

Rolling

Summer 2024

Issue 197



Road Roller
Association
Journal



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Front cover: *On a visit to the Helston Railway in Cornwall in June, I found Josh Menear busy with the family's roller, Burrell No.4040, hard at work rolling the new access road for the railway. 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 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024

Website: www.roadrollers.org

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Chairman's Notes

Another three months have passed since my last notes and I'm left wondering where the time has gone. As usual, I get the reminder from Brian that the next edition is due soon and he needs contributions so I have to sit down and try to remember what has happened since the last edition.

Since the last 'Rolling' we learnt of the passing of one of our stalwart members and a past Chairman, Alan Holmes. I managed to get to his funeral service and was pleased to see about a dozen Association members present. As with all funerals, I certainly learned things about Alan that I never previously knew and although I was aware that he was a very private person, I was surprised to find that the crematorium was pretty well full. It was a privilege to share memories of Alan with other friends of his after the service at the buffet that the family had arranged.

With the summer now underway, we are well into the rally season. I have managed to get my roller to two events so far but my busy time for rallies starts in July and I am away most weekends for the next two months. Although the weather seems to have dried up after the very wet spring, I'm not really convinced that we will continue to have good weather for the rest of the season. I have recently purchased some of the South African coal and although there are a few stones amongst it, it appears to be performing fairly well in the roller. There is quite a lot of smoke initially but once well alight, it burns much cleaner. We did a short road run using it and as long as we kept a deeper fire than we were used to with the Welsh coal, it kept the pressure up. As others have found, it does produce slightly more ash and clinker than the Welsh.

Our sales stand was present at the new Little Markfield rally at the end of June, although sales were slower than we would have liked (They always are!!). Unfortunately, I was not able to attend for family reasons but it promises to be a decent rally for future years. We wish Michael and his team well for the future. The stand will be at Bressingham at the end of August where they are celebrating the centenary of their Burrell roller. As usual we look forward to meeting as many members as possible during this event. We are usually invited to more rallies than we are able to attend because we all have our own machines and cannot necessarily find sufficient staff to man these events. If any members feel they would like to assist at any events, please contact myself or the Sales Officer to offer your assistance.

As some of you will be aware, the Association will be 50 years old in September this year and we are planning that the next edition of 'Rolling' will celebrate this milestone. If any members have any special memories of the early days or any notable events that the Association was involved with, please let us know for inclusion in this edition.

I hope that we all are able to fully enjoy the rest of this season.

Richard



A New Three-roll Road Roller

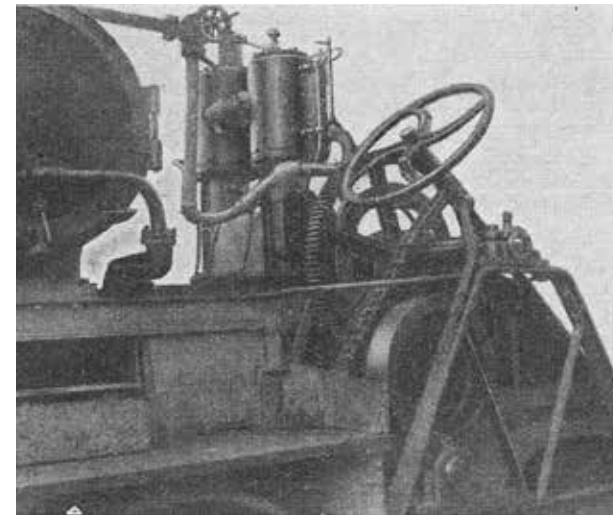
Member Peter Wells sent me a photocopy of this article last year but the copy was not really suitable for reproduction. Luckily transport historian Richard Peskett has a whole range of pre-1940s The Commercial Motor magazine and kindly allowed me to copy the relevant pages from the edition of 9th June 1931. The text and illustrations are from those pages but I thought it easier to reset the text to make it clearer to read. – Ed.

The Arnold Machine, which is Intended to Obviate the Formation of Waves During Road Construction

In road construction the use of a roller is essential, whether for foundation or surfacing work, and, in connection with such work one of the most common troubles experienced lies in the generation of waves at right angles to the path of the machine. With a two-roll appliance, it is difficult to avoid such deformation of the surface, therefore, in designing its new machine, the Arnold Waveless Road Roller Co. Ltd, Brick House Farm, Kelvedon, Essex, has made use of three rolls, unequally spaced. The centre one obviates the tendency of the machine to ride over a ridge; thus, if a hump be encountered a large proportion of the weight is concentrated on levelling it.

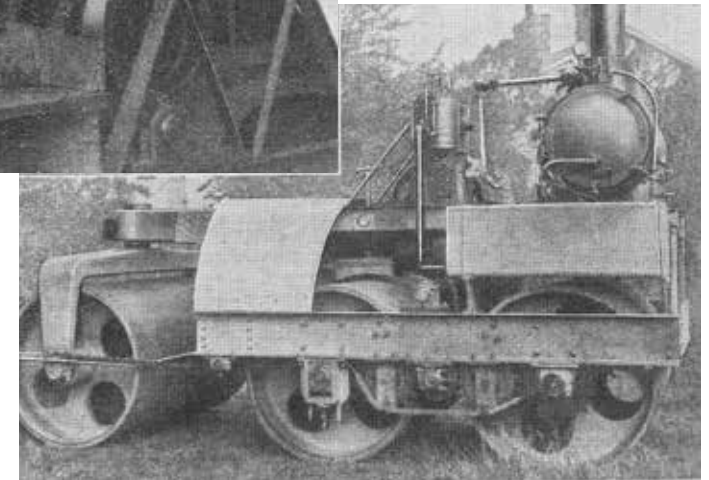
When passing over a hollow, the centre roll does not drop into it because it is rigidly connected to the frame.

The new machine has an overall length of 16ft 4ins and an overall width of 7ft; on each side the frame overhangs the rolls by only 7ins, so that it is possible to compress the surface close up to such obstructions as lamp posts, etc. The rolls are of 4ft diameter, and the distance between the front



LEFT: The engine mounting and supporting member for the first-motion shaft.

BELOW: The new Arnold three roll roller, which has been specially designed to avoid the formation of waves in road construction.



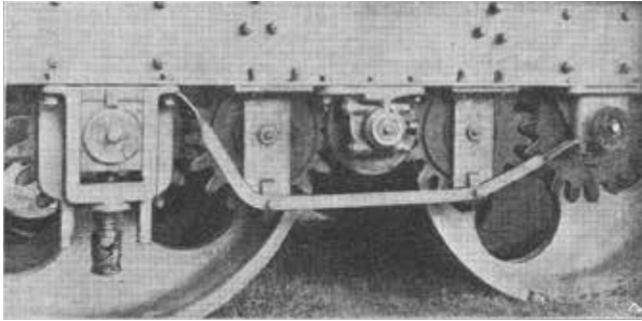
one and the centre one is 6ft 7ins, while the centre-to-centre distance of the second and third rolls is 5ft. The weight is 14 tons.

For the main longitudinals of the frame, steel channels are employed; these are 1ft deep. From them run supports for the fore-carriage, the lateral apron of which is in boiler plate riveted in position. To the supporting members in question are fixed the forward ends of the longitudinal channels which carry the engine. The front roll fork turns in a bearing consisting of $\frac{3}{4}$ in. steel balls working against a phosphor-bronze race. Steering is by worm and wheel; there are chains from the lateral shaft to the roll fork.

The rear ends of the engine bearers rest on a cross-member, which in turn is anchored to spacers above a $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. channel-section main cross-member. Two separate longitudinals run from the lateral engine bearer to an L-section member carried on uprights at the extreme rear of the machine; these support the boiler.

In the case of the machine in question the power unit employed is a Yorkshire, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 8in. and $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 8in. cylinders. The boiler, mounted at the rear, is also a Yorkshire, of the double-ended locomotive type. We understand that future models will have an oil engine. The crankshaft is extended on the off side and carries the flywheel; this extension is supported by a bearing mounted

on a special longitudinal girder. On the crankshaft extension is a sliding pinion with 18 teeth; this can be moved into mesh with a 120 tooth gearwheel on the first motion shaft. From this shaft power is transmitted by a single roller chain to the first countershaft, thence by two duplex chains to the second countershaft. Between these shafts are two adjustable rods, placed as close as possible to the chains. In the upper ends of the rods are half bearings, while the lower ends house ring-type bearings; the function of these rods is to prevent whip in the countershafts.



Drive from the second countershaft to the two rolls is by straight toothed pinions; this system avoids derangement of the drive when the axle height of the centre roll is varied.

At each end of the second counter shaft is a dog clutch; either one can be disengaged when cornering. Final drive is by straight-tooth gears mating with intermediate gears, which in turn mesh with pinions on the ends of the roll axles. This scheme permits the centre roll to be driven despite the height at which it is set – this is made adjustable to suit working conditions. The centre axle can be raised or lowered in its guides by means of screwed bars, distance pieces being used between the upper faces of the bearing blocks and the undersides of the frame members; these are of varying thicknesses to suit different settings.

It is interesting to note that all three rolls are in cast steel, as opposed to the more usual and cheaper cast iron. The axles of the two driven rolls are carried in Hyatt roller bearings, mounted in housings secured to the lower flanges of the frame members. Each roll is split and the drive is taken to both ends of each of the central and rear ones:

On the cylinder head is mounted a Manzel cylinder lubricator; the steam regulator is close to the driver and is in the horizontal run of the pipe from the steam chest to the engine. Also to the driver's left is the coal bunker, and above it the stoking door; the ashpan door is at the rear of the machine. Water is carried in a tank on the near side. Water-sprayers, scarifiers or other equipment can be supplied to meet the requirements of the purchaser.

This novel roller is now available for demonstration work; the practical nature of its constructional principles and the simplicity of its design point to the possibility of a successful future.

RRA Shield Presentation

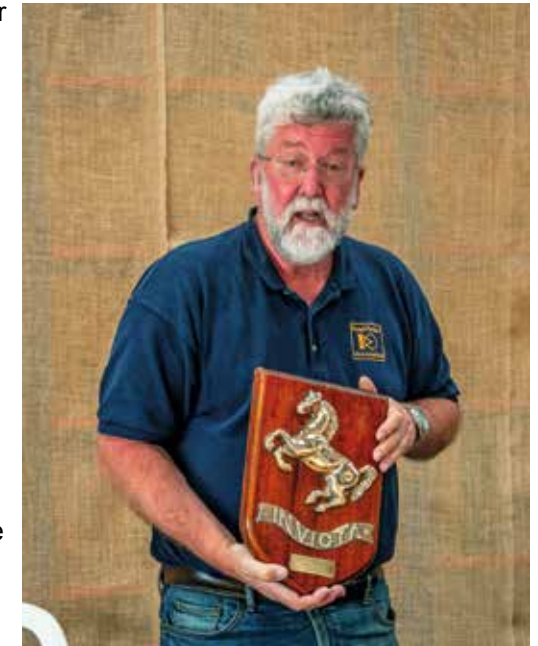
With the sad passing of RRA member and NTET Vice Chairman David Smith earlier this year, the committee decided to award the RRA Shield to long time RRA members David and Julie for all they have done for the heritage movement over many years. The Award was made posthumously to David.

Julie was unable to attend the AGM at Quorn in April, so an approach was made to the NTET to see if the Awards could be presented to Julie at the NTET's Driver Training Weekend at Astwood Bank on the Sunday. This was agreed, and PK Smith, the RRA's Sales Officer, made the presentation to Julie which he did before the presentation of certificates to those who had been learning engine driving over weekend.

PK said: "Having thanked Bob Siddall and Andrew Semple for allowing us to 'crash' their event, I did my bit to plug the Association. Julie Smith was delighted to receive the shield and was gracious, as always, in her acceptance."

Photos Courtesy of Nick Bosworth

Julie Smith receives the RRA Shield from PK Smith of the RRA.



PK explains to course members about the RRA and the RRA Shield to be awarded to David & Julie Smith.



Memories of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and a glance into the 80s and 90s

Eddie Valentine

What was this smoking beast? Close inspection revealed a large Scammell Pioneer owned by William Briggs of Dundee and pulling slowly a road surface heating and planing unit. The arisings from the operation were being loaded onto a reversing tipper lorry, which when loaded was driven off and replaced by another. I had never seen one before and never since.

The destination for the material was a minor rural road where a group of village volunteers had given up their holidays to repair the road, which had not been adopted by the local authority. However, the group had been lent, along with the driver, the County Council's Fowler 19546, 06/35, 10T DNA.

The task was reckoned to take at least a week, and so it came to pass a reasonable surface was created, not perfect but suffice to preserve the road for a good number of years.

A year or so before the 1975 local authorities reorganisation, I was driving on the A926 in Angus when my progress was halted by tar sprayers: Angus County Council tar sprayers, followed by two Road Marshall 'Highwaymen', an all British outfit! I think at least four Bedford TKs doing the chipping; yes, the good old days when we still made most things.

A remote rural location in Scotland beckoned me back in the 1960s, nothing for miles. I noted I was on a freshly surface dressed section – the clatter of chippings under the car, a sweet smell of tar, the real stuff, then but nothing else, but what is this coming into view, and parked up on the road? A rather battered Aveling Barford GC with faded, light blue paintwork, a worn looking cab, windscreen missing. Obviously, the squad had gone to replenish the sprayer and have a break. The roller I suspect was on her last job! Or perhaps she died on her last one.

Back to my early youth and out on my push bike. The local Council has almost completed a dozen or so new houses with lovely terraced walls built using stone from a demolished 'kirk'. Finishing off the roadworks, William Briggs were using a Huber Cat D2 diesel; not a water ballast wheel type but fitted with rolls, which looked rather archaic. The Huber looked good in light green livery with the letters in large white figures, 'Briggs Dundee'.

At about the same time as the Briggs contract, another Dundee contractor was laying sewers and was reinstating the road where the trenches had been excavated. For this compaction work Horsburgh & Murray had acquired from Dundee Corporation the double cylinder Miller's Marshall tandem steam roller, possibly the first of the class No.76945, Reg. TS 4231 of September 1923, not

rolling asphalt in this task but sub base. I wonder what happened to this unusual roller at the end of the day?

My family and I were on holiday around 1950 in the village of St Cyrus on the Kincardineshire coast. At this time, the main trunk road from Aberdeen southwards passed through, frequented by Leyland Tiger coaches and many long forgotten HGVs; it was the task of the former Kincardine County Council to keep their section maintained.

The sound of a McLaren Benz diesel engine and the howl of a gearbox alerted me one morning. Rushing out, I was confronted by a large motor road roller, a make I had never seen before, with rear mounted engine, open canopy, Reg. FL 7205. I hurried to tell my parents I was off to see a roller! Closer inspection revealed a mid-mounted scarifier on the rear side.

The road squad of around six were friendly and soon a KCC Foden arrived with the first load of tar. The roller was a Barford Perkins of 1927. A TWK? Thirty years old; KCC had got their money's worth! I last saw her a couple of years later partly dismantled, in the roads yard at Stonehaven and a hired Eddison DX carrying out what had been her duties.

Banffshire, in the extreme North East of Scotland, ceased to exist in 1975. It wasn't an area I frequented but passing through on a sunny summer's day on the way to an air display at RNAS Fulmar, now RAF Lossiemouth, was a shiny Aveling Barford in dark green; Banffshire County Council Roads.

Back to the late 50s. Having just moved to the Aberdeen area, my dad decided to take me by bus to see Aberdeen's then massive fleet of steam trawlers, 'Smokie Joes', as they were called, with their tall woodbine funnels.

At around the same time, the last of Aberdeen's tram tracks was being lifted, along with the 'Cassie' sets, which had surfaced Union Street and, which were being replaced by asphalt and yes, you have guessed correctly, parked neatly at the side of the street, along with a covered Barber Greene, were two Aveling Barford diesel rollers with open canopies, not sure if they were DC or GC, it was a long time ago! William Tawse, Public Works Contractors Aberdeen, a long gone company.

The A830 in the 1950s, was a tenuous and narrow route that wound its way for almost 50 miles between Fort William and the busy fishing port of Mallaig with its large fleet of herring ring netters, timber-built carvel hulls, varnished and powered by Kelvin diesels which were a sight worth seeing. Dad and I set out on our adventure, competing for passing places with fish lorries transporting the herring to market.

Work had started on the reconstruction of the A830 and my eyes were peeled for road construction works. Sure enough, a Marshall TSP (Tons Standard Perkins) came into view, or was it a utility model? I will never know; owned by McKean's of Edinburgh, it certainly looked work worn. A little further along was a

Marshall RD1 of the same owner and the working clothes certainly work worn. I was disappointed they were the only rollers encountered, not even a steam roller!

Royal Deeside early 90s

I used to travel up and down Deeside on a very regular basis during the course of my work and I used to come across Grampian Regional Council Roads Dept at work; still a proper roads department in those days, the no pothole era. It was a regular thing to see a patching squad; a stitch in time was the name of the game. The squad consisted of around five men including drivers, a light tipper lorry, and a cabbed GA roller, chippings, granite 3/8, from nearby Craighash quarry, cold bit emulsion was sprayed, then the chippings applied and rolled by the GA.

Also on my route was the village of Lumphanan, complete with Macbeth's Castle (The Peel Ring). There was also a small GRC road depot! Parked nearby was an immaculate Aveling Barford GC of 1960s vintage; it never seemed to move, grass was established around the rolls, hardly a mark on the yellow GRC livery. Perhaps I should have put in an offer for it?

The Marshalls visit to the blacksmith

The County Council had been working in the village for some time, carrying out reinstatement work to the roads after the installation of sewerage pipes. The work meant heavy work for the roller's Allan sliding scarifier. The roller was Marshall RD1 No.88691, the engine at that time a two cylinder Blackstone BHV.

I used to watch as the roller juddered to a halt, rolls spinning, the scarifier man spinning the wheel frantically to raise the tine enough to allow the tine to bite, and so it went on.

This continual tearing into the surface, blunted the tines and eventually all four points were blunt. It was time to visit the local blacksmith about a mile away from the job. I followed the roller on my bike and soon we were at the smiddy which was located in what used to be the small village gasworks!

The tines were withdrawn and taken into the building where the blacksmith set to work heating the metal to a workable temperature, then hammering and drawing out the metal to form a new point, the anvil 'singing' as he carried out the heavy work. Satisfied that all was well, he plunged the red hot metal into a water trough, steam hissing at the sudden cooling. The usual banter as the tines were refitted, then the throttle opened up, 'Pab! Pab! Pab!' as the engine speeded up and before long the scarifier was biting once more.

I watched as the County Council's 1943 or so Bedford OW 6-ton tipper arrived in the farmyard. I noticed the tailgate was missing; this was the early 50s. The Bedford reversed up to the farm loading bank. I moved my bike closer; this is interesting... Then from the rear of the shed I heard a familiar sound, a Brotherhood four cylinder petrol engine busting into life, and then the Council's Barford A1 2½-ton roller whined into sight. The roller probably was a late 30s

model and was minus its Barford/Perkins canopy! Reversing carefully, slowly up the loading bank ramp – I felt nervous at this manoeuvre – then slowly onto the platform; everything ok. How the roller was secured I do not know.

Sometime earlier, I watched as a local farmer performed a similar manoeuvre with a Caterpillar D2 bulldozer. It was raining, the lorry obviously wasn't level. As soon as the tracks touched the wet platform, it was over the side! Upside down, the operator was lucky to survive... The episode scared the living daylights out of me. Mind you, many years later I loaded a Barford A series, ex-Moray County Council, onto a Ford D series platform lorry and on reaching the destination safely unloaded, but perhaps not recommended!

The area where we resided was strongly agricultural with many poultry enterprises. An enterprising processor decided to expand in a big way; the result was a large plant in the village.

The floor was almost complete but the material needed to be compacted before the steel mesh could be laid. It was perhaps a coincidence that the County Council's Marshall RD1, No.88691, was at work in the village. So it came to pass that one summer evening the roller and driver could be found reversing into the shed and rolling back and forwards. I must say it was a rather boring evening for me, and I took a couple of spins on my bike to pass the time, and the roller man went home with an extra pay packet, no doubt cash in hand to help with the house keeping.

Membership Rate Change

As you will have seen in the Spring copy of *Rolling*, 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

'Barford & Perkins - By Appointment to the King'

Derek Rayner

Some time ago I researched details for a magazine article on the fleet of engines, etc. owned and operated by a steam contractor in the 1940s. John Knowles had started the firm in the 1920s at Wickersley, near Rotherham in Yorkshire's West Riding, later moving about five miles north-east to Braithwell. Edwin Knowles continued the business and Janet Dowson, née Knowles and regrettably now deceased, had a collection of various items and photographs handed down from her father and her grandfather before her which included a 'Buff Log Book' for a Barford & Perkins roller with the registration – FL 5821. Janet was happy for me to scan this as a result of the first owner's name noted in it which was clearly of very great interest.

The text of the published article included the following:-

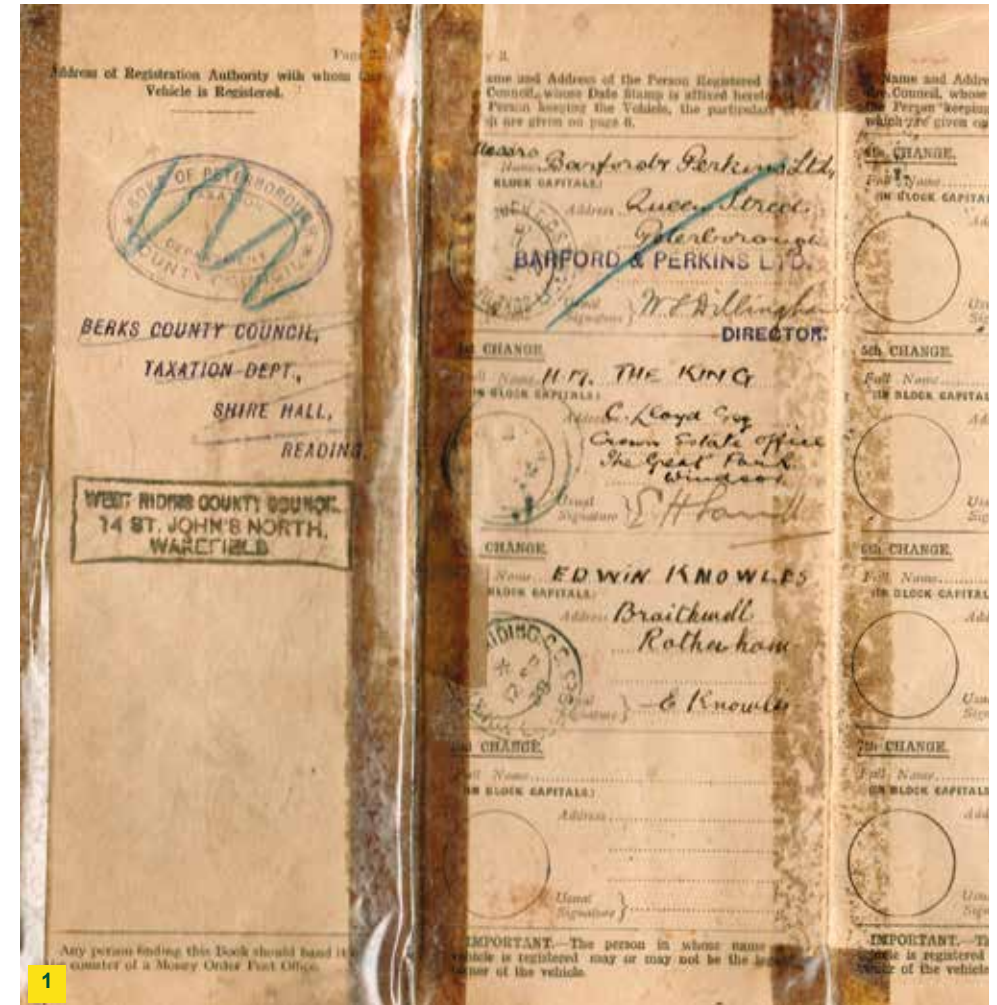
A further roller which Janet's father owned was a small Barford & Perkins A2½-type petrol-engined machine. This was B&P 'Reference No. W 057', registered FL 5821 on 11th February 1927. Janet was very proud to show the original Buff Log Book for this machine since the first owner was no less a person than HM The King – at Windsor – where the roller was used in the Great Park! (Fig 1). It was not known now by the family how her father came by such a 'gem' but reference to the Barford & Perkins records has indicated that the roller was originally supplied with a nameplate which read 'G R V Windsor Great Park 1927'. It was later with H Eccles, a major roller and traction engine dealer at Ravenfield near Rotherham, who may have acquired it from B&P as part of an earlier trade in deal. Edwin's son Jack Knowles had previously done business with Eccles and it therefore must have been from that very local business that he acquired it.

The little roller was in use during World War 2 and, of course, petrol was very strictly rationed at that time. Consequently, for those who may have an interest in such things, the roller's Buff Log Book contains many stamps made by the authorities at the various times when it was necessary for petrol to be issued to Jack Knowles (Fig 2). These stamps are now considered to be something of a rarity and the acquired petrol would have enabled him to continue to use the roller for what was obviously at that time, in the eyes of the powers-that-be, 'essential war work'.

Grateful thanks are extended to (RRA member) Mike Middlewood for the initial introduction which led to the knowledge of the existence of the accompanying items – and also to the Dowson family for their considerable assistance in the preparation of this article.

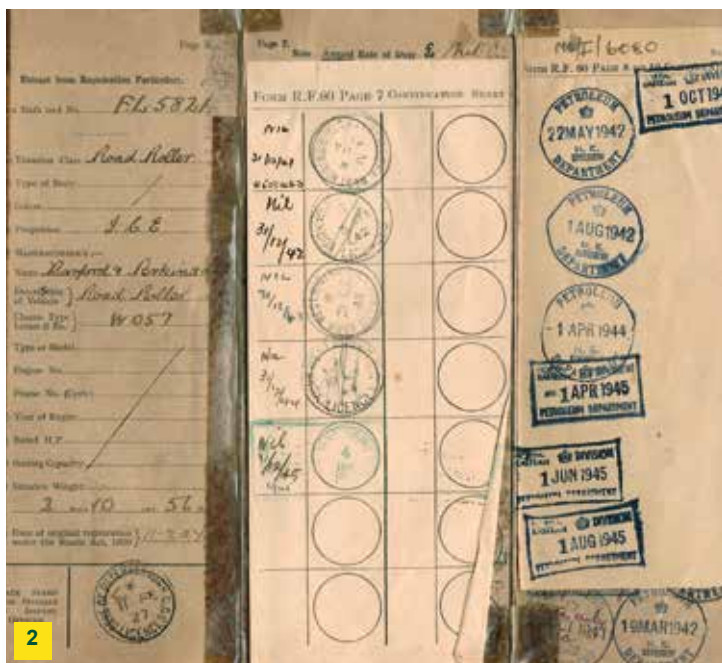
An interesting coincidence then occurred since I'd been in correspondence with member Andrew Eyre on the subject of a photograph of a Barford & Perkins D4 type roller in Egypt which I'd secured from a certain internet auction site. Andrew is a well known authority on B&P rollers and therefore, for his interest, I shared with him the scans of this remarkable Buff Log book.

Somewhat amazingly, he almost immediately came back to me with an image of that same motor roller, which had been used, quite understandably knowing of its owner, for the firm's publicity purposes in a contemporary B&P catalogue.



The important side of the original RF60 'Buff Log Book'. Courtesy Janet Dowson

Andrew also advised that he had previously looked in B&P Register No.10, held in the Lincolnshire Archives, and had noted down this roller's details as: 'Reference W 057' – A2½T – to C Lloyd, Crown Estate Office, Windsor – with a dispatch date of 14th May 1927 and registration FL 5821. He also very kindly – and quite amazingly – sent me an image taken from a contemporary B&P catalogue and observed that the artwork for the pictured roller had the same registration!



The reverse side of the Log Book shows two versions of the somewhat rare official Petroleum Department rubber stamps – dating from both during the war and afterwards. Courtesy Janet Dowson

In addition, he commented that Barford & Perkins used the Sessions House, a mock Norman building built in 1842 just over the Crescent bridge, on the west side of Peterborough North Station, as a backdrop for various of their roller photos. In fact, a couple of examples on pages 32 and 33 in the well-known 'Orange Book' – *A Hundred Years of Road Rollers* – are incorrectly attributed as being at Windsor Castle. Certainly Windsor Castle was used for some A-type roller publicity since, as Andrew said: "apparently the King had one".

Andrew went on to advise that he thought because of this, some of these photos may well have led others to think that the mock Norman 'Sessions House' at Peterborough was the same site.

However, Andrew admitted that he was puzzled by a later note in the B&P register which read: To A Ecllus Esq. Helsby Yorks – 20/4/1938. He felt that detail would have indicated a change of ownership or location, but to him, the details looked somewhat suspect – especially so since he was unable to find a place by

the name of Helsby in Yorkshire.

My research in respect of the Knowles article referred to previously – and my local knowledge in respect of Yorkshire – was very relevant, since by that time, the Knowleses were at Braithwell, a village relatively close to Hellaby on the main road from Rotherham to Maltby. Hellaby is about four miles to the east of Rotherham and was where a similar steam contracting firm was operated by Francis (Frank) Whitelock. According to the RLS records, this chap, over time, had two traction engines and five steam rollers from Knowles, apparently having taken over the business. However, the first of these, the traction engines, were noted as being acquired in 1943.

But that doesn't exactly add up with the 1938 date in the B&P records but it's possible that the dealer H Eccles, whose original yard was at Hawksworth Road in Sheffield, lived at Hellaby and in 1938 had moved to Ravenfield, less than five miles from Hellaby.

With this information, I was therefore able to answer Andrew's queries in that 'A Ecllus' was the local Sheffield contractor and engine dealer, Eccles, and the unknown place name of 'Helsby' was actually Hellaby. These 'anomalies' could have been as a result of an incorrectly noted down telephone message over a poor line – or perhaps the inability of someone to read the poor writing on the letter on which the information was sent to Peterborough?

This, therefore, was a very satisfactory conclusion all round and one well worth sharing with Association members who will read this article!



A very nicely coloured catalogue image of the B&P A2½ roller, registration FL 5821, with Windsor Castle in the background. Courtesy Andrew Eyre

Rolling out West

Brian Gooding

While in Cornwall a few weeks ago, I managed to catch up with my old mate Colin Savage, of 'Lesley's Jog' fame – the epic run with Colin's Garrett 4CD tractor, from John o' Groats to Land's End back in 2006.

These days, Colin is the General Manager of the Helston Railway, a developing heritage railway in west Cornwall, and so it was to the railway that I headed on a damp June Sunday morning.

The railway currently runs from its base at Prospidnick, north of Helston, to Truthall Halt, located by a stone road over bridge, with the trackbed beyond already cleared in preparation for extending the running line in the future as funds allow. Nearer to Helston, the line crosses the impressive Cober viaduct, which has been surveyed and found to be as good as the day it was built. Beyond that, the trackbed is intact as far as the Redruth road, to the north-east of Helston but the station site is now an industrial estate but the longer term plan is to build a new station east of the road.



Peckett 0-6-0ST No.2000 was in charge when I visited and is seen with the short train at Truthall Halt.



Railway Manager Colin Savage on the footplate of Peckett No.2000 at Truthall Halt.

A recent development has been the building of a new access road at Prospidnick so that new rolling stock can be brought in, the previous access road having been arbitrarily blocked off. The base of the new road is made of stone recovered from a nearby long-closed tin mine, which has been transported to the site and roughly levelled by an excavator.



Burrell No.4040 raises steam at Prospidnick. The single cylinder roller once worked for Thomas Turner of Bradworthy in Devon and R Dingle & Sons in Cornwall.



The new access road at Prospidnick is quite steep where it leaves the local lane and, in fact, climbs all the way to the station yard. This made for some interesting driving for Josh as well as some lovely sounds as the Burrell made its way very slowly up the incline before quietly reversing back down again.

With connections in the right place, the finishing of the road has been done by steam, an extra attraction for visitors to the railway, though they can only watch from a distance.

On the day of my visit, two rollers were in the yard, Fowler DNB No.19205, which was sheeted up, and Josh Menear's family's Burrell No.4040 which was soon at work at the far end of the road, rolling in the stone on quite a steep slope. Josh's comment was that it was better doing something useful like this than sitting on a rally field, quite understandable.



A distant shot of Burrell No.4040 at work, as seen from the platform at Prospidnick, gives an idea of how steep the new access road is in places. Even at this distance one could clearly hear the bark of the roller.

An Anniversary

Lyndon Shearman

This year it is 50 years since the RRA was formed.

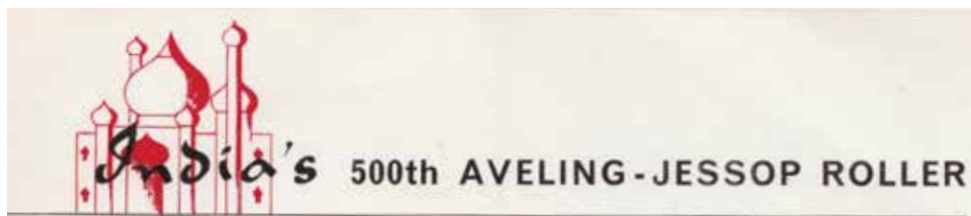
How did it happen?

In August 1974, there was an informal meeting at our house in Halifax, Yorkshire, of friends who had an interest in rollers. I had been interested in rollers since my childhood, for a local contractor was still using steam rollers into the late 1950s, and I enjoyed seeing them. Later, in 1964, two friends, Derek Rayner and John Charlesworth, and I bought a steam roller and took it to rallies. My interest grew, and in late 1966, I took up the job of roller driver (diesels by then) at the same contractor whose steam rollers had fascinated me as a child. I made friends across the rally movement, and the idea emerged of this meeting of like-minded people. On the day of the meeting, I had been driving an Edison diesel roller on tar spraying work somewhere in East Yorkshire, a long working day followed by a long drive home, but I was looking forward to this evening get together.

The group of people came together, and my wife Barbara fulfilled her usual hostess role, providing excellent refreshments for everyone. We discussed whether the rally movement at that time treated rollers with the same commitment as they did traction engines and showman's engines, and our view was that it did not. There were few, if any, occasions where road making demonstrations to show what rollers did and how they did it were held. We felt this was a missed opportunity, a piece of steam history which was being neglected. And motor rollers (petrol or diesel) were completely ignored, yet they were part of the overall history of the road making industry. There emerged, then, a view that it would be valuable to form an association which would research, record and preserve the special history of road rollers and the work they did.

An outline structure of such an organisation was put together, and a public meeting was planned for later in the year, giving time to publicise it and encourage interested people to join in. The meeting was to take place at the Golden Lion Inn, West End, Halifax. However, there were two Golden Lion pubs in Halifax, the other in the town centre, so as the time approached, I called in at the town centre one to inform them what we were doing, so they could direct people coming for the meeting to West End. The West End Golden Lion is no longer an inn, although, the last time I was in the area, the building was still there, and memories came back.

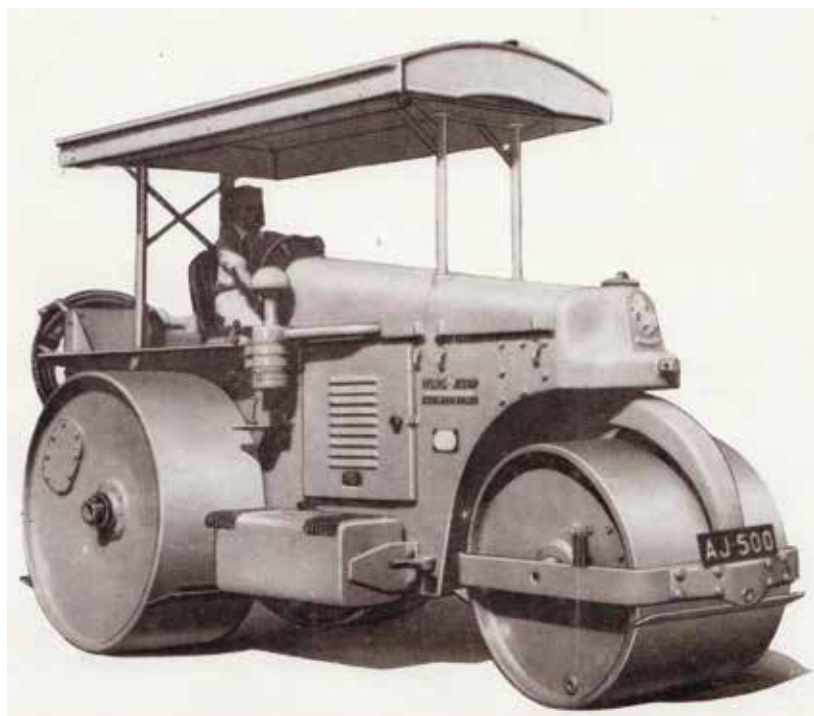
The meeting went ahead, a formal structure was agreed, as was the name, the Road Roller Association. So that is where, when and how it all began. Happy Anniversary, RRA.



Derek Rayner

The oldest engineering firm in India was established in Calcutta during 1788 under the name of Jessop. Over the years, it later imported many steam rollers made by the Kent firm of Aveling & Porter and also played a huge part in the development of roads and other necessities in order to link the country with its neighbours.

At the end of World War One, the Jessop firm became the representative for the sale of motor rollers in respect of Barford & Perkins and continued in that same role after Aveling & Porter and the Peterborough firm merged in the 1930s to become Aveling-Barford.



The 500th Aveling-Jessop roller produced by the firm in Calcutta, now Kolkata.

Jessops continued to expand and, in 1946, their Dum-Dum works, situated in an eastern suburb of Calcutta, started the manufacture of 500 motor rollers to a modified design of the popular 'G' Series of the Aveling-Barford product and this contract was completed in the early 1950s.

In 1956, however, it was decided that the 'GC' Series roller should be part-manufactured at the Dum-Dum works as an entirely commercial venture for Jessop's – with the support and approval of the Indian Government.

The first of these machines was driven out of the works in January 1957 and with an appropriate ceremony it was named the 'Aveling-Jessop' roller. Another ceremony took place just over four years later when, in March 1961, the 500th Aveling-Jessop 'GCS' roller, pictured in Fig. 1 was produced. This was then dispatched to the Chief Engineer, Madras Port Trust, where it was put to work.

This article has been adapted for use here from Aveling-Barford's house magazine – Aveling-Barford News, Vol.2 No.2.



Another later design of Aveling-Barford roller – the TR tandem – is seen at work in Madras, now Chennai.

Letters

Rolling Issue 196, page 18, The Transport Shed

The road roller mentioned is not a Marshall, but an Eddison-liveried Eddimatic Torque Range; in fact the original Eddimatic, built in the old Belton Works at Grantham, the registration LCT 650. Thanks to my recent cataract surgery, I was able to make out the Letters!

Turning to 'A Century of Service' page 32, there she is in bare hull form, herein lies the story.

During the late 1940s, Eddison decided to scrap around 60 steam rollers and replace them with post-war motor rollers. These rollers all relied upon conventional clutch systems and gear transmissions, and it seemed to Eddisons that the post-war diesels were over engineered and difficult to access for maintenance. Compared with the robust simplicity of Aveling Barford DX and DYs, these modern rollers compared badly! With this in mind, the company began to research the ideal general purpose road roller.

While carrying out this research, the engineers discovered Brockhouse had produced the prototype of a converter for use with the Ford four cylinder diesel. The result was both the engine and converter were adopted for this new Eddison road roller, removing the complications of clutch and gearbox, final drive being through a differential by spur pinion on the driving pinion on to a driving ring on each real wheel.

Experiments with the construction of this prototype continued in Eddison's Belton Works during 1955. By March 1957, the company board approved it was ready to be shown to the trade and press at the Belton headquarters. Ideas had been put to practical tests on the prototype, some discarded or modified, problems discussed and solved on the workshop floor. The reward for this trial and error came when the first roller was ready for testing; it performed admirably and required little modification.

Interest in the new roller led Eddison to look for a manufacturer to build the machine. The choice fell to Thomas Green & Son of Leeds. At the end of May 1957, Greens received formal instructions to put in hand the first eight production rollers for delivery by the end of 1957 and a further twenty by the end of March 1959. By the end of 1962 Eddimatic strength had grown to 200. What was the final total!

The Eddimatic roller was the first British road roller to go into production with a torque converter in place of a traditional gearbox drive.

Eddie Valentine

Steam roller SC7488 mentioned in spring 2024 'Rolling'.

I wonder if our readers would be interested to know that this roller is a film star and appeared in the 1969 film 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' in a scene filmed in Edinburgh City centre.

I've still to see it myself; hopefully soon, perhaps.

Andy Porteous



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, or phone on 01483 274855.

Thank you.

*A scene from a 1980s Cornish rally (sorry, we don't have the details) which shows a pair of Fowler DNB rollers, both with Cornish registrations. On the left is No. 18075, Britannia, and alongside is No. 19205, Lady Gwen. **Vintage Spirit magazine Archive***

