



CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

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Thirty second
year of
publication
www.wessex-sec.co.uk

From the Sump

New for 2009, a new look and a Hints and Tips column & I've started this off with my perennial advice for the reluctant engine – clean the points! I shall rapidly run out of ideas, so this feature really does depend upon YOU.

Albert Crittall died recently. He was a long time contributor to this newsletter and by way of remembering him, Robin Lambert suggested that we should run some of his stuff again. You will find the first article in this edition.

I was in an interesting – if somewhat worrying – conversation the other day. In the commercial world, in order to operate a machine one must have been trained to use it & be on record as having displayed a level of competence commensurate with Health & Safety. Common sense really – you wouldn't want fork lifts at B&Q to be driven by someone who didn't know what they were about. However, some museums are already in the position of there being no-one "competent" to operate an antique machine they display. Now, competent is a very ambiguous word & is difficult to pin down. A parallel might be learning to drive an automatic car & then being faced with having to drive a manual. I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this.

Am I competent to operate a stationary engine? I think so, but my interests lie in the more modern engines & if asked to start & maintain an 1898 gas engine, it would take me a while to figure it out. I've had oily hands since I was a kid, so probably within an hour I'd get it sussed & have it chuffing away – but during that time I could not reasonably be said to be competent. However, there is nothing whatsoever to stop me – or indeed someone far less experienced – buying such a device at a rally & "learning by doing" for the rest of the day. I might seek the advice of those about me (it would be hard to stop them! ;o)) but I bet you my last brass farthing that I'd receive conflicting advice and who is to say who is competent?

Where would we go to be trained to a competent standard? The bloke that sold it to you? Internal Fire? The Anson? And who trains their people in the myriad different Little Ways of our engines? Lots of questions & precious few answers.

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

J. Kim Siddorn, 9, Durleigh Close, Bristol. BS13 7NQ or by e-mail to kim.siddorn@blueyonder.co.uk.

Moving the Metal

For sale

Party Tent, strong and robust, 6m x 3m in PVC. Used only a few times from new £195

Victorian Cast Iron Lamp Post by Wm Cockey of Frome. Buyer to dismantle & remove from my garden. £395.

All above contact Robin on 01373 - 463526

Wico A series magneto. V good condition with impulse unit. £35

Vauxhall Vectra. 120K, top of the range, excellent order. Sold with new MOT at time of sale. £890 ono
All above, phone Eric Gay - 01225 754374

Wanted – Barnard W110 piston. A piston from a Austin/Morris "A" series 848cc SV engine or very early Mini would do the job.

Phone Tony 01373 464982

WANTED - Starting Handle for Bamford 9hp crank 2 5/8" Please ring Ron on 01749 870756

WANTED Triumph twin WW2 genny or parts.

"Old Glory". Stack a foot high 80's & 90's – tenner.

"Vapourising" small stack of old 'uns - £1 each.

WANTED "Stationary Engine" Magazine. Now only need 16, 17, 18, 24-34, 36. Have early copies to swap!

All above, phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

This column works - another engine sold here last month!

A Wrinkle & A Nod

After perhaps seventy odd years, it is quite likely that the HT coil has become lossy as the insulation fails & a winter in a brown paper bag (not plastic!!) in the airing cupboard might be just what it needs. The condenser might be in a similar fix or the magnet exerting less pull than the maker intended.

However, I'd go for the points first by removing them completely & facing them off on a bit of 1000 grit wet & dry stuck with oil to a piece of glass. Oxide is almost invisible along with pitting across the face until you get them off & look at them properly in a good light. This done, clean & refit them looking carefully at the logical sequence of insulating washers, gap them a couple of thou under the manufacturer's recommendation & you might find the starting absolutely transformed.

Might not be, too - but it costs nothing.