

TRACTION ENGINES PRESERVATION AND POWER

Paul Stratford

It was Kent farmer Thomas Aveling who in 1859 modified a portable engine to create a self-moving agricultural engine that became the forerunner of the steam traction engine that we know today. The partnership of Thomas Aveling and Richard Thomas Porter in 1862 became known as Aveling & Porter, a company which went on to produce not only traction and ploughing engines but of course steam rollers – altogether more than all other UK manufacturers combined.

Whilst steam railway locomotives lasted in revenue-earning service on the national network until 1968, the demise of the steam traction engine began many decades before with the introduction of the internal-combustion-engined lorry and farm tractor, the steam roller and the odd pair of ploughing engines lasting in service little beyond the 1950s.

It is remarkable that unlike so many of our historical artifacts which are preserved and displayed in museums, the vast majority of steam traction engines are owned and maintained by private individuals and enthusiasts, but for whom our industrial steam heritage would be much the poorer. These enthusiasts have purchased, restored, maintained and preserved traction engines as an important part of our heritage. In addition to conserving these engines they are also preserving not only the techniques needed to safely run them, but also the engineering and boiler-making experience required to maintain these engines both for the present and for future generations.

In this fabulous new collection of images, Paul Stratford has captured the magnificence of these superb machines, often in settings that look much the same as they did fifty or a hundred years ago. He evokes an atmosphere of a happier time when faith in British engineering and pride in skilled work well done were hallmarks of working life, and when the pounding of these stupendous mechanical beasts was a regular occurrence in the fields, fairs and highways of England.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Stratford was born and has lived his whole life in Warwickshire. From an early age he has always had an interest in steam railways, which began with the Stratford and Midland Junction Railway, which ran close to his home village. Latterly he has travelled extensively both in the UK and Worldwide photographing working steam railways before turning his attentions to not only photographing, but also restoring and driving traction engines. Having an affinity with the owners has enabled the author to position engines in many and varied photogenic locations.

After becoming a volunteer in the steam locomotive department at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway he has subsequently qualified as a fireman and now has ambitions to become a driver. His previous book for Halsgrove, *Classic Traction Engines* was published in 2010.

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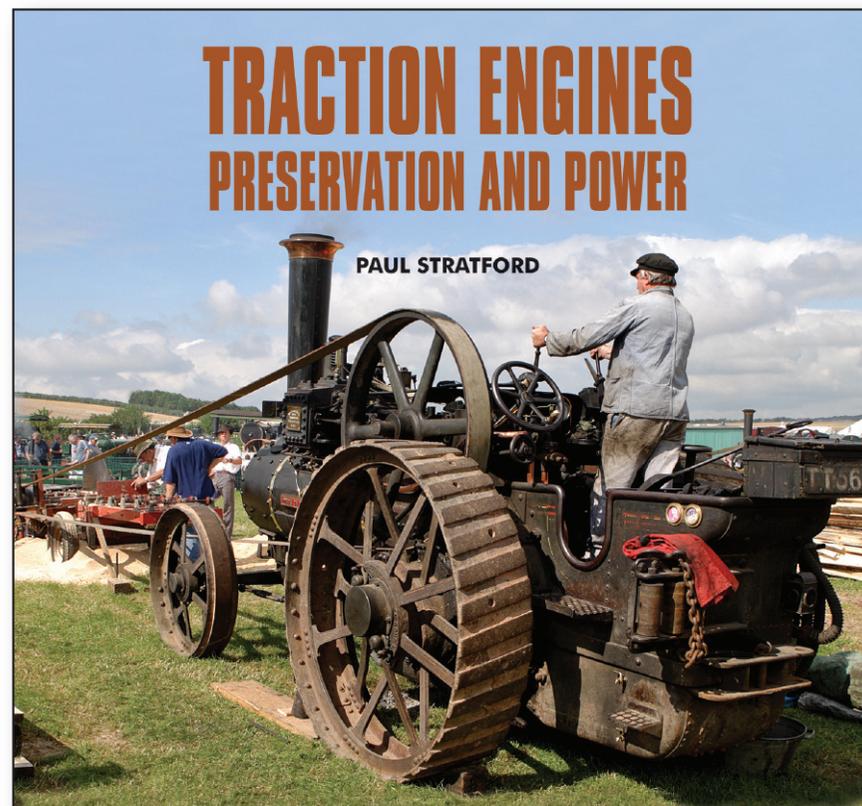
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TRACTION ENGINES: PRESERVATION AND POWER



Above: Preserved in the border town of Messina, South Africa, is Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies Portable Engine 36119 built in 1925.

Below: Example of a double-page spread.



The engine line at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway Vintage Rally held at Cheltenham Racecourse is headed by Marshall Traction Engine 'The Abbot' No. 28923 built in 1897.



The successful line of Burnell Single Cowl Compound No. 2426 built in 1901 are seen here against the backdrop of the Worcestershire countryside.



Top: Built in 1920 by Tasker in Andover as a light tractor No. 1822, the engine was converted to showman's specification in 1928. Now named 'Little Jim 11' the engine is seen at an end of season road run in Clanfield, Oxfordshire.

Above: Fowler and Road Locomotives are synonymous. This 6NHP class A4 example No. 9279 'Kitchener' built in 1902 passed through several owners in its working life, including the renowned Norman E. Box Ltd.



The second oldest preserved Fowler engine in the UK, 'Margaret', a single cylinder 12NHP ploughing engine built in 1870.



Having passed under the 32 arch viaduct on the Sudbury Line in Essex, Marshall Slide Valve 10 Ton Roller No. 74399 built in 1921 heads for the East Anglian Railway Museum at Chappel and Wakes Colne railway station.