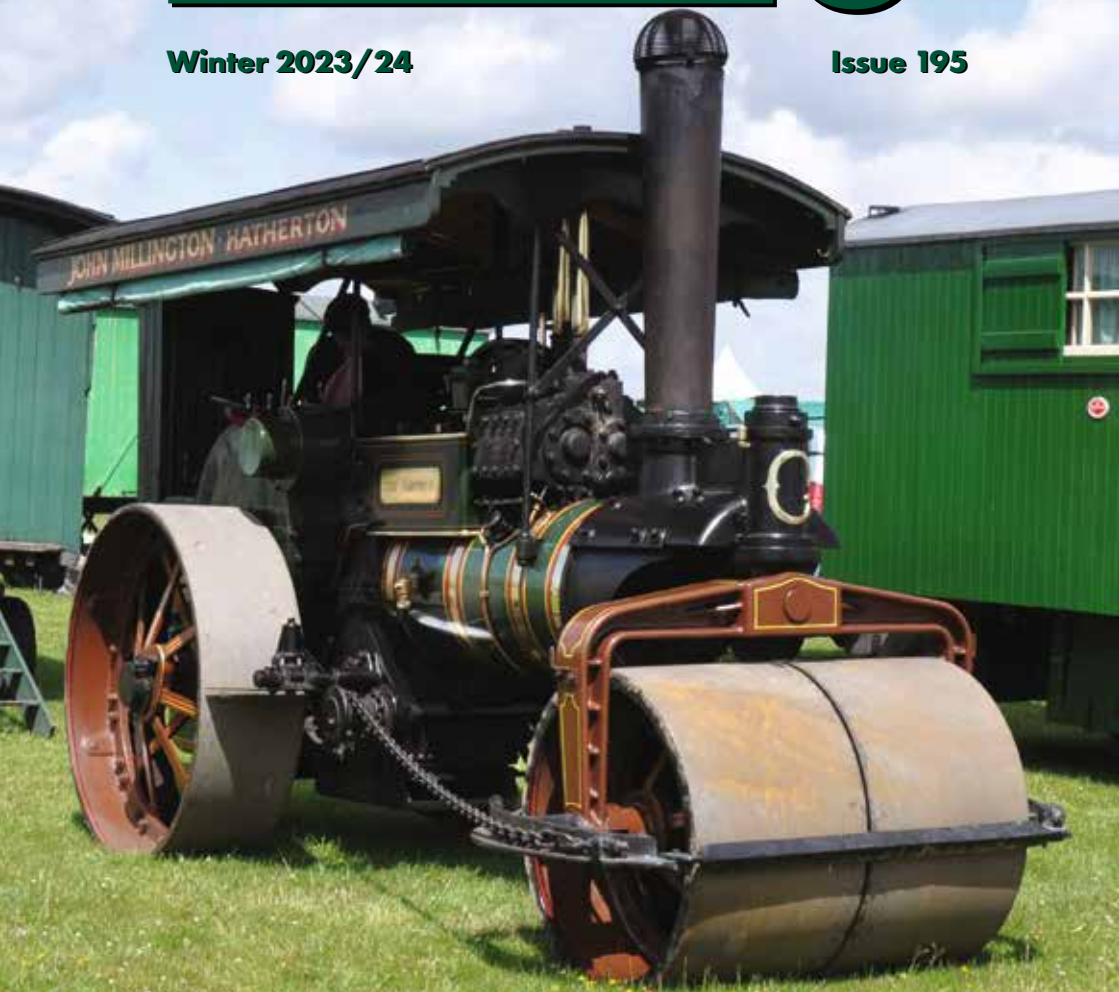


Rolling

Winter 2023/24

Issue 195



Road Roller
Association
Journal



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Front cover: *John Millington's lovely 10 ton Garrett roller No.34084, The Baroness, is seen in a quiet moment at the Kemble Rally in Gloucestershire back in 2009.*

The late John Reeves/Vintage Spirit magazine Archive

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 MARCH 2024

Website: www.roadrollers.org

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Chairman's Notes

I write these notes between two of the major storms that we are having this winter and I sincerely hope that you are all keeping safe. Down here in Somerset we are not fairing too badly (yet!) and I find it difficult to come to terms with how parts of the country further north are suffering so badly.

Early on in December there was a problem with the internet feed into our village and we suddenly found ourselves without Wifi for over a week. I always thought that I was not over reliant on the internet but I was amazed with the number of things that I could not do, not least I missed one of our zoom committee meetings. It was a great relief when the internet was reinstated.

Although it may seem some way ahead yet, we are turning our thoughts to the AGM. You should be able to find all the information you require about the AGM at other places in the issue and I urge you to book up early and support the Association again this year at Quorn. Michael Stokes is putting together the itinerary for the weekend and it is looking like we could have yet another exciting weekend.

As in all previous years, I must ask that you consider how you can help the Association move forward. Once again, I am desperate for us to appoint a new treasurer. I have been standing in and doing this since I became Chairman but I find it increasingly difficult to cope with both positions. Although individually each position is not excessive, I do find that the two together can lead to one or the other being neglected from time to time. If anyone wants to know more about the treasurer's roles and responsibilities do contact me and I will attempt to explain them to you. The other role that has not been filled for some years is that of General Archivist and we are also looking for a person to deal with lost registrations. The committee meets regularly about once a month and since Covid the vast majority of our meetings have been via Zoom, although we are trying to meet face to face at least once a year.

With the announcement that The Great Dorset Steam Fair will not be running again in 2024, we will be looking for events to visit with the sales stand. Last year we attended Quorn and Onslow Park. It is not yet confirmed if Quorn will run this year and we were a little disappointed with the sales we achieved at Onslow Park. The rally itself there was very good but for some reason the public did not seem keen to spend their money with us. Any suggestions for possible rallies to attend this coming year will be welcomed.

Wishing you all a happy and prosperous New Year. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM and in the meantime please keep yourselves safe and well.

Richard



Eric Smith RIP

A long-standing RRA member who joined in 1991 sadly passed away last October, aged 80. Eric Smith was well known to AGM attendees since he regularly participated in these meetings with his wife Marlene and on occasions, he brought along a motor roller which he displayed outside the venue for the benefit of members. At such meetings he was proud to tell members that his father worked for Fowlers in Leeds in days gone by and of him being involved in the last showman's engine ever built – in 1934 – which goes by the name of *Supreme*.

During Eric's early years he became connected with fairgrounds and, as such, he learned much about the mechanical aspects of such equipment and when the traction engine rally scene became of interest to him, he wanted to get involved. Motor rollers fascinated him and one of his earliest acquisitions was a 'copper-bonneted' Barford & Perkins 'A-type' roller of some age which he exhibited at various events at a time when motor rollers were not exactly welcomed at shows. As a result, he usually ended up in the 'tractor section' because the organisers didn't know what else to do with such an exhibit. His interest blossomed and, during one year in the early to mid 1990s, he said that he'd attended over twenty events with one or other of his rollers.

Eric somewhat remarkably turned his hobby into a business by acquiring 'old motor rollers' from cricket



A celebration of Eric's life took place at Cottingley Hall Crematorium in Leeds in November 2023 at which a floral tribute in the shape of a motor roller, made by Simon, graced Eric's coffin.

grounds and similar – such that he then removed the out-of-date and illegal engine since it required a starting handle to start it and he updated the machines by replacing the engine with a modern pull-start petrol one plus a hydraulic powerpak. He found a ready market for the reconfigured machines in cricket clubs which were in need of modern equipment. On one occasion, he facilitated the donation of a small Green's roller to the RRA from St Peter's School in York when they bought a 'new' roller. From the profits, he was also able to make considerable donations to his favourite charity – Macmillan's Cancer Care. His enthusiasm in these renovations also meant that he became an exporter in the roller market since at least one example went to Antigua during that period.

Initially using premises close to home in Swillington, some eight miles to the east of Leeds, Eric later rented a unit in Hunslet, off Balm Road in Leeds, in order to expand the business. His infectious enthusiasm in respect of his hobby / business will be sadly missed at future AGMs. It's understood that Simon, his son, will be continuing the business and to both Marlene and Simon and the extended family, we extend our deepest sympathies at this sad time.

Aveling steam rollers on Trinidad

Derek Rayner

This photograph, which has been in the collection of member Peter Smart for many years, is just 3½in. square and is captioned A&P 3080, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 1963. Peter very kindly sent a copy to me recently in the hope that I may be able to tell him more about it. In his accompanying letter, Peter went on to say that he decided to go through a pile of sub-postcard-sized prints, which didn't fit in with his usual filing system due to their size and he was somewhat surprised to find some really interesting shots, previously overlooked simply because of their non-standard sizes.

The mention of the island of Trinidad in the West Indies, just off the northern coast of Venezuela in South America, immediately reminded me of a reference in the 1965-published 'Orange Book' which was produced by Aveling-Barford in connection with the firm's centenary – this being entitled 'A Hundred Years of Road Rollers'.

There is a photo in that book of the Royalty Plate from Aveling & Porter roller No.1241 of 1873 which unfortunately had been scrapped in Trinidad about 1953 without its historical significance being known at the time. It was, as far as is known, the last remaining example of a roller with bevelled front rolls, these originally being 3ft 8ins diameter outside and 3ft 10ins inside by 20¼ins wide and 2ins thick. The driving wheels were 5ft 0ins by 15ins wide and 2½ins thick.

This one was originally supplied to G Turnbull & Co. – presumably an agent, the address being 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow – and it was destined for ‘Port of Spain’ which, of course, ties in with Trinidad since it’s the island’s capital.

As a result of the demise of No.1241, the title of the oldest roller in the world thus became that in the Norse Teknisk Museum in Oslo – No.1457 of 1878 – which was supplied with bevelled front rolls but which were later changed to conventional examples along with an appropriate matching saddle.

Royalty No.3080 was dispatched from Aveling’s works at Strood on 27th August 1892, the customer and destination being noted as Messrs A Field & Co. – ‘For Barbados’. It was a conventional ‘Standard’ 5hp 10 ton machine of the period, having a cylinder 8ins diameter with 10ins stroke. It was noted that it had ‘old pattern’ scrapers fitted and the front plate was ‘set back’. A later note in the records indicated that a new boiler and several associated items were supplied for the roller in November 1930.

At this distance, it’s quite possible that the reason for Trinidad being mentioned in connection with this roller is an error on someone’s part at some time in the past – confusing the two islands. Alternatively, it was perhaps transferred from its original location the 200 miles or so south to Trinidad after receiving its new boiler in the early 1930s. Who knows?



Aveling roller No.3080 of 1892 in Trinidad in 1963.
Peter Smart collection

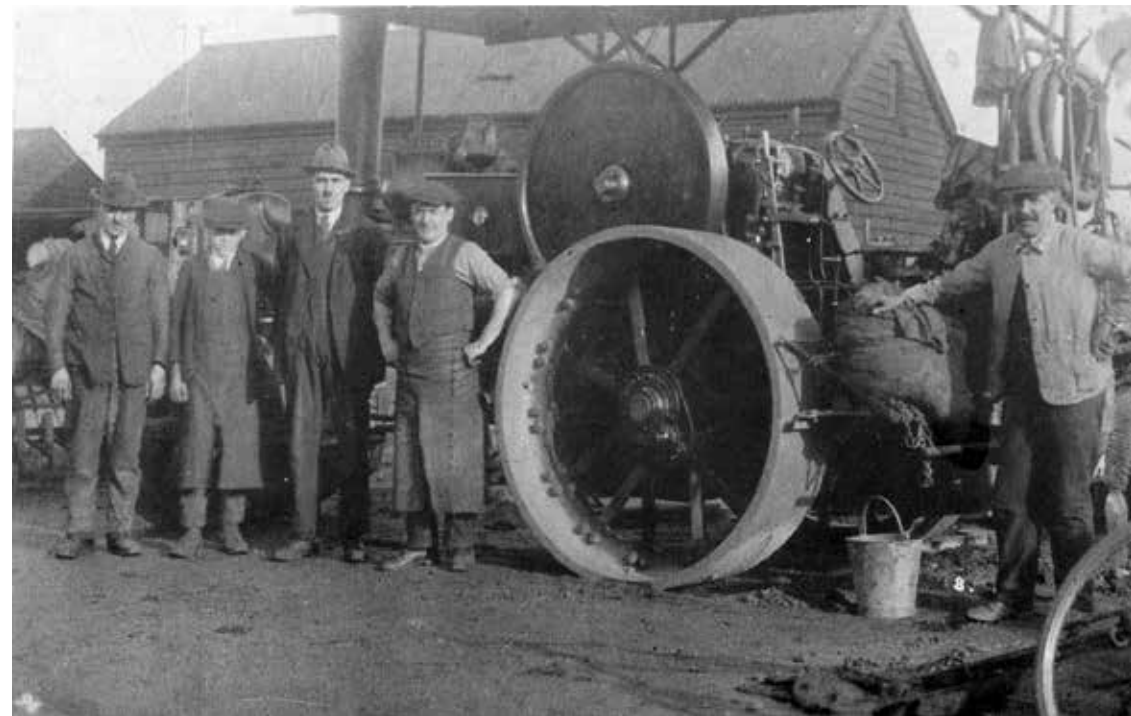
Mill Green, Hatfield – a Herts County Council Aveling roller

Sandy Ross

The photo below, taken from a postcard, is of a steam roller at Starkey Engineering at Mill Green, Herts, and is dated 1926. The firm was a local business near Hatfield supporting farmers and millers in the district, and remained active as precision engineers until 1978, carrying out work for the writer on his Aveling roller during their final years. Those shown below are noted (Left to Right) as Ted Turner, Robert Starkey, Ebenezer Starkey, Charlie Hunt (blacksmith) and Mr Olver (driver).

Judging by the condition of the ‘C’ type 8-ton roller, it is nearly new and is almost certainly one of the five similar rollers supplied to Hertfordshire County Council in 1926, their Royalty numbers being 10567 to 10570 and 10579. The subject engine is probably 10570, which was consigned new to Hatfield station, LNER, from Rochester.

Sadly the site is now a housing estate, and none of this series of HCC rollers has survived.



Aveling 7385 – Back to the Future

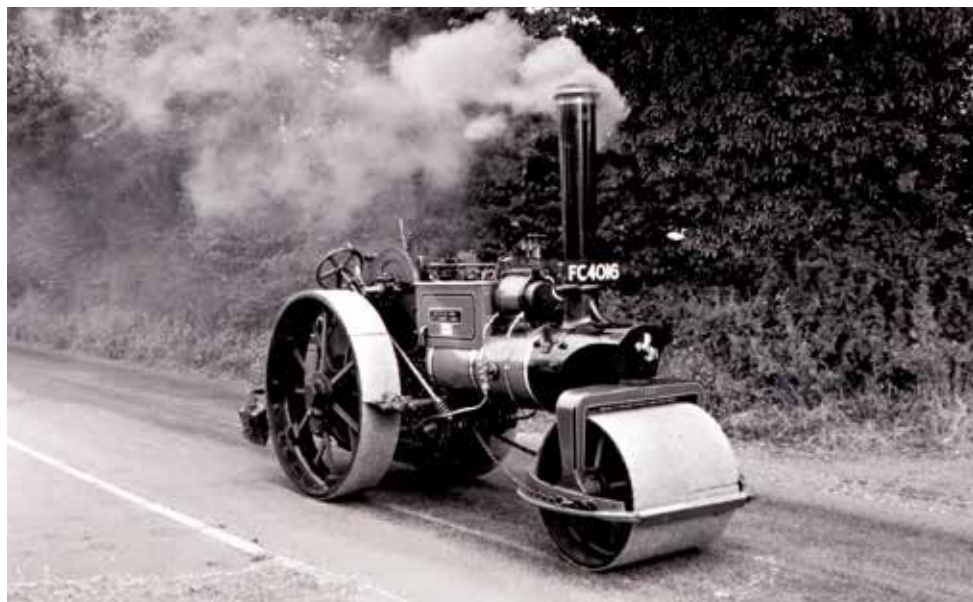
Sandy Ross

Aveling 7385 is an unusual 4-ton single speed roller, built new in 1911 for the City of Oxford. In 1938 it was sold out of service by Oxford and was purchased by Taylor Brothers of Wimbish in Essex via John Allen of Cowley.

When new to Oxford, the engine had no canopy – we know from the minute books that in August 1919 the City Engineer “stated that the time had now come when overcoats usually supplied to the Steam Roller Drivers had become due, the last ones having been in use for about 2½ years and he submitted an estimate from Messrs Marychurch & Blackler at 3 guineas each as against 27/6 each for the last set.” In typical local authority style the decision to purchase was deferred!

When we purchased the roller from Ben Taylor in March 1971; it had stood out of use for ten years and had seriously deteriorated during this time. The photo to the right shows the engine with several items fitted by Ben, including the canopy and water lifter. Being originally a Corporation engine, water was freely available from hydrants so there was no need for a lifter. The canopy had been built by Maurice, Ben’s son, who was lost in the last war.

Although the roller carried the name *Midget* on the canopy, it was affectionately (or otherwise) known as ‘Snatch’ at Wimbish, for reasons that are obvious to



The roller early in our ownership with no canopy.



*The engine with several items fitted by Ben.
Courtesy of Dan Chidgey*

anyone who knows the engine (*). Today it is more politely called just ‘the small roller’ even if it still throws tantrums from time to time!

When the engine was no longer used for commercial work, it was painted up and rallied in East Anglia by Ben, and we have several photos of it during this period. The painting (now in our possession) was commissioned by Ben at this time.



This painting was commissioned by Ben Taylor when the roller went rallying.

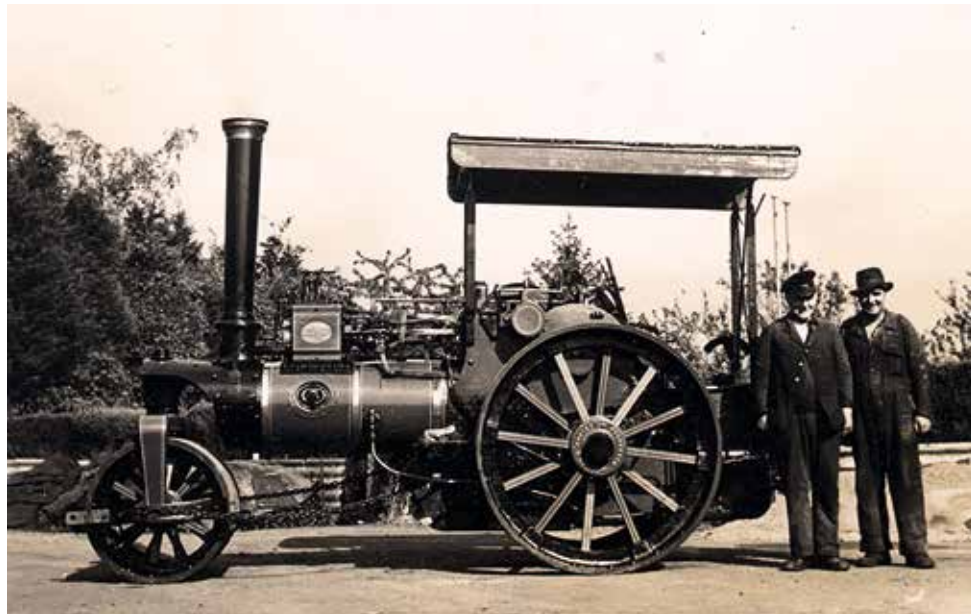
During the journey by low-loader from Wimbish to Hatfield in 1971, much of the remains of the canopy flew off, and we did not replace it during the rebuild of the roller. My photo shows 7385 being extracted from the yard at Wimbish.

Many years later we returned the less rotten signwritten Taylor Bros boards to the Wimbish team – my photo shows this occasion with my brother David. It was Kevin Swann's father, George, who ensured that much of Ben's correspondence and memories relating to the early days with the roller were passed on to us.

But after more than fifty years of ownership the reliability of the roller was as good as ever, but the crew were no longer in their youth! In the knowledge that the



No.7385 being extracted from the yard at Wimbish.



Ben Taylor and George Swann with No.7385 at Wimbish.



Returning the signwritten board to Wimbish – Kevin Swann (left) with David Ross.

original steel uprights would provide more handholds for the crew and the canopy protect us from the sun, rain and chimney grit, we set about recreating the 1938 item.

With photographs available of the original canopy, plus still having the uprights and the wooden framing, it was possible for my brother to prepare drawings for the replacement. Ian Vickery suggested some detail improvements to the original, and he made an excellent reproduction. The original steelwork was shot blasted and new bolts sourced, while the new canopy itself was painted and signwritten by us in my garden shed.



The roller with its new signwritten side boards and canopy.

Fitting the canopy was to be a major part of the project, since the original fixing holes in the tender had been lost when the tender was rebuilt. We also planned to raise the canopy slightly to give greater headroom for the crew. At this stage engine owner Alan Burbury came to our rescue, so the roller was steamed from our base at St Albans to his shed at Friars Wash where a level floor and lifting equipment was available, plus Alan's experience in such matters.

So the first outing with the new/old image was at the Herts Steam Club's rally at Letchworth, and there seems to be agreement that the canopy definitely enhances the appearance of the engine, while the crew feel safe and more in charge than before! The original signwritten side and end boards will go back to Wimbish once again as a reminder of the association of the roller with the yard and the history of Taylor Bros.

** Try starting a high geared roller with very light flywheel, an unbalanced crankshaft, and over 160psi on the gauge and you will know all about it!*



Over 60 years later, No.7385 with the replacement canopy.

A new life for *The Masterpiece*

In early September it was mentioned that there was an Aveling roller for sale near to us in Somerset, so as you do, I went to view it, clinched the deal and bought myself another project. It turned out to be an ex-Devon CC roller, 1901 Aveling & Porter R10 No.4873, *The Masterpiece*.

The next task was to bring it home.

We took the low-loader with a New Holland tractor down to Clayhidon to tow or push the roller up Devon's narrowest lanes two miles back to the low-loader; happily this was uneventful. We pushed it on to the trailer and hitched up back to Crewkerne for restoration. That story to follow...

Charlie Swaffield



Mystery photos no longer

Derek Rayner

A friend of mine in Germany who lives in the vicinity of Berlin has kindly sent a couple of photos of a motor roller, the make of which I didn't immediately recognise.

My friend mentioned that the photos are of a 'silnicni valce' and were taken in Japan - and when the images were enlarged, the people there certainly looked of eastern Asian descent.

At the same time that the images were magnified, the badge on the front of the roller was obviously enlarged and it appeared to be familiar – even today – but the confirmation of the make of the roller came with the immediate recognition of the manufacturer of the steam roller in the other photograph – obviously an official works photo which accompanied the two motor roller images.



This scene is probably a demonstration of the motor roller on a road construction site somewhere in Japan – with a view to it, or hopefully more of them, later being sold to Japan for road construction purposes.

It's a steam roller made in Plzeň by the Czech firm of Škoda – although with boundary changes and the Great War, it's not specifically known where Plzeň was when these photos were taken in what is presumed was the mid-to-late 1920s but it was probably in Czechoslovakia...



A close up view of the same scene with the various people specially posing for the photographer.

An 'official' works photo of a Czech-built Škoda steam roller which was later replicated in a toy tinsplate clockwork-powered form in both colour and black & white. The only known operable steam roller of this type is to be found in the large steam engine collection at Zamberk in the Czech Republic.



Memories of the 1950s, 60s & 70s

Eddie Valentine

Out and about during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, whether by push bike, motorbike or my dad's Hillman Minx, a road roller would turn up somewhere.

This could be on the new access road to ITV transmitter station at Durris near Aberdeen where I came across a Road Marshall RD2 6-8 ton painted in maroon livery lettered Lewis Middleton Public Works Contractor, Aberdeen, or maybe on the Deeside Road just outside Banchory. MacAdams was carrying out works for the former Kincardine County Council using an Aveling Barford GG of around 6 tons painted in a grey and red livery. Along the road you often came across Kincardine County Council's Aveling Barford, Banchory Depot's GC, orange painted and Ruston engined, one of the earlier models with open canopy; as I said, there was always a roller parked up or at work. I head down the road and across the county boundary into Aberdeen County Council territory where I come across parked in a layby with its coal wagon awaiting its next task, which post 1975 would be Aberdeen City.



Barford Perkins FL 7205 along with the Kincardine County Council crew are photographed near the Johnshaven Depot in the early 1950s. Note the roadman second left is wearing a trophy WW2 Wermacht belt.

It is now summer days and I smell surface dressing. Sure enough, an ERF sprayer, owned by Briggs Tar Refineries of Dundee, is at work, a cloud of steam rising and a glossy black carpet appearing on the road surface, closely followed by an almost new KCC Albion Chieftain reversing, a steady hiss as the grey chippings rush from the Hornsey gritter to cover the hot steaming tar. Two Aveling Barford GCs, Ruston engined, patting busily as they reverse onto the job then slip into forward gear rushing to compact the chips before the tar cools. I stand and watch for a few minutes; there is something about tar spraying isn't there?

A little further down the street a local cable contractor is reinstating the surface where recently telephone cables had been laid. A steady Ruston beat can be heard emitting from a 2½ ton Barford, painted in Post Office red, compacts the tarmac.

Where to now? Let's travel to south west Scotland. A summer's day found me on my push bike near Wigtown; this would have been around 1965. Parked at an intersection along with a Barber Greene were two Road Marshall RD2 rollers of around 6-8 tons, both fitted with Allan sliding scarifiers. One RD2, an early model, displayed an RD1 type wooden canopy while the other a more modern enclosed canopy and painted dark green. Back in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright I spotted a brand new Aveling Barford Master Paviour, the first I had ever seen, I understand it had replaced the authority's Aveling Barford DF. My time in Galloway done, I returned to north east Scotland where I was employed by Aberdeen Corporation and it was not long before I spotted one of their beautiful dark blue Aveling Barford GDs rolling a cricket pitch in the city's Duthie Park!

It was common to see either a GD, GC or GD in the streets and Road Livery in the city. My work permitted me a half day every month, so if it was a sunny day I



The living van high jinks, somewhere in Ayrshire in the 1930s.

would have a drive in my blue FIAT 850 into Aberdeenshire.

Further up Deeside near the village of Braemar, I came across Aberdeen County Council Aveling Barford GD looking immaculate in ACC's livery of Parson's Brown, accompanied by two Albion Chieftain tippers in the same livery.

Another outing took me up to Morayshire where I came across Moray Council Road's surface dressing, always surface dressing!

Again, Aveling Barford GC dominated – two of them. I don't remember what type of sprayer was present, but the grey liveried Albions did not have Hornsey gritters, but all lorries were using a chain secured gritter hanging from the tail board. To upper Morayshire now, Speyside whisky country, some time during the late 70s. Tarmac at work surface dressing for Highland Regional Council, a Master Paviour on a narrow riverside road, which surprised me, but there you are. Still in Highland Region, an ex-Nairnshire County Council Road Marshall parked, ex-Inverness County Council a real mixer maxter after 1975 reorganisation.

Calling in at a Highland estate, here was an ex-Perth & Kinross County Council Fowler DNA nicely tucked up in a cosy shed, used for estate maintenance, now in preservation. I head south now into Perth & Kinross; roadside signs warn 'Road Works Ahead'. Soon the green liveried lorries of Perth & Kinross County Council parked in a tidy row ahead of a Barber Green Paviour, Ford Thames Traders to a T, no mixed fleet here. A roller not common to the area comes into view, a Greens Eddimatic, almost brand new in bright orange and white. The heady smell of coal tar fills the air, and then we are past the works and on our way.



This Aberdeen County Council surface dressing image shows a Huber and Aveling Barford GC somewhere in Aberdeenshire in the 1960s.

I am now in the Kingdom of Fife, not far from St Andrews. Parked up for the weekend are two Road Marshalls owned by surface dressing contractor Wilsons of Rutherglen.

Travelling on now through time, I come across an HV Smith "village" parked up, five living vans including one Eddison in maroon, also a redundant Sentinel ex-sprayer, the tank in use as the standby tanker. There must have been a shortage of fine wood for the Aveling & Porter, which was busy rolling over some old fence posts crushing them for itself, or the vans' stoves, I thought an unusual task.

Another day and HV Smith again, an Aveling Barford GC in HV Smith green livery, disabled at the side of the road. Obviously Smiths had to hire a roller fast and further on, here was a Greens DRM on hire from local firm the Cunmont Quarrying Company, standing in until Eddison delivered an Aveling Barford DX.

William Briggs were regularly seen at work in north east Scotland, laying asphalt and compacting with Aveling Barford GDs of various marques and eventually with Master Paviments, later, along with Cunmont Quarrying and HV Smith, becoming part of Tarmac.

On another occasion, I was at home on a cold winter's day when my attention was drawn to a noise. Here was a Briggs GD being led by one of their Bedford tippers loaded with sand, which was being distributed by a crew of three roadmen in front of the roller as it travelled over the slippery surface.

Tilcon was another company in the area with quarrying interests who carried out surfacing in the 1980s-90s and often a pair of Master Paviments would be seen roading between jobs. Tilcon had an attractive livery of a light blue and maroon.



The Aberdeen County Council AEC Mercury three-way tipper posing for a picture during surface dressing in the 1950s. It looks pretty new.

Most of the roller marques if not all, have gone along with the lorries and machines that serviced them. However, journals like *Rolling* keep the memories alive. It gives me pleasure to think back to the times when those great British machines dominated, along with a few made in USA, Hubers.

Road Making at Welland

Ken Hickson

This year at the Welland Steam Rally we celebrated the 10th year of Vintage Road Making in its present form and location, which first started in 2012.

Over the years we have gradually extended 'The Welland Road', Narrow Gauge Railway and added more exhibits to enhance the display demonstrating how the work would have been carried out from the early 1900s to the 1960s.

A good range of steam and motor rollers took turns in rolling with members of the RRA working the crusher and laying the stone on the road.



Two rollers in Egypt

Derek Rayner

These two exceptionally good quality images depict a slight problem which the pictured steam roller found itself in, probably as a result of an error by its driver.

On the rear of the cab is the name of the driver – Sayed Amin – and the fact that it was ‘Roller - 3’. It will be noted that a Barford & Perkins semi-tandem roller has been brought along to assist in getting the steam roller out of the ditch into which it seems to have slid.

It's obviously not known whether the intended method of rescue was successful or not, but it was probably the only other ‘vehicle’ around which was considered heavy enough to be used for the purpose at the time.

Member Paul Jarman at Beamish came to my aid with the confirmation that the motor roller was a Barford & Perkins semi-tandem D4-type, with a four-cylinder Albion engine (like the restored example at the museum), which has a transverse gearbox with the final drive arrangement located outside the roller's frame. The museum's example is B&P Reference No.R 025 which was one of 20 ordered in 1925 for use in the UK.

The B&P name can just be made out on the long thin curved plate low down at the front of the roller, just below the letters R.A.F. This type of roller was very popular for airfield work during the WW1 period.

As far as the date on which the incident occurred, it should be noted that the RAF was not formed until 1st April 1918 – so the photograph would not have been taken before that.

However, it's likely that the roller was one of a large batch of similar rollers supplied to the RAF at the time and its specific details will therefore now be unable to be verified from the records.

It's a well known fact that it's not easy to identify certain manufacturer's steam rollers from the back. However, it's certain that one make can be ruled out in this



It is assumed that it's the roller driver on the right who is looking somewhat perplexed at his charge's predicament.

instance – and that's Aveling & Porter – since there is no water pocket visible.

By its looks, it initially appeared to me that the awning was a product from Leeds, either a Thomas Green, or one from the Steam Plough Works of Messrs Fowler.

The list of steam rollers which Green's produced is available and it does provide the potential of the roller being one from that firm – since no

less than 24 of their products were supplied to the War Office towards the end of WW1 and even into 1919. Some of these in the records have notes which include the information that they later found ‘home use’ – but other notes include such information as: ‘Haifa, Palestine’, or ‘PWD Jerusalem’ and also ‘Palestine’ included in the list. There are three others without such additions – so it could be that these may have gone to Egypt and what's shown is No.3 of those – but who knows at this time? I could but speculate in this respect in order to make things fit what's seen in the image!!

These three ‘unidentified’ Green's rollers were Works Numbers 1965, 1966 and 1967, all supplied to the War Office with single cylinders 6½in. diameter by 10in. stroke in March 1917, March 1917 and June 1917 respectively.

Who is to say, therefore, that since No.3 is what's seen in the image, that the pictured roller isn't the last one of this trio – namely Green's No.1967?

However, this speculation on my part was very much disproved following an enquiry to my friend Graeme Thirkell, a well known authority on Fowler products, since he confirmed to me that the roller was a Fowler ‘Class N’ single cylinder machine.

Further investigations in the records of the Road Locomotive Society revealed that there was a batch of ten ‘Class N1’ Fowler rollers supplied to the WD; these being Nos.15122 to 31, all delivered in February, March and April 1917. The records unfortunately don't indicate where these rollers were deployed – but we may perhaps assume that the roller is one of this batch of ten rollers.



A Barford & Perkins D4 type motor roller is summonsed to hopefully rescue the unfortunate steam roller.

Both: Author's collection



Another from Kemble 2009, Graham Atkinson's Aveling-Barford DX8, AE576, is seen enjoying the tarmac runway with a backdrop of various steam rollers. The late John Reeves/
Vintage Spirit magazine Archive