

# Rolling

Spring 2024

Issue 196



Road Roller  
Association  
Journal



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**Front cover:** *Seen in the yard at Quorn & Woodhouse Station on the Great Central Railway on the day of the RRA's AGM is 1932-built Fowler DNA roller No. 19356.*

**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> JUNE 2024

Website: [www.roadrollers.org](http://www.roadrollers.org)

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## Chairman's Notes

The AGM was successfully completed although there was a small problem with the availability of an evening meal on Friday at the hotel. However, we were all able to find food elsewhere and nobody went hungry. Many thanks go to Michael Stokes for his arrangements for the weekend.

There will be a fuller report of the AGM and weekend visits elsewhere in this issue but I want to bring your attention to the two very important motions that were discussed and agreed at the AGM. Firstly, after many years being able to hold the subscription rate constant, we now find it necessary to increase the subscription. It was passed unanimously that as of 1st August 2024 the subscription rate for ordinary members will be £20.00 per year and for overseas members £25.00 per year. For those of you who pay by Standing Order at the bank, you will need to instruct your bank to increase your payment. We cannot do this for you, it must be done by you. Nearer the due date the Membership Secretary will put a note in 'Rolling' reminding you to update your Standing Order.

The second important motion that was carried unanimously is that the Association will sell its various items of road making machinery. These machines have been stored in various locations, some with members and others in a museum, but most of them have deteriorated and, as the Association does not have the resources to properly maintain them, it is much better for them to be owned by someone who will look after them appropriately. In the first instance they will be offered to members at their current market value and only if no member is found, will they be offered elsewhere. The committee will discuss the disposal of these assets and more information will be published in 'Rolling' when appropriate.

It was agreed by those present that we would try to hold next year's AGM near Camborne in Cornwall on the weekend of the Trevithick Day celebrations. This is always held on the last weekend in April, which will be the weekend of 26th-27th April 2025. Please put this date in your diary now to avoid double booking.

In September this year, the Association will have been formed for 50 years and I hope that we can combine the celebration of this with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Thomas Aveling's birth. We are working with the Thomas Aveling Society who are running the Hoo Peninsula Heritage Festival on 7th/8th September. They hope to attract as many Aveling engines as they can to form part of their celebration and I hope that we can have a small presence there to record the 50th anniversary of the Association. Any engine owner who thinks they may be able to bring their engine please contact Michael Pearce (Chair of the Thomas Aveling Society) at [thomasavelingsociety@outlook.com](mailto:thomasavelingsociety@outlook.com).



The AGM elected Michael Stokes to be our Treasurer. This will relieve me of the extra work I have been doing since my election as Chairman and hopefully allow me to concentrate on the work of the Chairman. This change will involve a change in email addresses but this may take a little time to sort out so, for the present continue to use the treasurer@roadrollers.org to contact me. Any emails that arrive for the Treasurer I will forward to Michael. I would also like to welcome Mark Jay who has volunteered to join the committee.

I hope that you all have a successful rally season and I hope to meet some of you at the events that we attend.

**Richard**

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## David Smith Remembered

**PK Smith (no relation!)**

I was greatly saddened to hear of the sudden passing of David Smith on Friday 23rd February and I am sure there will be many much more informed and formal tributes than anything I can humbly offer.

As a member of the NTET since 1980, he was a member of the General Council and headed up their Technical Services Unit for many years before becoming Vice President in 2022. During this time he was responsible for not only predicting but also attempting to overcome many of the challenges faced by our movement and helping to lay out the parameters to allow us all to continue to safely enjoy our hobby. He was also keen to and successful in updating the systems necessary to achieve this, so helping to bring our movement more in line with the modern preservation era.



*David Smith enjoying a laugh with Phil 'The Coal' Hackett.*

Over the many years I knew him as an engine owner, his first purchase in 1983 was the 6-ton A&P single cylinder road roller No.11115, *Acrise Maid* (PU 5894), which he still had at his passing. This was our first connection, aside from sharing a surname, as this engine worked with my own roller (A&P 3430) for W C French back in their commercial days and both were survivors from Hardwicks scrapyards! Although he always spoke fondly of the engine, she was to become one of those 'long term restoration projects'. In recent years work on her was ongoing at Colin Hatch's engineering works at the same time as my own roller. Since then I believe the restoration has continued apace and was well 'on the way' and on Sunday 29th October last she moved under her own steam for the first time in 25 years and I am sure he was delighted. He was also one time owner of another A&P roller the 1924 7nhp Single cylinder *Penare*, No.10981 or "the gentle giant" as he referred to her. This was the roller that broke a piston ring (leaving a bit stuck in the steam port) which, when the piston returned, stopped it and bent the crankshaft! Dave phoned up the Witney yard asking if we knew of anyone who could repair it so we referred him to FJ Payne, a local specialist engineering firm to us based in Eynsham, while suggesting that surely there must be someone more local to him in the West Midlands and that he should check with (the late) Len Crane. He did speak to Len – who told him to go to FJ Payne! The roller I believe now resides in a museum in Australia.

Perhaps the engine most will associate David with though is the 1909 8nhp Burrell general purpose No.3121, *Keeling*. David was not a man of huge physical stature and this being a 'big' engine, the first time he brought it to the Banbury rally, inevitably saw a group of us presenting him with an orange box to stand on while driving it, which he took in his stride with his usual good humour. This engine was also undergoing work at Hatch Engineering at the same time as my own and so often we would both be 'in residence' there over a weekend working on our engines. After the day's labours, evenings were spent in the Harrow PH in the local village where David delighted in introducing, teaching and then thrashing me at dominoes!

It is fair to say that we did not always see 'eye to eye' (he would claim to need a set of steps to do that anyhow!) on matters of engine 'politics' but it was never personal and always ended up with a good laugh, often over a pint. Once he got started he was one of those joke machines who could rattle off at least ten jokes – and you were lucky if you could remember one. He was hugely knowledgeable on matters of engine related legislation, or lack of, and terrier like when he got his teeth into a subject. He will indeed be a tough act to follow as, for a diminutive gentleman, he was a large figure within our hobby.

To his loyal and faithful crew, Phil (The Coal) Hackett and Dave (the lifeboat man) Pope, his dear wife Julie and all his family my thoughts and condolences are with you at this sad time.

## Alan Holmes

January 1956 – March 2024

Born in Retford, Nottinghamshire, the only son of Norman and Joan Holmes, they were next door neighbours to the late Keith (Tiny) Flinton. Alan and Keith became life-long friends and shared the same hobby and love of steam.

Alan was educated in Retford and on leaving school went to university.

Following graduation, he went to work for Rolls Royce in Derby where he worked until he retired in 2014, albeit for a company who Alan's department of Rolls Royce was transferred to.

Being a private person, very little is known about his personal life. His father passed away in the late 1980s and Alan would regularly visit his mother until she passed away in 2017, often making the trip from Derby at short notice to arrange her care. In 1993 & 1994 respectfully Alan was made godfather to Eileen and Tiny's two sons John and Arthur. He was a keen walker, joining a walking group in Derby. In 2022 Alan underwent major surgery to remove a tumour on his lower jaw; he was out of action for some while but thankfully recovered to continue with his life.

Alan's hobby appeared to be the main element in his life. For nearly 40 years he could be seen with his circle of friends, both model and steam sections: Peter Adams, The Bosworth and Brothwell families and, of course, the late Anne Russon & Tiny Flinton to name but a few, at many rallies and charity events throughout the year. He attended the Great Dorset Steam Fair from 1985 until last year 2023.

He was a keen photographer; many a weekend he would travel to remote places to record mainline steam trains in action possibly calling in at a nearby rally for good measure. His photo collection will be an excellent archive.

It was not long before he became involved with the organisational side of the hobby. He was treasurer of the Elvaston Castle Rally for a while.

Alan Holmes joined the Rempstone Traction Engine Club Committee in 2010/2011, taking over the Model Tent from Ann Russon. Alan very soon made the section his own and eventually took on the public caravan bookings,



approaching this with his usual vigour and tenacity. Alan was very much one of the more pro-active members of the team and always on the go for the duration of the rally set up and rarely without his beaming smile, as well as keeping us all going with his humour. Alan was always keen to see the event grow and be successful, offering support to the younger members of the committee when they needed it. Very much like Alan, he always supported the younger generation involved in the hobby. He has been an incredible member of our organising team and is going to be sorely missed at this year's and future shows.

He also helped out at other events including South Cerney, and Lincoln Steam & Vintage Rally where he organised the model section camping and was the rally's official photographer.

Alan was a member of the National Traction Engine Trust for 42 years. In recent years he was a member of the rally monitoring team and in 2023 took on the role of Rally Authorisation officer.

He was also a supporter of the Road Roller Association, serving as chairman.

Somehow he managed to find the time to pursue all these activities.

To those who knew Alan, it was a pleasure and an honour to work alongside him, and he will be greatly missed by all the individuals and organisations who knew him and considered him a friend.

RIP, Alan.

- *Our thanks to Nick Bosworth for the use of his appreciation of Alan.*

I remember Alan was an avid photographer, particularly of steam trains.

In the 1970s and 80s, the early days of preserved steam locos returning to the mainline, several of us including Alan spent many (happy) hours travelling miles in all weathers to get that "perfect shot". Funny we never seemed to go in Alan's car though.

He was also a regular attender for many years at steam rallies in the East Midlands area, again with his camera.

In those early days, local engine owners and enthusiasts used to have meetings in Kegworth village hall where all things steam were discussed over a pint or two and we enjoyed many homemade cine films or colour slide shows.

Members were asked to vote for the picture they liked best and Alan nearly always won!

Always friendly and polite he will be missed.

**Bernard Bartram**

## Eric Smith – RIP

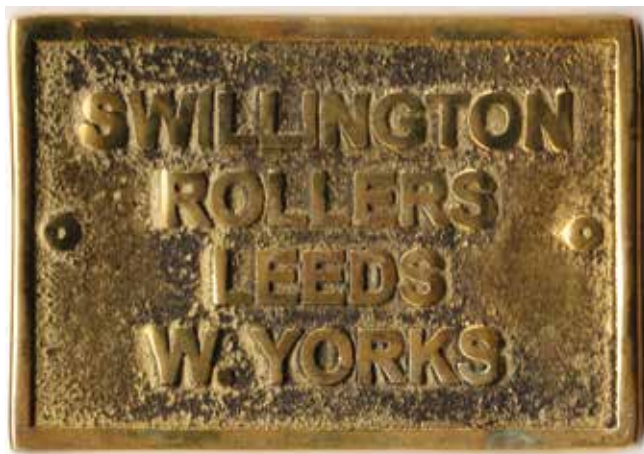
Members will hopefully recall the recent obituary in respect of a long-standing member Eric Smith and his passion for motor rollers which he subsequently turned into a business.

Space limitations in the last issue of *Rolling* were such that it was not possible to include the adjacent photo of a floral roller which his son Simon made, and which graced Eric's coffin at the service at Cottingley Hall crematorium in Leeds. It is felt unlikely that many members will have ever seen such a creation in the shape of a floral roller previously and it would therefore be good to recognise Simon's efforts in this respect.

Eric's business started when they lived at the village of Swillington, just outside Leeds – hence the name he chose for his products. He produced these plaques and he fixed one on the various rollers over time which he had 'converted' to make them legal by eliminating the 'starting handle' arrangement and fitted them with hydraulic power packs and which he then sold to cricket clubs, etc. in order to prolong their active life.

Eric's widow, Marlene, who many AGM attendees over the years will have met, has very kindly sent a brass plaque as a donation to the RRA Motor Roller Archives in Eric's memory. We thank her for this and are extremely grateful for it.

**Derek Rayner**



## Recovering A Barford Type V6 Sports Ground Roller

by Dave Bush

In February 2021, I was looking for a new project to do. I was standing in the yard of a friend who repairs plant machinery, rollers, lorries, etc. when I noticed a cast steering wheel with cranked spokes sticking out above a very large heap of tractors' wheels, items you save never to be used again. I asked what it was.

A Barford Pioneer was the answer. It has been stood there for over six years and after sand blasting and spraying, it has just been left. As I was interested, I was told to return in seven to ten days' time, which I did and it was standing in the yard. There was no engine or bodywork, but all the rest was there.

He told me he had taken it in part exchange for a 3-ton Aveling Barford pavement roller and the owner kept the engine and other parts. A price was agreed and he was pleased I would be making it run again; it was delivered the next day.

When it had been unloaded, Pete gave me a box and in it were the caps to fuel and oil tanks plus the Pioneer plate off the front and that he had been told it was a 1930s model.

Where the engine had been, a quarter inch thick mild steel plate had been bolted and he explained what was normally done was to fix a Honda 15hp engine and make an adapter to connect to the original input shaft.

Having asked Google about cheap Chinese engines, I came up with a Hyundai 500cc 15hp engine for £350. I am in business: a roller owner for less than a weekend away.

The motor was delivered; it revved to 3,500rpm. The original JAP revved to 1,200. I visited UKR Transmissions in Ilkeston and off the shelf they produced



a 25mm shaft to fit the engine and a larger one for me to fit a carrying plate and shaft to fit the original light shaft. Buoyed up by my success I had getting enough bits, hopefully to make it go.

I joined the Road Roller Association and on speaking to Andrew, he told me it was the seventh that was known of the V6 model and he also had an original spares catalogue for it and he could photocopy the original sales catalogue; I had them both so I know a bit more about it.

In October 2021 the parts were assembled and it was ready to start. I live in Derbyshire and it is quite hilly. There is a small area of level ground at one end, a large shed in which lives my modern farming equipment, and at the side an open fronted shed where the round bales and roller live. It is flat in front of the large shed and at the side of the roller shed for about 50 yards, then it goes up at about 1 in 10 to the yard and down 1 in 10 to the hay fields and pond.

The roller was pulled out and put facing the shed and started with me sitting on its top. I have never driven a roller before, let alone one that is 90 years old and no one, not even the man I bought it off, had seen it move under power. I engaged reverse let in the clutch and it went backwards until the rolls spun on the hill. Engaging forward slow speed, it went forwards. This was done a few times until I was ready to put it back in the shed, clean it and then have a good look at it, free all the bits that were seized and get it ready for painting.

With the roller back in the shed, it was packed up on four large wooden blocks. All the time I had owned it I had kept putting releasing oil on every moving part; everything was eventually cleared and working. The drive chain was in poor condition and removed, the rear chain wheel was in good condition. The front one was scrap. This was machined off and a new one welded by UKR Transmissions who also supplied the rear new chain, all off the shelf.

When I came to fit the front sprocket back on, it would only go half way. At this point I was thinking had welding it on distorted it slightly and panicking slightly; I then remembered they were assembled by fitters so back to the roller, I tried it on every spline; on the last one it went straight on, what a relief.



I said at the start the roller had been sand blasted. When I removed the rear panels, I had to take off the number plates. Where it had shielded the rear panel by being pushed up against it, the panel was about an inch thicker.

When speaking to Andrew he said if I could find the original maker's number he could tell me when it was made. Unfortunately everywhere has been so well blasted this was not an option and the original maker's plates had been changed; the remains of the bolts were still in the forks.

On speaking to another V6 owner, he gave me the recipe for the gearbox oil: so much yellow grease to so many gallons of 140 grade oil.

On removing the gearbox plug, a couple of gallons of water came out followed by a very thick sludge. Three gallons of flushing oil were put in and the roller started, put into gear and left running in slow speed for about one hour. What came out still looked like black treacle but after another treatment it looked a more reasonable time to refill.

All modern greases are stamped HP = high pressure, which means they have sulphur in them, no good for phosphor bronze bearings; it destroys them.

On speaking to Exol Lubricants, they told me they do a semi-liquid grease without sulphur. The gearbox is now full of it as well as the steering box; all the grease nipples are full of sulphur free grease from Exol as well.

My one nice surprise was the front rolls. When the roller was on blocks, they spun freely and smoothly and no play on the bearings on the front.

It was all reassembled using new Whitworth nuts and then painted. The original(?) wooden toolbox was repaired and put back in place. I am still looking for an original seat.

What more can I say? It is still 80% original and it can still roll a sports field and, having owned a number of 6hp JAP engines, it starts a lot easier. The original was a water cooled 1,000cc V Twin JAP.



## A Leicestershire Weekend

### Brian Gooding

Mid-April saw members head to Quorn in Leicestershire for the Annual General Meeting weekend, with outings and the hotel kindly organised by Michael Stokes. Many of those staying for the weekend, headed for the Quorn Country Hotel on the Friday afternoon. We soon discovered that there was no food on offer that evening, so we went off to different locations for an evening meal, some of us ending up at the Quorndon Fox. We returned for a convivial evening in the hotel.

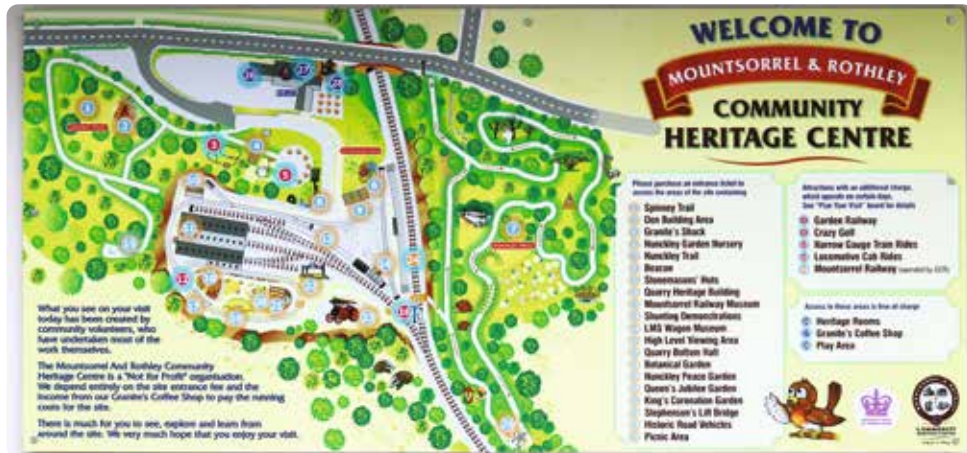
Saturday morning's visit was to the **Mountsorrel Heritage Centre**. A heritage bus had been organised for the weekend, but sadly it had problems, so we were confined to our own transport for the visits.

The Heritage Centre has been built in a former granite quarry, and is rail linked to the Great Central Railway at Swithland Sidings via a 1¼ mile line, the Mountsorrel Railway, though trains only run very occasionally.

Opened fully in 2016, there is a lot to do here. There is a narrow gauge railway, that consists of a trio of toastrack coaches pulled by a diminutive Ruston diesel, which runs



*The last surviving steam locomotive built in Loughborough by Brush Engineering; it dates from 1906.*



around a short loop, within which attractive gardens are becoming established. There is also an interesting railway museum, a small quarrying museum, some road vehicles, including a Scammell Scarab and trailers, once common at railway stations, a woodland trail, and an interesting railway lift bridge.

With the site being rail connected, there is a range of standard gauge wagons, a guard's van, a six-wheel GCR 3rd class coach, and a trio of industrial saddle tank locomotives, two in the museum and one in a running shed. The museum is well documented with display boards and various audio commentaries. One of the locos in the museum is the last surviving steam loco built in 1906 in nearby Loughborough by the Brush Electrical Machinery Co., which later became known for the manufacture of mainline diesel locomotives. The coach was built in 1888 for the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, which later became part of the Great Central Railway.



*The train on the narrow gauge railway at Mountsorrel Heritage Centre. A diminutive Ruston diesel loco was in charge.*

The lift bridge is of particular interest and for which the site volunteers are in the process of raising £15,000 to complete its restoration as a total cost in excess of £60,000. It was designed by Robert Stephenson for the Leicester & Swannington Railway in 1830 to cross the Grand Union Canal and allow the passage of boats underneath.



*An Austin Seven and a Scammell Scarab and trailer.*

With the centre based in a former quarry, there are plenty of spectacular rock formations to enjoy, as well as wild plants, while across the railway is a great nature trail to walk and enjoy.

Inside the visitor centre, which has an excellent



*A general view of the site with the lift bridge and its control cabin in the centre, still under construction. The railway museum is to the right with the standard gauge running shed alongside. The garden and narrow gauge railway are to the left.*



*Former British Railways Standard 5 No. 73156 was one of the locomotives on passenger train duty on the Saturday.*

cafe, there are two rooms with displays on local history and geology. One could spend hours just reading the numerous display boards around the site.

It cost us only £2 per head to go further than the visitor centre, plus a further £2 each for the train ride. I have to say this seems exceptional value for what is on offer and what one can learn.

After the visit, it was time to head back to Quorn & Woodhouse Station for a buffet lunch and the Annual General Meeting to be held that afternoon in a marquee in the railway yard.

Arriving early, there was time to look around and enjoy the one engine and a few rollers that were in the yard, ready for an event the following weekend. Most were in steam, which was good. I won't dwell on the AGM itself as the minutes are available to those who want to know more. Suffice to say it was occasionally interrupted by trains on the nearby railway, and particularly by a massive 'Peak' diesel which made more noise while idling than the two steam engines in service that day, a Stanier 8F and a Standard Class 5.

After the meeting, members dispersed either home or to the hotel for dinner.

Sunday morning's visit was to the **Abbey Pumping Station** in Leicester. The drive from Quorn was quite straightforward with parking at the adjacent National Space Centre.



*Standing outside the marquee at Quorn & Woodhouse Station, in which the RRA meeting was held, are Wallis & Steevens 6-ton Advance No. 7833, A&P No. 5163 and Fowler No. 19356.*



With time to spare before the museum opened at 11am, we walked out to the River Soar which runs very close by and enjoyed a short circular walk which brought us around to the front of the pumping station where we got chatting with Tony Kendall, Chairman of the volunteer group, the Leicester Museums Technology Association, which looks after the museum, although it is owned by Leicester City Council. (Tony is also a long standing RRA member.)



*Michael Stokes' A&P No.5163 travelled to the Quorn Country Hotel to be present for the RRA dinner and is seen before it set off back to the railway yard.*

We joined up with the rest of the RRA group who had come in via the car park end gate and were divided into two groups, one to tour the beam engine house, the other the transport collection shed.



*A view of Abbey Pumping Station from the riverside path.*

The pumping station houses four Woolf compound rotative beam pumping engines made by Gimson & Co. of Leicester in 1891, which pumped sewage to a sewage farm at Beaumont Leys. The station continued in use until 1964 when electric pumps were installed but these were superseded a few years later and the station was no longer needed. The site opened as a museum in 1972 and the four engines have gradually been restored to working order. The cylinders are 30ins and 48ins, and the flywheels are 21ft in diameter. The beams are 28ft in length.

The tour started on the beam floor from where good views over the area can be had. The whole floor is made of wood but much of it is panels that can be lifted out to aid maintenance, a good design. We spent quite a bit of time here before



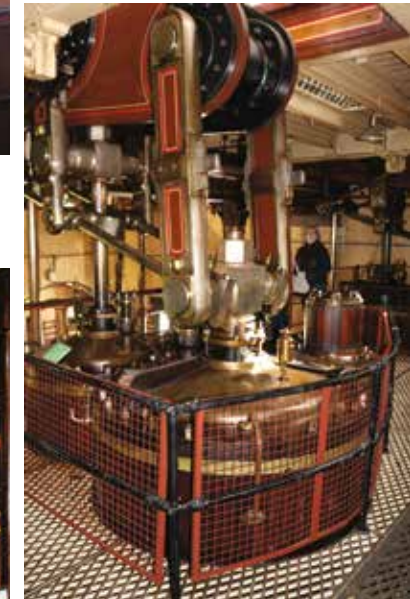
*Three of the four beams at the top of the engine house. The travelling crane used for maintenance is also visible.*



*A look through the flywheels of two of the engines.*

descending to the valve floor, and then to the main floor which contains the cylinders and flywheels.

Next, we were treated to a 'downstairs' tour, not available to casual visitors. (I would mention here that



*One cylinder top and Watt's parallel motion linkage to the beam above.*

the engines were not running during our visit as otherwise we would not have been able to go where we were taken.)

We now had two lower levels to admire. The first level contained the valve gear for the engines, an impressive mix of shafts, rods, eccentrics and counterweights before we descended a further spiral staircase to a damp bottom level with the pumps, below which were the large incoming sewers which, fortunately, we didn't have access to! Down here is a plastic skeleton which is used around Halloween when the museum runs ghostly engineer days.

Returning to the outside world, the two groups swapped over and it was our turn to visit the transport shed. This contains an interesting collection of vehicles with a local connection, including a pair of fire appliances, one by Morris Motors from 1939 and a Dennis of similar age, both with ladders and bodies by Merryweather. There was a 1911



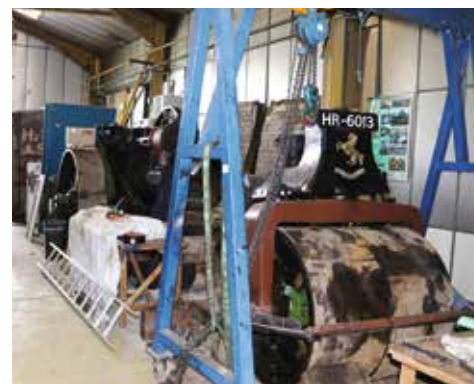
*Down at the bottom are the sewage pumps. A large sewage main still runs below the floor.*



*A view of part of the Transport Shed with an ex-Eddison Marshall diesel roller in view.*



*A rare 1911 Leyland tower wagon that once worked on Leicester's tramways.*



*The museum's Aveling & Porter R10 steam roller, No.3319 from 1894, currently in pieces.*



*Ex-Eddison 8-ton 1941 Aveling-Barford DX roller in great condition.*

Leyland lorry converted to a tower wagon to work on overhead lines for the city's tramways.

The building houses an interesting collection of vehicles, from old bicycles through horse-drawn carriages and a bus, to lorries and former Corporation Leyland PD2 buses, one of which had recently been repainted at a cost of £14,000. There are a trio of road rollers here, too, a former Eddison Marshall 'Eddimatic Torque Ranger', according to the legend on the side, a 1941 Aveling-Barford 8-ton DX, also ex-Eddison, and the museum's Aveling & Porter R10 steam roller No.3319, dating from 1894, and currently undergoing some boilerwork.

The shed also houses some of the museum's railway stock, including Bagnall 0-4-0ST No.2087, *Leonard*, which is used on the site's narrow gauge railway on special event days.

It was now time to conclude the visit, and say our goodbyes to RRA members who were heading home. We had decided to have an extra night in the hotel and travel back on the Monday, so we headed back to Quorn to have a round trip on the Great Central Railway, ensuring we were steam hauled, of course, a fitting end to another sociable weekend with RRA members.

## 2024 AGM Minutes

The minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 13th April at Quorn & Woodhouse Station on the Great Central Railway are available on request from the Secretary, Charlie Swaffield (details on page 2).

Please note these are draft minutes as they are not agreed until the 2025 AGM.

## At a Scottish bus museum

Derek Rayner

The Scottish bus museum is located at Lathalmond near Dunfermline and non-member Keith Jones decided to pay a visit there during last summer in connection with one of his many preservation interests.

He discovered a narrow gauge railway which was giving rides to visitors, using a relatively recently-built small gauge steam locomotive and also a standard gauge railway under construction – as well as the many and varied types and makes of buses which were the main purpose of his visit.

In addition, Keith was surprised to find a 1930-built Marshall steam roller – SC 7488 – on display. This machine, ex-Edinburgh Corporation, has been on show there for some time now and appears to be in a very good external condition.



*The ex-Edinburgh Corporation 'S-type' Marshall roller – No. 85601 – at Lathalmond near Dunfermline. Keith Jones*



### 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](mailto:membership@roadrollers.org), or phone her on 01483 274855.

Thank you.

## STEAMROLLER by Paul Jennings, 1955

Per Wikipedia: Paul Francis Jennings (20 June 1918-26 December 1989) was an English humourist and author. After his Catholic education, Jennings served in World War 2. For many years he wrote a column, *Oddly Enough*, in British newspaper *The Observer*. Many collections of his work were published, including *The Jenguin Pennings* (whose title is a spoonerism) by Penguin Books in 1963. He also wrote popular children's books including *The Great Jelly of London*, *The Hopping Basket*, and *The Train to Yesterday*.



### STEAMROLLER

Sigh sadly, O steam, for piece of a machinery  
Fast disappearing from all urban scenery;  
Soon all County Councils and U.D.C.s'll  
Abandon the steamroller, take up the diesel.  
Just as green lamp-posts no longer light darkness,  
But gaunt candelabra of concrete starkness,  
So may we see Time take further revenge in  
The desuetude of this lovable engine.  
Already it looks a bit palaeolithic  
Like the early steam carriage of Richard Trevithick.  
Alas, let us weep for this elephant kettle,  
This megalosaurus of burnished metal  
With splendid funnel and green-striped boiler  
Dreamily steered by an elderly toiler.

Steam, so Victorian, like Carlyle or Tennyson,  
Unlike most inventions, was always a benison  
(Nobody ever invented steam bombers);  
A steamroller's beauty accords with St. Thomas,  
For *visum*, it *placet* – a seen thing, it pleases,  
As surely as peacocks, or girls on trapezes,  
Those rods and those pistons – what pleasure to see 'em,  
The whole thing's a travelling Science Museum;  
Here Da Vinci might see, brought to working perfection,  
His sketch-book ideas from the Windsor Collection  
And say, 'A divine contradiction thou showest;  
Thy flywheel goes quickest when road speed is slowest.'

Purposeful, puffing and peripatetic,  
The steamroller's nevertheless sympathetic;  
The word for this engine, I think is *avuncular* –  
It never dwarfs man, making man feel homuncular;  
It walks up and down like a pipe-smoking gardener,  
Somehow it's more than a mere mobile hardener.  
Come, let us savour its sub-soul, or *mana*,  
Let's gather sweet garlands of steamrolliana  
Before this creation of Foden or Ransome  
Is dead as the dodo, defunct as the hansom.

No Borough Council will ever give ear to  
The plea that a road job's an open-air theatre  
In which no mere diesel could play the theme role as  
For years it's been played by our genial steamrollers,  
Though, best of all proofs that internal ignition  
Is dreary, unloved, lacking steam's ebullition –  
No diesel has drama, or fire in its belly,  
No diesel is christened 'Britannia' or 'Nellie'.

## Letters

I thought these photos might be of use to you for *Rolling*.

I came across the roller at the rear of the White Hart pub in Chobham (Surrey) on New Year's Day when I met up with some friends I'd been at university with. It had been set up for kids to play on but it wasn't clear if it was the pub's or adjacent cricket club's.

Not being any sort of expert on motor rollers, I can't tell you anything beyond what is on the plates but suspect you can find someone who knows more! I'd hoped the serial number would be more legible in the photo than has proved to be the case.

### Stuart Gaines

(By enlarging the plate, I think the works number is DRX205, so we know its identity.

I asked Andrew Watson what he knew about these rollers and he asked Chris Sant who advised the following:  
"The DRX is listed as "in production" in 1946 and this illustrates it was also built rather earlier. It was available in the 2.5 to 4.5 ton range powered (when new!) with a Lister 16bhp twin cylinder diesel engine." – Ed.)



Thomas Green motor roller DRX205, seen on New Year's Day .



*Avelling & Porter R12 roller No.5623 was new in 1905. It worked for Wiltshire County Council until 1928 when it joined the W W Buncombe fleet in Highbridge, Somerset as fleet No.123. It is seen at an Abbey Hill rally.*

**The late John Reeves/Vintage Spirit magazine Archive**