

# Rolling

Autumn 2022

Issue 190



Road Roller  
Association  
Journal



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**Front cover:** *Basking in the sunshine at Goblands Farm at Hadlow in Kent, is 1930 Aveling & Porter AD Class No.14039, Canterbury, the former Canterbury Corporation No.1. The roller was in steam for the RRA AGM visit on 9th October.* **Brian Gooding**

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 30<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022

Website: www.roadrollers.org

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# Chairman's Notes



At last, we have been able to join together for an AGM weekend after a two year enforced break. Those of us who attended at Gillingham were treated to some really special visits staying at a hotel with facilities that were highly suitable to our needs. Unfortunately, the lift was out of order which made it difficult for us bungalow dwellers who do not find stairs easy, especially when carrying a suitcase. However, the food, service and other amenities were well up to standard and I think I can safely say that the whole weekend was enjoyed by all who attended. Our sincere thanks go to Derek for arranging the weekend especially as he did have some setbacks when trying to get a new location for the Thomas Aveling memorial plaque that was originally situated on the, now demolished, Aveling works. A full account of the weekend can be found elsewhere in this issue.

My usual plea for more committee members did not find many people rushing to take up my offer although we were able to elect one new committee member, Steve Neugebauer, from March. Steve has been a member for a long time and you may have met him on the Association stand at the Great Dorset Steam Fair where he has been a helper for many years. After the meeting I was approached by one member who is willing to join the committee and I intend to get him co-opted onto the committee at the next committee meeting. The other encouraging election at the AGM is the promotion of PK Smith from committee member to Sales Officer. This is very significant move as we have been without or only had very short-term post holders for many years and we hope that we can now get a little continuity into this post and perhaps an increase in sales.

The next AGM will be upon us very quickly as the one that was just held was postponed from last March and the constitution states that it must be held in March. There should be a preliminary notice of the 2023 AGM elsewhere with this issue. In line with usual practice, this AGM will be held in the north of the country.

The announcement that the Great Dorset Steam Fair will not be held next year came as a shock to most of us following what appeared to be a successful show. However, it is an indication of the rapidly rising costs of staging such an event and the uncertainty of what the future will hold for this type of event. I fear that we may yet see more shows that we assume are fixtures falling by the wayside; I hope that I am wrong.

With the cancelling of Dorset, we will be looking for other venues to attend with the sales stand. We will also be looking for help at some of these events. At the moment we are booked to attend the Great Central Railway Rally over the Easter weekend and hope to see as many of you there as we can.

Finally with the end of this season upon us, I wish you all well for the winter months and hope that you are able to achieve some of the maintenance jobs that I'm sure you have lined up for your machines. Personally, I have to retube my roller this winter but fortunately I have a couple of younger volunteers to do most of the crawling about under the engine.

**Richard**

## 2022 Annual General Meeting Weekend

**Brian Gooding**

In superb autumnal weather, members gathered at the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham in Kent over the weekend of 7th-9th October for the delayed 2022 AGM, with arrangements organised by Vice Chairman Derek Rayner. As usual, a number of visits had been planned for the Saturday and Sunday as well as the AGM itself on the Saturday afternoon .

For a few of us who arrived early enough on the Friday, across the road from the hotel is the Royal Engineers Museum, a fascinating museum to walk around and learn about the development of this branch of the armed forces. For those who arrived later in the day, there was an opportunity to look around the museum later in the weekend.

After a good breakfast on Saturday morning, we set off across the River Medway – more accurately under it through the tunnel – before turning north towards Hoo and Stargate Marina, the home and workplace of member Robert Deards. Here members were shown a



*Robert Deards moves one of his Barford & Perkins rollers for members to drive.*



*Chairman Richard gets instructions from Robert on the other Barford & Perkins.*



*A diminutive Motor Units pavemant roller.*



*By chance, we saw the Thames Barge Niagara being turned around in the River Medway before redocking.*



*Thames Barge Marjorie at the end of the marina.*



*The beautiful interior of Marjorie, repaired by Robert and his team after it had been sunk in a collision.*



*TID172, a former Ministry steam tug.*



*St Werburgh Church in Hoo, the resting place of Thomas Aveling and his wife.*



*The grave of Thomas Aveling, his wife Sarah and his mother.*

pair of immaculately-restored Barford petrol rollers, which some were able to drive, as well as other rollers and the chassis of an MG sports car which is under a full restoration. Outside were a number of other i/c rollers awaiting their turn in the workshop or just there for spares.

The marina is home to several houseboats but close to the shore is 1946-built steam tug TID172, one of 182 built for the Ministry of War Transport. Several members climbed over the walkway railings to have a look on board the tug, an activity which looked more precarious than it really was.

Robert's business is rebuilding Thames barges and beyond the myriad houseboats, two were moored alongside, the 1898-built *Niagara*, and the 1902-built *Marjorie*. Members were able to go on board *Marjorie*, and we marvelled at the varnished wood below decks. Robert said that he had done a lot of work on this barge after it had been hit by another vessel.

Following the visits to the marina, members stopped a short way up the road at St Werburgh's church, an interesting church being wide rather than long, but its claim to fame for us is that it where Thomas Aveling is buried. Within the church is a window commemorating Thomas Aveling.

It was time to head back to the hotel for a buffet lunch and the AGM. On show at the AGM was the original iron plaque that the RRA and NTEC (as it was then) had erected on what was Aveling's office building (later Winget Ltd) at Strood back in 1982 to commemorate the centenary of Thomas Aveling's death. Sadly the building has been demolished and the plaque had been put into storage. Fortunately its whereabouts were known and Derek was able to have a fibreglass replica made from the original pattern; both of these were also on show at the meeting.

Highlights of the meeting were that we looked at possible charitable status for the Association but it was felt this was a step too far and that the idea of a limited company would be pursued to protect all members' liability should anything go wrong. Awards were presented after the meeting, the Thomas



*Andy Ratcliffe and Derek Rayner with the Thomas Aveling plaques at the AGM.*



*Michael Stokes receives the Thomas Aveling shield from Richard Newman.*



*PK Smith receives the 'Rolling' shield from Chairman Richard Newman.*



*The Aveling Barford Type Q diesel roller at the Old Brook Pumping Station.*



*The front of the Old Brook Pumping Station in Chatham.*



*One of the Blackstone pumps.*



*A general view of the two Campbell oil engines in the Old Brook Pumping Station. The pumps are at the far end.*

Aveling shield to member Michael Stokes of the Great Central Railway for organising the Road Roller weekend in June this year. The 'Rolling' trophy went to PK Smith for articles in the magazine.

The first of Sunday's visits was to the Old Brook Pumping Station in Chatham, a former foul water pumping station opened in 1929 with Blackstone pumps driven by a pair of Campbell oil engines, one of which was run for us. The station was taken out of use in 1979 and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Members found this an interesting visit and spent some time looking around and chatting to the two volunteers who hosted our visit. The original Thomas Aveling plaque has been donated to the museum in perpetuity, and the replica has also been placed in their care pending a final solution to erecting it near the Aveling works.

Members now had a choice of heading off to the next and final visit, or heading back to the hotel first to go and look around the Royal Engineers Museum. Derek had also offered the opportunity to see the site of the former Aveling works and the possible site for the replica plaque on the Medway Bridge. Having visited the museum, Rosemary and I opted for the



*Cross-section model of the pumps showing what is under the floor.*



*Bob Barnes starts one of the Campbell engines. It is started by compressed air.*



*It is hoped in time to be able to put a replica of the Thomas Aveling plaque by the steps up to the Medway Bridge.*



*The impressive Rochester Castle keep.*



*Members gather to witness the handover of the original 1982 Thomas Aveling commemorative plaque for display in the museum. Bob Barnes receives it from Richard.*



bridge option and so began something of a diversion for us, for across the river stands the imposing Rochester Castle, so we spent some time climbing up and down the castle's 200 steps but the views from the top were magnificent.

Next we headed off to Hadlow in the Kent countryside to visit Goblands Farm, home to the Pearce family collection. In steam for our visit were three engines – a Ransomes portable, the



*The site of the former Aveling & Porter works by the Medway Bridge as seen from Rochester Castle.*

'Canterbury' Aveling & Porter roller and the rebuilt Fowler ploughing engine *The Mistress*, much of which is a new build, there not being a lot of the original engine left to start with. There were, of course, other engines to look at but not in steam.

And so, for most of us, the enjoyable weekend came to an end and it was time for the journey home. My thanks to all who hosted us so ably and to Derek for organising another AGM weekend. And so to next year... the AGM will revert to March and the plan is to hold it in north Yorkshire. Preliminary details will hopefully be with this edition of 'Rolling'.

• *My apologies for the small size of some of the pictures but it was difficult to leave some out as that would have reduced the ability to tell the story. – Ed.*



*The rebuilt Fowler ploughing engine *The Mistress* is studied by Roger Smith. Not many parts are original.*



*A diminutive Ransomes portable engine in steam.*

# Keep the Flywheel Turning

## Reminiscences of travels with my steam roller

PK Smith

“To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive and the true success is to labour.”

*Robert Louis Stephenson 1850-1894*

As many of you are doubtless aware, and the rest have probably guessed from the header, travelling on my ‘venerable’, as she is often referred to by the preservation press, steam roller *Sarah* (A&P 3430 of 1894) is a steady affair. Life at a slower, sedate and more gentle pace better suits my disposition, although not always that of my crew, who are becoming increasingly harder to find, as they invariably discover the delights of travelling at 6-15+ mph as opposed to my sedate 3mph. Inevitably these ‘speed demons’ will cite their part in my past adventures, that often take many days to cover the same route as that done by others in a single morning or a late afternoon, as the reason for their unavailability when I am in need of crew! Luckily I am blessed with a reasonably reliable machine as it is an Aveling & Porter product which, despite her 128 years, still regularly does about 200 miles a year under her own steam – all without the aid of a ‘pram’. It is probably fair to say that it is as much to do with my age as hers (as well as being increasingly unable to find the ‘staff’) that I don’t do the 500+ miles that I seemed to be able to do when younger! Nonetheless, in all the years I have owned and driven my roller, I have always ‘made it’ to where I was going to, albeit eventually; OK except for once, many years ago, on a run to the Banbury rally at Bloxham. Due to a conspiracy of circumstances, many of which were beyond my control, I did have to admit defeat and was taken home, on a ‘pram’, in despair and defeated disgrace from about the half way point but that is a story, perhaps, for another occasion.

These tales revolve around my forays out to the excellent rally that used to be held at Kemble airfield (usually over the first weekend in August – nowadays held at South Cerney) which, following the sad demise of the Knowl Hill Rally, became my alternative event to attend. It is probably true to say that although it became one of my favourites shows over the years, it did become something of a ‘nemesis’ event!

I had tried, and successfully conquered, many different routes to get there over the years as it is about 30ish miles from my base at Witney eventually settling on one that took in Carterton, Lechlade, Fairford, Masey Hampton with an overnight stop at the Cotswold Waterpark visitor centre (which provided a great breakfast and proper ‘facilities’ in the morning!) so doing the last ten or so miles the following day via Down Ampney and eventually through Kemble village itself before the long ‘drag’ uphill onto the airfield site. In short lots of water, food and the occasional hostelry stop, a good steady run.

On one such journey, having made good time to the first water stop at Carterton (about six or so miles), the steam valve for the injector failed to shut off and, with no means of isolating it, proceeded to rapidly empty the contents of the boiler – both steam and water – all over the road. Fortunately my crewman’s Granddad lived in the town, about half a mile away, so after

‘disposing’ of the fire, we were able to park up the roller on his drive and manhandle the living van and trailer off the road onto the verge outside his house much to his neighbours delight and amusement! By this time several of the ‘Witney Boys’ had arrived on the scene (mostly with cameras it must be said!) and even though it was by now after midday on a Saturday, a brand new 3/4in. valve was found and fitted, the boiler refilled, the fire relit and we were on our way again.

As we were running late, I decided to make the Yells family yard at Fairford the new overnight stop. Upon approaching Fairford though I was alarmed to see signs stating that the bridge that we needed to cross to get there was closed. It had not been long since the ‘great floods’ of that year and almost all the houses were still sandbagged up with piles of water damaged furniture, etc. outside their front doors. The local petrol station knew nothing of the bridge closure so, as I was now committed to the route, we pressed on, eventually crossing the bridge although it was obvious that the water level was still only just below the parapet walls having not long receded. It later transpired that the ‘man in the yellow jacket’ with the clipboard we had noticed, while crossing, was the council engineer who had only just (after having seen us go over it!) declared it safe to be reopened! We eventually parked up overnight in the driveway of the Yells family yard – not in the usual paddock as it was still under several inches of water! The rest of that year’s run was completed, without event, the following day.

The following year what was by now being referred to, in certain circles, as the ‘curse of Kemble’ struck once again. This time it was on the second day and within sight of the

rally field. Having climbed uphill from Kemble village to the airfield, we were travelling on the, by now, flat/undulating road towards the site entrance when I noticed the oncoming cars were pulling over lots more than was really necessary to pass the roller. The next instant the living van behind the engine moved violently to the right and then again. My first instinct was that either someone, impatient to overtake, had rear-ended the



trailer, which was behind the van, or had misjudged the distances needed to overtake, given the on-coming traffic, and hit the van. Upon inspection, it was in fact that the trailer that had 'broken loose' of its A-bar and although that was still attached to the living van, the rest of the trailer was now only secured to the back of the van by its safety chain. The back of the living van was something of a mess and the steps had been ripped off their mountings and were back down the road away but the front of the trailer had come off worse and was well 'caved in' by the altercation. If ever an example were needed for the fitting of safety chains between trailers this was it as a few minutes earlier we had been travelling uphill and who knows what or how much damage a 'runaway' would have caused! Fortunately a passing local to Kemble engine owner, making his own way to the show, stopped to help us out and with his assistance the parts were found to re-secure the A-bar and trailer and the rest of the journey was safely completed.

Forward another year and, third time lucky; surely everything would be fine, but don't they also say that bad luck comes in threes! This year as I had been, for the first time, to the excellent Strawberries & Steam event organised by Colin Hatch and 'Steam Team Swindon', I would be approaching Kemble from a different direction. Having by now run out of Witney crew, I gratefully secured the services of Swindon team member Jason Howard, owner of an incredibly rapid T3 roller. With only about 23 or so miles to cover on the Sunday before the show, we set off and I was immediately grateful for Jason's local knowledge as I think I would probably still be driving around Swindon now, or at least until the coal ran out, without a local 'guide'. About eight miles short of Kemble, however, the problems started when the injector refused to 'pick up' and the pump, in true Aveling style, also refused to perform! After checking the injector innards and finding nothing amiss and getting the pump to do something, we pressed on only to have the same thing happen a couple of miles later. By this time we were just approaching, the now late, Joe Powell's yard at Ashton Keynes so the decision was made to end the journey there and to investigate the problems further. On the Tuesday Colin Hatch and I met up and upon stripping the (new two years earlier – remember) injector steam valve, found that not only had the seat fallen off the bottom of the threaded spindle but also that the tap thread itself was stripped almost as if cross-threaded! Colin provided and fitted a new/old replacement valve from his extensive 'stock' of such things and plans were made to move the engine the remaining six miles on the Thursday to be there for the show which started on Friday.

Crew this time was to be Nigel Lewendon (the late father of Stan and Mike) and as the trip was only six miles, and so two hours at 3mph, we lit up and were away on schedule leaving Joe Powell's at 14:30. It was about 4½ miles into the journey and just short of Oaksey village that the 'curse' returned with a vengeance! Again the injector refused to pick up and temperamental Aveling pump syndrome also struck yet again. Everything that could be checked and done on the roadside was, but to no avail, so the fire was 'lost' in the ditch just as Swindon engine owner Carl Brown on his McLaren, also on his way to Kemble, arrived on the scene.

Phone calls were duly made and Colin Hatch came out to our assistance yet again. Once everything had cooled, and pressure gone, the new/old steam injector valve that had been

fitted on Tuesday was checked to discover that the composite (PTFE) disc/seat had this time apparently completely 'evaporated'! With this replaced, and with the aid of Carl's stirrup pump and a bucket, the boiler was 'topped up', the fire was relit and we duly set off once again. Everything was going fine, we negotiated Oaksey village and all its 'traffic calming' successfully but then, without warning – no water again – no injector or pump. Once more everything was stripped out and checked and it appeared that the composite valve disc had not totally 'evaporated' as we had thought earlier as the injector innards were clogged solid with various and assorted bits of it. The local Kemble engine owner, who had helped the year before with the 'runaway' trailer episode, was by now on hand to assist us and the injector was whisked away to his workshop for a clean out and overhaul. As we were awaiting its return, the pump decided, mercifully, to contribute a little water into the boiler. Time was against us now and with the light going fast, and no guarantee that this would not keep happening every half mile or so, and in the knowledge that the road ahead had few, if any, places to safely 'park up' the engine and her road train if it did, I eventually conceded defeat and managed to arrange a 'push' for the remaining two miles to the rally site. Steam section leader Matt Shipton duly arrived aboard a very large Scammell recovery lorry and with Colin Hatch towing my living van and trailer with his land Rover, I was gently pushed and pulled the last two miles of the journey, eventually to arrive on site at 23:20. With six miles covered in nearly nine hours (a new record even for me!), I was not in the mood to be photographed – mercifully the photos of my arrival on site did not come out anyhow as it was too dark – but retired to the beer tent for several ciders and to a round of applause!!

Having spent the Friday running back and forth to the yard to rob every spare Aveling clack valve available, three amazingly, and most of Saturday 'emptying' the injector of debris whenever it refused to work, I was astonished and somewhat humbled to learn on the Sunday that I had been awarded the rally 'pot', aka 'The Spirit of Kemble Award' that year. As the previous recipient had won it for driving his roller from Chatham to Kemble in three days, I can only presume that I got it on the sympathy vote, or maybe for being s\*\*\*!! Anyhow the Kemble rally is held on a different site now (South Cerney airfield) so nothing can possibly go wrong any more – can it???? – assuming I can find any crew to help get me there!!

## 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.**

## Meet a member

### Richard Taylor

I have been married to Aileen for 43 years this year and have one son Scott who was born in 1985.

When I left School in 1969, I became an apprentice plumber and completed my apprenticeship I then did a year or so "on the tools" before leaving for a 30 year career as a Police Officer, retiring from the Police in 2003 at age 50. After four years doing not a lot, in 2007 I started a second career as a Train Guard with Central Trains which in November 2007 became Cross-Country trains. I retired finally and for good in 2019.

I have always been interested in things mechanical, having had many motorcycles since the age of 16, upwards of 50 plus at last count!! I currently own eight. As regards steam, my interest was started by my mums' brother, my Uncle Bill, who was a driver for the old LMS, later BR, stationed as I was at Leicester depot. Unfortunately, my parents were not really interested so I never got to go to any steam related stuff as a young boy. So, steam, etc. sort of took a bit of a back seat until 1995 when things started to get really interesting!

In early 1995 when stationed at Wigston Police Station, I was presented with the opportunity to transfer as a village bobby to Lutterworth Police Station. On transfer, my beat consisted of mostly rural villages including the small village of Cotesbach.

During the first few weeks at Lutterworth, I took it upon myself to try and introduce myself to all the farmers on my beat. One of the farms was Hall Farm in Cotesbach owned by the late Richard Vernon whose name will be familiar to many of you as the owner of many vintage tractors and about half a dozen steam engines including two 1918 BB1 Fowler Ploughing engines and the unique Howard ploughing engine.

As I drove into the farmyard, I was presented with the sight of a massive steam engine, in fact it was one of the BB1 ploughing engines! I straight away thought 'I am going to like this chap!' I got chatting with Mr Vernon and having got Police work out the way in double quick time, I asked him about the engine, and he told me all about it and then took



*Aveling Barford DX.*

me on a conducted tour of the rest of his collection. I was there so long I nearly forgot to go back to the nick and finish my shift! Ha ha.

I found Richard to be quite hard to chat to which for those of you who know me, will find that unusual to say the least! He was always a man of few words. However, he stated he would be at the then Highcross steam rally in a week or so and to come and say hello. I knew the rally as my wife and I had been visiting every year since 1979; our first visit was on our way to our honeymoon! So on the Saturday, we visited the rally and I introduced myself to Richard again and he said something which was to change my life for good... "I need someone to steer for me tomorrow when I take the engine back to Cotesbach; if you want to you can do it." Errrr, you could have knocked me over with a feather!! Of course I said yes!

Sunday bright and early I returned to the rally field and this time I didn't pay, stating I was crew with Mr Vernon! So when it came to setting off late afternoon, I climbed up onto the massive toolbox steersman's position and suddenly realised what I had let myself in for – keeping 18 tons of steel and cast iron on the road for god knows how many miles back to Cotesbach. With Richards words ringing in my ears... "Whatever you do, don't let the nearside wheel run onto the grass verge or we will run off the road" GULP!

I can honestly say I have never sweated so much in my entire life as I did that day, and it was nothing to do with the heat! However, I was totally hooked by the sound, the smell of hot oil, the smell of the hot steam and smoke from the fire, the whole experience. I was addicted.

Over the next few years I helped Richard a lot, including helping him finish his Howard ploughing engine and quite a few trips to rallies with the BB1s, my favourite being 15170 NR78 *Princess Caroline*. A lovely engine, a gentle giant and a very free steamer.

The culmination of my time with Richard was when in 2000 he asked me if I would



*Aveling Barford DY.*

help take both the BB1s to the Hollowell Steam Rally as it would be their last trip out together as a pair. I felt very honoured to be entrusted with such a task. Come the day of the road run I was with another chap called Ian who had previously helped Richard, Ian said to me that he was happy to steer both ways if I wanted to drive! Did I want to drive? Yes, yes, yes!

So, there I was standing up there on the footplate, king of the road! For the next



thirteen or so miles, I was living the dream as I was for the whole weekend and back; it was an experience I will never forget helped by the fact that a video was made of virtually the whole road run. Treasured memories.

By 2002 my pal Mick Wilkins, who had also helped Richard, decided to purchase his own steam roller a Aveling Porter 8-ton C Type piston valve 11366 named *Bessie*. For the next 12 months or so I helped Mick by steering the roller and occasionally driving her.

In 2003 I retired from the Police and after a few months I spotted in one of the magazines an Aveling Barford DX motor roller. It had a single cylinder Ruston engine and weighed eight tons. Shortly after seeing it, I went up north with member Graham Atkinson to view the roller. Graham came with me as he already owned a DX. Graham gave the roller a clean bill of health and in fact it had virtually been completely restored apart from the canopy. So for the next three years its home was my front drive, from where I did occasional road runs and Ashby Magna Steam Rally and the Urban rally at the Leicester pumping station after of course sorting out the canopy, or awning depending on who your talking to.

Much as I liked the DX, I always wanted something steam and in 2004 I purchased an Atkinson 6in. scale steam lorry called *Louise* from the late John Drury of Coventry. He was a true gentleman as when I road tested the engine, one of the tubes appeared to be leaking. He said he would fix it before I took ownership, well he did. He actually made a new boiler for me and included it in the original agreed price! Eventually I sold both the DX and the Atkinson and purchased a brand new a 4in. Foster Agricultural engine which I named No.10, nothing to do with it being blue or politics! It was the 10th and final one that Grattons of Derby built. I rallied the Foster for a couple of years then I was contacted by the chap who had bought my DX from me asking if I would be interested in buying it back! Ermm, well ok then, If you insist, ha ha. So I was again the owner of a motor roller which I kept for the next three years until 2009 as by then I had been told that there was a 6in. Foden C type tucked away in a garage in Derby. So in July 2008 I became the owner of a Foden steam lorry! The steam was getting bigger!

I took the Foden to many rallies over the next six years until in 2014 I got the offer to purchase my friend Mick's Aveling C Type which had stood unused in his engine shed since 2003. A deal was done and a full size steam roller was mine at last, along with a living van and a trailer. She needed some work doing on her, including having the front forks welded and also I had to re-seat the regulator by grinding it in which took about three months on and off using a valve grinding machine that was originally used on railways engines! I am told I am the only person in the club (Welland Valley Vintage Traction Club, Market Harborough, Leicestershire) to have done that particular job.

After passing all the relevant tests, she was on the road and I took her to the Langton Brewery open weekend (of course!) and the old Lamport rally.

I renamed the engine "BEZ" after my late mother as that was her most used nickname. Although "Beryl the peril" was considered!

I had some fabulous times on "BEZ" but eventually had some bad news from my boiler

inspector regarding the firebox so taking into consideration that other work was ideally required, I decided that it was time to part company with the old girl. In October 2018 we parted company and she went to pastures new.

So I was looking for another engine! Which is how I came to purchase my 1937 Aveling Barford 10 ton DY motor roller also now named "BEZ". It took me about a year to get the engine running correctly as it would "only" tick over at about 250rpm and the max revs are 475! After 12 months I was nearly at the end of my tether as Graham Atkinson couldn't even sort the problem, when I suddenly had a light bulb moment (yes, I know I don't get many!) and the problem was sorted.

My first proper road run was back from Langton Brewery – yes there again, ha ha. It's only five miles but it took me 2.5 hours! I could have walked it in just over an hour! Then, of course, in 2020 as we all know, a certain world event happened which brought everything to a halt for nearly two years. However, I used the time wisely and have been busy painting her and doing lots of little jobs as those of you who regularly come to the club yard know.

Finally, we come to this year. First event of the year I took her to the Great Central Railway Quorn station for the Easter gathering, and what a brilliant weekend it was too. Then came the RRA weekend again at Quorn, followed by our annual visit to the Langton Brewery beer festival. Then the club's open weekend and finally a private steam party.

The old girl is now back at the yard for attention to a bearing and a clutch and maybe the odd winter run (or should that be very slow walk) out!

*Richard originally wrote this for the Welland Valley club magazine but he suggested we use it as well to encourage other RRA members to send it their own profiles for 'Rolling'. That is an excellent idea, so over to you, members, to come up with future profiles. – Ed.*



*Aveling & Porter C Type No.11366.*

# Three drum rollers, a deceptive spectacular engineering design

Part 2

Francis Pierre

All illustrations are from Francis Pierre archives and photos are from Francis Pierre unless specified.

## Articulated three-drum rollers

Of course, three-drum rollers were not easily handled when in use. Some Danish engineers had the idea to construct an articulated version. First was the Rimas Triplex machine built by RJM (Fig.23). It was powered by a Fordson Major engine. All the drums were driven, so it was probably the very first 'all-terrain' road roller in the world! Also, the Wegenbouw Museum in Holland had one of these, a fabulous item (Fig.24, photo by Y Lecadre). Later, RJM disappeared and John Mollers, also a Danish company, took over this machine and renamed it the Unimax without changes (Fig.25) except that a new more simple cover was designed instead of using the original Ford tractor item. Transmission to the drums and steering was mechanical and quite complicated (Fig. 26).

Pedershab, which built the TA3 roller, also produced a three-drum roller with the middle drum capable of vibrating and the two drums at each end, being both driven and steered. It

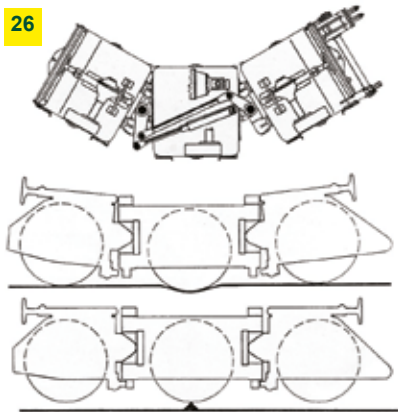
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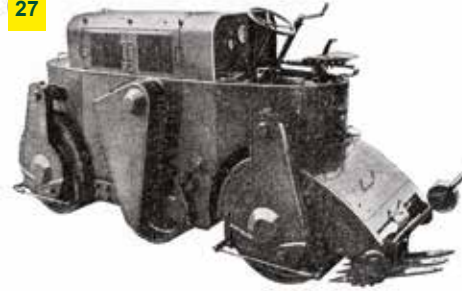
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BLAW KNOX TRIPLE ROLL ROLLER

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was named PM7A (Fig.27). Its commercial success, however, was low. In France, Richier purchased one of these interesting items of equipment but after some tests the firm went no further with the idea of importing this type of machine (Fig.28). The last articulated three-drum roller was produced in the UK by Blaw-Knox (Fig.29). It was fitted with a modern hydrostatic drive and could be supplied with either two or three drums. It was, however, somewhat short lived.

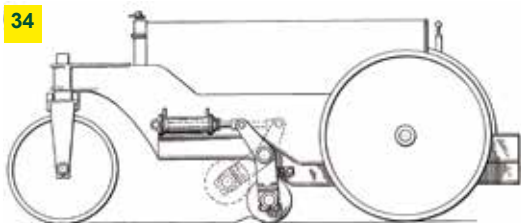
## Tandem rollers with an additional compaction unit

Some other rollers included additional equipment to improve their efficiency. The old idea of using a compacting trailer type of machine manifest itself in a Hyster C340 tandem in the States and was actually probably 'converted' by a contractor (Fig.30). From the 1960s

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onwards, additional compaction could be achieved by the addition of vibrating plates to any type of rollers, including three wheel tandems. Power for such plates could be supplied by an additional power group as is pictured (Fig.31).

Somewhat more sophisticated was an old Hatra rubber tyred compactor with a vibrating roller added to its back which was seen in Germany (Fig.32). There have also been examples of a third roller being placed in the middle under a three-wheel roller – as in the Australian-built Malcom Moore machine which was named 'Tru-plane' (Fig.33). Buffalo Springfield took out a Patent in 1936 for such a design (Fig.34) and Austin-Western also in the US, used a similar device on request (Fig.35) – this example pictured in France.

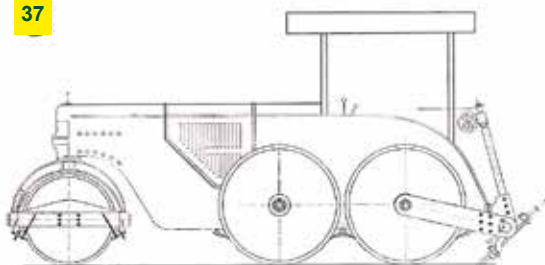
Another US company, Hercules, fitted a third roller at the back of a three wheel roller (Fig.36). In conclusion, another special roller is this example by the previously mentioned Danish firm of RJM – the UD14 – which was fitted with four driven wheels at the rear and one steering wheel at the front (Fig.37). This latter machine was quite probably exceedingly difficult to steer!!



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## Letters

### Rolling across County Durham

Dear Editor

At the beginning of October, I helped Andrew Cook take his Aveling E Type *Pegasus* from home near Copley in County Durham to the Tees Cottage Pumping Station in Darlington and back. The scenery was superb, and the weather much better than expected, so I thought you might like to consider one or both of these images. The first is from Friday, most of the way up Cockfield Fell, where we paused for the engine to get her breath back after a climb of a few hundred feet, with an old pit spoil heap behind. The second is from our water stop at Ingleton on the way home, Andrew is just topping up the crankshaft bearings before we press on the final six miles to home.

**Anthony Coulls**

*by email*



### Little and Large

Dear Editor

Although after 1920 Aveling & Porter concentrated on selling a standard range of steam rollers, before this time they had been prepared to satisfy the whims of any customer. Following the initial period of steam roller development up to about 1890, generally it seemed to have been accepted that a 10 ton nominal weight roller was the ideal machine for water bound roads, although the Aveling catalogue of 1908 offered rollers 'from 4 tons weight up to 30 tons, and even heavier if required'.

Some of the heavier UK rollers were purchased by operators with a need to compact

locally produced hard granite materials, such as Northumberland County Council, while the smallest rollers were in many cases purchased for use in large country estates or parks.

It is unlikely that any rollers sold during the last century in the UK weighed above 20 tons, but happily examples with nominal weights of 4 and 15 tons survive today in preservation, and both extremes were to be seen at the much missed Old Warden rallies in recent years. The 2008 photo shows 15 ton Aveling Royalty No.8717, new in 1916 to West Lothian County Council and recently sold to a new owner, next to our 4-ton Royalty No.7385, new to City of Oxford in 1911. In both cases, the actual weight in working order is greater than the nominal weight, as was the practice at the time. Some later Aveling rollers carried a nominal weight plate screwed onto the front forks; allegedly this would be swapped between contractor's engines to satisfy the requirements of the hirer.

**Sandy Ross**  
Redbourn, Herts

'Sally'

**Dear Editor**

Having joined the Road Roller Association last year, we thought you would like to see some pictures of our much loved *Sally* so far in 2022. Much to our delight, she was awarded Best Roller at Weeting Rally against very strong competition. Onwards to Whitby, Driffild and Lincoln!!!

**The Holloway family**  
Spilsby  
Lincolnshire



## Ruckinge sign

**Dear Editor**

As promised here is a photo of the sign in the middle of Ruckinge in Kent that I took in April last year. The roller is not as prominent as I recalled but the shape does at least have an Aveling look to it. I happened to spot it on the way to Howletts Zoo so stopped on the way back to take the photo.

**Stuart Gaines**  
by email

*(Thomas Aveling farmed at Ruckinge in the middle of the 19th century. – Ed.)*



## 2023 Annual General Meeting

Next year's AGM weekend will revert to provisionally the first weekend in March and will be based in North Yorkshire, probably near Thirsk.

More details will be announced in due course.

## Standing Orders – Membership renewals

When members set up standing orders to pay their membership subscriptions, it is essential that their membership number is quoted when paying, especially if the payer is not the member as sometimes happens.

Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile the information on the Association's bank statements, so to ensure your membership is not inadvertently cancelled, please ensure this information is correct. There are still a few members who have not updated their subscription to £16; if this is you, please amend your standing order to the correct amount.

For membership queries, please email: [membership@roadrollers.org](mailto:membership@roadrollers.org). Thank you.

*The plaque with the Thomas Aveling window in the church at Hoo reads:*  
In memory of Thomas Aveling of Rochester eldest son of Thomas and Anne Aveling of Whittlesea in the County of Cambridge. A member of the Inst Civil Engineers, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, France, and Knight of the Order of Francis Joseph, Austria. Died March 7 1882 aged 57 years.

