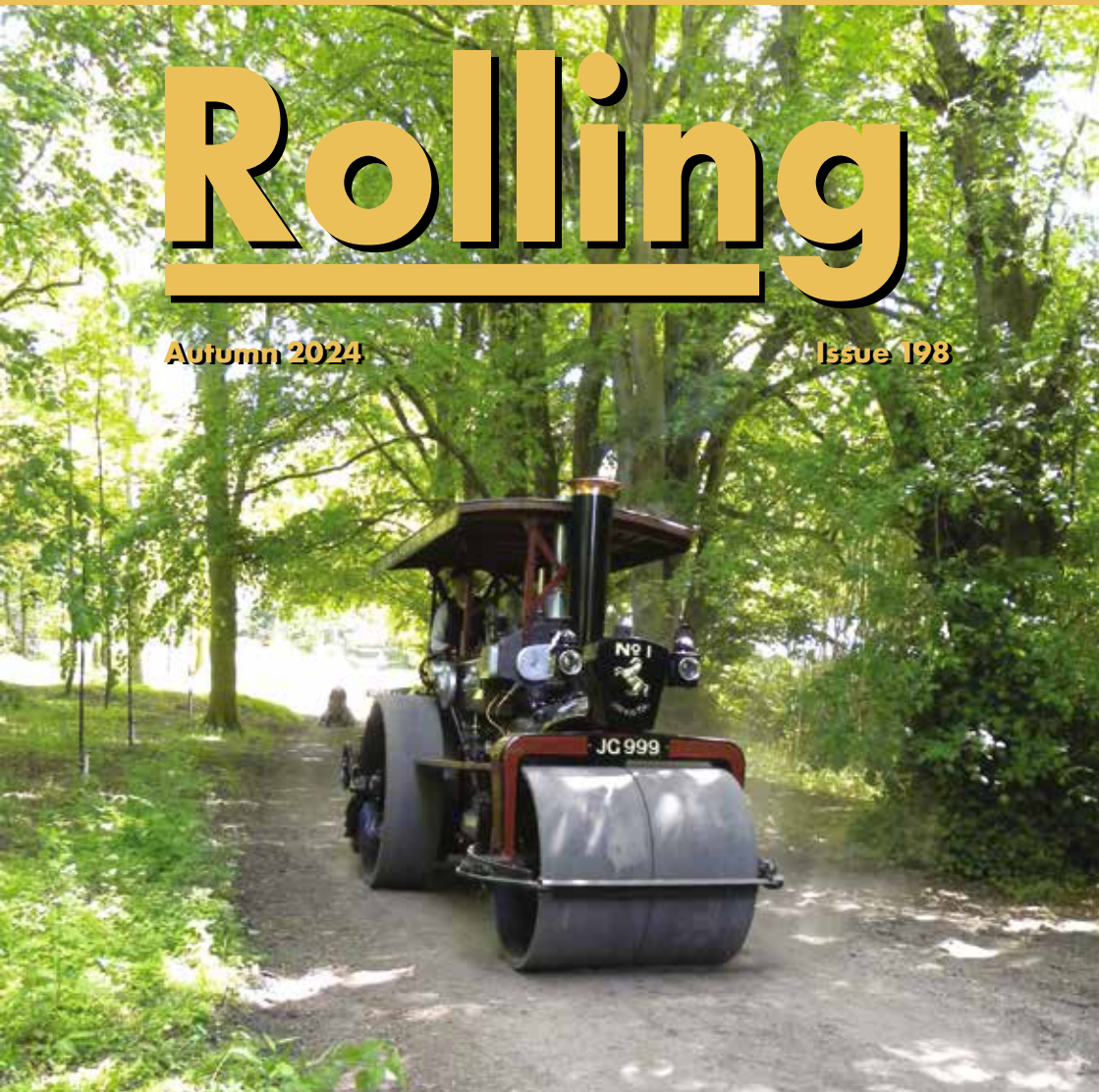


50th Anniversary Edition

Rolling

Autumn 2024

Issue 198



**Road Roller
Association
Journal**



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Front cover: *Aveling & Porter AD Class roller No.14039, Canterbury, is seen among the lime trees at Hollycombe Steam in the Country during the 2023 Steam Festival at the museum. Barbara Ward*

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 31st DECEMBER 2024

Website: www.roadrollers.org

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Chairman's Notes

The association has reached the milestone 50th anniversary since its formation and you should be able to see some of the achievements in this special edition of the magazine. The association was officially formed on 1st September 1974 at a meeting held at the Golden Lion hotel in Halifax after an initial meeting had been arranged at the home of Lyndon Shearman to discuss the possibility of forming properly constituted group.



With the coming of autumn, this year's rally season is fast drawing to an end and we can look back at what has been a variable year with the weather forcing some rallies to cancel, and yet other weekends have had very good weather and events have prospered. From my own point of view, I think I have been very lucky this year as all the events that I have attended have been successful and the weather has held up well. Not so good has again been the quality of the coal that has been available. We have had to manage on coal replacement nuts that seem OK for boiling water while standing still but cannot produce enough steam for much movement, South African coal that contains a lot of stone and produces vast quantities of ash, and Colombian coal that produces large quantities of smoke making it difficult if the wind is in the wrong direction.

The Association has attended a few events this year starting at Markham in July. We have tried to attend different rallies this year so that we can meet as many members from different areas of the country. After Markham we had a presence at Bressingham for the 100th anniversary of one of the resident rollers, Hoo Peninsula Heritage Festival that also celebrated Thomas Aveling's 200th birth date and finally the Bedford rally. I hope if you attended any of these events you were able to meet our representatives and spend a few minutes with them.

Planning is well advanced for next year's AGM in Cornwall on 26th-27th April. This is the Trevithick Day weekend at Camborne and we will be circulating hotel and booking details with the next issue of 'Rolling'.

I hope that you all keep well and I look forward to meeting many of you next year.

Richard

The RRA has 249 original Aveling-Barford drawings for the GA footpath roller which are surplus to requirements and are offered for sale to RRA members. A list is available on request. Offers – guide price £100. Collection from Grantham.

Andrew Watson. Email: andrewwatsonmarston@gmail.com

Memories of the RRA

Lyndon Shearman

I remember when the RRA carried out training courses, not on how to drive a roller, but on the techniques used for successful road making. For example, on a cambered road, you work from side to centre to keep the shape of the surface. We looked at 'half-wheeling' and 'full wheeling', the distance moved from one pass to the next. And you reversed in different places, to avoid making a shallow spot. I recall courses at Armley Mills Industrial Museum, Leeds, and Abbey Pumping Station, Leicester. We produced a manual on rolling techniques for those who attended – has anyone still got them?

I remember our AGM at Rochester, when we went across to Strood for the unveiling of the Thomas Aveling plaque, and then we went to Aveling's grave at Hoo.

We did some work on the roads at Blists Hill Museum, Shropshire, and then we had a job to do at the Black Country Museum in the West Midlands. The road between the Victorian houses was wearing away, so we arranged to surface dress it. We spread bitumen emulsion with brushes, then scattered stone chippings on the bitumen, then rolled it with a steam roller. At the museum earlier this year, the roads still looked fine, so we may have done a good job!

In more recent times, we celebrated the 40th Anniversary at Halifax, where the RRA started, and we had visits to the Industrial Museum, and a local firm, Marshalls, who make paving materials. The late Eric Sykes brought along one of his rollers, and one of the local councillors had her photograph taken as she was sitting in the roller! We had to get special permission to park the roller outside the hotel where we held the AGM, as we did not want to get a parking ticket!

So, a long journey, with lots of interesting events on the way, and I am delighted to have been part of it.

Eddie Valentine

Thank you, Lyndon, for giving us the Road Roller Association, and for the article 'An Anniversary' in issue 197.

It was around 1977 that I first read about the RRA. There was an address to write to, so I wrote in and became a member. Like Lyndon, I have always been interested in road rollers of all kinds and the plant used in road maintenance, quarries, etc. At that time, I never thought anyone else was interested in such thing. It was a pleasant surprise that there were. The interest over the years has given me friends. I have met likeable 'rogues' and it has been a lot of fun.

Looking out old copies of *Rolling*, Issue 42 Winter 1985 came to light; Lyndon had written an article 'Grass Rolling'. The rolling of cricket fields, football pitches, etc. which at one time had provided a useful market for both roller makers and roller owners. I, myself, recall while employed by the then Aberdeen Corporation Links & Parks Department back in the 60s, the Streets & Roads Aveling-Barford

GD arriving one morning to roll the 'cricket' field at Duthie Park!

The editor Mike Hartley mentions receiving some photos for the photo page from Roger Newbury and thanks him for taking the trouble.

Another photo came from Phil Ogden and forms part of Roller Profile No.1 Aveling Barford Type DX, works No.AF553, weight 6 tons, Reg DMJ 305. The roller was new to Baines Brothers, then to Eddison, assembled from cannibalised parts from DXs in Eddison's Bury yard.

Derek Rayner is Chairman and is hoping to stand down after five years in the position and that it is his sincere hopes that the new chairman will bring some new ideas and pilot the RRA successfully into the next decade.

Spring 84 – Issue 39

From the Editor Mike Hartley

Well, this is it, the new format of *Rolling* at last. We hope you like it. Any comments are welcome. I would like to thank the other members of the Derby production team for the enormous amount of work that has been put in, all in 'spare' time, over the past year to get the new shape into production.

AGM Report

The 10th AGM of the Association was held on 3rd March at the Track Marshall Social Club, Gainsborough. After the members were welcomed by Henry Marshall of Track Marshall, the President, Lyndon Shearman, replied on behalf of the Association.

Rolling Around

In Devon, engines currently receiving attention at Roger Pridham's boiler works at Lamerton include Aveling 8815, a 10 ton single, ex-Staffs CC and for many years in a playground at Lichfield. A new firebox is being made for fitting by its owner Mr Hopkinson of Leicestershire. Also, there is Mike Hynd's very derelict overhead slide valve compound 4765 *Prince Albert*, which is to have the backhead and front tubplate replaced and the tender rebuilt.

Letters to Rolling

Dear Derek

I was very concerned when I read of your accident when towing with your roller. I have had a few near misses when travelling 'light' so may I suggest that all members should write to our local papers. Something along these lines, "Steam Engines on the road."

Autumn 86 – Issue 49

And Issue 197 share images of Burrell 4040, TT 7917 *Heather*, image 12-10-85, Thomas Turner, Bradworthy, Devon.

I Have enjoyed receiving *Rolling* and contributing tales of the rollers and roadmen over the years. I wish also to mention the roadmen, roller men, and lorry men of Angus County Council, Arbroath District Roads, who kindled my interest all those years ago. Thank you.

Rolling through the years...

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Road Roller Association, we decided to take a look back at one issue of *Rolling* from the first issue and then each anniversary year, i.e. 1974, 1984, 1994, 2004 and 2014, and to pick out something of interest from those issues. What follows is a romp through the ages, though, of course, there is much more in the other back issues of *Rolling*. For much of the time, Alan Porter was Editor and most of these issues fall under his custodianship.

It is interesting to see how much the Association used to organise in the earlier days, perhaps when people had more time to become involved with its activities, though it is good to see excellent road making displays at some of the larger rallies up and down the country at the present time, although these are not organised by the Association.

I hope this snapshot of material prompts memories in our longer established members; perhaps you will let us have some of your for future issues of *Rolling*...

Brian Gooding
Editor

1974 Issue No.1: THE INAUGURAL MEETING

Apart from five of the seven founder members (John and Margaret l'Anson were unfortunately prevented from attending), seven other enthusiasts turned up at the Golden Lion Hotel on 1st September. Just to prove that distance is no object, all the way from Ruthin in Denbighshire came Ewan and Murray Lloyd-Jones (now famous for operating steam rollers and a steam tarsprayer); from Nidd Bridge, near Harrogate came Gerry Proctor and his wife; from Atherton near Wigan came Bob Prescott; from Leeds came Bill Owen (now retired but once a prominent engineer with John Fowler and, later, with Greens) and finally from Denholme came Stuart Harrison, now co-owner of Aveling & Porter steam roller No.14070.

After the Acting Chairman, William Mitchell, had outlined the reasons for the need and formation of the Association, those assembled were invited to become members and everyone accepted. Having got some members, a proposed constitution was read out, discussed and adopted, and was followed by the election of officers.

With the formal business out of the way the rest of the time was spent on



discussing aims and activities of the Association. One suggestion put forward could involve every member, and this was that the Association should attempt to compile an authoritative book on the history of road making. Other suggestions were for a visit to be made to Greens works in Leeds, while, for next year, an actual Roller Working could very well be organised. Obviously these are only initial ideas, but at least it's a start. Anyone else any ideas?

YOUR OFFICIALS

Taking on the arduous job of Chairman is William Mitchell, who is busy restoring Aveling & Porter steam roller No.11467 and a 1937 Aveling Barford BD4 motor roller. Secretary is Chris Cooper, of 35 Bents Drive, Sheffield 11, who is helping our Chairman with restoration work. Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Lyndon Shearman of 15 Thornton Street, Kings Cross, Halifax, a roller driver with Eddisons and the owner of a 1938 10 ton Greens motor roller. Committee members are: your Hon. Editor (*Alan Porter – Ed.*), Bob Prescott, Bill Owen and John l'Anson. Only one office was not filled, that of President, and it was felt by the meeting that it should be left vacant for the moment until the Committee finds a suitable person.

SUMMER 1984 Issue No.40: TECHNICAL TIP

THE GROUP 'G' DRIVING TEST... *some practical hints by Armstrong*

Many R.R.A. members will have already passed their Road Roller test, but a short account of what's involved (while it's still fresh in my mind) might go some way in helping those members who haven't yet flattened their 'L' plates!

Preparation

Firstly and foremost there is no substitute for real foot plate experience – be it steam or diesel – so get rolling!

Steering is definitely an art to be mastered, so much effort in this department is a must. If you intend to take your test on a steamer remember that you will have to combine the three separate skills of steering, 'driving' and firing.

As a footnote to the above: legally all 'L' drivers should be accompanied by a supervisor who holds a 'G' group licence – unless the roller was built to carry one person only, or if it is under 3.05 tonnes unladen. This does not, of course, apply to the driving test when you will definitely be on your own with your examiner as an observer.

Driving Test Application

When applying for a test you must be over 18 years and hold a current "full" licence (e.g. group 'A').

The present test fee is £14.40 and upon receipt of this you'll be sent a questionnaire concerning your test. When this is completed and returned the all

important card will arrive with your date, etc. (This should give you time for plenty more practice as well as time for swotting up on the Highway Code!)

The Test

For the test your machine must be in good order, and it goes without saying that you must be properly licensed and insured.

Also 'L' plates must be displayed.

A blow by blow account of the test would be boring so I'll list the things which I encountered.

1. Usual eyesight test.
2. Emergency stop.
3. Manoeuvres: Right and left hand turns, forward and reverse.
4. Highway Code.

Following This

I seemed to have satisfied the Examiner and he duly handed me the pass slip. Having spent a couple of hours raising steam and a further half hour manoeuvring 13 tons of steel around at his whim, I was overcome with joy, and commented "Thank God for that, it's taken 20 years of practice!"

As can be seen there is more to it than meets the eye, but don't let this put you off; like most things in life it's easy when you know how.

SPRING 1994 No.78

THE BOYS (AND GIRLS) FROM THE BLACKSTUFF

Lyndon Shearman

*"They said the thing couldn't be done.
Bravely he went to it.
He tackled the thing that couldn't be done,
And couldn't do it!"*

I felt a bit like that after suggesting that we, that is the congregation, could take on the job of repairing and resurfacing parts of the car park at the Church of the Epiphany in Oxley. It was, after all, years since I had worked as a Boy from the Blackstuff, and a lot of water had gone under the bridge since – in fact most of the bridges had fallen down! But once the idea had been voiced, there was no going back, for Father Graham and the Council seemed keen to pursue it. So I was summoned before them all to explain what would be involved.

It was decided that we would concentrate on resurfacing the entrance to the car park and removing the two flowerbeds which took up space and were constantly being run over by cars. There followed a good deal of planning and organising. My time in the surfacing industry had been spent in Yorkshire, so I had no contacts in this area for the supply of materials or hire of equipment.



Gaffer Lyndon Shearman (4th left) gives the order of the day before the gang attack the pile of tarmac, while Father Graham (2nd left) listens approvingly.

Barbara, my wife, spent a good deal of time ringing around making new contacts and getting prices, and I was surprised to find that the price of tarmacadam had remained fairly stable. It had gone through the roof in the early 70s as oil prices rose, for tarmacadam is nowadays made with bitumen, not tar, and bitumen is an oil by-product.



The roadmen hard at it.

We had decided to spread the work over two Saturdays in June; the first to prepare the road and flowerbeds for surfacing, and the second to actually lay the new surface. Accordingly, on the first Saturday, a motley crew assembled in the church hall, and began work. The entrance road was attacked with picks to remove high spots and bring the road to a suitable shape. This was vital, as a new surface will reflect the shape of the road underneath. Meanwhile, other stalwart navvies were ripping out the concrete edgings round the flowerbeds and digging off the earth. Debris from the entrance and broken edgings was used as hardcore. Although most of our navvies were new to this sort of work, they performed very well and we were finished by late morning.

The following Saturday was the cruncher. A big pile of hot steaming tarmac was tipped out of the lorry and sat there looking at us, We had to shift it before it went cold, or it would set solid and we would have had an ornamental black hump in the car park! In fact, yet again, our roadmen worked well, shovelling and barrowing, while Phil Bryett took a rake and worked alongside me spreading the tarmac. To say Phil had not done this before – and it is a skilled job – he did fine, and could get a job with Tarmac Roadstone as a rakehand if ever he fancied a career change! The same applies to Garry, who drove the BOMAG 120AD 2 ton roller, and after only a few minutes tuition was rolling like a veteran. The results are there for all to see. The finished job is extremely creditable, especially considering that most people were new to the job. Clearly, Father Graham's sermons are powerful stuff to provide such motivation.

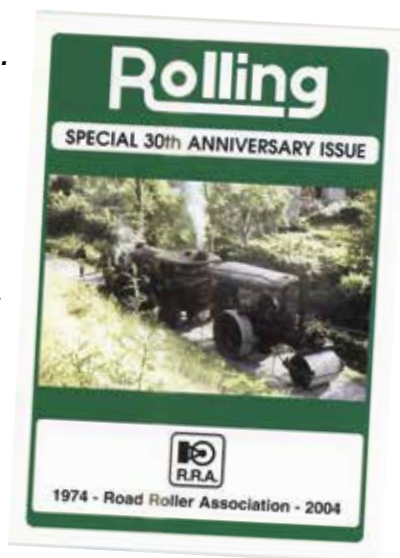
2004: SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Free with the Summer 2004 issue of Rolling (No.119) and was a mainly photographic issue...

Message from the President

What is the fascination with road making? It is not just the machinery, although this is interesting enough. Much road making equipment has an air of the 'home made' about it and the men are a breed apart from normal construction workers. The job of road resurfacing, whether using 'black top' or tar and chippings, always appears to be executed at high speed. To me there is the hint of the nomad about these gangs, staying in one area for only a few weeks, then they are gone.

The centre piece for all this activity has to be the road roller. Steam-powered rollers were amongst the first self-propelled road vehicles



and as soon as the internal combustion engine became a viable proposition it was used to power road rollers. The numbers of preserved road rollers and the interest they generate at displays of vintage vehicles demonstrates that there is something a bit special about the road making process.

The Road Roller Association has played a major role in fostering this interest. Its activities encourage people to take an interest in all aspects of the history of road making. This interest takes many forms; restoring and operating large items such as rollers and tar boilers; or collecting smaller items such as road signs, hand tools, paraffin lamps, and anything else associated with our hobby; or collecting photographs of working scenes. Whatever the special subject individuals choose to follow, it all adds up to a magnificent fund of knowledge regarding this aspect of our history.

Road rollers need to be seen working, the preserved examples are still capable of producing good quality work and many are to be seen engaged in these activities at vintage rallies. These demonstrations capture the atmosphere of the road making gang of yesteryear and for many it will be the only chance they get to see these vintage machines in action.

The pictures in this booklet are not recreations, they are the real thing. Study them carefully. They capture part of a bygone age and should give pleasure to those with an interest in the history of road making. The booklet is a tribute to all those who not only worked in this field but also to the ingenuity of the men who designed and built such machinery. Those who have only taken an interest and been content to photograph the contemporary scene, rather than follow a career in the industry, must not be forgotten either, for without their interest we would not now have this magnificent collection of photographs to study and enjoy.

Steve Arrowsmith

Message from the Chairman

1974... and all that

Do you remember what you were doing in 1974? I cannot remember what I did in 1974, except that I was still in full time education. I certainly cannot remember what I did on a specific date in 1974. However, some people do remember what they were doing on a specific date, for on Sunday 1st September 1974 they were meeting in a house in Halifax for the inaugural meeting of the Road Roller Association. During the early 1970s, steam rollers, and their owners, were being treated as the poor relations of the traction engine movement with nobody to look after their specific interests. Motor rollers and other road making equipment, and their owners, were not even being treated that well. Those people were unhappy about this situation and a small group of them decided to do something about it and held the meeting in Halifax.

Of those at the inaugural meeting some are still members of the Association, some are still very active on the Committee, some have passed away, and some are no longer members. Wherever they are today that small group of people have left a legacy that those of us involved with the Association today continue to strive. The objects of the Association, as agreed at that very first meeting, are as valid today as they were 30 years ago, and are embedded in our Constitution as follows:-

To promote the preservation of rollers and other road making machinery, both steam and internal combustion powered, horse-drawn and pedestrian controlled.

To foster interest in these machines, artefacts and in the history of the road making industry by means of meetings, demonstrations, exhibitions and other activities.

Steam rollers, motor rollers and road making equipment are no longer the poor relations of the traction engine movement. At many events, road making displays form a major feature. During 2004 it is expected that displays will take place at Banbury, Elvaston Castle, Kemble, Holcot, the Great Dorset Steam Fair, Barleylands and other venues. Many of these will be organised by members of the Association, rather than directly by the Association. One of these events, the Great Dorset Steam Fair, coincides with the date of that first meeting in 1974 and it is intended to celebrate the 30th Anniversary with an extra special display of road making equipment there.

Hopefully the founders of the Association will be pleased to see what we have done, and of what we continue to do, in order to keep alive their aims of 30 years ago.

Alan Holmes

SPRING 2014 No.158

DISCOVERING AN ELEPHANT HUT

Andrew Craske

On a lovely autumn day, my son and I were on our way to our winter quarters in Dalton, near Thirsk with our 10 ton Fowler roller No.15589 and living van, both ex David Wood & Co. of Yeadon. I was steering and my son Jeremy was driving when he gave me a nudge and shouted, "Is that an elephant hut over the hedge?" Sure enough, it was. I have not seen one for years, but remembered North Riding County Council had a number of them. Basically, they were made out of a World War 2 gun carriage as the chassis with an Anderson-style air raid shelter of curved and corrugated steel sheets for the roof and sides.

As we did not have time to stop, I called at the farm some time later to inspect and photograph the hut. The farmer who owns it said that he bought it years ago, possibly in the 1960s, to rear pheasants in it. Amazingly the hut still had

its original NRCC enamel sign above the door. A friend of mine who used to work for the NRCC told me that one day a call came over the CB radio that a NRCC lorry towing one of these huts up a steep hill had come to a standstill and needed assistance. One wag over the radio was heard to say, "Let all the bl**** elephants out!"

These huts were used not as living vans but more as a store and shelter, being fitted with a pot-belly stove. They were used on rather large projects such as road widening or bridge building. Why they were christened elephant huts is probably because of the size, large enough to hold a herd of elephants!

The chassis on this example still has the jacks, adjusting wheels and gears to get it level on rough ground. It would be nice to see it preserved but the size of it and the impracticability of using it would mean that it would have to be a static exhibit.



The NRCC 'Elephant Hut' on a farm near Thirsk.



One of the levelling jacks still in situ.

Unveiling the Mysteries of Vintage Road Rollers: A Journey of Discovery in India...

Satinder pal Singh Bhatia

As the wheels of time turn, they often unveil hidden treasures from the past, reminding us of the marvels that once ruled the roads. Within the realm of vintage road rollers, there exists a special allure, especially when it comes to the majestic presence of the steam-powered giants.

As a long-standing member of the Association, my journey into the world of vintage road rollers began with a chance encounter that would ignite a passion in me lasting for years to come. It was the year 2012 when the RRA extended to me the honour of Honorary Membership, recognising my contribution at that time to the preservation of history. Mr Derek Rayner, the esteemed Vice Chairman and Steam Archivist of the Association, visited me in Ferozepur in January 2013 to confer this honour on me.

My journey with vintage road rollers had taken a pivotal turn when, in September 2009, I stumbled upon a relic of the past tucked away in a railway yard at Ferozepur Cantt railway station, Punjab, where I lived at the time. Amidst the rust and neglect stood a century-old Aveling & Porter steam roller, silently whispering tales of bygone eras. For me, it was a moment of serendipity, as if the universe conspired to bring together the machine and its intended steward.



The rare sloping-cylinder Aveling & Porter roller No.6465 of 1908 with its inside flywheel before restoration at Ferozepur.

With determination and reverence for its heritage, and with the assistance of others, a journey of restoration commenced in order to breath new life into the weary metal frame. Each stroke of the brush, each careful alignment of parts, was a homage to the craftsmen of yesteryears who forged these behemoths in England with sweat and ingenuity.

The completed restoration in October 2012 was not merely a mechanical endeavour; it was a labour of love, a journey of discovery into the soul of the machine. As layers of grime gave way to gleaming metal, the intricate mechanisms that powered the steam roller were uncovered, the simplicity of its design and also the complexity intertwined within it were amazing.

Upon completion, the Aveling & Porter steam roller stood resplendent, a testament to perseverance and passion. At its new home, on display and plinthed on an open lawn outside the Divisional Rail Manager's office at Ferozepur, it became a shrine of sorts, with enthusiasts and curious onlookers alike gathering to pay homage to this fascinating piece of history reborn.

But the journey didn't end there.



After the roller's Indian-style restoration, it was plinthed outside the DRM's Office close to Ferozepur station.



Moradabad – and the Tata Marshall steam roller before restoration.

Encouraged by the success of this restoration, more hidden treasures languishing in the shadows of neglect were discovered. In 2014, while posted as Divisional Commercial Manager in the DRM's office in Moradabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh, a place famous for its brassworks, I stumbled upon two more steam rollers awaiting rediscovery.

The first was a Tata-Marshall roller, its once proud form nestling in a forgotten corner of the railway yard and by then, considerably weathered by time. Elsewhere in this Division stood another relic of a bygone era, an Aveling-Barford steam roller, both of these silently awaiting their rescue and resurrection.

With renewed determination, and with the help of Moradabad's DRM, both rollers were rescued from obscurity. The Tata-Marshall now stands proudly in Tikona Square, a beacon of heritage in the railway residential colony of Moradabad. The Aveling-Barford, after being lifted from its resting place at Raj Ghat Narora station, was transported to the Indian Railway's Heritage Steam Shed at Rewari around 60 miles from Delhi.

In addition to these discoveries, I had a chance encounter with a 1945 Aveling-Barford motor roller in the backyard of the subordinate's



After restoration the roller was put on display in Tikona Square close to Moradabad station



Dereliction is evident in respect of this 1940s Aveling-Barford steam roller as discovered in 2014 at Raj Ghat Narora station.

rest house at Ludhiana railway station. It was a photograph in a local newspaper, showing the roller covered in wild vegetation and half-embedded in soil, that prompted me to visit its location. The sight of this forgotten giant sparked a new mission.

Determined to rescue it from oblivion, I initiated the process of lifting, painting, and eventually it was plinthed outside Ludhiana railway station on a pedestal. Today, this restored motor roller stands as a sparkling landmark, admired by visitors and serving as a popular selfie-point for young passengers.

More recently, my mission to preserve Indian's roller heritage led to yet another discovery - an Aveling-Barford motor roller, found at Jammu Tawi station in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. This historic machine, again, hidden away in obscurity, is now the focus of my latest efforts. With the support of the railway authorities, work is underway on its restoration, and plans are being drawn up for a move to a prominent location near Jammu Tawi station. The goal is to ensure that this invaluable piece of history is properly plinthed and displayed in a way that honours its significance, allowing it to be appreciated by future generations.



This Aveling-Barford motor roller was come across lying in a disused condition at Jammu Tawi station yard, just waiting to be rescued.



Another abandoned Aveling-Barford motor roller was found at Ludhiana station.

Throughout these restoration projects, the technical expertise and moral support provided by Mr Derek Rayner have been indispensable. His guidance and encouragement served as a driving force behind the successful completion of these endeavours, reinforcing the spirit of international camaraderie within the RRA community.

There is one further steam roller with which I've been involved and this was

somewhat coincidentally discovered at Roorkee, some 200km (125 miles) north-east of Dehli. From an internet contact of mine, I'd known of the existence of a Fowler ploughing engine in an Indian Army barracks there since 2019 and when Mr Derek came to stay with me at Chandigarh in 2023, I took him to Roorkee so that he could hopefully identify the engine. This proved successful but what neither of us knew until we arrived, was that standing next to the ploughing engine was a previously unknown Fowler steam roller with its works plate still attached.

It was No.16366 which was later identified as being owned in England by the firm of Robert Bridson & Sons of Neston on the Wirral. Contact was made with current-day steam enthusiast there, George Bridson, who well recalled that his father had driven the roller in the early years of World War 2. The firm had subsequently sold it to the Ministry of Munitions for 'War Service' in January 1944 and it was taken by Bridson's to Birkenhead



At the conclusion of its restoration and awaiting the unveiling ceremony involving local dignitaries, the roller is plinthed outside Ludhiana station.



An unidentified 1940s Aveling-Barford steam roller at Raj Ghat Narora station being lifted for transportation to its new home at the Indian Railway's Heritage Steam Shed at Rewari.

Docks to be loaded on to a ship - but, of course, no one knew at that time where its ultimate destination was to be.

To come across the T3B roller of April 1930 in the somewhat distant state of Uttarakhand in India was something of a pleasant and a very unusual revelation! I was delighted to have been able to be part of that discovery which gave pleasure to many other interested people.

Today, these restored historic rollers, both steam and motor, stand as living testaments to the resilience of the past, delighting thousands of steam enthusiasts who flock to Rewari to witness history come to life. As I reflect on these journeys of discovery, I am reminded

of the words of Mr Derek: "Preservation is not merely about saving relics; it's about keeping the spirit of the past alive."

In the rolling hills of Kent, the bustling cities of Punjab and the historic railway sheds of Rewari, let us continue to roll back the curtains of time, one vintage road roller at a time.



The same roller now stands proudly in the Steam Shed's yard after its restoration.



Fowler T3B roller No.16366 was surprisingly discovered on display in the small museum at the Indian Army barracks in Roorkee. Derek Rayner

A couple of 'Rochester'-produced rollers

Derek Rayner

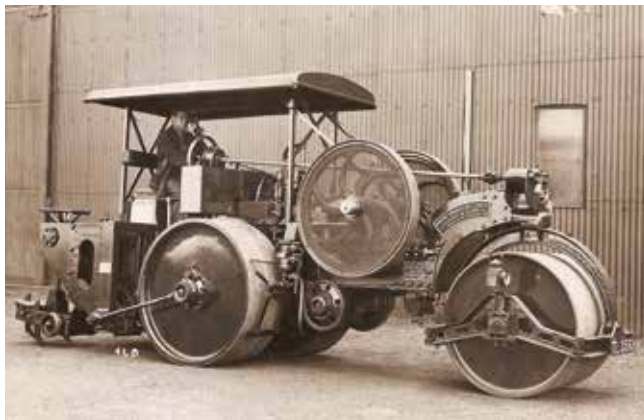
Following an Ebay purchase on behalf of the Association, our Steam Archivist has delved into the background of the accompanying two photographs since they depict an interesting combination of rollers taken at an interesting time in the manufacturer's histories.

They are clearly official works photographs, with appropriate details of one of the rollers picked out in black and white. The pair was taken in or adjacent to the Aveling & Porter works at Strood, note NOT in Rochester, despite what it says on many of the firm's products! In addition, they appear to have been taken around the time of the amalgamation – possibly even on the same day. That would put it around 1934/5 but it has been necessary to undertake some research into the rollers depicted so that more detail could be established to hopefully provide a better understanding of what can be seen.

Following the delve into the records of both Aveling & Porter and Barford & Perkins in order to take this further, it's possible that some assumptions will have to be made. The major one of these is that the photographs were taken at more or less the same time and that the rollers pictured may not have been finally completed when they were photographed.

The easiest machine to identify is that shown in Fig.1 since this is an Aveling & Porter Type DC oil engine roller with an underslung forecarriage and is fitted with an unusual and not so common Henderson scarifier – with its tines down. The owner's plate reads: 'Romford Urban District Council – SG Beaumont – M INST M & CE – ENGINEERING SURVEYOR' and it carries a registration plate showing it to be TL 3593. Information from the Lincolnshire Archives reveals that this registration was issued on 6th June 1934. The roller in question therefore is Aveling & Porter No.AB 212 which the build details confirm was a DC9 machine and it was dispatched to its new owners on 27th July 1934.

This two-speed roller weighed 10 tons 3 cwt 2 qr when fully laden and was fitted with a 19hp Blackstone BLSI



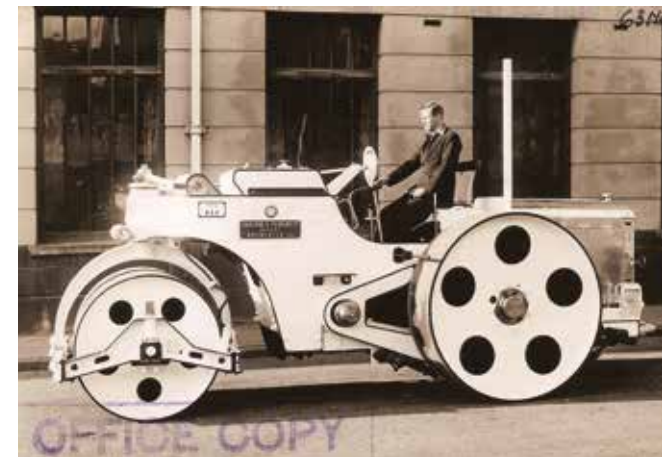
The pristine condition of this Aveling & Porter DC type motor roller is to be admired.

engine – No.188219 – and was painted 'No.2 Green'. The records show it as being equipped with a Henderson scarifier – this being Reference No.HS 9. A nameplate, as detailed previously, was fitted, and a further interesting addition on the actual pages of the Build Sheets was they were rubber stamped – 'TAKEN OVER BY WAR OFFICE' – indicating that the roller had been commandeered for war service and presumably was therefore used in the creation of airfields or repairs to them during World War 2. The roller was, however, last licensed on 13th December 1944.

Fig.2 is clearly a Barford & Perkins Type MD6 since the roller's worksplate indicates this. Unfortunately, there is no indication of a B&P reference number on the roller. It's notable, however, that the lower of the two plates indicates that it was manufactured by Barford & Perkins at ROCHESTER!! Looking in the Barford & Perkins Motor Roller books for an MD6 roller – its specific identity is open to question unless an assumption is made as previously mentioned. Some writing on the reverse of the photograph indicates that the roller was an MD6 'NWB type'. In this context, NWB means a Non-Water Ballast roller, i.e. it was not fitted with rolls that could be filled with water or sand to increase its working weight.

However, if it's accepted that since the DC roller was pictured shortly prior to its dispatch from Rochester on 17th May 1934, then this motor roller may be B&P Ref No UU 009, dispatched on 22nd August 1933. It was fitted with Blackstone BPV2 (spring) engine, No.183347 and had an awning, together with a single-tine Allen scarifier. There is obviously no awning fitted in this photograph and it's not possible to see whether there is a scarifier fitted. It is possible therefore that the works photo in the traditional 'photographic grey', lined out in black and white, was taken prior to the awning being attached. However, the customer for this roller if, indeed it is the example pictured, was: 'The Mayor of Quelimane Municipality, Mozambique'.

Because it would clearly have required to be part-dismantled for shipping, it's likely that the awning would have been packed separately and it wasn't totally complete at the time of the photograph as a result of this requirement.



The plate on this 'Black & White' image of Barford & Perkins indicates it's a Type MD6. Specially note the location of its constructor as being ROCHESTER.

'Buster' at 100

Richard Newman

Bressingham steam museum has a wide range of steam engines ranging from full sized rail locomotives through a number of narrow gauge locomotives that run on routes around the estate and also a number of road steam engines. The whole museum and gardens was the work of Alan Bloom, a nurseryman and plant breeder whose passion was steam engines. He collected the engines and created a fabulous garden to showcase his work. Since his death in 2005, the garden centre and museum have continued, although the nursery (once the biggest in the UK) has now closed.

Although many of the road engines are not currently in ticket, one of the museum's three road rollers reaches the milestone of one hundred years old this year. The museum took the opportunity to have a roller themed weekend to celebrate this centenary. *Buster* is a 10 ton Burrell 6nhp compound roller, works No.3993 (not to be confused with any other *Buster*). *Buster* was sold new



Bressingham's Burrell No.3993, Buster, during the centenary celebrations weekend.



Although out of use for a long time, Burrell 8 ton roller No.3962, Boxer, was also on display outside.

to Doran Bros, a roller and steam haulage contractor. At one stage they owned over 30 steam rollers. By the 1960s, many of their rollers were in a sad state and *Buster* was laid up in a yard in East Dereham along with two other Doran Bros' rollers. Alan Bloom bought all three and transported them to Bressingham where it was found that *Buster* had a sound boiler and firebox although her canopy was in a sad state. *Buster* was restored and is often seen rolling around the Bressingham estate.

Of the two other rollers that Alan bought Burrell 3962 *Boxer* remains at Bressingham but has not been steamed for many years and the third roller, which was purchased without its front rolls, was sold on in the late 1960s and has since been converted to a showman's style tractor.

Interestingly, one of the other rollers present for the weekend was also 100 years old this year and is the next engine to have left Burrell's works in 1924. That is works Number 3994, an 8 ton engine.



A line up of seven rollers during the centenary weekend.



Stephen Long sent is this photo of his 1956 Green DRL roller. This was its first outing since Derek Rayner helped him get it registered. Stephen and son Danny drove it the 12 miles to Bressingham for Buster's 100th birthday.

West Riding Aveling Rollers

Derek Rayner

A little while ago the adjacent photograph depicting the Aveling roller appeared on the local website 'Aireborough Forum', which covers an area to the north-west of Leeds.

A trawl through the information contained in the RLS Yorkshire (West Riding) records revealed three Aveling rollers were possibilities for the pictured roller; these being those belonging to the Urban District Councils of Otley (No.5805); Wharfedale (6121) and Shipley (7088).

Comparing the details of each which were obtained from the Aveling Royalty Books held in the Lincolnshire Archives revealed that:

No.5805 (released 1st August 1905) was a 5hp 10 ton compound with outside valves. It had a special awning over the tender with hinged sides – and it was supplied with a Steel scarifier – No.750. This one was the only roller of this trio which was noted as having a scarifier. The roller's manufactured weight was 13 tons 0 cwt.

No.6121 (24th October 1906) was a 5hp 10 ton compound with outside valves. It had a hook on the saddle bracket – which the roller in the photograph doesn't have – it also had a full length steel awning which the roller in the photograph also doesn't have – so that ruled that one out.



The Aveling & Porter roller which appeared on an Aireborough (West Yorkshire) local website. This article seeks to identify it.

Finally, No.7088 (6th June 1910) was a 5hp 12½ ton compound which had an awning over the tender.

The above information suggests that the pictured roller is No.5805, as being the only one of the three with a scarifier... The awning description is perhaps somewhat unusual but nothing can be seen on the photograph to indicate what the hinged sides were, but they may well have hinged up inside the awning and therefore are not able to be seen in this view. However, the roller has what appears to be a large quantity of coal on top of the awning, so the hinged sides may have been something which were thought to be required to keep such a load in position when the roller was travelling from place to place on the local council roads it served – and then, for whatever reason, were found to be unnecessary in service and were subsequently removed...

The information included in the records in respect of this roller also indicated that it was 'Show finished and painted'. It may therefore have been exhibited at a local show en route to the customer, but that's not something which would now be easily discovered.

It's known that the above identification is only speculation, but what's above possibly clears up the 'mystery' of the identity of the roller in the accompanying image. Other members, however, may have a different view and, if that's the case, then the editor would be very pleased to hear from them.

Standing Orders

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.

With the increase in subscriptions from £16 to £20 from 1st August 2024, if your subscription is due after that date, please remember to amend your standing order to the new amount before the date.

If your renewal is due on or before 31st July, please amend your subscription once it has been paid for this coming year.

If you use online banking, it is easy to change your standing order; if you do not, you will need to contact your bank to change the amount.

Please do remember to do the above to ensure the continuation of your membership.

For any membership queries, please email Rosemary at: membership@roadrollers.org, or phone on 01483 274855.

Thank you.

Hoo Peninsula Heritage Festival and Aveling 200

Richard Newman

I was invited to attend this event over the weekend of 7th-8th September, organised by the Thomas Aveling Society, and I thought that I should attend as we have very little contact with this organisation which focuses itself on the man himself and his life.

The event was held in a field opposite Hoo church where Thomas Aveling is buried. His grave was renovated by our Association in 1982 and the Thomas Aveling Society has further restored the grave this year. This was the first time the society had attempted to put on something of this scale and they hope to repeat and improve the event in future years.

Although part of the event was to celebrate 200 years since the birth of Thomas Aveling, that was not the main thrust of the weekend which was mainly to celebrate the history of that part of Kent. The event was opened by Jools Holland, who lives nearby and is Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent. The Thomas Aveling Society had got two Aveling steam rollers



1930 Aveling & Porter AC Class No. 14073 Andrea; note its white headstock.



1904 Aveling & Porter RC10 No. 5446 Poppy.

to attend and Robert Deards brought about ten of his motor rollers to make a fine display. Unfortunately the weather was not kind on the Sunday and the event did rather peter out with quite a few participants departing early. Although a date has not yet been set for a similar event next year, I'm sure we would like to wish the organisers well and hope that we will be able to attend what promises to be a worthwhile show..



A selection of Robert Deards' motor rollers.

Membership Rate Change

As you will have seen, it was agreed at the AGM to increase the cost of membership to £20 for UK members and £25 for overseas.

This increase comes into force on 1st August.

Would all members please make sure they pay the new amount when renewing. As was pointed out at the AGM, there is no option for part membership. If the full amount is not paid, the RRA may keep your under payment as a donation and not renew your membership.

By whatever means you are renewing, could you please make sure you include your name, membership number and, if possible, postcode, so the right membership is renewed.

Thank you, in advance, as I do not want to have to waste RRA money chasing underpayments!

Rosemary

Two rollers in a very holey predicament

Derek Rayner

Some excitement in the Sussex seaside town of Littlehampton was caused in 1914 when a road on which a steam roller was working gave way beneath it during the time it was employed by the local council on road repairs. The roller was a conventional Wallis & Steevens machine dating from 1895 which was owned by a local contractor from Arundel – James Penfold.

The roller was pictured in its somewhat undignified position, (Fig.1) with the front rolls down a hole which it had seemingly made for itself and it provided the local newspapers with a few column inches of material for their readers to ‘enjoy’ reading.

It must have been a somewhat startling occurrence for the driver when, at the junction of Howard Road and Howard Place, early on that Thursday morning, there was a sudden subsidence at the front of the roller and the front roll more or less disappeared from view to a depth of between three and four feet. He must have immediately thought of the water level in the boiler as to how long it would be before the machine dropped its plug! But it’s presumed that he would have very quickly thrown out the fire to prevent such an occurrence happening. Whether that action is something which actually took place, we will perhaps never know since it’s presumed that the newspaper reporter involved would not have known of such ‘technicalities’ at the time.

Penfold’s were immediately contacted about the unfortunate incident and made preparations for lifting the roller out of its unfortunate predicament (Fig.2) and putting it again on solid level ground – something which took some time to achieve. Two cart loads of sleepers arrived from their yard along with some

jacks. A hydraulic jack was placed between some sleepers and the boiler but unfortunately the sleepers began to split and break. More sleepers and additional jacks were brought along and gradually the front of the roller was raised and the hole it had made was filled in. The roller was again put back into steam and driven away from the location and out of danger. It was



At Littlehampton, in January 1914, the front end of the Wallis & Steevens roller is well down into the cavity in the roadway.

early morning – about twenty minutes past seven – when the incident occurred and it was consequently about half past two in the afternoon when the necessary work was completed. This exercise certainly provided the local population with some unexpected ‘entertainment’ whilst it was underway.

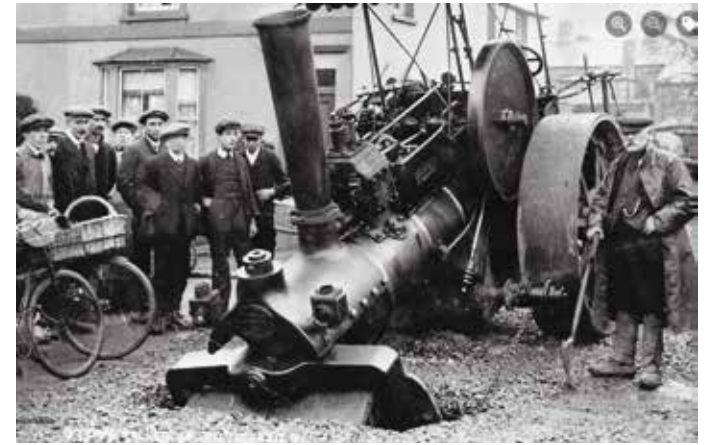
There was inevitably an appreciable amount of local speculation as to what had caused the problem and one suggestion put forward at the time was that it had occurred as a result of an old section of a tunnel not been properly back filled when it had been abandoned.

However, the eventual reason was actually established, in that on the previous day, during its work, the roller had burst a water main and the escaping water, under pressure, had washed away the surrounding subsoil and created a cavity below the surface, as a result of which, it was into the hollow made by the weight of the front of the roller that it disappeared.

The newspaper reports involved were extracts from the *Bognor Regis Observer* of Wednesday 14th January 1914 and the *Worthing Gazette* of the same date and it is believed that the incident occurred the previous Thursday 8th January.

Ten years later, a similar incident happened which resulted in a somewhat more extensive national newspaper coverage in the *Daily Mirror*, dated Saturday 26th April 1924, as well as locally in the *Daily News* (London) and the *Westminster Gazette*, both of which carried a report and there was also pictured the adjacent photo (Fig.3) featuring the undignified position of the Aveling steam roller involved.

Apparently the roller was going about its normal business in Talbot Road, Highgate, London, when all of a sudden, the road collapsed beneath it and the roller fell into a hole around six feet deep. It was thought at the time that because it was in such a deep hole, the roller may have to be removed in sections, but how this was eventually achieved is not known...



Another view of the roller – Works No.2324 – with the inevitable inquisitive crowd, along with local children, gathered around it prior to the machine’s rescue being started with jacks and packing.

The roller belonged to Hornsey Corporation whose depot was nearby in North Hill, Highgate and fortunately the photo of it, almost on its side, is such that its registration of MD 5726 is clearly visible. It's understood that both the driver and his mate were able to jump clear when they felt the roller subsiding and, in consequence, no injuries resulted from the roller's sudden descent into the 'unknown'.

Courtesy of the Road Locomotive Society, its records have revealed that the unfortunate roller was Aveling & Porter Royalty Number 6924 and also, over time, Hornsey operated some seventeen road steam vehicles, including eleven Aveling rollers and steam wagons by both Garrett and Yorkshire. The example pictured was an 8-ton compound machine, released from Strood on 2nd November 1909.

The roller was obviously extracted and any necessary repairs carried out, since it is later recorded as being sold on to Messrs WW Buncombe in Somerset in 1928 for which company it worked until at least August 1960. However, there is no record of it after that time, so it is presumed it was then scrapped.

Acknowledgements are extended for the valuable assistance of member Ian Corfield in respect of the Newspaper Archives and also the Road Locomotive Society's Records Officer.



This accident, involving an Aveling roller ten years later in Highgate, London, in April 1924, inevitably attracted the usual group of interested bystanders. It can be seen that someone has had the foresight of propping the roller up on its left hand side with a baulk of timber so that it doesn't fall over any further.

A brace of Rustons...

These two pictures are from a collection of rally pictures from the late 1960s/early 1970s (at a guess!) but we have no other details.



John Brice's 1922 Ruston & Hornsby SR Class No.115123. Note the repairs to the front forks done a long time ago.



1942 Ruston & Hornsby SR Class No.122338, Endeavour, enjoys a quiet moment.

Seen taking part in a road making demonstration this summer is this 1931-built Aveling & Porter DX diesel roller.

