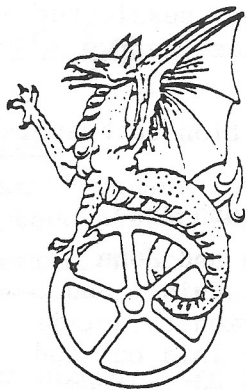


WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1992

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THE GREAT SOMERSET COUNTY STEAM FAIR 1992 Brains Farm, Wincanton July 29th/Aug 2nd.

Its difficult to know exactly where to start with this report as although written on August 12th and not arriving through members letter-boxes until the end of September a lot of controversy and mixed feelings will have been generated about this event. I personally enjoyed my five days as an exhibitor, a super location on short grass was chosen for the stationary engine lines with parking some 20 yards from our exhibits. Our engine marshalls looked after us very well and even the weather was good, but where were the public? Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were wasted days really with hardly anyone looking around, in fact it was an ideal time to maintain and service the Transit to while away the time. Talking to friends and work colleagues who paid a visit to the show the £7.00 admittance fee was too expensive for what was on offer, most felt that £3.50 would have been about right especially on Wednesday and Thursday when many exhibits were missing. One friend told me that a family with three children and 2 middle-aged grandparents walked back to their car when they couldn't raise the £40 entrance fee!!

Evening entertainment was laid on in the huge beer tent and real ale was on offer at £1.60 a pint with scrumpy on £1 per pint. I did try a pint of medium but I think the label on the barrel should have read rough - rough and after forcing half of it down I poisoned a clump of nettles with the rest. A huge market was in situ with lots of bargains and food vans were everywhere, one even stayed open for 24 hours. A small fairground fronted the beer tent and the dodgems proved to be the most popular with the chair-o-planes and the big wheel struggling to attract customers. Bungee jumping was very popular on all days. How anyone can leap off the top of a crane with an elastic rope tied around their legs beats me and I believe they paid £35 a go and £20 if you were an exhibitor (no thanks!!)

The steam section was quite well supported with some twelve showmans engines lighting up the fairground and a nice road making demonstration took place with a steam powered stone crusher cracking large rocks, and then a roller embedding the end product through a field entrance. Several racksaw benches gave a nice sawing demonstrations and a rare steam crane lifted the trees onto the benches just as it would have been done many years ago. Corn grinding, flour milling, threshing, spar making all proved popular viewing but sadly the ring events were somewhat depleted owing to lots of exhibits not turning up. The model tent was huge, one half the size would have done but never the less some nice exhibits were inside including club member Pete Holloway with his superb Beam engine being driven by compressed air. The antique tent was filled with things we all like to look at and chatting to one stall holder she told me that the lady that organised the stalls had her birthday on Friday and the show organisers had treated her to a free hot air balloon flight complete with champagne, what a nice gesture. The tractor pulling section always seems to draw a good crowd and the roar of these machines could be heard all around the show, unfortunately they never appeared on Sunday as they had to attend a show in Berkshire which was part of the pullers championships.

To sum up this rally I would personally support it again, but I think the organisers were too optimistic with a 5 day event, three would have been more realistic. The 300 acre site could be reduced by half bringing exhibits more close to hand and saving long walks through vast empty areas and above all cutting the entrance fee to gain the confidence of exhibitors and public alike. ED.

RALLY RAMBLINGS BY DAVE AUSTIN.

In sympathy for Rob, the Ed., who I feel sure must be as frustrated as a dog in a desert whilst frantically searching for something to use to produce the monthly newsletter I thought I might give him a hand by writing a few notes on a couple of rallies that we have attended recently.

Having more leisure time due to retirement Marie and I are now in a position to travel further afield to rallies so we decided to try some in Oxfordshire.

The first was at Stoke Row, near Nuffield this was held on the 13th & 14th June.

On arrival at the site we were given a very warm welcome by Dave Sarney and John Stevens the two guys that organise this Rally. We set up camp, unloaded the engines and then went for a stroll around the site. We were most impressed by the attention to detail that had been given in laying out the site. Each exhibitors site was clearly laid out and labelled, thus making it very easy for the exhibitors to find the plot allocated to them no matter what they were exhibiting, whether it was a steam engine, a trade stall, a car/commercial or stationary engine all were treated the same, which I must say makes a change from the special attention lavished on the steam engines at some of the shows.

Saturday evening a Barn Dance was held in the main tent, this was open to local residents as well as exhibitors. We were given two free tickets but we did not use them because I had my eye on the tent next door.

By rally standards this was a relatively small rally, but was most enjoyable and as usual we made new friends, we were quite surprised when Sunday evening after working hard all the weekend Dave and his wife returned to the site to pick us up and take us to there local pub where John and his wife were waiting for us, this was indeed a very kind gesture (and the draught Bass was superb.)

Whilst on site we were introduced to a man called George Ballard who informed us that he was one of the organisers of another rally in the same vicinity called the "Woodcote Rally". Having liberated a form for this we told him we would return to attend in a few weeks time.

The next man to us in the stationary engine line was John Bonner who was the man that published the details in the Stationary Engine magazine, how to convert electric motors into generators, it was not long before my caravan was on mains hook-up from his generator and this was the first time I had had this on a rally field, (mind you his engine changed note when I plugged in the kettle).

If any reader wishes to have a go at converting an old motor John will be happy to supply a diagram or a copy of the video he has made, he will also help by answering questions over the phone. I gave him a blank video and £2.50 plus 50p postage and he duly sent me a copy and a diagram.

As I mentioned this was a small rally with the line up of exhibits as follows:-

- 27 Steam engines, road rollers, sentinels etc.
- 38 Agricultural tractors.
- 24 Stationary engines.
- 27 Commercial vehicles.
- 26 Vintage & Classic cars.

As can be seen not a lot of stationary engines, John and Dave would welcome new faces so if you are looking for a change of venue why not phone John Stevens on 0491 641124 and ask him to send you a form for next year.

We will most certainly be there.

DAVE AUSTIN.

WEIGHT WATCHERS. One of our club members was stopped recently in Hampshire by the police and after an inspection of the stationary engine in the rear of his van was asked to follow the officer to a ministry weighbridge where the vehicle was weighed. Front axle then rear axle, he was within the limits of the van's carrying capacity, but many of us do tend to carry much more than we need so take care not to overload and position your engine correctly in your vehicle. Somewhere on your van should be a plate with axle weight information.

APOLOGIES for not advertising the Wellow Flower Show and some wanted advertisements. I am afraid they arrived too late for August newsletter, which had already gone to the printers one week early owing to the Bank Holiday.

CLUB DIARY DATES.

- OCTOBER EVENING - Monday 26th - Illustrated talk on the Bristol Wagon and Carriage Works by Eric Brain.
- OCTOBER 31st - Skittle Match at Pilton. Please don't forget to contact Shirley or Jackie if attending.

WANTED

Massey Ferguson 135 or Massey Ferguson 35X Tractor in reasonable condition, for working purposes not preservation.

Information or sources of information for wiring diagram of 48 volt 'Petter - Light' generating set with control panel as shown in Fig. 155 page 132 of Petters Oil Engine catalogue (1932 reprint).

Does anybody have any details (i.e. actual original or exact copy) of original trolley for Petter 'M' type (V.A. series) which I can copy for my engine.

For all the above contact:- Gerald Atherton, Rose Glen, Bristol Road, Churchill, Bristol
or Tel: 0934 852670.

FOR SALE.

WOLSELEY mark 2 water cooled 1½hp with new rotary pump on four wheel trailer - £100

LISTER 'D' type 1½hp water cooled engine on wooden base with hand book - £95.

B.S.A. petrol/paraffin air cooled generator, 1945, 1 - kilowatt, 220 volt - £75.

PETTER 1½hp air cooled engine £45.

For all the above contact Mr. C. Cary, 6 Fourways, Ansford, Castle Cary, Somerset.
or Tel:- 0963 50722.

FOR SALE - ROTA SCYTHER (or Autosickle) not sure which as the owner didn't explain very well. Approx. 1948 and in working order complete with a host of spares. Contact Mr. Godfrey Coles of Codford, Nr. Warminster on 0985 50348.

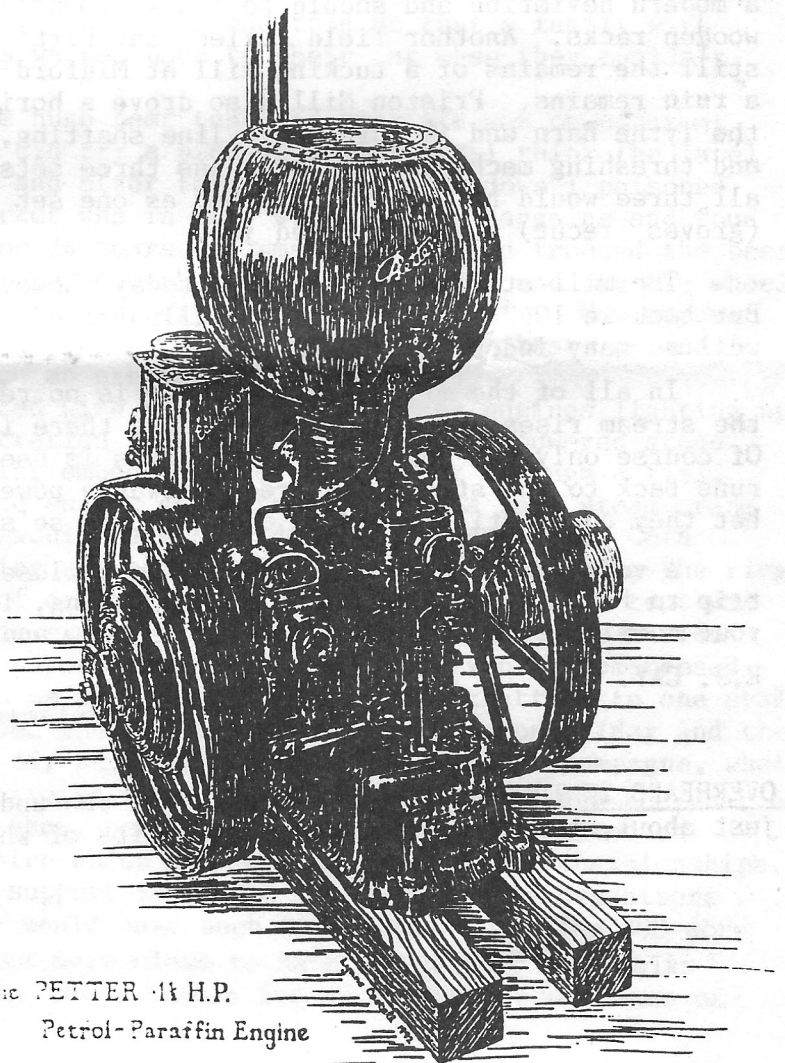
PRINTS BY LYNNE CASTELL

For an ideal birthday or Christmas present or just for a drawing of your favourite engine Lynne Castell has sent us a list of stationary engines she has drawn on 10" x 12" paper, below is a list of engine prints available and the price list.

Lister 'D' type (petrol), Amanco 3 hp (pet/par), Ruston Hornsby 5½ hp (pet/par) and Petter 'M' 1½ hp (pet/par).

Black & White print	£2.25 each + £1 p/p
Colour	" £5.75 each + £1 p/p
Hand coloured	" £12.75 each + £1 p/p
Set of 4 B/W	" £8.50 + £1 p/p

For orders please contact Lynne at 15 Spring Terrace, Milton, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset. BS22 9AT Tel. 0934 628760.



The PETTER 4 H.P.
Petrol-Paraffin Engine

PRISTON MILL Nr. BATH.Evening Talk at The Old Down Inn 27/7/92.

When we arrived at The Old Down Inn, Bob and I thought we had come on the wrong date, its not often we are early, it made a nice change to have a pint before I had to start extracting money for the evening raffle. I also had a chance to have a chat to one or two members. The room soon began to fill up, but we could have done with a few more members present for this very interesting talk on Priston Mill.

Peter Hopwood gave us a very detailed account of the history of Priston Mill. The first reference to a mill on this site was made in 931AD when the mill was given by King Athelstan to the Abbot of Bath and the mill has worked on the land ever since. It now seems hard to believe that there were over 5,000 corn mills recorded in The Domesday Book. It was quite common to find mills within three to five miles of each other, you may ask why this was, "transport" or the lack of it was the answer. Not only was there a need by the estates and large land owners for milling facilities but the peasants themselves grew small quantities of grain for their own needs. It was not possible to transport large loads to and from widely seperated mills. So mills were built wherever the need arose.

Priston was built as a overshot water mill, overshot being the term used for a wheel where water is fed to the top of the wheel and falls into trough like buckets around the circumference of the wheel and undershot wheel is a wheel fed at the bottom with the water pushing paddles on the water wheel.

The stream that feeds Priston Mill was diverted so as to reach the wheel, but this water once had to be returned to the stream. How do you fancy digging a tunnel 150 yards long by hand? This was done at Priston and I ain't aff glad I weren't on that job.

As the years passed transport improved, ships began to ply the seas and grain began to be brought from other places. Mills started to be built near ports and the country mill became less of a necessity, as transport became less of a problem. But, not all the mills in the country areas faded away, many became parts of farms, being worked as not only corn mills for grinding wheat for human consumption, animal feed was also produced. Priston Mill was put to another use, this was driving a tucking stock. This was a machine for softening cloth. At Priston there is a field named 'Back Ground' this is believed to be a modern deviation and should be 'Rack Ground' a field where cloth was hung for drying on wooden racks. Another field called 'Saw Pitt' also exists close to the mill. There is still the remains of a tucking mill at Midford near Bradford on Avon, but alas now only a ruin remains. Priston Mill also drove a horizontal shaft, 30 yards long, this ran to the Tythe Barn and in turn drove line shafting, the shafting being belted to chaff cutters and thrashing machines. Priston has three sets of stones, however this does not mean that all three would be working together as one set would generally be out of use being dressed (groves recut) a very skilled job.

The mill still produces flour today, however, most of its output goes to visitors. But back in 1963 and before, the millsupplied flour to St. Martins Hospital in Bath, as well as many independent bakers.

In all of the mills history there is no record of the mill ever being without water, the stream rises about 3 miles away and there is no extraction of water for any other use. Of course only the power the water gives is used to drive the mill and then the water runs back to the stream. A free renewable power source, them old boys weren't so daft I bet they could still teach we clever so in so's a thing or two.

A very informative evening drew to a close, I for one shall not be long in taking a trip to Priston, or what about a club outing, if any of you are interested don't be shy your committee is here for you, let us know and we will do the rest. Good night and God Bless.
E.J. GAY.

OVERHEARD IN THE LADIES LOO..... "I can understand how a sheep-shearing machine works, just about, but I can't quite get to grips of what a RAM pump does....."