



# CRANKING



Issue No: 3/12

March 2020

## The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

### Editor's Note

Welcome to the March WSEC Newsletter – my name is David Lacey and I'm your new Editor for the magazine. A few of you will know me from most probably the excellent Whaddon Crank-Ups (more on this later...) and one or two shows last year.

From a very young age I've always been fascinated by engines and all things mechanical; my late Father was well-used to his Hayter Lawnmower being regularly being stripped down for 'essential maintenance and servicing' – to the point he got so fed up with me doing this, he brought home an engine from an old car from one of his clients (He was an accountant) for me to strip down and play around with.

From then on, I knew exactly what I wanted to do in life, become a mechanic.....I studied Motor Vehicle Mechanics at GCSE level on my own with the help of a Science teacher and gained a GCSE A grade.

I left school in 1988, did the usual 2 years at college and then gained a placement as a workshop trainee at the local Austin-Rover dealership in town. I worked there from 1990 growing up with Minis and Metros with their famously leaky A Series engines and brittle transmissions – working my way up from trainee to Service and Aftersales Manager in 1998, a role I very much enjoyed.

2003 I could see things were going pear-shaped with the company, so I left the rat-race of the dealership and settled into a job in a small garage in a Devon village, specialising in Peugeot motor cars, it was a much more relaxed and fun job, making friends there that I still have today.

2006 arrived and I was once again asked to consider joining the family construction business, which I did – and haven't looked back since. A lot of hard work, sweat and sheer determination saw me take over the ownership of the business in January 2015, where I am still today.

So....as you can see, I have a long-term interest in engines and anything mechanical – Stationary engines had always interested me but having a young family with priorities elsewhere, the time just wasn't right. But back in 2018 I got hooked after visiting the excellent West Somerset Railway Associations Steam Fair at Taunton – where upon walking around the engine field, the delightful sound of a Petter S two-stroke engine grabbed my attention.....and that is where my interest started.....

I now have a collection of around 25 engines, ranging from small to large, many of you will have seen (and heard) some of them at local events. It's not just the engines – it's the social and friendship side of the hobby that I enjoy too – and the welcome I received from various members at my first Crank-Up (Whaddon Mince Pie, Dec 2018) will never be forgotten.

I look forward to putting together the Newsletter and I hope you'll enjoy it too – but I do require some input and articles from our members, so please don't be shy at putting something on paper or emailing me a short item for inclusion. We also welcome For Sale and Wanted requests (space permitting) so please don't hesitate to send those in. I also don't intend to change the layout or format of the newsletter either.

Given the current world situation, the newsletter may have to take a break, but this is very fluid at the present time.

*David*

## Whaddon Spring Crank-Up

The eagerly-awaited Whaddon Spring Crank-Up was just what we all needed after what seemed to be the longest and wettest winter we've had for a long time. The weather forecast for the day wasn't great, but most of us got into position in Gordon's barn before the heavy rain arrived – so that was good.

We had a great turnout of engines, I think I am correct in saying we had 22 engines on display in three lines – and a wonderful selection we had too – ranging from a Hornsby engine with an interesting history to two very interesting engines, a Slavia and a Robot engine. Both looked and sounded great, it was a real treat to see them.

There were engines running large pumps, lights – perhaps the star of the show was Gordon's Blackstone Spring Injection diesel engine brilliantly mounted on a purpose-built display trailer, it sounded sublime! (But we won't mention the extension lead running from the socket running the showmans lamps on the trailer.....)

We were very well looked after by the ladies who organised the catering – the tea and coffee, the excellent soup and not to mention the infamous apple crumble went down a treat with all present. Thank you to all who spent considerable time and effort in doing this for us, it is very much appreciated.

The raffle was well supported and was a real fun part of the day, with many winning prizes.

It was also nice to see many youngsters at the event, taking an interest in the engines and the raffle!!

Due thanks to Gordon and Paula for the event, not forgetting all of the other helpers, it is a firm favourite of mine!

## M-L Lister2 Magnetos Type RS1/4/5

This type of magneto is of the rotating magnet type, the magnet revolves this helps to protect the less robust parts, like the coils, and condenser they stay stationary, also the contact breaker does not rotate it is operated by a cam at the end of the rotating magnet shaft. Some RS1 magnetos have a stop switch, others have the provision for the wiring of a remote stop switch, how many of you knew that?

Now the magnetos should not be dismantled or interfered with unnecessarily, a bit of periodical attention to the ignition system is essential for it to give its best.

Now let's look at what one should do, lubrication the cam that drives the points has a felt pad and if you should find this dry a few drops of light oil should be applied. The contact breaker pivot, this should also be given a little oil, as we use our engines very little compared to when they worked hard for a living, just a couple of drops once a year should do the job. To do this job the tiny split pin and washer should be removed, oil applied and then the pin, washer and split pin refitted. Cleaning the magneto, again in their working days dirt and grime built up and could even get all over the H/T cables as well as the terminal with our engines this should not happen so just keep it clean, if these parts do get wet, oily or dirty this can lead to poor starting so just keep them clean.

Now let's have a look at the magic bit, the contact breaker, the contacts must be kept clean, if left to get in a very poor state it may be necessary to polish them with a fine carborundum stone, or a very fine emery cloth, then afterwards to wash them in petrol.

Now to get the points set removed from the magneto one has to remove the nut and washers at the spring end, do not lose the insulating collar and remember how the metal and insulating washers were fitted, remove the tiny split pin and washer from the cotter pin, the points can now be removed from the back plate, undo the two screws retaining the back plate and remove.

Now one can reface the two points, when clean and flat wash in a drop of petrol, and replace, remember the cam must be clean and free of any deposits.

Now once refitted the gap must be set, turn the engine over until the gap is wide open, now if you are very lucky you may have the setting gauge that came with the engine when new, no gauge? Then set a gap to about 12 to 15 thou fully open. Now all should be well in the sparks department, if not one should work to the following routine, engine misfiring? Check plug cable it may be at fault, cracked, broken or corroded in the pickup, still not right? Then fit a

replacement plug, check gap on plug – remember it may spark ok out of the engine but not when under compression, it can be that the gap is too large, close it up a bit, now after doing all of this we have a spark but no go why not check the timing, a very simple job on a Lister D or A and if that fails one can only get the magneto looked at by an expert. But if one has a spark at every turn of the engine when on compression stroke I think it's time to look elsewhere for your trouble.

## **CHAIRMANS REPORT MARCH 2020**

February did not start well for me, I acquired some years ago a fractional horse power engine built in the late 1920s, after many hours and lots of work I got it running with an electronic system from Mini Mag. They are on the Isle of Wight, overjoyed I was until it stopped and all compression gone? Leaky exhaust valve cage, that can soon be put right I thought... I removed the cage and then dropped it on to the bed of my lathe, lots of broken cast iron. So, you see February did not start well, things can only improve thought I.

Well they did....I got a message from Ted "We have a new NEWS LETTER EDITOR" - I took my pills to help me calm down from the shock, so may I introduce you all to our new editor, Mr. David Lacey, David lives near Wellington in Somersetshire, now I must appeal to all club members let's make life as easy as we can for our new editor, please send in articles so as we can have a great newsletter for all club members. Send your articles to David Lacey, 8 Dyers Close, West Buckland, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9JU or by email [editor@wessexsec.org](mailto:editor@wessexsec.org)

Do you remember when Stationary Engine magazine awarded the Wessex Club a prize for the best newsletter of any Stationary Engine Club in the country, we could do it then so why not again? One other good part of February was that I managed to fill the programme of events for 2020 so we now have all our evening meetings at the Old Down filled with speakers or other forms of entertainment for you all, so please come along to the Old Down Inn on club nights.

Now I know that some of our club members may yet not have received their insurance cards, we are sorry for this but Caroline, our membership secretary has been unwell, but is now working hard to put this to rights so if you have renewed your membership you will soon be getting your paper work. The annual general meeting took place on the evening of February 24<sup>th</sup>. The meeting being opened by the club president Rodger Pike at around 8pm, apologies were given for absence, the minutes AGM being with all attending members they were given time to read and raise any matters attaining to the minutes.

We then moved on to the slight changes to the constitution this was made clear to all members present. My report followed, then Caroline gave details of the club's finances, at this time the club is not as financially sound as it was. The committee will be taking a long hard look at this matter in the very near future.

The election of officers was a straight-forward vote by the membership, all the committee were re-elected plus the club now has a Vice Chairman Mr Peter Gear. May I welcome him to this position and hope he can help the club grow and go on as one of the leading stationary engine clubs in the land. The meetings last item was AOB only one item was raised and that was the subject of having some meetings in the afternoons, but the suggestion was not well received by the members present, with no other business brought forward the meeting was closed by the club president.

Now that I have read in the vintage press that the vintage movement is in decline with many of our older events disappearing, even large events are no more, lots and lots of other events struggle to survive, it will be a great shame to see the end of the preservation movement. All your lovely old engines down the scrap yard, cars, motorcycles, etc well this is what is going to happen, UNLESS we find new blood to help with the new ideas and bring new life to the rally scene. Costs are ever increasing, I even had a quote from a motorcycle display team for the Semington Show at £1000 per day for two 30 minute displays, bouncy castle for two days at over a thousand pounds.

If you want to see our movement survive you must stop leaving the running of things to others thinking "Oh they can do it" I will just exhibit on the weekend, well that is not going to work as without you younger people taking over from us old grey beards.....all our great English heritage will be lost.

So I am begging all that read this to become involved in saving our rally scene, our heritage and for some of us this has been our lifetimes work and without you it is without a doubt going to disappear, and with it will go all the knowledge and engineering knowhow we have gained all over the years. So please start helping now before it's too late.

*Eric Gay - Chairman WSEC*

## GRAPEVINE & SOCIAL NEWS

I hear our Club President Roger has had another spell in Hospital and is back home now, also Fred Rogers was admitted and ended up in the same ward as Roger, both are back home now and on the mend so get well quickly and we hope to see you both out and about soon.

Sadly Jackie and I missed out on our Club jumble at Cranmore which friends tell me went off very well although it seems the cafe did not open which may have disappointed some who wanted to quench their thirst and perhaps had planned to have a breakfast, hopefully stall holders went home with a bit more loose change in their pockets than they arrived with.

The Club crank up at Paula and Gordon's farm again we missed out on but feedback tells me it all went off well and was well attended with an extra line of engines down through the centre of the huge barn, So once again well done to our hosts for laying on such a great venue. The word is out that some of our favourite events will not be taking place this year. Don't take it as gospel but do check it out with anywhere you have intended to exhibit at or visit.

Our Club event at Westbury Golf Club and I think we mentioned recently that the Selwood Rally won't be taking place this year and with so much changing day by day in our country I am sure lots more events will be cancelled.

*Robin*

## CLUB EVENTS/CALENDAR

Owing to the current and proposed restrictions Wessex Stationary Engine Club has decided to curtail all activities for the foreseeable future. All club nights have been suspended, and the bike jumble/sale planned for the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month has been postponed, as has the Midsummer Vintage Show due to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June. We apologise for any inconvenience, but we have taken this action in the interests of our members and guests and will produce a revised calendar when more is known about the progress of the virus.

There are a couple of extra events that might make up for what looks like being a disastrous summer. We have been invited to the Worton Village Day at Five Lanes Farm on the 5th September, and the following day Trowbridge and Westbury Lions are holding their excellent annual White Horse Classic & Vintage Vehicle Show, and they have asked us to go along. For Worton please contact Eric on 01225 754374 and for the White Horse Classic & Vintage Vehicle Show entry is on line <https://www.whitehorsevehicleshow.org/> or contact me on 0775 1918283 for more information.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the committee or its members. Although the greatest care is taken in compiling this newsletter the editor takes no responsibility for any errors or omissions

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**Deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month**

# **2020 WESSEX STATIONARY ENGINE CLUB AGM REPORT**

The 2020 AGM took place on the evening of 24 February at the Old Down Inn at Emborough. It was reasonably well attended, with some 25 or so members and partners present. The evening started with a lot of last-minute membership renewals and we eventually settled down to the business of the night at ten past eight. Roger opened the meeting as President and apologies were received from Wendy Gane and Hazel Atherton. The minutes having been distributed and read there were no matters arising, Hon Sec Ted then gave a brief outline of the changes to the Constitution and again there were no observations or queries.

Eric's report as Chairman consisted mainly of a summary of the year's events, good and bad. The sad loss of Gary Sainsbury and the resignation of the Vice Chairman were countered by the successful events and club nights and a very enjoyable and well-attended Christmas meal. He announced a full programme of events, though sadly the Maiden Bradley event wouldn't be repeated as the pub had now closed. There was, however, another new venue in the offing. He thanked Ted for his efforts as stand-in newsletter editor and said that the new editor, David Lacey would be producing the next issue. He also thanked Anne Kempson for her efforts in producing the annual quiz.

The Treasurer's report was given by Caroline, who confirmed that she was now taking on the duties of Membership Secretary too. She said that income was slightly down on the previous year (£14,657 - £11,059), due largely to the cancellation of the annual show, and membership figures were down too (213 - 173), but this year so far we had seen a slight increase in numbers (9 new members). The Alzheimer's Society had benefited to the tune of £166.78 from the Wedmore crank-up and £194 from Whaddon Farm. £468 has been received from the two Cranmore sales. The greatest single item of expenditure was printing, (£1,250) but steps are being taken to reduce it.

This year there were no presentations except an engraved wine glass, to be presented by Eric to the landlady, Maxine, in appreciation of her continued support. The Editor's Cup wasn't presented this year due to the changes of editor during the year, and it was hoped that there would be more contributors so that it could go to a worthy recipient next year.

All present incumbents had agreed to stand for re-election to the committee and there was just one new nomination, Pete Gear for the post of Vice Chairman, so the voting was largely a formality. In the event all were re-elected/confirmed in post with little in the way of opposition. The Committee for 2020 is therefore as follows:

Roger Pike **President**

Eric Gay **Chairman**

Pete Gear **Vice Chairman**

Ted Edwards **Secretary**

Caroline Turley **Treasurer**

Bryan Coles

Gordon Guley

Herb Gane

Linda Pike

Roy Sandford

In his Presidential address Roger said that all in all it had been a good year, spoiled at times by the weather and the sort-outs had been successful. He mentioned the sad loss of Gary Sainsbury and Mary Verrall and hoped that 2020 would be a better year in that respect. The Christmas meal, he said, had been enjoyable and well attended, and thanked Maxine and Eric. He wished everyone a good 2020 and hoped for good weather for the annual show.

In A.O.B. Gordon Guley asked if there was any appetite among the membership for club "nights" to be held earlier in the day. There was little response although Roger Kempson thought that it could be difficult to get speakers in the afternoon, and Anne Kempson thought that some subjects to attract the ladies would be a good idea. Cathy Bryant asked what sort of subjects were wanted and was told that anything entertaining would be welcomed. Anne Kempson thought that the date of the Christmas meal hadn't been sufficiently publicised and Eric said that the club had incurred costs as a result of "no shows", so should there be a Christmas meal next year he would probably be asking for deposits or payment in advance.

There being no other business the meeting closed, less than an hour after it opened. Surely some sort of record! Thank you to everyone who attended or took the trouble to vote by post.