



CRANKING

The Wessex Stationary Engine Club's monthly newsletter

October

2009

Thirty second
year of
publication

www.wessex-sec.co.uk

From the Sump

I've been involved with engines for the whole of my adult life & spent many years in the motor trade, so I am not easy to fool when it comes to talking to garage mechanics. Just as well ... I took my BMW in for its MOT last week to a place that I'd frequented for fifteen years off & on. It failed on worn track control arm, back axle control rubbers, two new number plates and both front and rear suspension levelling valves leaking. Enquiries showed that the suspension valves were £400 each & it was two DAYS labour to fit them, deeply buried as they are in a complex vehicle. Around £1,600. Gulp.

My son-in-law suggested we ought to get a second opinion and, loath though I was to spend another forty quid on a car I had most reluctantly mentally consigned to the breaker's yard, I thought it was worthwhile. Upon his recommendation, I went to KwikFit, somewhere that I would never normally have considered. Track control arm, back axle control rubbers, new front number plate and a small rubber on the exhaust. Never even mentioned the suspension valves, leaking or not. Not even an Advisory Notice. It cost me a very reasonable £250 to get the work done & £25 for a retest. Pass. Hurrah!

When I thought about it, the first garage told me the case hardening had worn off the front brake disks when I had the pads changed there recently. Case hardened cast iron? I thought not. Anyway, if you have a nasty shock of this nature, get a second – and unprompted – opinion.

Last month, there was a successful attempt upon a World Speed Record at Edward's Air Force Base in California. "Inspiration" (excellent pun!), a steam powered vehicle broke the record set up with a Stanley Steamer in 1906 when it contrived to cover the Measured Mile at a sprightly 127.7 MPH. The officially recorded average of an up and back run was 139.84MPH with a top speed of 151.085MPH and the British-born driver Charles Burnett III was suitably pleased.

Powered by 300hp twin stage steam turbines, the three tonne, twin finned record breaker is made of carbon fibre composite and aluminium with a space-frame chassis design. It howls like a gas turbine and is – naturally enough – painted in a fetching shade of British Racing Green. Constructed by a team established in Lynton under the patronage of Lord Montague of Beaulieu, the vehicle represents ten years of research and work by a dedicated team. It is a triumph of original thinking and British engineering.

However, as it took 2.5 miles to reach its top speed and two miles to stop with its road wheel brakes being augmented by a parachute, I cannot see a production version appearing on the school run anytime soon.

Moving the Metal

For sale

Drummond Lathe. 1917, Has an interesting history. Needs to be seen and no reasonable offer will be refused. Phone William Bennett – 01749 - 830052

JAP Model 55. The unusual vertical twin! & apparently unused. Easy starter. Very sexy finned manifold. Apparently in good order. Might swap for something small & interesting. £140.00.

Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

Stationary Engine Magazines. July '95 (257) to Dec '06 (393) in six official binders. £50.

"On Four Wheels". '75-'76. Complete set in 8 official binders. £40. All in good order.

Phone P. Riley 0117 932 4345

WANTED

ABC engine. Particularly 1915 250cc Firefly but anything considered. Good price paid for the right engine!

Triumph twin WW2 genny or parts.

All above, Phone Kim Siddorn 0117 964 6818

This column works -

Something sells here every month!

Special notices

Five current members of the Executive Committee are retiring this year, most of whom have served the club for many years in this capacity. Therefore, we are looking for new blood and seek nominations to the committee from the membership. You may send applications to me or to Hon. Sec. Arthur Smith, Coombe Castle, Heytesbury, Warminster, BA12 0EA in order to get them on the voting slip before the meeting so that applicants may benefit from Postal Voting.

Postal Voting at the AGM

Please note that the committee has changed the rules slightly for next February.

- It was put to the committee that it's only common sense to be able to identify the voter. Therefore, voting slips will in future carry name & address lines.
- If you vote by Postal Vote and then find you can attend the meeting, your vote will be destroyed unread so that you may vote by a show of hands as required by the Constitution.

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.