

# CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

September  
2009

Thirty second  
year of  
publication

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

## From the Sump

The Sort Out season looms upon us, Newbury on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, ours at Cranmore on 17<sup>th</sup> and Enstone on 14<sup>th</sup> November. Any others I should publicise? They are curious events when you think about it. The vendors expend great effort in bringing a huge pile of heavy, dangerous to move and generally quite unsaleable junk miles and miles across country, scattering amongst it a few little gems to be hauled blinking into the light by delighted buyers. These they bear away home, peering in their rear view mirrors at their treasure & grinning to themselves at their good fortune. Depending on nature, it becomes THE winter project or – much more likely – is sheeted down with the other silent “to do” lumps in the garden or jammed uneasily into a corner of the workshop. There, it will gather dust until its turn comes or it finds its way to another sale after interest has waned – or the owner dies!

But what happens to the bulk of the trailer's load? Does the vendor cart it around interminably until it succumbs to corrosion and just vanishes? Gets fed up and drops it on a scrappy as a Mixed Load? Dunno – I'm an inveterate buyer, me ;o))

When you've been to a few sales, you get a feel for a stall without really paying attention. Nicely polished brass, repainted stuff & (dead give away) tidy price labels almost always mean high prices.

Boxes and boxes of rusty old tools, broken injector pumps & just old tat needing only a cursory glance whilst moving. A jumble of stuff in glorious untidy array with rusty plums in the pudding of oily iron that are easily missed unless you stop & stare.

And the prices – no rhyme nor reason there. An engine in running order here for a tenner & twenty yards away, the same in derelict order for fifty! Is it a reflection of the vendor's interest or lack of it? Does he specialise in something else? Who knows?

I often think that I ought to get a stall – I've got enough stuff I don't love especially, the Good Lord knows, but somehow the effort versus likely rewards is never an equation I much fancy calculating. So, as the Fall of Leaf is upon us and the days shorten, I'll again venture forth with an empty car & a full pocket & come back with those positions reversed. I'm not alone though, am I?

## Moving the Metal

### For sale

**Petter 8hp.** 1919, M type. Class One prize winner, totally rebuilt reluctant sale. Best offer near £1.200. Phone Eric Gay - 01225 754374

**Enfield “Sloper” Diesel.** Apparently in good order, free with compression. I'll never get around to it! **JAP 55 twin cylinder.** Ran fine the last time I tried. Probably never used in anger! Swap for something small & interesting or £140.00 for either (not both!). **“Somme to Beverley by Way of Sunderland”**

A history of the ABC engine at war, 1915 to 1971 - By J.K. Siddorn. 70 pages, 80. photos and line drawings, cardback. Published by the author – address below. £4.99 including UK postage. £5.99 Worldwide (Sterling only accepted)

A comprehensive history of the stationary engines, APU & GPU units built by the All British Engine Company Ltd. Based upon the text of the series of articles that appeared in Stationary Engine Magazine during 2009. The work includes new information, corrections and eighty contemporary photos, line drawings and adverts - and the captions are accurate, capacious and exhaustive!

*Birthday? Christmas is coming – an ideal small gift!*

## Special notices

Tap-tap – hello? Is this thing on? I'm beginning to wonder as I've had no requests for adverts & neither have I been inundated with articles. I am quite happy to write the bulk of the newsletter myself, aided by the one or two stalwarts that most ably write Good Stuff month by month – my thanks to them – but I'm sure we'd all welcome some diversity of tone!

**WSEC Social do!** - Skittles and Supper evening at The Royal Oak Corsley on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7-30pm. You need to let Diana know you are coming, so ring to book your place on 01373 464982.

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

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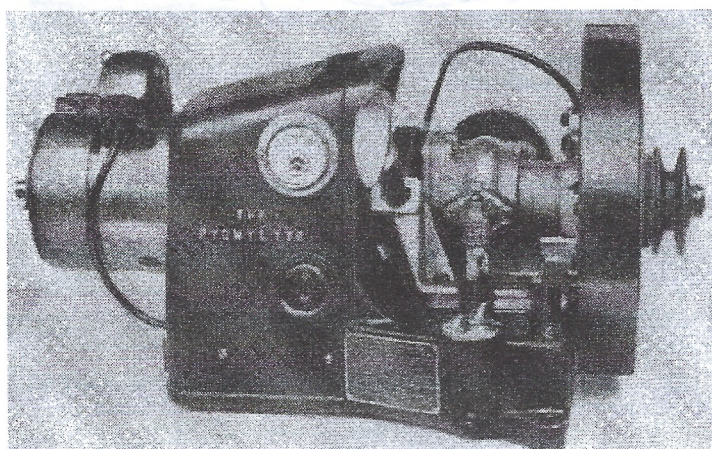


## Featured Engine No. 33

### Adventures with a Marvil By Kim Siddorn

Apart from the obvious play on words, the name is derived from John MARston (the company's founder) and VILLiers, the company name. The Marvil is a horizontal, fan cooled, single cylinder two stroke engine of unusual configuration. Apart from the cylinder barrel & crankshaft assembly, it is of all aluminium construction. Appearing first in Britain in 1933, it appears to be a transatlantic co-operation, but the exact antecedents are not known.

The original unit had a bore & stroke of 50mm x 38mm & it gave .6 bhp at 1,750 rpm. A later development was the 50mm x 50mm Marvil Century of 98cc. The smaller cylinder has five fins, the larger, seven. They rapidly became ubiquitous and drove small generators, hedge trimmers, sheep shearers and pumps of all kinds. A most successful venture



was the 15 volt, 10 amp "Pygmylite".

The Marvil unit was bolted to a large aluminium casting and directly drove a CAV three brush shunt would dynamo with an all-up weight of just 56lbs. In 1935, a quantity were supplied to the London branch of the US giant Associated Manufacturing & these can still be found carrying the Amanco name.

Both units shared a common appearance supplied as standard bolted to an aluminium fuel tank that was common to both sizes & was supplied with a direct lift carb. Invariably, these engines were fixed speed engines & ran at 1,750 rpm, although adjustment was possible between 1,250 & 2,000 rpm. They could also be purchased with a top tank and a proper carburettor and were throttle controlled.

I am currently restoring a smaller unit. I stripped down the carburettor & was rather surprised to find that it is complete as they have a number of easily-dropped bits that can skitter off unseen. I've had one apart before, so was especially careful.

I'd assumed it was Mazac or similar, but no, it's aluminium & at some time a cack-handed fiddler has broken off one side of the flange & another more sensitive hand has gas welded it back on – pretty fair job too considering the thin sections involved.

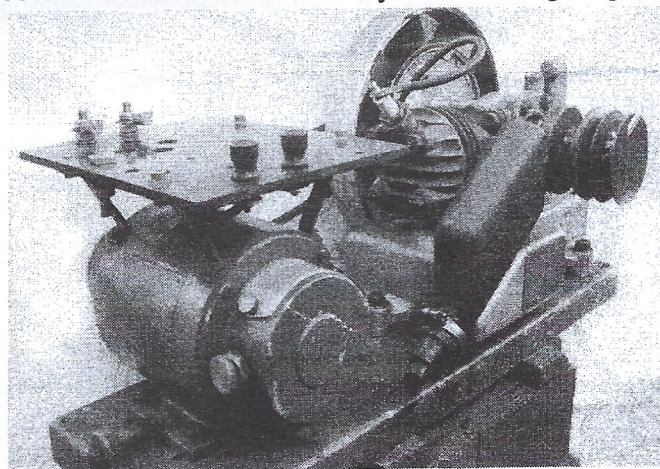
For those unused to these curious direct lift carbs, let me take you through it. From the base of the carb proper, a long pipe descends into the cast

aluminium fuel tank to which the engine is bolted. Both fuel pipe and engine base must make a good seal to their faces or the fuel will not rise as it should. At the foot of the pipe is a ball valve that stops the fuel being pushed back down the pipe by back pressure. It also makes this type of engine more easily started by hand.

The depression caused by the air flow raises the brass ball off its seat & allows the petrol to rise up the centre tube, across the bore and about another 1.5" to the top of the carb. At its top there is a needle with a fine thread that controls the mixture. (I screwed it right in then out 2.25 turns.) The needle allows the fuel to spill out of the tube which is itself a close fit in the carb body. The metered fuel now pours down the outside of the tube until it meets the bore where the rushing air pulls it into the engine. There is no means of regulating the air supply except for the choke lever. & there is no air filter.

Trapped between flange & crankcase, is a curious device that I can best describe as a toothless five spoked clockwheel with a centre spindle pointing away from the engine. It sits in the recess in the carb that is provided for it and supports a lightweight spring and a fibre disc that moves on the spindle. As the carb feeds direct into the crankcase, it is subject to pumping, so this disc valve controls the back pressure in the inlet.

Engine speed is controlled by a brass segment in the points cam rising out of its slot under centrifugal force and holding the points open. It works very well actually and can be finely adjusted by changing the weight of the spring against which it acts. There is a coil spring under compression in a little tube attached to the body of the points box & it operates on the back of the moving point. It is adjustable, bringing more or less pressure to bear on the points arm. I can't quite figure out why, but I assume it is there to steady the arm, giving fine



control to the points.

Once you have decided upon an engine speed, the engine is run under load until it has reached a decent working temperature. Final adjustments are made by taking off the chrome plated cone on top of the carb and finely adjusting the mixture until the engine two strokes properly and complete combustion is achieved.



## Calendar of Events for 2009

Oct 4<sup>th</sup> **SUNDAY ONLY! .Event.** Vintage & 4x4 Sort Out, A34/M4 junc, Newbury Showground RG18 9QZ  
 Oct 10<sup>th</sup> **Supper & Skittles** at The Royal Oak, Corsley. 7.30 Phone Diana 01373 464982  
 Oct 17<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Autumn Sort out at Cranmore station.  
 Oct 26<sup>th</sup> Club night. Guest Speakers:- Bob Burgess, Colin Dipper **TRADITIONAL ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC**  
 Nov 14<sup>th</sup> **Event.** Engine Sort Out, Enstone, Oxon.  
 Nov 30<sup>th</sup> Club night. 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

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

Some time ago the committee decided not to hold an August meeting at the Old Down Inn because of poor support, probably due to members being on holiday during that month. I was never happy about that decision, we need more events not less, so I put it to the committee that the August meeting be reinstated and given a try again. Well the meeting this August on the 20<sup>th</sup> was a resounding success. Instead of a guest speaker we had a "member's night", where members brought along their "other hobbies". The response was brilliant, we had Ruben Smith with his superb model ploughs, made to scale, and were exact replicas of the real thing. Kevin Phillips displayed his radio controlled model boats and radio controlled decoy ducks. Francis Armstrong had a very impressive collection of the brilliant teddy bears that she makes. Rob Armstrong displayed some vintage valve radios from the 50s, in working order I might add. Eric Gay brought along a very nice model steam engine that he has working from compressed air until he makes a boiler. Robin Lambert had a magnificent layout of farmyard animals complete with farm buildings that had lain dormant in his loft for over 40 years. Henry Baker had his display of over 60 model Ice Cream Vans. His brother Oliver brought along his musical instruments, it was about six guitars, a banjo, a ukulele, a keyboard, a bass guitar, loads of music books etc. It really was an impressive collection of entries from the members who had brought them. Each of the exhibitors in turn gave a brief talk on what they had brought along, Olive explained what all the different instruments were, he then played his guitar and ukulele and when he got to his keyboard he said "I had to have this as they would not buy me a Grand Piano". We decided that the entrants would be judged, with a ten pound prize for the winner. Margaret and Henry Simmons were the appointed judges and after a very close contest they adjudged Oliver to be the winner. To say he was pleased was an understatement, he said to me that is the first time I have been paid for my music. The usual raffle followed, and I'm sure the members present will agree with me that this was an excellent

evening's entertainment, thank you very much to everyone who took part, I'm sure this will be repeated again next year.

**Several of the present committee are standing down at the AGM in February so we will be looking for members to come on the committee to fill these vacancies, please remember the club cannot run itself, if you wish to consider coming on the committee, or know of a member who does please let one of the committee know**

### Pheasant Plucking

by Kim Siddorn

We were at an event one day when one of my blokes comes to find me.

"Come quick, there's trouble at Druid's stall" Druid is a mild mannered purveyor of tat to the gullible and he is possessed of a mischievous nature.

When I got there, there was quite a crowd. They had gathered around a couple in their late thirties & she was speaking in a low, venomous tone to her husband.

"Just for once in your life, do as I ask" she gestures towards a linen bag on the stall. It is about a foot long & sticking out of it are some pheasant tail feathers. The neck of the bag is tied tightly around them. Occasionally, they move to & fro.

"But ..."

Woman to Druid "How much is it?"

"W-e-l-l, it's not really for sale."

"I don't care what it costs, just tell me".

Druid smiles & opens his mouth but I catch his eye first & he mentally removes a zero before speaking. "Um - twenty five quid?"

Woman to husband "Pay him".

"But ..." then, seeing the determined resolve in her eyes, the same as led martyrs to the stake, he shrugs & gives two tenners and a fiver to Druid who wordlessly picks up the bag & smiles at the lady "What are you going to do with it?"

"Set it free, of course."

There & then, in the growing crowd of curious onlookers she undoes the string & pushes it into the air with both hands. From the bag flies the mechanism from one of those dancing coke tins that were about some years ago. The feathers are moving, but there isn't enough lift & - predictably, perhaps - it falls on her husband's head, catching him a smart blow.

"OW!!!"

There is a long silence. She picks up her purchase, puts it carefully into the bag. The husband is hovering between hysteria and irritation as their eyes meet.

"Just - don't - say - anything." she instructed from clenched teeth & together, looking neither left nor right, they parted the crowd like Moses dealt with the Red Sea and vanished into the throng.



## Social news

### By "Earwig"

Happy Birthday to Alan (Keith) Vickery, who may or may not be hanging up his tools for good on the 16<sup>th</sup> September. Either way, wife Barb has a new set at home for him in the guise of vacuum cleaner, ironing board etc.

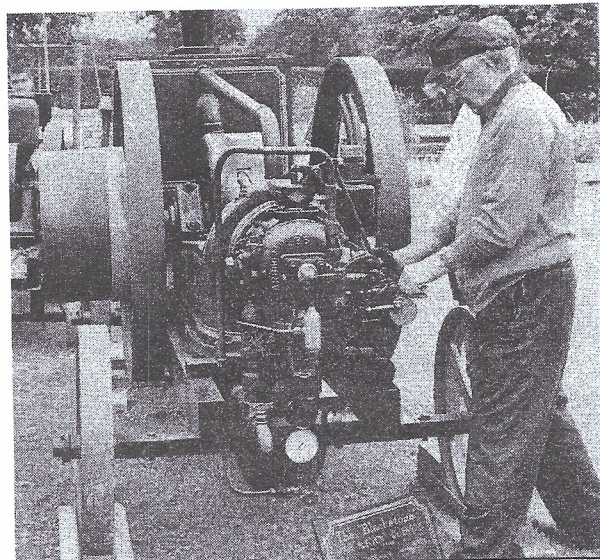
Congratulations to Wendy & Herb Gane who will be celebrating their Ruby Wedding on the 10th October,

Don Rogers & Kevin Phillips both clock up one more year in October - many happy returns to them.

## Another Grand Day Out

By Robin Lambert

No, not the sequel to the Wallace & Gromit movie, but a real life treat at Margaret & Derrick Hardwicks museum which houses some 50 stationary engines and artefacts of all descriptions. Amongst the many visitors were some 20 odd W.S.E.C members, here to view the

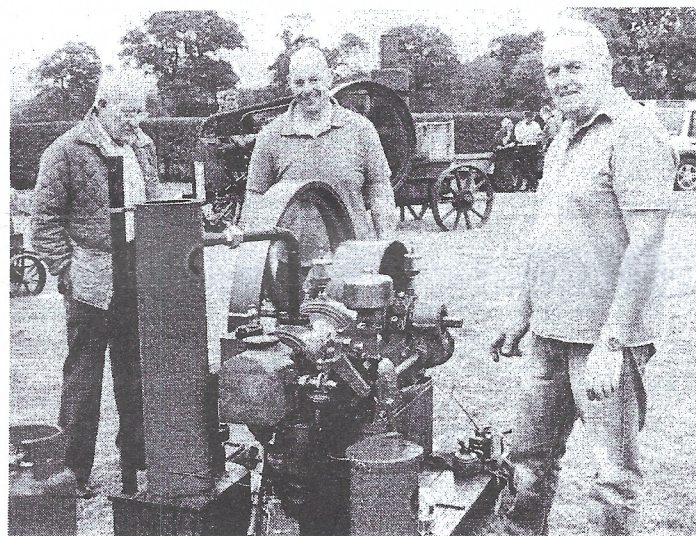


Derreck Hardwick starts his Blackstone aided by an 8hp R-H!

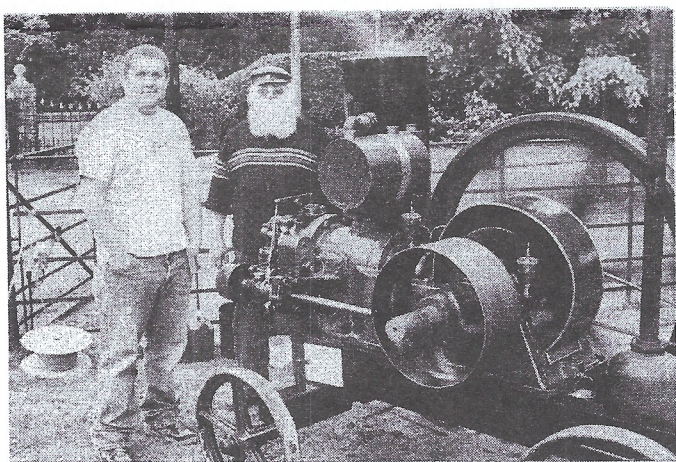
Don & William Rogers (*LEFT*) had their 10hp R&H IP model running slightly slower than usual but at 180rpm it ticked over like a watch & never missing a beat. A real eye catcher was a Loughborough College made engine that was made by the students as part of their engineering training. Derrick told me the College even had their own foundry and all the castings were made by them and about 6 engines were produced each year.

The new addition to the collection here is a full size windmill that pumps water up from a 30ft bore hole which then tops up the pond which is a lovely feature of the beautifully landscaped gardens.

I had to smile at a large shed that was full of what was described as "might comes" which we all tend to keep just in case they might come in handy.



A real gem amongst all the buildings is a purpose built reproduction of a 20th century workshop that houses a 12hp Crossley Gas Engine which has a fly wheel weighing around one and a half tons. Located in the Bristol area just a few years ago, what better home could it have found and is now set up for all to see. (I first saw it where it had been since 1919, when it was purchased by a Kingswood engineer in a small way who had made stuff for the Bristol Aeroplane Company Ltd during WW1. It was ten years old then & replaced an even earlier Crossley, that company supplying it refurbished - Ed)



museum and browse and chat to this year's exhibitors of Hornsby Engines. Several of our club members were invited to bring along their machines, which ranged from two and a half hp to six hp, in total around a dozen Hornsbys were here on show with some very rare Listers ranging from 2.5hp to a mighty 8hp 'R' type brought along by ShanMacrae. Graham Raymond had probably the oldest 2.5hp on view. It was made in 1909 and it is quite possibly one of the prototypes for what was to follow in later years. If any one knows of an earlier engine let Graham know as I am sure he would be very interested and perhaps disappointed!

Several Victoria's were all lined up like soldiers in the museum and amongst them was spotted Jamie & Luke Coates no doubt gleaning information for a future project amongst their own collection. Outside in the neatly mowed paddock the Hornsbys were strategically placed to pre marked out numbered locations that made very impressive viewing.

Owner Andy Vincent (*centre, with Ed & John Thorn RIGHT*) came with one of the smallest Hornsbys and it had a few teething problems as it never seemed to fire on every stroke despite lots of heat from the gas torch. Steamy unburnt paraffin vapour was billowing from its exhaust. Lots of help was on hand with advice and theories regarding the problem from John & Ed Thorne who had two of their Hornsbys on show. I am sure they helped Andy no end with their suggestions.