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No 268

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Good mix of weather and exhibits at Great North Fair



Alex Hayward's 1893 Marshall (and Marshall living van) prepare for duty outside the Regional Museums Store. ANTHONY COULLS

BEAMISH'S annual Great North Steam Fair is now established in this spring slot of mid-April and is a worthy season-opener for many in

the north, held from April 12-15, writes Anthony Coulls.

Growing bigger and better each year, the organising team always



A recent restoration in the form of Aveling & Porter No 10921 of 1924 *Julia*. DAVID WARREN



Foden No 13218 of 1929 *Cestria* and newly recommissioned open top ex-Blackpool tram No 233, the latter enjoying good loadings from visitors. DAVID WARREN



Henry Netherway's Foden basks in spring sunshine in the colliery yard as a narrow gauge loco passes in the background. ANTHONY COULLS

manages to pull some new rabbits out of the hat, led by dynamic transport curator, Paul Jarman. This year was no exception, and along with the usual complement of road steam, site traffic on the roads was augmented by more vintage cars, commercials and a superb array of vintage belt-driven motorcycles – the action never ceased from doors opening to public closing.

While under a mixture of sunshine, rain and hail, the crowds came out and enjoyed the spectacle of working steam in the landscape.

Down in the colliery area, a complete 2ft gauge railway system was laid out, and two steam locos and a Baguley petrol engine were taking their turn on demonstration trains.

Many of the road engines were either locals or regulars, but several noteworthy machines caught my eye – Trevor Wrench's Clayton & Shuttleworth traction engine, new to Lanchester and making a return

in preservation; Fowler crane engine *Duke of York* making its impressive presence felt; Alex Hayward's venerable Marshall traction engine with its set back perch bracket came down from the Borders and Henry Netherway's beautiful five ton Foden steam wagon. I was particularly pleased to see the latter as some 15 years ago I first saw it as a boiler unit with smashed cylinders stored in the Beamish colliery area when Jim Rees owned it. Now rebuilt, it is a joy to behold and fitted in with its surroundings perfectly.

Another newcomer came in the form of Aveling & Porter eight ton roller No 10921 of 1924 *Julia*, which recently returned from a major overhaul and ex-Bishop Auckland RDC.

I understand that visitor numbers were high – certainly all buses and trams looked full each time I saw one; how will the team top this year? We'll have to wait and see!



Visiting tram Birkenhead No 20 of 1900 rounds the corner of the townscape at Beamish. It is owned by Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society and housed at Wirral Transport Museum. STUART CHAPMAN

The Beamish 'home fleet'

With Beamish Museum now pledging that the first weekend of each month will have 'extra road steam guaranteed' in addition to published events, transport curator Paul Jarman talks **Alan Barnes** through the 'home fleet'.

If you had to choose a location where traction engines could be steamed and have the freedom to roam in a period location then Beamish Museum would be somewhere near the top of the list. As well as owning engines itself, the museum also provides a regular home for several other traction engines. With Beamish as their base the owners of these engines know that their machines will not only be kept in secure and covered accommodation but that they will also have access to the maintenance and workshop facilities if the need arises.

Paul Jarman, transport curator at Beamish, is enthusiastic about the increasing number of steam powered exhibits which can be seen during the events and rallies held during the year. This is in marked contrast to only a few years ago when this museum sometimes came in for some criticism due to the lack of regular road steam. With a new steaming season now upon us it is perhaps an opportune moment to highlight some of the exhibits which are now considered to be the steam 'Home Fleet' at Beamish.

As Paul explained: "The 'Home Fleet' is the term we have come to use when referring to those engines which are often, although not

exclusively, based at Beamish for most of the year. In addition there are several others which come and go throughout the rally season – often laying over here for events and putting in additional appearances around the town as the opportunity arises."

The whole thing really came about in 2009 when I arranged an ad-hoc steam weekend over September 26-28 and which starred the visiting railway locomotives Furness Railway No 20 and *Bellerophon* – along with one of Mike Sutcliffe's restored Leyland buses and Michael Davison's newly restored 1889 Marshall traction engine No 17134 *Mary Margaret*.

The single cylinder traction engine had made its first public appearance the weekend before at Locomotion – the

National Railway Museum at Shildon, following a total reconstruction carried out by George Hudson. When newly built this Marshall had been exhibited at the Royal Agricultural Show at Windsor before being delivered to JR Barley, a firm of threshing contractors in Thirsk.

After life in North Yorkshire as a contractor's engine it eventually found its way into preservation although by that time it was in a very derelict state. I had met Michael at the Shildon event and I hoped that he would be able to bring his magnificently restored engine to our weekend. At that time Beamish was coming out of a period of change and with the support of a new director the transport aspects were beginning to receive a great deal of attention. I was able to develop various ideas for events as well as for bringing to life the railways and road steam performance at the museum.

Through Michael, I came to know the rest of the group which has informally become known as 'SODEM 2' (South Durham Enginenemen) and very soon we saw a small nucleus of engines coming to be based at Beamish. The opportunity to keep engines

"The owners of the engines have somewhere safe to keep them and a 'playground' in which to enjoy them"





Rambler was purchased for preservation by the late Eric Holland and spent many years based at Haverthwaite station. TERRY PINNEGAR



Guy Rutter keeps his 6-ton Wallis & Stevens 'Advance' road roller No 7861 of 1926 at Beamish. BEAMISH

under cover in secure buildings and use them on our two-mile road system without harassment from modern traffic was obviously a big attraction.

The general 'swing' of the site on a busy day is quite intoxicating and the recent opening of the chip shop seems to have reinforced the popularity of days out when steam is on the menu.

It was thanks to Vincent Allen, who was assembling our 1871 steam locomotive *Coffee Pot No 1* at the time, that Neil Corner's Burrell showman's road locomotive No 3909 of 1922 *Winston Churchill* has come to spend a lot of time here. This engine was supplied new to A Holland of Swadlincote, Derbyshire and originally carried the name *Pride of the Road* and was renamed when it entered preservation. >



Fowler road roller No 18877 of 1931 *Rambler* was purchased two years ago by Beamish from Guy Rutter. TERRY PINNEGAR



The Wallis 'Advance' outside Barclays Bank. Marshall traction engine *Mary Margaret* (behind) looks like she took a short cut to get to town. BEAMISH



Marshall No 17134 of 1889 *Mary Margaret* moves the threshing and baling machines to their next demonstration site. TERRY PINNEGAR



Mary Margaret at the locomotive works. BEAMISH



Mark Sutherland has, at times, kept his Wallis & Stevens traction engine No 7769 of 1923 *Greenwell* at the museum. TERRY PINNEGAR



Another engine named *Rambler* at Beamish comes in the form of Clayton & Shuttleworth No 48215 of 1919, owned by Trevor Wrench. BEAMISH



Clayton No 48215 belted to the museum's 1924 Winget No 2 stone crusher. TERRY PINNEGAR

Mark Sutherland has, at times, kept his Wallis & Stevens traction engine No 7769 of 1923 *Greenwell* at the museum and we also currently have Clayton & Shuttleworth traction engine No 48215 of 1919 *Rambler*, owned by Trevor Wrench. He is busy at the moment with the rebuilding of the boiler for the museum's 1913 Ruston Proctor colonial style portable engine. His Clayton

was originally used quite locally to Beamish, at nearby Lanchester although now it is normally based in Suffolk.

Guy Rutter came to Beamish with his Fowler DNA road roller No 18877 of 1931 *Rambler* a couple of years ago and we were so taken with the engine that we eventually arranged to buy it from him. This 10-ton roller spent its working days in West

Yorkshire and was bought for preservation by the late Eric Holland and spent many years based at Haverthwaite station in Cumbria. Guy also keeps his six ton Wallis 'Advance' road roller No 7861 here and visitors will often see his Lightweight Super Sentinel steam waggon No 1465 steaming around our road system.

He said arrangements with engine owners



Neil Corner's Burrell showman's road locomotive No 3909 of 1922 *Winston Churchill* spends much of its time at Beamish. TERRY PINNEGAR



Supplied new to A Holland of Swadlincote, Derbyshire, No 3909 originally carried the name *Pride of the Road* and was renamed *Winston Churchill* when it entered preservation. BEAMISH



Regularly seen in steam at Beamish are the three-abreast Savage Gallopers of 1893, purchased from the Ayers family in 2009. The family had owned them for 116 years. TERRY PINNEGAR

were kept as informal as possible, with the 'regulars' being signed up as museum volunteers and allowed the freedom to roam.

They are fully conversant with the operation of the site, the behaviour of the trams, the horses and many other site activities. This works very well from both sides and is a direct result of keeping it simple and restricting the number of such arrangements that we have. The result is regular road steam, threshing, sawing or stone crushing performances alongside Beamish's own exhibits and staff. The owners of the engines have somewhere safe to keep them and a 'playground' in which to enjoy them. Guy's Sentinel has certainly expanded the size of this playground and when here is often seen thundering around.

The museum is extremely grateful that the respective owners and volunteers feel so able to support Beamish and give up so much of their time and it is thanks to their sterling efforts over the past three years that steam has become such an established part of the museum operation. Current plans to develop engineering and timber workshops will hopefully repay this commitment by making the facilities available to them and another short term project under discussion is to create a 'steam contractors' yard'.

This will provide a typical setting for the 'Home Fleet' as well as for visiting engines and associated equipment and will provide improved access for a larger number of visitors to enjoy the engines here.

More often than not there will be additional steam performances on most weekends in the high season but we have recently decided to make the first weekend of the month a feature of the calendar in terms of additional steam and transport attractions which will be in action.

While road steam in action will always impress visitors, Beamish also has some notable static steam exhibits. Work to restore a Ruston Proctor portable is under way although it will be a while before this will be seen in steam. No 47319 was supplied to Ruston's South American agent Saavedra, Bernard & Co in 1913 and was one of a number of engines brought back to the UK by Tuxfords. It was bought by the museum in 2009 and while it does need



The engine most frequently to be found in steam is this 1855 Crowther of Newcastle vertical winding engine, originally sited at Beamish No 2 pit, which closed in 1962. BEAMISH

extensive restoration it has the advantage of being a wood burner which fits with the museum's plan to better utilise its 120 acres of woodland resources. While it may be some time before this engine burns anything at all there are two notable and historically important engines which visitors can see in steam.

The engine which is, undoubtedly, most frequently in steam is the winding engine which can be found in the colliery. The Crowther vertical steam winding engine dates from 1855 and was originally sited at the Beamish No 2 pit which was closed in 1962. The engine was relocated and rebuilt at the museum where it is well maintained and can be seen in steam on most days. This engine was the last of the big Crowther winding engines to work in County Durham and was developed from the design for an improved vertical engine which had no beam and which was patented by Phineas Crowther of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1800. This type of engine was widely used in collieries throughout England.

Also regularly in steam is another static



Powering the Gallopers is Savage centre engine No 627 of 1895 *May Queen*, restored after arriving at Beamish and steamed for the first time since the 1940s. The organ was also completely restored. TERRY PINNEGAR



Guy Rutter's Lightweight Super Sentinel No 1465 (featured last issue) arrives at Beamish and enjoys steaming around the road system. TERRY PINNEGAR



Currently in works at Beamish is Ruston Proctor portable No 47319, supplied to South America in 1913 and returned to the UK by Tuxfords. BEAMISH

engine which powers the set of fairground gallopers which the museum bought from the Ayers family in 2009. The three abreast Steam Gallopers built by Savage of King's Lynn in 1893 is powered by Savage engine No 627 of 1895 *May Queen*. The ride is of the highest standard with each of the horses individually painted and named and when operating the musical accompaniment comes from an 87-key Gavioli organ.

The carousel is known as the Sally Beach set and was owned by the Ayers family for 116 years. It is one of the most original sets to survive. The organ has also been completely restored since its arrival at Beamish, as has the engine, which has been returned to working condition.

It is good to see that the profile of steam power at Beamish is being raised. Achieving a balance with the variety of transport exhibits will be the key to success and we are sure that the efforts made by the team at Beamish Museum will soon be rewarded with increasing numbers of visitors through the gates. ♦