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CRANKING

44 Years of Publication



December 2023

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's Monthly Newsletter

FROM THE SUMP

Well, that's another year done and dusted, I hope you've had a good season rallying those engines and exhibits of yours. 2023 has sure been a busy one, I think we've done 14 events plus the small one-day crank ups, to be honest it's been a bit full-on at times but we've enjoyed it.

Stand-out events of the year for us were the West Somerset Railway Steam Fair, West Bay (both for the rally and the outing to the local drinking establishments, guided by well-informed locals!), the Morwellham Engine Rally near Tavistock and Yesterday's Farming at that excellent site at Draycott.

I think out of the 14 or so events we attended, only 4 were totally dry, leading to quick cover-ups with tarpaulins at times. Getting everything home, dried off and oiled up again after getting wet became a little tiresome though.

I hope to get to some of the Club's Shows/events next year, but I find myself some 80 miles distant so it can become difficult on my own to attend with both exhibits and accommodation.

It was sad to see the demise of the Great Dorset, but maybe some other shows might rise up and take its place? Welland seems to be everyone's favourite all-in big show presently.

Now we are into the long winter months, I have a few engines in pieces for repairs, having a liner fitted to my 5hp Hornsby oil engine, hot bulb replacement on one of my 12hp Petter S type engines and a couple of engines awaiting fitment to trolleys, hopefully over the Christmas and New Year break I'll make some progress.

Some of you will notice the new and far easier to use membership system that has been recently introduced. It seems to have made it far easier to renew memberships going on by what I've seen, a big improvement and I must give a vote of thanks to Ted Edwards for researching and implementing the system, a big achievement, *thank you Ted*.

Many of you will be reading this after Christmas celebrations have come and gone, I hope you've had a good time at home with family and those close to you – may I take this opportunity to thank those who have sent in editorial over the year. *David - Editor*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Well here we are speeding towards the end of another year and yet again I only seem to start my reports with news of members who are not well, this has happened once again. I was very upset when had phone call from Nicki Cossen telling me that my very dear friend Peter had been taken into hospital with sepsis, this was in his replacement hip, the hip had been replaced some time ago. Peter was very ill and when I say very ill at one time he was near death but he is a fighter and things have improved but sad to say the doctors have found that his pace maker has been infected also, this meant a transfer from Salisbury to Southampton so that he could be operated on once again. I know that all of you who know Pete & Nicki will want to wish Peter a speedy return to full health, so dear friend, get well soon and we can have another cup of tea and maybe visit the chip shop in Trowbridge once again.

Now bad news never seems to travel alone, some of you may remember Keith Shephard. Keith was not only a club member but also joined the committee and did a great deal of work helping the club in many ways, it has been my privilege to have known Keith for many years. One of life's real gentlemen, over the last few years we met on numerous occasions at the West Wilts Model Engineering Club.

It is with great sadness that I have learned that Keith may only have a short time left with us, he is very, very ill.

I hope with all our club members we may have among us a few budding artists and how would you like to win a prize, a good prize, we the committee of the Midsummer Vintage Show, would like a new design for a poster to advertise the event. To be staged at Greenhill Farm, Bradley Road Southwick BA14 9RH over the weekend of June 15th & 16th 2024

The only stipulation will be that it must be eye catching and stand out so people will want to take a closer look.

All entries must be with me by February 1st 2024 so get that pencil, paper and paint to work and have the pleasure of not only winning a good prize but also having your work displayed over a wide area.

With the new year just around the corner we the committee are trying to plan for 2024, one event that will be taking place will be the Westbury Crank up, at The Steam Gala, with the West Wilts Society Of Model Engineers, on Saturday 6th April 2024, now jot that down in the diary, along with the bring and buy sale in March, and I hope to be able to arrange some more crank ups at Midsomer Norton, Steam Railway and at Cranmore East Somerset Railway - 'work in progress'

But before all that don't forget Gordon's Vintage crank up at Whaddon Lane Farm, Hilperton, Nr Trowbridge on 28th December, come along and work off all that high living excess over Christmas or add to it by enjoying the food and goodies laid on Paula and her band of helpers. I hope to see many of you at Whaddon and to you all have a great New Year and I hope it will be a happy and peaceful year for us all.

Eric Gay, 21 Rutland Crescent, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 ONX Tel: 01225 754374

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to those who have renewed membership and a warm welcome to those who have recently joined the Club, we hope you enjoy your stay with us. Hopefully you've found the new membership system has been relatively easy to use, far better and more intuitive than the old one. Those yet to renew, please bear in mind your insurance cover expires 31/21/23.

Membership Secretary

TRIP TO BROWNSEA ISLAND – NATIONAL GAS ENGINE



Early on a December Sunday morning, a few intrepid Club members made the trip to Sandbanks, near Poole, doing battle with the local Porsches and Range Rovers to make the short trip over to Brownsea Island by passenger ferry.

On the island is a castle, now a hotel owned by the National Trust and leased to John Lewis & Partners for their exclusive use. Within the grounds of the Castle, there is a National Gas Engine sited inside a building, where it has been for many years.

<- The engine within it's glass enclosure

This engine was restored between 2014 and 2016 by some very skilled people that many of us will know - Dennis & Chris Barnes, Mike Hopkins, Nick Maloy amongst others.

Previously many parts of the engine had been stripped off by well-meaning volunteers and left in various areas on site, the piston being found supporting the drawbar of a farm trailer some way away! The cylinder assembly was left outside with the open end up, collecting rainwater and

seawater, not good for it at all. One of the drip oilers got smashed and subsequently thrown away! A replacement was found on all places, eBay....

The most expensive and involved part of the restoration was the fitting of a new liner to the cylinder, the replacement liner can be seen if you look very closely at the bottom of the cylinder. Remember, every part needing repair or machining had to be taken off the island by the ferry, the cylinder assembly weighing in excess of 750kg, no mean feat by itself!

The engine dates from circa 1907 and was installed in a building, dated 1901.

The engine was primarily installed to provide electricity from a large dynamo via accumulators (batteries) - the electrical requirements of the house (Castle) were drawn from these batteries. The engine was also equipped with a large fire-fighting pump immediately to the rear of the engine, chain driven from the via a large hand-operated clutch assembly. The clutch still survives but the pump and dynamo are long gone. The bases on which these items were affixed to can still be seen on the floor adjacent to the engine, albeit now flush with the floor level as the room in which it is situated in used to be the National Trust shop area.

Gas for the engine was produced in the Gas Producer Plant, situated in a separate room to the engine. Coal was heated in the absence of oxygen which then produced coal gas, which after filtration etc to remove acids and tars, could be used by the engine after being fed to a gas bag to allow the engine to draw in the gas it requires.

The engine now runs on bottled propane, with the propane delivery side of things neatly hidden away out of sight. An electric motor provides a means of starting the engine easily, but it is of paramount importance to retard the ignition timing before starting, otherwise irreparable damage would be caused to the reduction gearbox of the starting arrangement should it backfire or run in the opposite direction. There is a big label on the magneto reminding those who start the engine to do this!

The original cast silencers are on site, but presently the engine (somewhat loudly!) exhausts up through the roof, once started it always attracts attention and inquisitive visits from residents within the hotel.....



The day was made even more interesting with us finding a Lister D engine within a nearby pump house coupled up to a well pump and sand bed filter pump, with all the associated belting. A clean up of the magneto and a wash out of the fuel tank soon had this dependable engine up and running, it ran faultlessly for an hour or so. The pumps obviously needed attention with dry seals but everything went round and round without any nasty noises! And no.....we didn't turn the hotel's water supply a rusty shade of brown!

<- Dennis & Adam Troake attending to the Lister D

It was soon time to stop the National engine, put it back to bed, spraying it with liberal amounts of corrosion inhibitor.

A fantastic day out was had by all and had the weather been more favourable, it would have been interesting to have explored the island too, together with its history within the Scout movement, it has plenty of interesting history. Maybe another day.

Thank you to our hosts for a fab day out. *David Lacey*

BICTON BOTANICAL GARDENS – CHRISTMAS LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

You may or may not know the Lister family own Bicton Botanical Gardens near Budleigh Salterton in Devon – they have a late-night shopping/craft fair every December and a few hardy souls are invited to display an engine – usually a lighting set of some description for the afternoon and evening. We site ourselves in the main courtyard just outside the shop, it is all on hardstanding so it's quite easy to get everything into position without too much effort.

Members of the public love to see, hear and smell the engines running, it truly is a great evening interacting with those who wouldn't even think about going to a vintage engine event; the cold is soon forgotten once the refreshments come out in the form of pork & apple baps, mince pies and mulled wine!

This year we had exhibitors from afar as Gloucester, Wantage and West Bay. Many stayed overnight and made the journey home on the wet Saturday morning. *David Lacey*



FOR SALE

FREE to a good home - Stuart Turner A3PE13 pump (no valves) free to good home.
Contact Ted Edwards 07751 918283

For sale - a book and 3 magazines as listed below.

"Stationary Engines for the enthusiast" by David Edgington & Charles Hudson. 1st edition 1981 (in vgc)

Magazine (journal)

"The Stationary Engine"

Issue No.50 (24 page celebration issue). April 1978

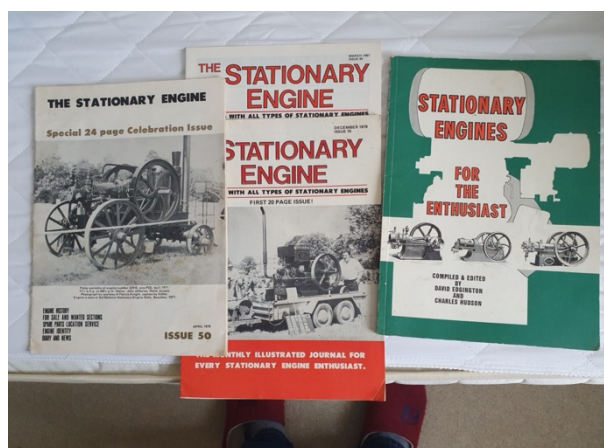
"The Stationary Engine"

Issue No.70. December 1979

"The Stationary Engine"

Issue No.85. March 1981

These are in good condition, not thumbed or dog-eared.



If any of your members would like to purchase with sensible offer I'll be happy to post them off. *Ian Carter* - Interested? Please contact Ted Edwards 07751 918283

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 for copy submissions is always 20th of the month