

OUT AND ABOUT - SEIGEMOOR.

One cold and grey autumn afternoon saw the ever doubtful white MG (on one of its infrequent trips away from a Unipart stockist!) heading accross the Somerset moors on an intrepid "engine outing." The venue was Aller Moor pumping station, once the property of the Somerset Water Board - Drainage Authority - River Board, or whatever, and now owned and retired by the Wessex Water Board. Here we were to see one of an almost unique type of steam pumping engine, over 100 years old. The station, now a museum, is in the care of Wally Musgrave, who ran the pump for almost all his working life. The engine, made in 1869, is an Easton Amos with an Appold centrifugal pump, a type especially made for land drainage. Also in the museum are two other Easton Amos pumping sets from other moorland stations now pulled down, one being even earlier, of 1864 vintage. All three engines are different, the first being a vertical twin cylinder, the second being arranged as an inverted V acting on one side only of the crankshaft, and the third an inverted V acting on each end of the crankshaft.

After an hour of Wally's anecdotes relating to 'his' engines and moorland pumping, we moved on to Curry Moor pumping station a mile or so away to see yet another, even larger, Easton Amos of about the same age. This was set up to be run by a 25hp electric motor for display purposes and silently running the original applewood 'cogs' were too! This engine had been replaces in 1955 by two Ruston-Hornsby Class 4 V.C.B. four cylinder diesels with compressed air start driven by a small Ruston twin diesel. These looked very impressive and were impeccably maintained.

Wallace then took us over to Westonzoyland pumping house. W.S.E.C. members who would care to thumb back through their cherished (and soon to be collectors items!) newsletters will find out all about this station and its preservation trust in August 1978 when we were invited to take part in an open day at the museum. However it was rather short notice and very few turned up. (Only John Emery, if my memory is correct! Ed.) We hope to do it properly in 1980, the 150th. anniversary of the establishment of the engine house, so all you lot in the back row at the A.G.M. speak up and remind the committee!

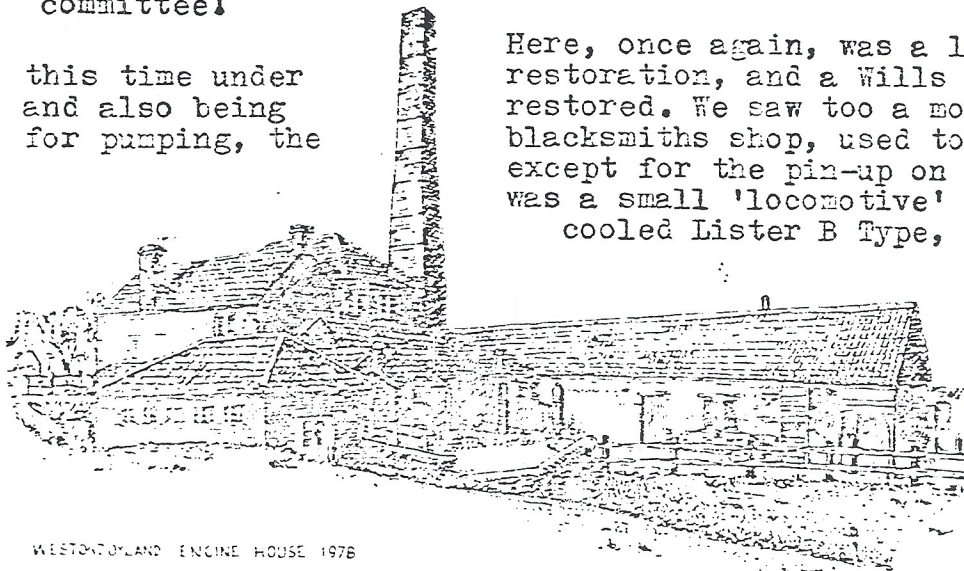
this time under
and also being
for pumping, the

Here, once again, was a large Easton Amos engine, restoration, and a Wills engine, made in Bridgwater restored. We saw too a modern G.M. diesel now used blacksmiths shop, used today much as it was then, except for the pin-up on the wall! Lurking outside was a small 'locomotive' powered by a 5hp hopper-cooled Lister B Type, also a 2½hp Lister A Type,

just ready for restoration.

As it became dark, we reluctantly departed after thanking Wallace Musgrave and Ian Miles for a most entertaining and enjoyable afternoon

A Wessex Club trip to these pumping stations



WESTONZOYLAND ENGINE HOUSE 1978

could easily be arranged - anyone interested?

Eric Brain.

Footnote: Photographs and technical details of these engines and their pumps, together with a potted history of Easton, Amos & Anderson, who were eventually bought out by Pulsometer Co. of Reading, can be found in "The Steam Engine In Industry" Vol. I. by George Watkins. Moorland Publishing Co. Ashbourne, Derby.

The November meeting took the form of a quiz night. This was well arranged and organised by Eric Brain and Stuart Ashman. 56 coloured slides were shown and various aspects of engines were to be identified. Ages, Manufactures, magnetos, nationalities etc. Anyone having digested the Stationary Engine Magazine over the last 12 months was well away. A wild guess was all some of us was able to make. No. 56 was a real puzzler. "Name the engine" the quiz master said. We all gave it a name but none of us was marked correct as even the quiz masters didn't know what it was!

At 9.30 we had all marked our papers and the judges were to check scores while we retired for refreshments after such exhausting brain-work.

Mark Tilly and Eddie Mills both had top scores so a tie-breaker was arranged. Another engine, to be identified, was shown. The first to answer was Eddie. He was presented with an engine restoring kit and Mark with an oiler as second prize. Third prize was won by John Emery, who received two Lister books and a bag of useful brass oddments. The ladies prize, of chocolates, was won by Marg Dring and the booby prize, a Lister book, went to Jean Wookey. Other high marks were obtained by Ian Cradock, Tom Randall, Ivor Yeo, Herbie Gane and a valiant effort was made by our youngest member, Jeremy Dring.

The meeting closed at about 10.00, everyone having enjoyed the "almost Christmas quiz", and realising how little they really know about Stationary Engines.

Emery and Sons.

***** TEN WAYS TO KILL AN ENTHUSIASTIC CLUB *****

- 1/. Don't come to the meetings.
- 2/. If you do come, come late.
- 3/. If the weather does not suit you, don't even dream of coming.
- 4/. If you do attend a meeting, find fault with it and the work of the committee.
- 5/. Never accept office, as it is easier to criticise than do things.
- 6/. Nevertheless, complain if you are not appointed on the committee.
- 7/. If asked by a committee member to give your opinion on some matter, tell him you have nothing to say. However tell everyone else how it should be done.
- 8/. Do nothing more than is necessary to help the club and stay away at times when members are expected to roll up their sleeves and unselfishly help things along, but afterwards say that you did not help because of a certain clique which run the club.
- 9/. Hold back your dues as long as possible but insist that certain events are subsidised from the club kitty. Make sure you are away on holiday the day of the major event, then complain to all and sundry about the choice of date.
- 10/. Don't bother about getting new members, let George the Chairman do it but be sure to complain that the club is too small. Make as much trouble as possible behind the back of the committee.

The above hints on killing an enthusiastic club appeared in a 1920's Canadian magazine. Thank goodness they DON'T apply to members of our club !

Contributed by a very active non-committee member!

THE CASE OF A BLACKSTONE OIL ENGINE.

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Beckington was the last rally that I attended this last season and I suppose you could say the luckiest, because it was at this show that a very unselfish chap told me about an engine way down in Dorset.

I personally find, and I expect others do as well, that at some rallies people often walk along the ropes, stop for a chat and tell you half a story about the engines that they know for and will never quite let on where they are, but on this occasion, the person who told me was a fellow exhibitor who had an engine on show right next to my Bamford 6hp., and water pump. Anyway, as it happened, 'Paddy' from Dorset also did a fair bit of vintage tractor ploughing and was looking for a Standard Fordson and my knowing for one at Wedmore, we exchanged information.

He told me that he knew for a Blackstone oil engine about twice the size of my Bamford, tucked away in a broken down tin shed all covered in branches and thorns. Well, thinking this was not too big, I obtained the phone number of a certain Dr. Cole, who was seeing to the disposal of it on behalf of a patient of his.

The following Sunday, after making what the wife regarded as half a dozen expensive phone calls to Dorset, I set off, cheque book in pocket, to meet the Doctor at Wool railway station, about 5 miles from Wareham. Within minutes of arriving at the station the Doctor arrived and we were soon on our way, reaching our destination, a deserted brickworks, within about five minutes.

At this stage I was beginning to think to myself, "Well, I hope this is worth it," but this thought was quickly forgotten when, as we pulled away the rusty tin sheets, a pair of big, curved spoked flywheels about five feet in diameter came into view and when fully exposed were revealed as belonging to an early lamp start Blackstone, complete in every detail, including a birds nest in the fuel tank which I later found.

Of course my reaction was that it would make a lovely engine when restored, but it was much bigger than I had thought, and much too large for my half-ton trailer, so, with mixed feelings, I told the Doc. that I was sorry to have wasted his time, but I would not bother to buy it.

My trouble is that I tend to think about deals too long and I have missed some good ones in the past, so as I lay awake thinking about this engine for the next couple of evenings, that Blackstone grew smaller and smaller in my mind and I thought, "Well, just as well buy it and worry about transporting it to rallies later on." so, I rang the Doctor and made the deal.

When one buys an engine of this size there is rather a lot to consider, and buying it is only the beginning. Transporting it home was the next problem and the system we arranged was too good to be true. 'Paddy' who I must say was one of the most helpful blokes that I have met for some time, lives quite near where the engine was and it was laid on that, when he fetched his Fordson

which he bought from Wedmore, I would go down and we would load the engine for him to bring on the upward journey. But, as you all know, its not very often that things go exactly to plan and not only did the JCB's gearbox fail, but the wiring loom on the low-loader burnt out too! So, seeing that it was Paddy's only free weekend, he had to forget about bringing the engine up for me and continue to fetch his tractor with a four-wheel trailer. Now I was back to square one. How was I going to bring 2½ tons of Blackstone sixty miles without making about four trips with car and trailer?

Luckily enough, the answer came without too much problem as one evening the phone rang and my good mate Herb Gane from Wells offered to fetch it for me as he had to deliver what seemed like fifty tons of cow feed to the Yeovil-Dorchester area. The only thing Herbie was worried about was having a dirty great hole right through the bottom of his wagon! So, once again we set off to Dorset and this time, after taking the Flywheels and crankshaft off to make it easier for the JCB, we successfully loaded the engine and after securing with ropes, we set off for home, but not before Herbie had eaten all my sandwiches and drunk my coffee!

The engine was originally used on a big clay pulverizer in the brickworks, and had not been started since 1949. It was made about 1912-1914, is 10½hp., and is of the Carters Patent slow speed type.

Phil Harris.

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— O THE SLEEPING BLACKSTONE O —



An Engine Christmas Pantomime
Or A Grim Fairy Tale!

Scene 1 (A clear frosty morning a few days before Christmas, the rising sun shines over a plough field).

Once upon a time there was a man called Gordon Blastit. On this bright morning he was close to his goal and he knew it. Months of research, tracking and questioning the locals had brought him to these fields and a few hundred yards more would bring him near to the engine he could so far only dream of.

Gordon breathed a cloud of ice into his cupped hands as he stumbled clumsily in his Wellington boots over the frozen ruts of the field. He was almost amongst the greenhouses of the abandoned market garden. His heart started to race as he walked faster, 'there must be a catch', he thought, 'perhaps his information had been wrong?'. He would soon know.

As he climbed over the old gate he could see the greenhouse. 'The largest one', they had said, 'with the small shed at the back'. As he approached broken glass crunched under his feet, but Gordon didn't notice he was busy sorting out his tool box in his mind. He hoped the assortment he had in his rucksack would be sufficient for his first trip. He walked down the long greenhouse to a small door, turned the handle and peeped into the musty shed. It was dark but the shaft of light from the doorway put a spotlight on a smallish engine and pump that had supplied the greenhouses with water.

Gordon rushed into the room and there it was! In this lonely place was the rarest Blackstone in the country. Only ten had been built for a special works test programme and here before him was the only surviving engine. He walked slowly around it, it was surprisingly complete, the vandals who had broken every window of the greenhouse had not been inside the shed. This had to be the find of the century. Gordon had stood and looked for at least ten minutes before he realised he had not yet touched the engine. He bent down to touch the flywheels, a thin film of grease had preserved them, and as he ran his hand along the original black paintwork Gordon did a very unusual thing. It must have been his pleasure in finding such a prize, but he bent down and kissed it on its head.

A sudden flash of light blinded Gordon and sent him spinning back against the wall. The shed was filled with red smoke which when it cleared revealed

a very attractive young woman. She was tall with long legs, which she showed off to the full in dark tights and high boots. Her tunic was tight and revealing her hair tied in a bow at the back. Even Gordon had to admit she was a very attractive woman. 'This has got to be my day', he thought. But then he looked closer and the full horror of what had happened struck him. She was standing in the middle of the four bolts that had attached the engine to its base!

"Go you ghosts of Christmas past,

I've shaken off this curse at last", she said, and slapped her thigh hard.

"Oh gosh!", exclaimed Gordon, "I think actually there must be some mistake, you see I came here to fetch an engine...."

She continued,

"My names Amanca, how do you do?

I'll try and explain this thing to you.

An ugly witch with dirty broom

Cursed me to this engine room

And only released to heavenly bliss

By a single loving kiss.

In shapely form to you I've come

So Gordon Blastit why look so glum?"

Gordon replied,

"I know it's Christmas but for goodness sake

I only wanted an engine to take

And now it's gone, it's all too bad

I didn't think pantomimes end so sad

Oh no", said Gordon, "This can't be true

I've started now to talk like you!!!!"

In this festive tale a moral is told

For engine collectors who are too bold,

All sing with voices of merry tones

"People in greenhouses shouldn't kiss Blackstones".

----- CURTAIN -----

CAST:-

Gordon Blastit was played by Angela Ripon

Amanca was played by Welton Rovers (and lost!).

N.B. Panto horse manure for greenhouses is now available at

the stage door.