

Rolling

Winter 2021/22

Issue 187



Road Roller
Association
Journal



Officers and Committee

President	Stephen Milns. Invicta House, Crosemere, Cockshutt, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 0JS shmils@invserv.co.uk
Chairman	Richard Newman. 8 Church Road, East Huntspill, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 3PG treasurer@roadrollers.org
Vice Chairman & Steam Archivist	Derek Rayner. 'Invicta', 9 Beagle Ridge Drive, Acomb, York, YO24 3JH derekinvicta1915@gmail.com
General Secretary	Charlie Swaffield. 8 East Street, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7AB aveling10780@aol.co.uk. Tel: 07794 604 352
Treasurer	Richard Newman – contact details as above
Membership	Rosemary Gooding, 6 Hazelwood Cottages, Knowle Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8JP. membership@roadrollers.org
Sales	Vacant
Archivist	Vacant
'Rolling' Editor	Brian Gooding. Steam Heritage Publishing Ltd, Unit 1, Alfold Business Centre, Loxwood Road, Alfold, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8HP editor@roadrollers.org
Webmaster	Brian Gooding
Committee Members	P K Smith. 6 Lenborough Close, Buckingham, MK18 1SE pkpasmith@btinternet.com Andrew Goakes, The White House, Grange Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0YH
Minutes Secretary	Rosemary Gooding
Motor Roller Register	Ex Officio Andrew Watson. Willow Corner, Main Street, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG32 2HH 01400 250 840 andrewwatsonmarston@gmail.com

Front cover: Committee member P K Smith's venerable 10 ton Aveling & Porter roller No.3430, Sarah, from 1894, heads into the Oxfordshire village of Bampton en route to The Trout at Lechlade on 13th November 2021. **Brian Gooding**

Chairman's Notes



Once again, we find ourselves in the situation where Covid is likely to affect many of the things that we would like to do, not only the furthering of our hobbies but also more and more in our private lives. I, personally, am not very keen on sticking a swab up my nose but I find I am having to do it more often to ensure that I and any of my contacts are kept as safe as possible. From the point of view of our rallying and other restoration activities, we will have to wait and see what the next few months bring but the possibility of further restrictions looks very real. Obviously with the AGM getting closer we need to be very aware that whatever we do is in the best interests of the members and their safety. At present we intend to carry on the AGM as the live, in person event as previously advertised but we must be prepared to change this as the circumstances dictate.

My usual plea before the AGM is for more members to be offering themselves for election to some of the various committee posts. At present we have too few committee members doing too many jobs. It has become very difficult to sensibly run the Association with so few officers. We would welcome any nominations to any post but especially we need a General Archivist, a Sales Officer and up to three committee members. I am going to relinquish the Treasurer role at this AGM so a new Treasurer is desperately required. If we can fill all of these posts, the workload for each committee member becomes much more bearable and none of the roles needs to be onerous and should not take more than a few hours a week to perform.

The other big proposal at the AGM is being brought by the committee and is to finally bring to a conclusion the attempts to register the Association as a charity. A lot of background work has been put into this by your committee and reasons for this proposal are twofold. Firstly, the formation of a charity will enable us to reclaim tax (only if the member is a tax payer) on your subscriptions and secondly it will give the committee members and officers much needed security in the unlikely event of the Association being sued. To achieve this, we will need a completely new constitution which will need to be agreed at the AGM. The new constitution itself has been agreed with the Charity Commission and is basically not open to any major changes. There are some sections in it that may look very daunting and there are some sections that not all members will necessarily agree with. However, this has been back and forth to the Commission on a number of occasions and they will not accept any major changes. This new constitution is very long (21 pages at last count) compared to the old one and elsewhere in this edition of *Rolling* you will be able to find out how you can obtain a copy. There also some supplementary rules that will also be available with the constitution.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM and hope that we will be able to resume some form of normality by then.

Richard

Submissions for 'Rolling' can be sent by post to the Editor's address above or emailed to: editor@roadrollers.org. Please ensure emailed images are good quality Jpegs or Tiffs.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Association.

CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 30TH MARCH 2022

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2022 AGM Weekend

As *Rolling* is going to press, there is still a lot of uncertainty about what Covid restrictions may or may not be in place by early March. The committee must also consider the safety of members whatever the rules may be at that time and with all of this in mind, a decision must be made as to the wisdom of holding a face to face meeting of this kind. The committee have decided that they will have to make a decision by the end of January whether to go ahead with the weekend as planned or cancel the planned events and hold the AGM on the same date via zoom.

The result of the decision will be published on the Association website, those who have already booked will be informed by email or telephone and for those members who cannot access information via the website, the Secretary will have the result and members should contact him via email or telephone (his contact details are inside the front cover of all issues of *Rolling*).

Those members who have not yet booked on the booking form distributed with the last *Rolling* and who intend to come to the AGM are urged to complete the form and send to Derek before his closing date of 3rd February so that provided the event goes ahead, there is no late rush after the closing date. If you have misplaced the form and require another one, please contact the Secretary for a replacement copy.

However the AGM is held, it is vitally important that members are aware of the proposal to move the Association to become a Charity (Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO for short). There is a completely new constitution and associated rules to be presented to members. The new constitution runs to many pages and it is considered unfeasible to print and post this out with *Rolling*. Again, members are asked to contact the Secretary who will either email a copy or send a copy via the post. Please only ask for a printed copy if you do not have access to email as the constitution alone runs to 21 pages and the cost of sending out copies to all members would be prohibitive.

Please note that if the decision is to hold the meeting by Zoom, we will not be able send out all of the papers until after the closing date for motions, i.e. after 12th February.

Richard Newman
Chairman

Pamplin's Burrell rollers

Derek Rayner

My son, who lives in Cambridgeshire, came across this newspaper cutting on a local Facebook page and sent it to me since he knew it would be of interest.

On seeing the roller with the 'CE' registration, I immediately thought of a couple of photos I'd seen of another roller with a 'CE' registration in a very similar predicament. This roller, however, was the Cambridge City Council roller dating from 1889 – Aveling & Porter No.2481 (CE 9187) – and the reason for the roller's problem was, in both cases, the local sewers in the city not being able to hold its weight. Somewhat surprisingly, it went down on the left hand side on one occasion and on the right on the other.

However, that was not the case with the roller pictured here in Soham. The roller is not an Aveling and, according to the accompanying report, its Thetford-produced axle had fractured. It was then assumed, as it turned out, quite incorrectly, that the roller was a County Council roller – but research into the historic records of the Road Locomotive Society has proved otherwise.

It was established that the roller in question was owned by Pamplin's Steam Rollers of Whittlesford, a mile or two to the south of Cambridge. Pamplin's fleet must have been kept very busy on hire to the County Council since the county-wide authority didn't purchase any steam rollers of their own until the 1920s – and they were all Avelings. The pictured roller was therefore probably on hire to the County Council for it to have been at Soham at the time that the pictured problem occurred.

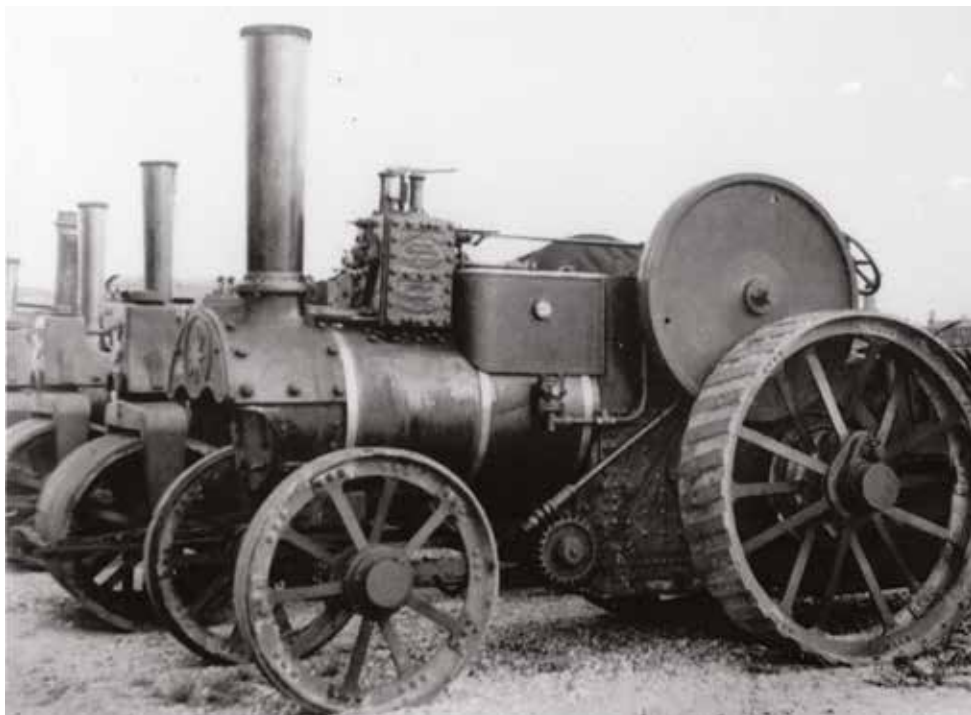
With the roller's registration mark of CE 9328 being very prominent, it didn't take long to establish its specific identity as Burrell single crank compound No.3217, supplied new to Pamplin's in 1910.

Further investigations revealed that the firm had fifteen rollers, ten being Aveling products and five coming from Thetford. These latter were registered consecutively in around 1921 as CE 9327, CE 9328 and CE 9329 (No.2401) with a fourth example being CE 9412 (No.2519).

There was a fifth Burrell roller, this being No.1653 of 1892 with

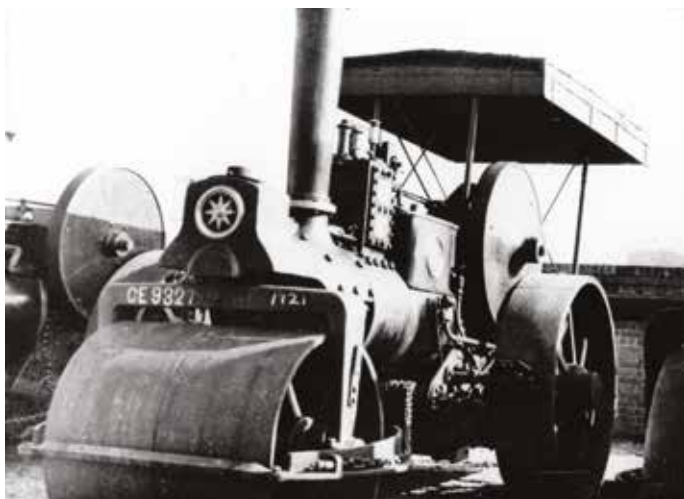


The newspaper cutting showing the roller's predicament in Soham.



At Pamplin's auction sale in July 1947; Burrell convertible No.2519 headed the line up.

the registration of VE 5786. This is a much later Cambridgeshire registration dating from approximately March 1931 but the reason for such a late registration is not known. The roller was new in November 1892 to Gloucestershire County Council, fleet number 'G' and was a 12 ton single crank compound. The council traded it into Aveling's for a new roller in March 1897 and by June the following year, it was



Consecutively registration number – CE 9327, Burrell No.3459 – stands in line awaiting a new owner.

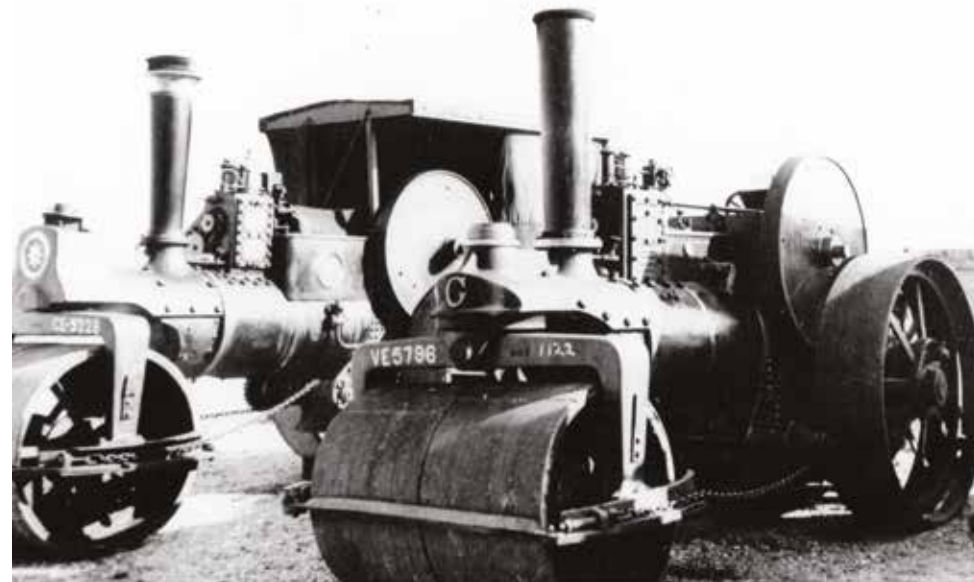
with Pamplin's. The reason for this change, for a roller which was only five years old, is not known.

Interestingly, the RLS list indicates that most of the rollers were 'ex-Ward' and since this is not a name which is to be found in the Society's County listing as an owner of a road steam engine, it's presumed that it could be relating to the legal term 'Ward of Court', following the dissolution of Pamplin Bros.

Two of the Burrell rollers were somewhat 'different' – in that No.2519 was a convertible and No.1653 at sometime during its working life had been fitted with a saddle from a Garrett roller which still had the brass Garrett 'G' on the front.

At the close of its business, Pamplin's held a large auction sale on 5th July 1947 in which no less than thirteen of their rollers were available to prospective purchasers. All except one found new homes: No.1653, for example, was, by February 1948, recorded as being with Esmond Kimbell in Northamptonshire, following the sale.

All photos: Old Glory archives



On the right is the 'Bitza' – Burrell No.1653 with the Garrett 'G' brass logo prominent on its saddle – along with Burrell No.2317, the infamous 'star' of the Soham accident to its left. It will be noted that since the accident, it has gained what is presumed to be a 'Pamplin-made' canopy.

Lights, Camera ... "I'm ready for my close up!" ... and ACTION....

Part 1

P K Smith

Many years ago now I was lucky enough to be in a position to be able to purchase the rotted out and rusty remains of a Pheonix Rapid, horizontal pattern, 90 gallon Road Tar Spraying Machine (commonly referred to as a tar pot or boiler) from the late Robin Greenaway of Stoke Row. It was originally supplied new to the County Borough of Reading, on 15th August 1931. Robin's father had brought it years later via an auction/ dispersal sale, towing it from Reading back to the family's home in Stoke Row behind his Austin 7.

It was soon to be found earning its keep in the area, initially with Robin's father and older brothers in charge, although in later years it was simply hired out, when required, to another contractor for use on the local roads. (Robin told me that as the youngest boy, his father did not let him near it when in use as he considered it to be "an infernal 'n' dangerous thing"). It had then seen service as a 'gate guardian' for the Greenaway house and yard but was eventually abandoned in their coppice when it ceased road repair duties. It had subsequently been robbed of many of its component parts (jib crane/ barrel winch, chimney base, tar pump and draw off tap, etc.) as part of a deal for some engine tyres between Robin and another Chilterns area steam engine owner. Two of the tar boiler wheels even ending up serving for many years on the Greenaway family cement mixer!

After doing the deal with Robin for the remnants, I also managed to trace, and buy back, all of its missing 'original bits' and even got its wheels back off the – by now scrapped – cement mixer! Back at the yard in Witney, Oxfordshire, where I keep my steam roller, over the following years and admittedly at a leisurely pace, along with my good friend and fellow yard regular Iain Gordon (who has sadly since passed away) I had set about rebuilding much of the machine. A new outer wrapper was rolled, new end plates cut out and corner radii made. The inner pot was patched where required, new internal baffle, lids and hinges made and a new chimney rolled. Many happy hours were spent in both



Notice of impending road works at Downton village green.

figuring out how, from the remaining remnants, to rebuild it as accurately as possible and in the riveting and assembly. Only the firebox construction (of which there was nothing left!), sorting of the firebrick lining (completely gone!), firebrick arch (shattered and in many small pieces!) and fitting a winch cable for the jib crane still remained to be done. It was, however, all painted in red oxide, as it would have been when new; they became black when in use and coated with tar!

One late January morning, out of the blue, my friend John, the owner of the Witney yard, received an unexpected telephone call. "Yes, we have a tar boiler here." "Would it be available for some film work?" "Oh yes!" An 'agent' telephoned five minutes later. An hour later he arrived, having travelled from Northamptonshire! He seemed quite thrilled at the sight of the enormous amount of interesting artefacts before his eyes. Others have different words to describe the Witney yard 'collection'. He snapped away with his 'phone' taking pictures of all he saw, asking questions like "How old is that?" and "How much a day would that cost?" until eventually he went away happy.

The following day the phone rang again. They wanted to use my tar boiler for a filming role in something called 'Downton Abbey', some scenes for which were being filmed in the village of Bampton in Oxfordshire, just seven miles away, on 21st March 2013. They also wanted to use my collection of assorted road making 'tat and ephemera', including wheel barrows, tar buckets, rakes, tar forks, tamper, shovels and the 'DANGER – HOT TAR' road sign (something I had made up out of some scrap pallet wood on a wet Sunday afternoon!) They loved the steam roller/s, the traction engine, the showman's engines, the steam tractors, the selection of living vans, the stone crusher, the old cars, motorcycle and the many and various push bikes that are also resident, but they had no budget for any of that, just now, but maybe in the future.

Some frantic tar pot restoration was needed as filming day was suddenly brought forward to 29th Feb but we got everything there and by 07.00 John and I were in a world of white box trailers with a sniff of bacon and coffee in the air. We were instructed to go



"...a world of white box trailers: "

and sit in a bus with a load of 'extras' and got chatting to someone who had been lined up to work on the 'road mending gang', so he followed us everywhere. In came a 'clipboard', attached to an overly earnest young man, who saw us and panicked, as apparently we were both supposed to have been 'prioritised', and promptly dispatched us off to "costume and wardrobe" in one of the white box trailers.

We both thought we were already decked out for the part but apparently not. John's boots, trousers, jacket and cap were not acceptable nor were my shirt, trousers, waistcoat, watch chain (despite being hallmarked bang on period!) and jacket. They could not, however, surgically remove my trademark 'greasy trilby'. Cloth gaiters were an interesting accessory. Costumes issued, we were sent off to another white trailer to change. We had just got our trousers off and in came two costume girls to assist us!

Next, it was off to make up! We were ushered into yet another white box trailer and, sitting on two adjacent swivel chairs, we looked forward to see mirrors surrounded by light bulbs; we were stars! Two delightful make up girls attacked us. We gave permission for our hair to be butchered, which was closely followed by the application of make up. We were supposed to be representing 'working with tar' which was their brief so no pan-stick for us. They daubed black gunk on our faces and after they had worked their magic on us, we both looked like we often do when working on the showmen's engine line at the Great Dorset Steam Fair by day three – but without the aroma! Having passed inspection we were escorted straight onto a minibus. As the smell of breakfast disappeared into the distance, we tentatively enquired about eating. "We will organise something later" the 'clipboard' said – but it never materialised! We travelled the three-quarter mile journey into Bampton and were now 'on location'.

On arrival, the costume girls there looked again at me and thought my shirt was too clean. At one time there were no less than three of them 'being dirty' with me! 'Special effects' had already got their hands on the tar boiler. They could not understand why their smoke machine, which they had set up inside the tar pot, resulted in smoke coming from everywhere except out of the chimney. We helped them insert smoke into the other end, where the firebox should have been and as if by magic, the chimney started emitting smoke. Various different smoke machines were used during the morning for different effects, but in the end burning charcoal mixed with incense in a small burner set in the base of the chimney gave them their favoured result. Some bags of B&Q patching tar had been laid on the ground in front of the Bampton church and when the special effects boys sprayed it with vinegar and an accelerant; low and behold it appeared to be hot smoking tar.



The tar boiler in prominent view with St Mary's Church in Bampton behind; aka Downton village green...

The road gang included

our new friend (that we met in wardrobe and on the bus), plus another who were both on tar raking duty and the actor Kevin Doyle, who plays the character Joseph Molesley, who was using my 'tamper'. I had to walk past them, looking like I was offering them 'advice', carrying one of my tar buckets, on my way to help John hoist the 'tar' barrel up onto the 'smoking' tar boiler. The director had earlier asked me if one of us was willing to say a few words. I promptly stepped back as with my Aveling & Porter hearing and the 'period' spectacles I had been lent, in place of my real ones, I felt I would not only not hear, but also not see, my cue and so volunteered John! Unwittingly, he had been practising the line most of his life as he had to bark at the Molesley character to "Get back to work" when the directors hand went up. Apparently our new road making friend was somewhat peeved that having been an extra for eight years, the 'new boy on the block' had straight away landed a speaking part.

The scene was set. "Lights, Camera, OK, Action." The actress Joanne Froggatt (who plays Anna Bates) walks around me and goes on to talk to the character Molesley. After their short conversation, John interrupts them with his immortal line and "Cut" and "Reset". There were three different camera positions, all filmed separately. For each position there were two rehearsals and probably three takes so our little bit took from 8.30am to about 12.00am to shoot... and we were done.

We both took every opportunity to speak to all of the actors and I have to say they were all polite, charming and not overcome with self-importance in any way and not 'luvvy' in the slightest. The catering truck, which we finally made it to, really was all you imagine them to be and we left feeling like a couple of proverbial butcher's dogs! In all it was one of those fascinating life experiences and a grand day out. I was intrigued at the level of detail that is involved, such as tape over white lines on the road and fake (polystyrene) bricks to cover up modern extractor vents and make temporary signage,



John Wharton keeps an eye on proceedings.

etc. none of which is really appreciable in the finished production – although I noticed later they could not disguise the village's TV aerials. My and John's terrible admission is that we had never actually previously watched 'Downton Abbey' on television. John's wife, however, who followed it as if she were a member of a religious sect, was a wee bit jealous!

To be continued...

An Aberdeen Fowler anomaly

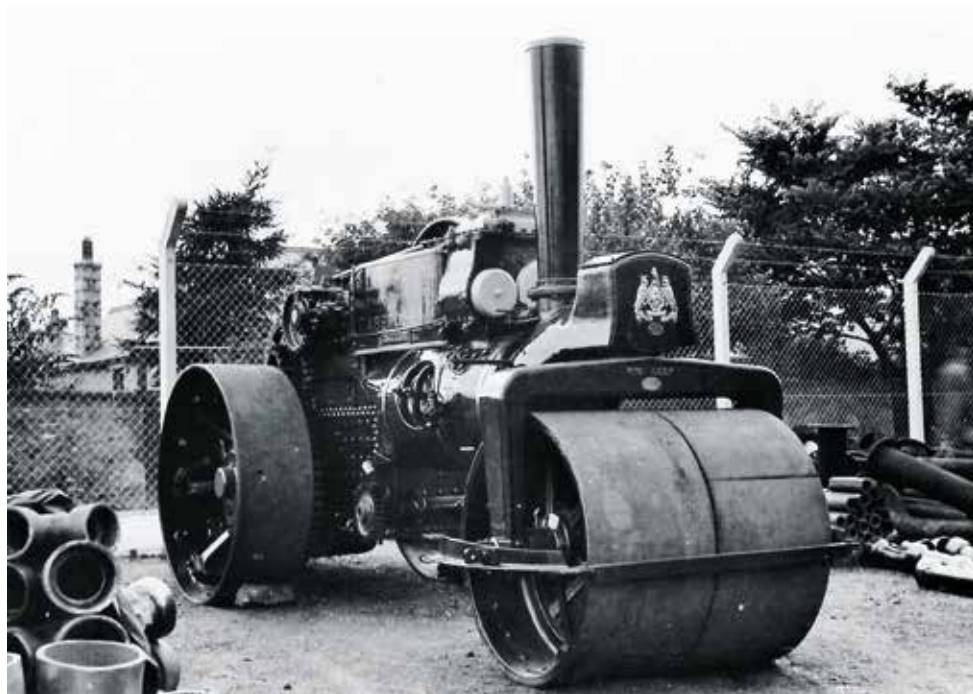
Derek Rayner

Following on from the selection of interesting images from Morayshire in the Autumn 2021 issue of *Rolling*, another image sent to me by Keith Jones had written on its reverse the following information:

William Tawse Contractor, Rubislaw, Aberdeen 5-8-52. John Fowler D2 6hp compound roller No.11095, *Conqueror*.

It turned out that another similar photo was in the Frank Jones collection of photos which, by its appearance, was taken at the same time but from a slightly different angle. This photo of Fowler No.11095 is dated the same day and is also stated to be at Wm. Tawse's yard in Aberdeen.

This latter discovery gives some weight to the speculation that there may have been another steam enthusiast with Frank at the same time as his photo was taken – perhaps both of them were visiting the area to photograph industrial rail steam activity since that was Frank's main interest. In Aberdeen, for example, there was the fascinating Gas Works system in the Granite City still very much in operation at the time.



By an unknown photographer – unless Frank Jones took two photos of the same roller – this is Fowler No.11095 in Aberdeen on 5th August 1952.



This photo was definitely by Frank Jones and shows the roller from a slightly different angle to the other image.

It will be noted that the roller appears to have been recently overhauled and painted but it has somewhat incongruously been fitted at some time with a 12 ton Aveling front fork, probably as a result of a previous unfortunate accident!!

The Road Locomotive Society records indicate that this D2 compound roller was new to George Eastwood, Emley, in Yorkshire's West Riding, on 4th February 1908. It was the only roller he owned and it was by him that it was named *Conqueror*. He sold it to William Tawse of Aberdeen at an unknown date.

Interestingly, Fowler No.11095 is recorded in the current *Traction Engine Register* but its location is given as 'unknown' – and also there is no registration number attributed to it. That's something that strikes me as being rather 'odd'. Therefore if any reader can help solve this apparent anomaly, it would be very much appreciated.

(I vaguely remember this roller working in Aberdeen where I lived as a kid in the 1950s. I think Wm Tawse also owned the famous Rubislaw (granite) Quarry, which was a massive hole in the ground – over 450ft deep and 400ft across – an interesting place to go and look at on a weekend when it wasn't working. There was even a rickety viewing platform that you could stand on to look down into the vast chasm below. Sadly all gone these days, as the quarry closed in 1971 and is now full of water. – Ed.)

Rollers at Sandstone Estates

Derek Rayner

There are presently a couple of steam rollers which are in working order at the Sandstone Estates near Ficksburg in South Africa's Free State. A huge bi-annual event is usually held there in 'odd' years, usually around April. This show combines lots of narrow gauge steam railway activity along with military vehicles, aircraft, vintage cars, tractors and many other attractions, including a number of road steam vehicles.

The two operational steam rollers at Sandstone in April 2019 were Marshall No.88876 of 1940 and Fowler No.19543 of 1935, both being looked after by a volunteer group of enthusiasts from Cornwall. In addition to these two, there was an unidentifiable Aveling-Barford 'GC-type' roller on display which is used at times as a load for heavy haulage demonstration purposes. Also, several other steam rollers were to be seen in storage sheds around the site, having either been working at one time and presumably now out of ticket – or perhaps awaiting their turn for being put back into working order.



The two operable rollers which were in steam on occasions during the April 2019 Sandstone festival. Fowler No.19543 on the left and Marshall No.88876.



Burrell single crank compound roller No.3312.



Fowler No.19539 of 1935.



Fowler No.15546 on the left with a very non-Fowler like forecarriage head with No.16667 to its right. The former roller and others at Sandstone showed considerable damage which appeared to have been caused by poor handling at some time in the past.



*Fowler No.18060, with its chimney in the tender, was distance away from the others. Behind and just visible are the pair of Fowler ploughing engines. **Andrew Johnson***

In one of the large storage sheds were Burrell No.3312 of 1911 which had been fitted with a Hosack scarifier at one time, now missing; Aveling & Porter No.5396 of 1905 and four Fowlers. These latter were D2 type No.15546 of 1920 together with Nos.19539, 17577 and 16667. There was also a very rare Fowler 'Precision' motor roller – No.21210 of 1935. Elsewhere on site was another Fowler which had seen use in relatively recent times, this being No.18060 of 1930. This was also undercover and was adjacent to a pair of somewhat derelict Fowler B4 compound ploughing engines.



Aveling No.5396, unusually fitted with a large belly tank and one of a trio of similar rollers – designated as a 'Special Road Roller' – and the first of a trio of identical 12 ton rollers supplied to 'Crown Agents for the Colonies' on 25th November 1903, destined for Pretoria in South Africa!



Fowler 'Precision' motor roller No.21210.

Letters

Grantham Park Roller

Dear Editor

It's not often we hear of success stories but I think this is one of note.

A group of us saved the Grantham Park roller from the scrap man in 1999, but due to a general lack of support from the council and business in the Grantham area, we ended up funding the works ourselves, and the community project failed.

Over a number of years we dismantled the roller and assessed the remains in conjunction with the Boiler Inspector; by 2009 the costings in our original estimate to the council had more than doubled. The council were no longer interested in the project and unbeknown to me, had already transferred the roller to my ownership in 1999.

I was approached to let it go for spares but that was a non-starter as far as I was concerned, and after a conversation



Peter Tye's A&P 10392, arrives at The Trout at Lechlade at the end of the SoDEM Run in November 2021 on one of its first outings since restoration. Rosemary Gooding



Peter Tye being presented with the Eric Middleton Trophy by NTET President Andrew Semple. Brian Gooding

with Dave Wothers, along came Peter Tye and Colin Hatch to assess what we had. Peter took over the project, to fully restore the roller to working condition.

The goal of total restoration of the roller we started in 1999 has been achieved, as Peter completed it with the help of Colin Hatch at his Swindon Boiler Works earlier this year.

He road tested it some time ago and then took it on road runs to iron out any problems.

He completed the annual SoDEM road run on 13th November, and at the National Traction Engine Club AGM held on 20th November, he was awarded the Eric Middleton Award for the roller.

I cannot think of a more worthy recipient of the award. Peter and all those at Hatch Brothers involved with the restoration can be very proud of what they have achieved.

The remains of our group in Grantham will be for ever grateful that the roller we knew from childhood is once again fully restored and on the road.

Tim Harris

by email

Aveling & Porter Left Hand Cylinder Engines

Dear Editor

I refer to the Item 'Some Moray County Council images for our delight' in *Rolling*, Autumn 2021 Page 14. Referring to convertible Aveling No.3969 with a left hand cylinder it states that 'it's not known at this time why Avelings changed its original long-standing arrangement for a relatively short time'. It goes on to say that '... it's assumed that the new design wasn't successful which is why they reverted to the single cylinder being on the right again'.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this arrangement was short lived and not a success. Neither the overall period during which they applied this arrangement nor the number of engines so fitted has been determined. It was applied to Aveling's single cylinder ploughing engines with each pair comprising a left and right hand cylindered engine with many having a long life. This arrangement was applied for least 24 years as evidenced by surviving left hand cylindered traction/convertible engines dating from 1884 (No.1995) to 1908 (No.6619) – by which date Aveling were in any case producing relatively few 'traditional' traction engines. Unusually there is also one Aveling roller in preservation with a left hand single cylinder, the date and number of which escapes me. The surviving engines are mostly 6nhp with at least one 7nhp. Why that arrangement was used is unlikely to ever be known but one suggestion is that it is beneficial by putting the crank next to the flywheel.

Paul Abbott

Lyndhurst

Bridge Testing in Howdenshire

Derek Rayner

The term Howdenshire is an ancient one and covers the area around Howden in East Yorkshire – from North Cave to Barmby on the Marsh and out towards Spaldington. The bridge in question carries the B1230 Howden to Hull road over the Market Weighton canal.

This new road bridge over the canal at Newport was built in 1930. A contemporary newspaper reported that during its construction, which necessitated knocking 'half' of the old bridge down, building that half of the new bridge in its place and then repeating the exercise for the second half, traffic was kept moving by means of a flagman.

On completion of the bridge (Fig.1), prior to it being handed over to the East Riding County Council, no less than five of the council's steam rollers were used to test it. Their combined weight was estimated at 115 tons and even under such a weight, something that it was envisaged would never occur during its normal usage, it was found that the settling of the bridge was infinitesimal. Today's arithmetic indicates that each of the five rollers therefore must have weighed a colossal 23 tons which, from our present knowledge, is somewhat generous to say the least!!

The accompanying photographs are from the Howdenshire History archive and we are grateful to Susan Butler for her kindness in allowing them to be reproduced here for our enjoyment.



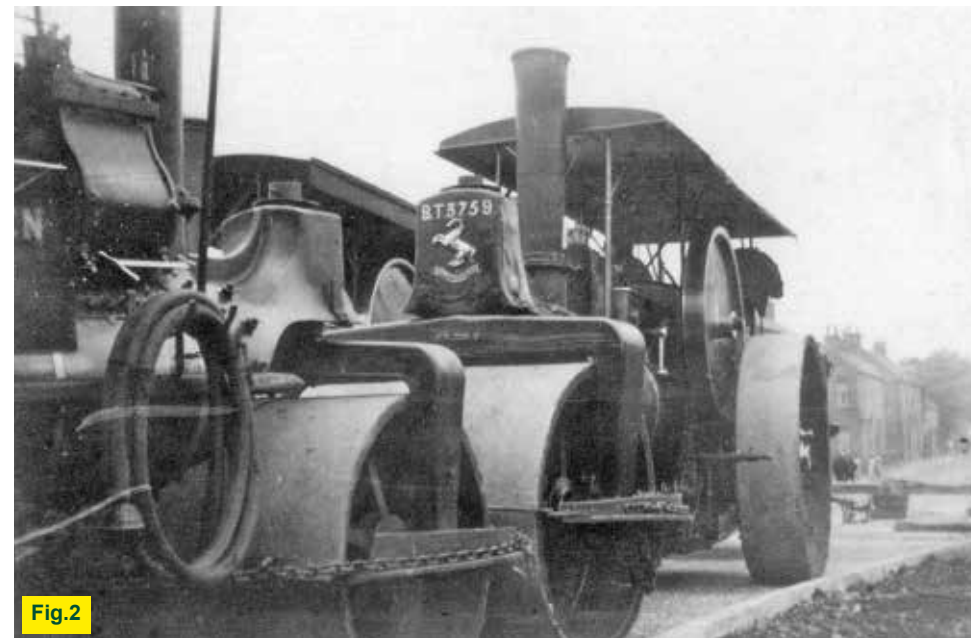
A 1955 image of the bridge at Newport on which the heavyweight proof testing exercise was undertaken in 1930. Collection of Susan Butler

The ERCC owned, over time, no less than 30 steam rollers, a greater proportion of them inevitably being from Aveling & Porter. In Fig.2 and facing the camera, it is one of these which is the easiest to identify since it has the registration BT 3759. This one was new to the council in September 1900 and was Aveling No.4552, a 16 ton convertible, their Fleet No.2 and which was last licensed in 1951.

In front of this roller is another Aveling. This has the letters 'EN' at the end of a word visible on the motion cover. It was initially thought that it may have been a roller owned by Howden Rural District Council but this has proved not to be the case since that authority had only a T Green roller dating from 1901 and a 1920 Aveling KND convertible.

Part of another Aveling convertible can be seen in Fig.3 with the registration BT 888? – the last number being unable to be determined. The County Council had two Aveling rollers which were consecutively registered BT 8883 and BT 8884. However, the first of these, No.6090 of 1906, was a conventional slide valve compound – whereas the second was a convertible. So what can be seen is No.8420 of 1914 which is still around today, albeit in a non-original traction engine form without the convertible bracket on the front.

However, it is Fig.4 which confirms the answer to the last digit of the previously mentioned roller since it is the figure '4' – and this roller is standing next to its consecutively registered 'brother' – No.6090 – which somewhat remarkably also still survives. In Fig.4 it can also be seen that Aveling No.4552 has a heavily weighted traction



The photo in which Aveling roller registration BT 3759 is prominent. Collection of Susan Butler

wagon on tow – and perhaps it was this which accounted for part of the additional weight over and above that of the five rollers to make up the total of 115 tons mentioned in the newspaper report.

The fifth of the quintet of these heavy rollers on the bridge is the Fowler tar-spraying example seen in Fig.3. It will be noticed that it is minus its drive chain to the tar pump which is mounted on top of the belly tank. This one is easily identifiable since the County Council owned only one of this type of roller. It must therefore be Fowler No.16444, a DN1 type which was registered in Leeds as UM 4144; being new to council in March 1926. For some unexplained reason, this also was their Fleet No.1.

Roller details are courtesy of the Road Locomotive Society – with thanks.



Fig.3

This image shows the Fowler tar-spraying roller to advantage. Collection of Susan Butler



Fig.4

Three of the Aveling rollers on the bridge – the registrations of the two examples on the right can easily be read. A traction wagon apparently loaded with rocks is on the left in order to add to the dead-weight of the rollers. Collection of Susan Butler

Alan Potter

My husband Alan Potter passed away at the end of December 2020 after a eight year heroic battle with cancer.

We did not attend many events but a few years ago, the AGM was in Cumbria and we had a lovely weekend at the various events.

Alan packed a lot into his life: he ran an electrical contracting business as well as managing a small herd of beef cattle; he raced motorbikes and competed at the Manx Grand Prix in the Isle of Man for eleven years; he also raced at Oulton Park, Knockhill and other circuits. He helped fit out a motorboat and sailed with the owners from Blackpool to Santander. He also enjoyed exploring the Coniston Coppermines and was keen on caving in the Yorkshire Dales.

He completed a 7¼in. gauge railway around the house and after major surgery in 2013, he bought castings and built a 7¼in. Feldbahn steam engine.

His major project was to be a 10¼in. gauge farm railway, but sadly this was not to be, along with the various steamboat projects started and restoring a Wallis & Steevens Advance roller, but time ran out.

Alan leaves behind his wife Carolyn and daughter Jayne.

Carolyn Potter



Alan Potter, a member since 1996, at Threlkeld Mining Museum & Railway.

Motor Roller Register Update

The Motor Roller Register now holds details of 1,256 rollers located in 23 countries. A total of 54 different manufacturers are represented from around the world. Not surprisingly, the most numerous are from Aveling-Barford (480), followed by Wallis & Steevens (132) and Barford & Perkins (114).

When new rollers come to light, I update the information received by reference to the build-records for A-B, B&P and Marshall which are held at March, Lincoln and Gainsborough. For W&S and Fowler rollers, I refer to Malcolm Faithfull and Roger Fuller respectively, as they have a good knowledge of these manufacturers.

If your roller is not in the Register please let me have details, including in particular the serial number. I will then update the Register and send you a copy.

Andrew Watson, tel: 01400 250840

email: andrewwatsonmarston@gmail.com

An interesting account of a court case involving a steam roller

Derek Rayner

In the *Wakefield Express* dated 24th March 1923, a report appeared relating to a case in the local West Riding Court where Charlie Nicholson, steam roller driver of Wakefield, an employee of Wakefield Rural District Council, was charged with driving the roller without a rear identification mark.

Non-member Howard Benson, who very kindly sent me the cutting relating to this court case, went on to advise that the driver involved, Charlie Nicholson, was born on 9th March 1894 and in 1939 he was still driving rollers for the West Riding County Council. His younger brother, John, born in 1907, was also a roller driver for WRCC and their brother Joseph William Firth Nicholson, born in 1902, was a roads lengthman.

In the court case, Mr Gerald Beaumont, defended. PC Mathers said that he saw the roller working at Overton and it had no rear identification mark. Mr Beaumont pointed out that the roller had been working on the roads all over the Council's area for some time prior to 1920 when the Roads Act was passed and, if there was any contravention of the Act, a



Aveling & Porter roller No.3578 of 1895 posed with the gang at Bretton Park, some seven miles south-west of Wakefield in 1913. It is possible that two of the Nicholson brothers appear in this photograph! **Collection Derek Rayner**

word to the officials would have had the matter put right immediately without the necessity of summoning the Council's servant.

The name of the owners of the vehicle was printed in large lettering on it and he contended that no offence had been committed as, in his opinion, they were not legally liable to put the identification marks on the road roller. He asked for the case to be dismissed and said that if the police desired it, he would undertake to have the numbers placed on the vehicle.

There was a legal argument between Mr Beaumont and the Magistrate's Clerk (Mr J B Cooke) as to whether or not the Council had complied with the Act, which Mr Beaumont considered they had done. The case was dismissed on payment of costs (4s.), the Chairman intimating that the Bench did not consider the name of the Council printed on the roller complied with the Act, although it was an identification in a certain sense.

From the Road Roller Association's point of view, access to the late Alan Duke's RLS listings provides an identity for the steam roller concerned. The Council's first roller was Aveling No.3578 of September 1895, a 12 ton single, of which a photograph exists showing it pictured close to Bretton Park in 1913. This roller was sold locally to contractors J Dickinson & Son (Emley) in around 1919 -1920.

The Council had purchased another roller in September 1903 from Thomas Green & Son of Leeds, this being Green's works number 1482 – a 12½ ton compound – on which the missing mark on the registration plate should have been WR 6873. This one was followed in October 1925 by another Green's roller, a 12 ton single No.2201 with the registration WU 3254. Both of these machines passed to the West Riding County Council in April 1930 when the major countrywide reorganisation of road making activities took place.

Therefore the roller which was the subject of this reported court case was Green's No.1482.

Lost Registrations

The RRA Fact Sheet Number One, entitled **LOST REGISTRATION NUMBERS**, explains how to re-register your motor roller with its original registration mark (the V765 Scheme).

Fact Sheet Number Two has details of how to register a previously un-registered machine – or see the website.

Send two first class stamps to:

Derek Rayner, 9 Beagle Ridge Drive, Acomb, York, YO24 3JH.

Wallis & Stevens 10 ton Advance roller No. 8095 is seen on the road in Cornwall, probably back in the late 1980s. The roller is still resident in the county.
Vintage Spirit magazine collection

