big engine to put on a trailer and rally, it was a most impressive sight to see and it looked like everyone enjoyed this visit to Blagdon Pumping Station. Two hours wellspent.

TED ROUTLEY.

Overheard in the Ladies Loo

"..... he said Hold this while I test for a spark," Now it's gone all straight and I shall have to get it permed.....