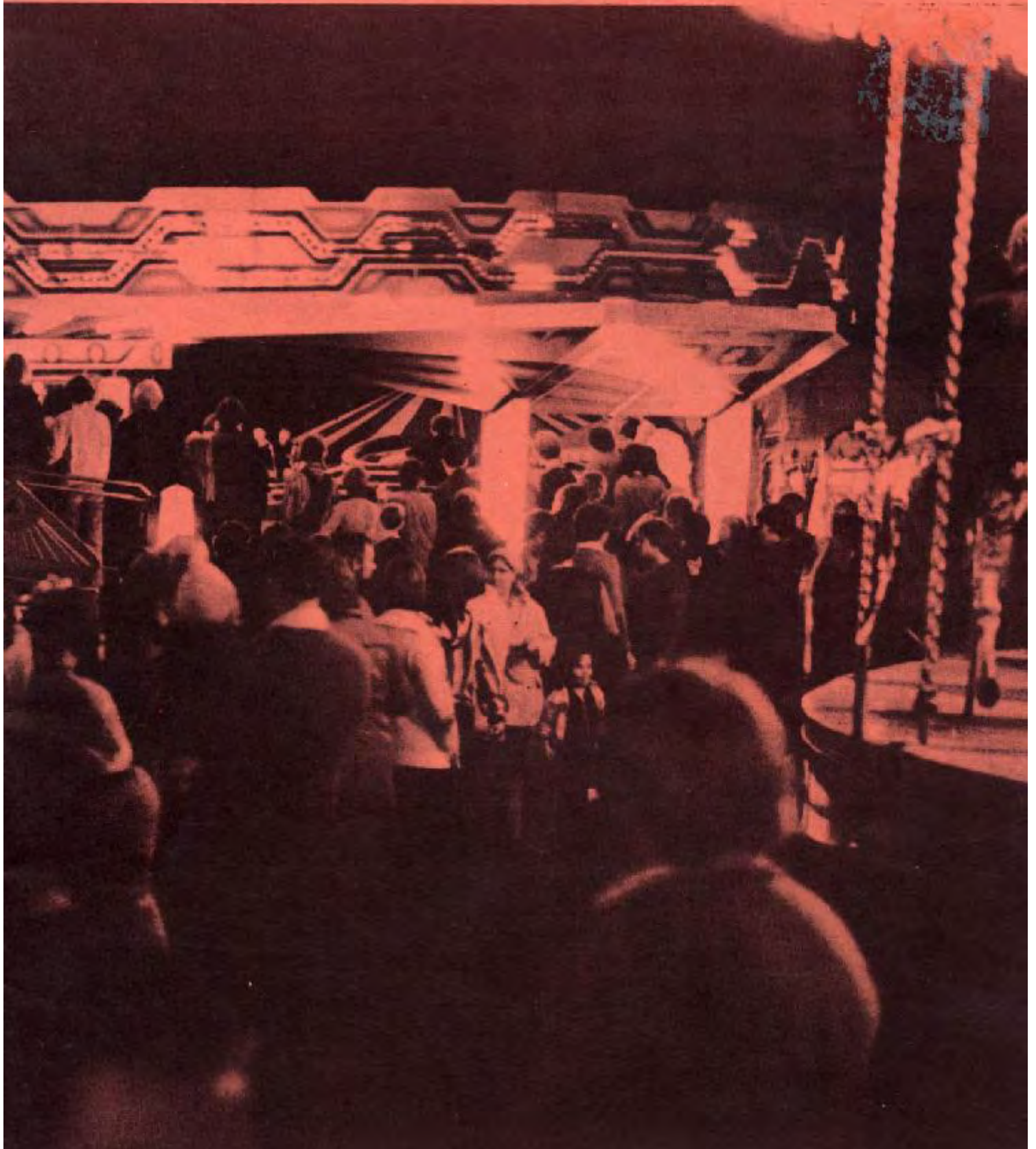


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# THE FAIRGROUND **MERCURY**

The Journal of the Fairground Association Vol. 3 No. 3 Autumn 1980



# Editorial

With most enthusiasts' (and showmen's) fairgoing activities at their usual autumnal peak we have scaled down this issue slightly in order to enable it to be produced quickly at a time when we are all very busy. Any short measure will be more than made up in our bumper Christmas edition.

By the time most of you will have received this copy the run of Midland Mops will be in full swing. This year we can take particular pleasure from the fact that the holding of this year's Tewkesbury Mop owes not a little to the efforts of our local members, Bill Treen and Phil Herrott, not forgetting of course our veteran colleague Bill Wilkins. When Bill and Phil heard of the dispute over rent which threatened the Mop they immediately contacted their local 'papers to make the story available to all. The support for the fair gained by this publicity did much to help persuade the local council to reach an agreement with the showmen.

The happy conclusion to this story has in it a lesson for all: if your local fair is threatened—from whatever quarter—let the press hear about it. Local newspapers are always on the look out for 'good stories' and if you can put across the showman's case you'll be surprised at the public's reaction. Most people like fairs and, given some encouragement, will be prepared to say so. And there's nothing more likely to make a local council think carefully about its actions than the expression of popular opinion.

## Cover

Out of this world! Bob Wilson & Sons' brand-new Turnagain Space City Waltzer on the second night of its debut fair, Witney Feast, September 16, 1980.

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For all those who sometimes wonder where to address their subscriptions/magazine contributions/orders we include a list of the appropriate officers on this page and where to contact them. Note we

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# END OF ERA

Of all the machines that have changed hands during the last quarter none can perhaps claim a greater record of service in one family's ownership than the subject of our first article. Rod Spooner, who has known this ride since his earliest fairgoing days, records the end of an era—and the start of a new one.

With the conclusion of the Headless Cross Cherry Wake Fair at Redditch on Saturday, July 19th, 1980, a riding machine which had been owned by one family for forty eight years, the Wilson's of Redditch Waltzer, was dismantled and delivered to its new owner, Mr Alfie Gess.



In 1932 Frank Wilson, the present Tom Wilson's Grandfather, accompanied Mr William (Rodeo) Wilson to the Continent to purchase a new novelty ride. William Wilson was already travelling a Noah's Ark and Frank, having seen this, decided this was the ride to replace his three-abreast Gallopers. The machine was brought to Redditch, built up in the Royal Yard and started up, only to turn round anti-clockwise! This was remedied and the ride was soon a great novelty on the run of fairs which included, Stourport, Aston Whit (Birmingham), Redditch Carnival, The Cherry Wake, Oxford St Giles, Stratford Mop, Warwick Mop, and Aston Onion Fair.

The mounts supplied with the ride were very rough carved animals, and these were later replaced by a more professional set, the outside row later being replaced by motor cycles. Every Friday and Saturday evening during the 1939-45 war, this ride with the Dodgems opened in the Royal Yard the winter quarters of the Wilson family. I spent many happy Saturday evenings there in my youth, and met a number of local girls through riding on the Ark. . . .

The ride was converted to a Waltzer in the early 1950's, and at this time the ride was redecorated with a theme of Spanish dancers. Some eight years ago another new set of front and side boards were made and decorated during the winter by two local Redditch scenic artists. Two years ago the front was redecorated by Windsor Studio of Redditch. The ride has undergone many other changes during the last few years including a new paybox built by Supercars (of Warwick), new platforms built by Onsite, (Harry Wigfield's enterprise), and only recently, a complete rebuild of the centre gearing, etc., by Jacksons of Congleton.

*(overleaf) The Waltzer with Spanish front, Headless Cross Cherry Wake, July 1952. (Rod Spooner).*

*(below) The Ark in its original form at the Birmingham Blackpool Week Fair, Edgbaston Reservoir, 5.8.33. (The Wilkins Collection).*



During the years I have known this ride there have been various changes in the transport. Pre-war it packed on a flat truck (carrying gates, platforms, etc.), and a box truck (carrying the mounts, scenery, top frame, steps, and hand rails, etc.). The two wheel centre was towed behind an ex-World War I Tilling-Stevens lorry whilst the two trucks with the four dodgem trucks made up the two loads of the Burrell showman's engines 'Queen Mary' and 'King George V'. These engines were laid aside in 1948 and three ex-W.D. A.E.C. Matador Gun tractors were purchased. In addition, I can remember a Scammell chain drive tractor in use for a few years.

When the ride was converted to a Waltzer it created an extra load as the cars travelled on a flat truck. This meant doing a double with one load. The box truck was still retained although it was not used to capacity. The next change was an eight-wheeler Maudsley lorry which carried the cars on the top deck and the platforms on the bottom doing away with two trucks. This was later replaced by the Mickey Mouse Foden which we know today. Eventually the box truck was broken up, (although the chassis was shortened and is still in use with the sets) and a six-wheel Leyland (ex Bob Wilson) was brought in to carry the platforms, and gates, whilst the Foden was boxed-in to carry the cars on top, with the scenery, trams, hand rails, steps etc. in the bottom.

One of the Matadors is still in service to this day with a 'Kip body' fitted and still towing two loads—a very useful tool on wet grounds.

And so at St Giles Fair 1980 Tom Wilson took delivery of the Bob Wilson Maxwell Spinning Top Waltzer which may serve the family for a further forty eight years, but unfortunately many of us will not be alive to see if this is so.

Rod Spooner

*AEC Matador 'Queen Mary' with box truck, Waltzer car truck and two-wheel generator, Alcester Mop, October 1953. (Rod Spooner).*



# LITTLE & BIG MOP

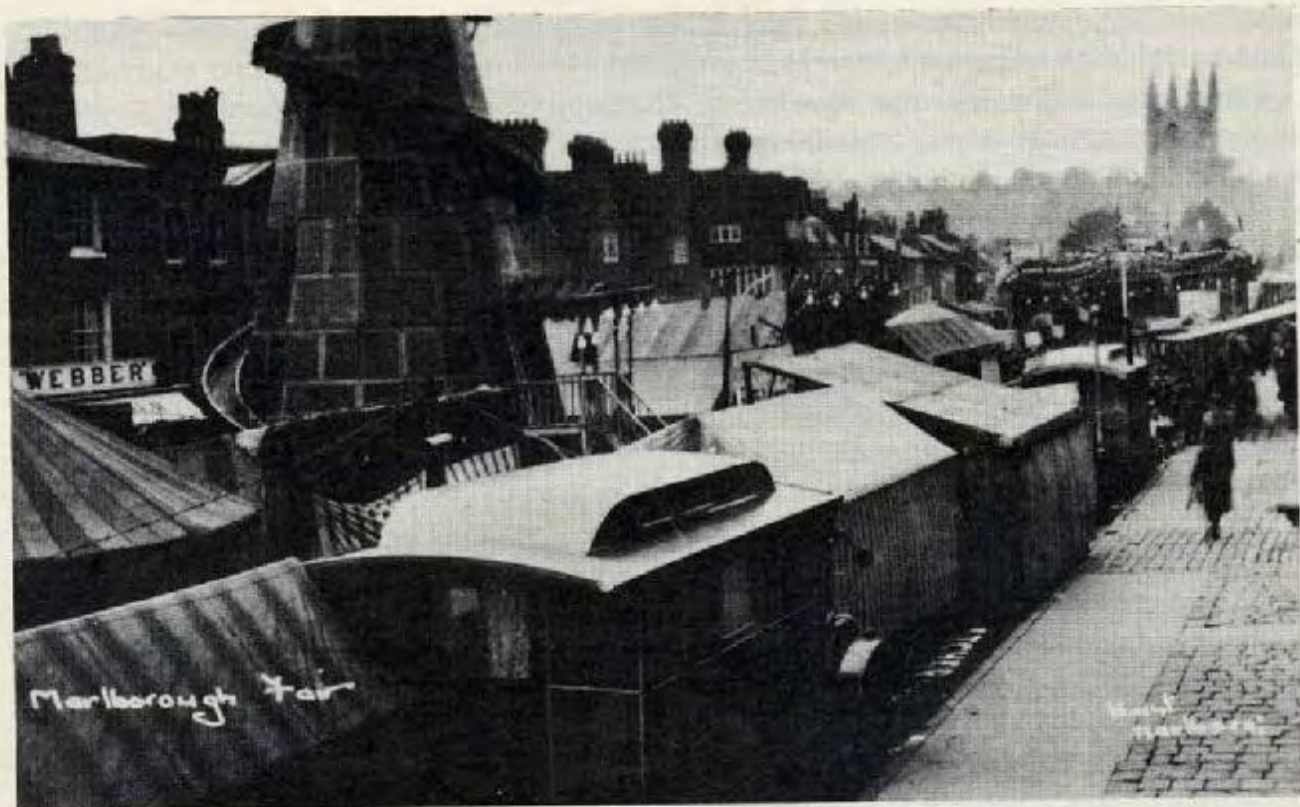
The Mop Fairs, those strangely-named events peculiar to an area of the Midlands and the West Country that extends from Kings Norton in the north to Salisbury in the south, are once again with us. Alf Johnson chronicles the seasonal goings-on in his home town where the traditional pattern of two Mops (the second known in some areas as the 'Runaway Mop') still survives.

The ancient Wiltshire market town of Marlborough, for many centuries well known as a stopping place on the main road from London to Bath, is proud of its noble High Street, with its varied architecture, one of the widest in England. This gently curving, but rather sloping thoroughfare, the scene of a great fire in 1953, is the setting for the town's two Annual Mop Fairs. These are held on the Saturdays before and after October 11th each year, and are known as Little Mop and Big Mop.

Marlborough has had several Charters granted to it, the first dating back to 1204, but none of these makes any reference to an October event. Exactly when, or even where the Mops started is a matter of some guesswork, because local historians have been unable to find any references to them in the Council records before 1831. It is therefore generally accepted that they originated as small hiring occasions and then gradually grew into the large pleasure fairs as they are known now. In his history of Marlborough of 1854, Waylen mentions only one Mop or Hiring Fair, this being held on October 14th. As the town is in the centre of a farming area it is probable that the farm labourers used to come to the street after the harvest each year to obtain employment for the following season.

The rights of the fairs were once owned by the nearby Savernake Estates until 1931 when they were purchased by the then Town Council. The Mops were then organised by this body until the early 1950's when the administration was taken over by the Western Section of the Showmen's Guild. These events are now claimed to be the largest street fairs in Wiltshire.

When trying to describe the earlier fairs, it is somewhat difficult to establish exactly when the older machines used to appear and where they used to stand. Local knowledge is somewhat vague because personal memories of the older generation are not always too precise. The information available is not too clear as to which machines were brought by which showmen and of course photographs of the older Mops are quite scarce. However, it would seem that the town saw quite a large variety of the older rides which were brought to Marlborough by the well known riding masters of the day. It seems that Jacob Studt as well as other members of the Studt family attended with a variety of machines from time to time, whilst other well known visitors were Hill's with their 4-abreast and Scenic, Cole's Flip-Flap and Gallopers, Edwards' Gallopers and Jennings' Horses and Whales. The cinematograph shows of Taylor's and Dooners', Wombwell's Menagerie and Chipperfield's Shows are other names which spring to mind from the local residents. Names of other owners are quite obscure, but it must be presumed that many other machines such as the Cakewalk and the Chair-O-Planes must have been in this High Street in the years before the Second World War. Naturally, accompanying these attractions must have been quite a selection of well known engines and organs, many of which might well be in the hands of preservationists today. There is no doubt that this town



*Circa 1930. Above: The Helter Skelter is believed to have been owned by one of the Ayers family. The front boards on the show in the background declare: 'Miss Rosie Purchase with the late Capt. Purchase's Lions'. Below: R. Edwards and Sons' square-ended Dodgems (front) and Gallopers with Jennings' Wonderful Whales at the rear. (Hunt's Studio).*



must have seen some memorable fairs in the past, with the Showland world regarding Marlborough with some considerable importance.

The period after the war saw many changes, with the older machines gradually disappearing and the newer ones taking their place. By this time Messrs. R. Edwards of Swindon and Messrs. Jennings of Devizes had established themselves as principal riding masters at the Mops. An Ark, Dodgems and later an Octopus was supplied by the Jennings family, whilst the Swindon travellers brought their Dodgems, Ark and Speedway, this latter machine eventually being replaced by their Swirl. A set of Gallopers attended as late as the mid-fifties, and a Wall-of-Death, presumably Messhams, occupied a site several times. Also making appearances at different fairs was a Caterpillar, (Green's?), a 3rd Dodgem, a Cakewalk, Ghost Train, 2 Helter Skelters, Chairs and a 3rd Noahs Ark, all of which were brought by seemingly anonymous owners. Codona's Jets, Stokes' Big Wheel, Butlin's Slide and Wynn's Rotor are other attractions which come to mind.

Although from time to time there had been the usual complaints about the fair, mainly for traffic reasons, it was not until 1966 that the first serious threat faced the Mops. Following a near tragic fire in the High Street there followed a series of meetings between the various authorities concerned and the Showmens Guild representatives, the result being that the living vans and trailers were to stay on the Common, instead of coming into the street. This move did not satisfy all concerned, and the next year (1967) saw the entire fair moved into the centre of the road, thus leaving clearways all round for the access of any emergency vehicles. Although this move meant that several Showmen lost their grounds, the authorities seemed to be pleased with the result. The line up of machines for this new look Mop consisted of (starting from the Town Hall end) Percy Rogers' Big Wheel, Jennings' Octopus, Ark and Dodgems, R. Edwards & Sons' Skid, Dodgems and Ark, and McKeowen's Boxing Show, with Wynn's Rotor attending for Big Mop only.

*1965 Unknown Ark being erected. Note the living wagons in the street, this was the last year for them to do so. (Alf Johnson).*





After this general upheaval, things remained quiet for a few years until the seventies, when there were several occurrences which had effects on the fairs. Following the trend of other fairs up and down the country, the Guild initiated an official opening ceremony in October 1971, inviting the Mayor and other important officials to attend. This was a move which drew the Guild and Council closer together, although the public took a year or two to accept this idea and even today the numbers present are not as many as would be desired. The ceremony has taken place from the steps of Jennings' Ark every year except one. This year unfortunately, there was one position vacant for little Mop, the Octopus being absent on this occasion. However, this spot was filled by Whitelegg's Trabant for the second Saturday, a move which well pleased the younger people.

By the time the 1972 fairs had arrived the new London to Bristol Motorway had opened, thus relieving the town from a lot of its passing traffic. The people who had been complaining for a number of years about the congestion which had been building up at fair time were of course somewhat deflated by this change.

The change over period during the local government re-organisation (73-4) was awaited with some apprehension, but fortunately any fears soon disappeared when it was realised that the newly formed Kennet District Council were inclined to stay with local traditions. The machine positions at this time were still occupied by the previous mentioned tenants, the only new observation was that Jennings' Ark, which for a few years had been undergoing a modernisation appeared at Big Mop with its new rounding boards in position.

An absentee in 1975 was Edwards' Ark after a long continuous attendance, the firm still bringing their Dodgems and Swirl, whilst the Octopus of Jennings having been sold, its place was taken by their newly acquired Hurricane Jets. Because October 11th fell on a Saturday this year the fairs were two weeks apart, this turning out to be most fortunate for the showmen. The evening of Thursday the 9th saw what was probably the largest fire the town had seen in modern times, a large furniture store near to the site of R. Edwards' & Sons Dodgems being completely destroyed. Some idea of the size of this disaster can be imagined by the fact that no less than 12 fire engines were on the scene and the emergency services were stretched to the limit. Two of the fire engines were still in attendance on the Friday morning when normally the fair would be pulling in. Coming at the time it did was the worst possible thing to happen for the tenants of the Mop. As can be imagined, an emergency meeting of the Council was held within a few days and once again the future of the fairs was in the balance. Had it not been for the superb negotiating powers of the Showmens Guild representatives, 1975 might well have seen the end of Marlborough Mop Fairs. Some re-arrangements were needed to please the Council before the second Mop took place, the general outcome being that one machine position was lost for good. On the brighter side, Michael Philips' Round-Up made its first appearance, replacing Wynn's Rotor.

Following the disaster of 1975, there was a further round of meetings before the fairs of '76 took place, the authorities demanding that firebreaks were set across the street thus making for minor adjustments to the layout. However, before this new plan could be put into effect there was another unpleasant happening a few days before little Mop. The whole town was saddened to hear of the death of Mr Jack Jennings, a much respected figure in Marlborough and a Showman who had been attending the Mops all his life. As a token of respect the firm's 3 big machines did not attend Little Mop, but stayed on their trucks on the Common. The Guild were able to find two replacement machines at short notice, these being J. Rogers' Lifting Paratrooper and J. Stokes Twist. This year also saw McKeowen's Boxing Show at one fair only. Its place being taken at Big Mop by J. Stevens' Tunnel of Love.

William Whitelegg brought his month-old Pollard built Cyclone Twist to Little Mop in 1977, this machine replacing the Jets, whilst another innovation was that Messrs Jennings', Ark, having been converted to a dual purpose ride, appeared in the street as a Waltzer.

At the time, the fairgoers did not know it, but this year was to be the last visit of Percy Rogers' Big Wheel, a machine which had dominated the scene for about 15 years and had become a great favourite with the crowds. Many people felt that a certain amount of atmosphere was lost when 1978 saw the new Round-Up in it's place, but there are hopes that perhaps the wheel might return again one day. This change over meant that there was a similar machine at both ends of the street for Big Mop. The last fair of the

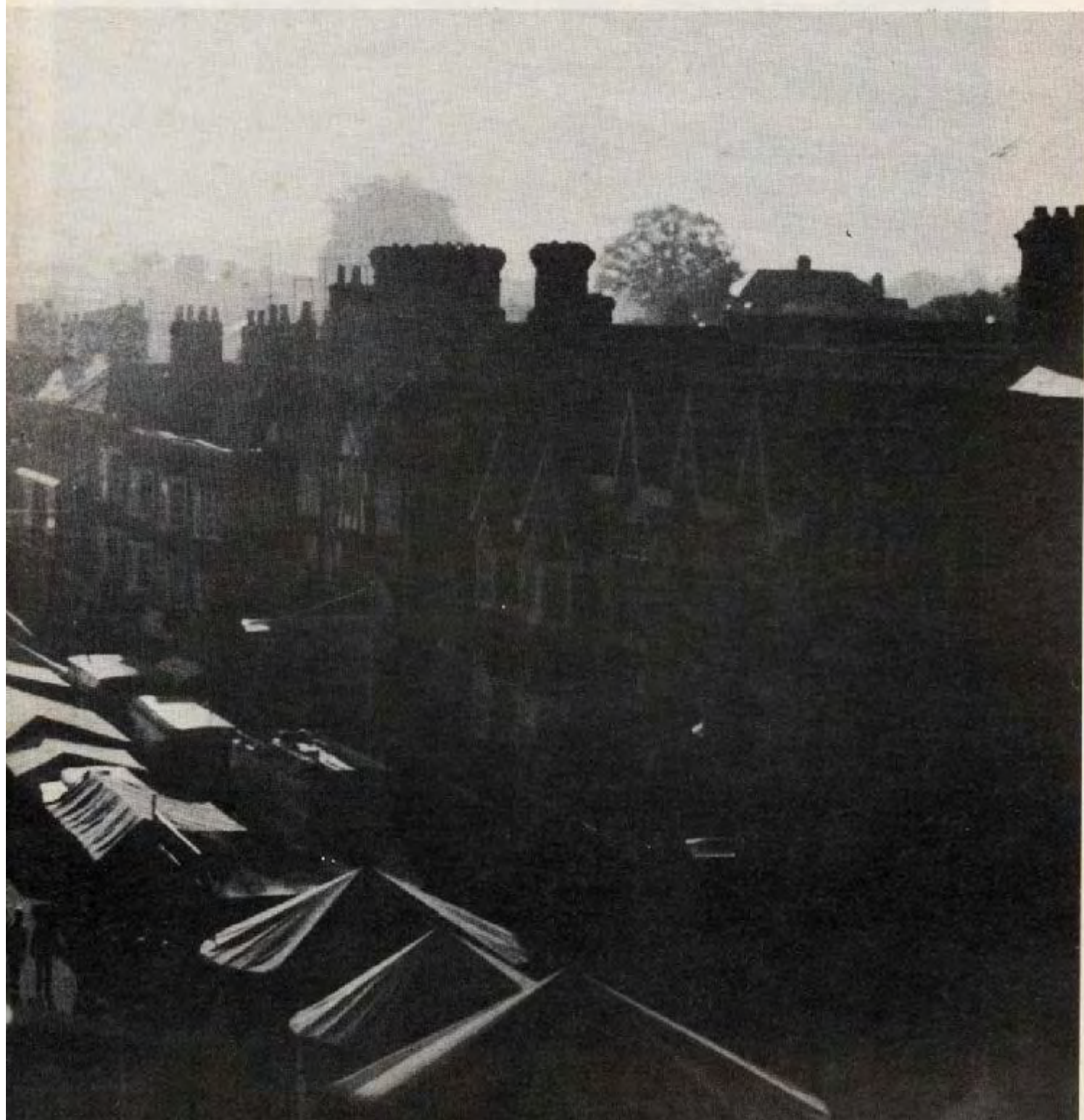
*1965 The view from Percy Rogers' Big Wheel along the broad, curving High Street.*



decade saw one change, this being the first visit of Paul Lucas with his Skyline Slide, thereby giving the '70s more machine changes than had been seen for a long while.

With a pulling in time of 10.30 on the Friday mornings there are not many fairground fans around, but for those fortunate enough to attend, they are assured of a fine array of transport.

The first fairs of the eighties are now rapidly approaching, and it is to be hoped that the present good relations that exist between Council and Guild will continue to prosper. There is no doubt that sooner or later there will be some complaint or other, but these tend to come from newcomers to the town and not from local people. In this respect the Showmen can rest assured that their delegates will look after their interests well. At the present time the Wiltshire County Council are looking at fresh ways of improving traffic



flow and road safety in the street and hopefully any plans will not interfere with the town's traditional big nights of the year. Perhaps with an eye to the future, the fair might eventually see the introduction of a "floating position" as is the procedure at some other big events. Whatever happens, there is no doubt that the people of Marlborough and the surrounding villages will still turn out in large numbers to support the showmen when they present the "Largest Street Fair in Wiltshire".

Alf Johnson

*1965 Messrs Jennings' Ark and Dodgems building up. (Alf Johnson).*



# The Model Tober

## Part 6

In part 2 of this series of articles I explained a simple method of marking out the base of a model, which is the all important step in model construction. Having completed this first task you will be ready to start building.

I would strongly advise modelmakers to construct the working mechanism (driving unit) as a first objective. This is the vital part of the model and possibly the most difficult for anyone with a non-engineering background. I would emphasise this point with the following brief story. A few years ago I was approached by an elderly gentleman at one of the model shows. He produced some photographs of what, at first glance, appeared to be a finely detailed

and authentic looking model of an early Savage Electric Switchback (the type with the massive tapered pillars and heavily corniced roundings). On closer inspection I could see that there were no cars on the model and, indeed, no track for them to run on—just walk platforms covering the whole of the gate area. This gentleman, who was obviously very talented in the matter of ornamental construction and decoration, simply had no idea of how to build a track and operate the cars.

Having built and tested the driving mechanism, which in many cases means the complete centre truck, your next priority should be the building and testing of the remainder of the working

parts. For example, if you are building an Ark or a Waltzer, the moving platform should be your next objective, and to enable you to proceed with this you will first have to make and fit the Sleepers—Gates—and Running Track. Having done this, you should build and assemble the Moving Platform in the following number of stages. (1) Make and anchor the Wheelbars (Swifts) to the centre “Cheese”. (2) Make and fit the platform hinges to the wheelbars. (3) Temporarily connect up the hinges at even spacings using “slave bar strips”. (4) Run the platform and adjust spacings as required. (5) Finally, glue on the platform facings.

The above method of moving platform construction is explained in detail in my “Model Fair Designs” series of plans covering these particular models.

Having completed “all” of the working parts of the model, you can face the rest of its construction, secure in the knowledge that your model will be a successful working exhibit.

The following are a few “Hints and Tips” worth mentioning at this stage.

**Working with wood**—Use a hard grade pencil sharpened to a chisel shaped point for marking out on wood. This will give a thin accurate line.

When drilling holes in wood, first make a depression with a sharp centre punch. Simply use hand pressure, there is no need to use a hammer. To drill a clean hole place the part to be drilled on an odd piece of wood and carefully position the punch mark under the point of the drill. Place an odd piece of plywood on top of the part, hold down firmly and drill through the 3 layers.

For sawing plywood up to 6.5 mm. use fine to medium fretsaw blades. When cutting out the insides of panels, gate frames, handrails, etc., first drill a small hole in one corner. Free one end of the fretsaw blade and thread it through the hole. Re-connect the blade and saw out the

centre part of the panel. Very few model makers can cut to a straight line with any accuracy using a fretsaw so you should always cut slightly to the outside of the line leaving it just visible and then trim back to the line using a sanding block or a fine file.

With parts that have to be “fitted” to the model such as handrail panels, steps, shutters etc., always cut out slightly oversize and then trim the parts back to the correct size and fit using a fine sanding block. For sawing other woods such as Ramin hardwood strips use a junior hacksaw or a razor saw and for very soft woods such as Balsa use a razor saw or a trimming knife.

Avoid making fitted joints too tight where the parts are to be subsequently painted. A perfect joint may not fit together after it has been painted. When making important joints such as in roundings you will find it helpful if you stick a piece of plastic tape on either side of the post before fitting the vertical parts of the frame. This will help to “space” the joint and allow for coats of paint.

**Working with metal**—The cutting of sheet metal components is by no means easy using hand tools but the best results will be obtained if you use a saw. You can of course use tinsmiths snips but these will distort the metal and it will not lie flat. Use a junior hacksaw where possible or a junior hacksaw blade inserted in a fretsaw. When cutting flat components such as platform panels, cut slightly oversize, leaving the scribed line visible and then file to the correct size.

Accurately centre punch all holes before drilling and always keep the punch sharpened correctly. Never “force” a blunt drill through metal or the part will distort. Keep all drills sharpened and use only light pressure for drilling. If you use a drill for counter sinking sharpen to 90 degree point.

Vic King

# Notes

## Way Out West

To the members who were used to seeing me 'pop-up' all over the country at fairs and various social gatherings and might have thought that I had hibernated to some far distant land need not wonder anymore, because I am still around. The fact that my non-appearance at many events this year has not meant the decline in my personal interest in fairs and showland in general, it's simply that like most of us these days, inflation has meant that the pound in my pocket hardly gets me down the bottom of my road, let alone across the motorways of the country. The days when I would think nothing of visiting a couple of fairs, covering around three to four hundred miles are long gone. Anyway, that's enough of my problems, I expect you all have your own to worry about.

To turn to the subject of fairs, one of the busiest times of the year for West Country showmen is the regatta season which always seems to be over before its begun. Only lasting a mere three to four weeks, most of the fairs are only for a few days duration. The South Devon coast is the main area for the regattas, with the season ending up in North Devon at Bideford, just in time for the start of the back-end run beginning at Barnstaple.

For me personally, one sight which always heralds the start of this particular season is seeing the showmen's loads making the arduous haul up 'Telegraph Hill' on the Torbay road from Exeter. Messrs. Anderton & Rowlands No. 1 section make this trip from their last stop at Taunton. Joining them are a great variety of tenants who come from as far a field as Bristol, Southampton

and other parts of the country. Many of these showmen come many miles down just for one or two of the regatta fairs and then are off again back up the country. Also joining up with these loads are T. Whitelegg & Sons Ltd who travel up from Plymouth where they would have been open on 'The Hoe' and before that at Sutton Harbour. They make their way up the A38 to Haldon racecourse and cutting across the top of Haldon Hill join up with the other loads making for the Torbay area. Whiteleggs though, turn off for their visit to my home town of Teignmouth, where both sections join together, the No. 2 section having been at Dawlish the previous week.

Always a welcome visitor from distant parts at Dawlish and the first fair of several visited during the regattas, is Johnny Scott with his immaculate Ghost Train and Fun House. Another well-travelled showman, from the Eastern Counties who brings similar attractions to the area at this time of year is Nipper Appleton with another very well presented Ghost Train, Skyline Slip and his famous shows.

The regatta fairs usually follow this pattern of opening, with Teignmouth on from the second Monday in August for six days duration; Paignton, the second Monday for three days duration; Babbacombe the Friday following Paignton until the Monday (excluding Sunday); Brixham, the Wednesday following Babbacombe and Teignmouth, for three days duration. With an overnight pull-down on the Saturday night and Sunday morning at Brixham the majority of amusements make their way down to the River Dart ferry for the early morning crossing to Dartmouth, with other showmen going on to Torquay. Some showmen actually attend both of these fairs, by having their living trailers taken across the ferry to Dartmouth and coming back to Torquay with their equipment. Torquay is held on the last Monday of August, which is usually the Bank Holiday, for three days duration; and Dartmouth being open in part from the Monday until the Wednesday when the other tenants from Torquay join up to make the full fair from Wednesday until the Saturday. After Dartmouth the amusements split up, the majority going up the length of Devon to

Bideford, others to Mid-Devon and from Torquay the showmen make their way up the Exe Valley for the start of the back-end, there ending one heck of a few weeks even for an on-looker.

Equipment travelling the West Country, known to me this year are as follows: Anderton & Rowland's Maxwell Waltzer, Disco Ark, Nos. 1 & 2 Dodgems; Michael DeVey's Cyclone Twist; Bob Phipps' Octopus; R. Pepper's Dodgems, Speedway Ark and Octopus; David Rowland's New Jackson Waltzer; Arthur James' Big Wheel; Charlotte Whitelegg's Upright Paratrooper; Tommy Rowland's Dodgems; Tommy Kayes' Round-Up and Skyline Slip; Tommy Charles Jnr. Ghost Train; J. Rowland & Sons Dodgems, Big

*Amusements packed in tight at Teignmouth Regatta Fair. In the foreground is Billy Whitelegg's Cyclone Twist with Tommy Rowland's Dodgems behind, taken a couple of years ago before the roundings were decorated by Chris Thomas. (Photo: Teignmouth Post & Gazette).*

Wheel and Noahs Ark and Maurice Rowland's Waltzer. Supplementing the local equipment, during the height of the season is Billy Whitelegg's Cyclone Twist; Johnny Scott's Ghost Train; Nipper Appleton's Ghost Train and Mrs. E. McKeowen's Boxing & Wrestling Show, amongst others.

During the last decade, since in fact I became seriously interested in fairs, the amount of rides travelling the West Country has shown a marked increase in numbers and to the showmens credit the standard of equipment and transport has shown a welcomed improvement, all this despite the economic gloom, and what is more must be all to the good of the business. It is indeed refreshing to see a new generation of showmen prepared to take the time and trouble to make their equipment clean and eye-catching. It is, after all, this very fact which the public at large wants—good clean fun!

By the time this appears I hope to have met up with some of you at a few of the major back end fairs.

Chris Russell



# Truckin' on

A great many newly acquired rides, imported and otherwise, have been appearing up and down the country over the last few months. This has meant quite a few smart lorries and tractors being put into service.

While in Yorkshire in early June I came across Murphys' Paratrooper load which is transported by an Atkinson four wheel tractor (Reg. ALO 395H). While at Horbury I was able to see Marshalls Atkinson tractor (Reg. NFV 973M) with its articulated dodgem plate load. At Pinner in May, it was evident that A. Burgess, B. Coupland and J. Searle have all acquired Meteorites; Burgess' artic load is towed by an A.E.C. tractor (Reg. OHT 699F) and E.R.F. artic (Reg. PKX 375L) pulls B. Couplands ride. J. Searle uses his E.R.F. tractor which came out in early 1979 to tow his Meteorite, this is a very smart vehicle painted mustard and tan and lined out in orange and green (Reg. KGO 453K). Dunwell Pamham on taking delivery of his twist purchased a Foden 80 artic tractor (Reg. WHN 169M) for its transportation.

Other Fodens I have seen are J. Beach 6-wheel tractor C40 cab (Reg. WPH 358G) in use with the Waltzer, and at Newcastle on the

*Bert Stocks' Dennis, Cambridge 22.6.80.  
(Rod Jesson).*

moor was an almost identical tractor unit, that being with Wheatleys Big-wheel (Reg. BGB 742K). Newcastle always gives the transport enthusiast much to see, this years fair being no exception. Wilmots have a new Atkinson (Reg. 761 WRB), replacing an older model. Another Atkinson nearby was Taylors' in use with the Coaster (Reg. RWE 676L). Grahams' coaster lorry, Foden (Reg. EGD 171K) looked very clean and tidy and like all their rides and transport puts many to shame. Further down the line I came across the E.R.F. with Henry Armstrongs' Dodgems (Reg. MNN 347K) which since I last saw this vehicle at Grantham has had a great deal of work done to it.

Ron Taylor can boast a new tractor at the side of his revitalised boxing booth, a Leyland Lynx (Reg. ERO 812K). He certainly backs Britain with three Leyland lorries.

On the way back from Newcastle, I called in at Cambridge, with a new line of extra machines the transport was very close together at the back of the rides and with limited time and dodging the dogs I was able to take a few photographs. Swales Bolesworth transports his Waltzer platforms on a low-loader, the A.E.C. unit has now been replaced by an Atkinson (Reg. JAN 525K). It still awaits painting. T. Whyatt has the first D.A.F. tractor to appear on the grounds this is used with the Swinging Gyms (Reg. OJL 270M). L. Gray transports his Waltzer on an E.R.F. (RNH 471) and the power unit is carried on a





four wheel A.E.C. tractor (Reg. LJE 214L).

It was a sight for sore eyes to see the rare Dennis Jubilant of Bert Stocks (Reg. 80 MAR) which hadn't appeared on Midsummer Common for some years. It is amazing how many old vehicles survive on the grounds, and in my next article, I shall take you over different parts of Britain and from my collection we shall see some very ancient vehicles which all go to make up our fairgrounds.

Rod Jesson

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## Northern

Since the last edition of 'Northern Notes' there has been a few changes to transport and rides in the North-East. On the transport side Billy Crow Jnr. is now using an Atkinson Mk II six wheel artic tractor, (EDC 224K), to transport his Razzle Dazzle ride. The Atkinson has been painted and lettered to a high standard in Crows usual livery and looks a very impressive sight when on the road with its load. The Foden tractor previously used with the Razzle has been retained and given the body and generator from the remaining ERF tractor, which has been withdrawn and now stands with its sister ERF in Crows yard. Also in the yard is the Guy Tractor used by Alan Crow with his artic living trailer, the Guy unfortunately suffered engine failure early on in the season and was replaced by a Foden tractor which has been painted cream and orange to match the living trailer. All the Crow families 'new' vehicles this season have now been lettered as well as the Foden and Seddon put into service last year.

John Culine has renewed his Giant Octopus transport. The Leyland tractor and BMC van have been replaced by a Atkinson tractor, (AUP 170B) and a Bedford TK luton van (FPT 780G). Both vehicles are painted two-tone blue and the Bedford has some useful publicity on its sides in the shape of a painted Octopus. Toogoods are also running an extra vehicle this year, a very smart ERF eight wheel luton van painted maroon to match Toogoods two Atkinsons.

In the last 'Northern Notes' I made the mistake of saying that Alan Turner was using a ERF eight wheel lorry with his Octopus. The ERF (EVK 338D), is in fact owned by Keith Turner and tows his Paratrooper load, Keith also has a smart little Foden tractor. To transport his Octopus Alan Turner has a ERF four wheel tractor (YVK 59H), and a four wheel framed truck. The tractor carries a generator and is eventually to be fitted with a small body, the framed truck is ex-Billy Irwins Swirl and is still covered by a plastic blue sheet carrying the words

'IRVING SWIRL'. A well known enthusiast at present living in Newcastle was fooled by this truck into thinking a Swirl had arrived at the 'Fun to be Young' fair at Newcastle Exhibition Park.

Although not a 'new' vehicle but worthy of a mention in these notes is the impressive ERF eight wheel artic tractor of Newcastle based showman Stanley Reeves. The tractor acquired last year for use with the ex-Crow Bennett Satellite is something of a stranger in the North-East as Stanley attends only a few fairs in this area. One of the features of the tractor is a special luton body enclosing two generators and has living accommodation in the luton, another feature is the very smartly lettered and lined cab. Jon Manders of Amble also uses two very smart tractors with his Skyliner ride, they are identical Scammell 'Routeman' artic tractors. Both are painted a light blue and smartly lettered in yellow and are a credit to their owner.

A 'new' ride travelling the North-East is a smart set of Chair-O-Planes owned by A. Noble. The Chairs feature some unusual 'Odeon' style paintwork and previously travelled Scotland in the ownership of Newtons. For transportation a Leyland tilt cab 'Octopus', (GCN 652G), is used. John Murphy's brand new Maxwell Waltzer cars arrived in time for Newcastle Town Moor, these are an excellent acquisition and complete the up-dating of the Waltzer. The Toogood family have also been busy modernising their Waltzer. The old wooden shutters have been replaced by new ones and painted to match the rounding boards also a set of Maxwell type handrails have been fitted and for the future a set of all-weather shields are to be added to the ride. The Waltzer is of Lakin build and was originally a Ben-Hur Speedway, the ride coming to Toogoods from Will Starr. Toogoods being responsible for converting it to a Waltzer. It's also interesting to note that at one time Toogoods had a Bill Haley Rock & Roll front on the Waltzer. George Crow's Meteorite paybox has been vastly improved by some very nice lettering, the rear of the paybox now asks punters to 'Journey into the Unknown'.

Barry Brown

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## Correction

Owing to a printer's error the date on Philip Bradley's picture of John Biddall's Waltzer gave the year as 1979. As several readers pointed out this made the transformation shown in the second picture (taken in April of this year) even more remarkable. The date of earlier picture should have read 1959. Our apologies for any confusion caused.

# Further facts on Fodens and ERFs

Following my article on the purpose built 1946 ERF and 1938 Foden showmans tractors some interesting information about the tractors has come to light.

The ERF unit, FUP 204 "Winston Churchill" of Bob Wilson's was indeed new to him in 1946 but was very probably built using a 1944 re-conditioned chassis. In 1956 it carried the name "Semper Fidelis". The tractor had "gone" by 1964.

I believed Botton Bros. to have had two of the ERF's, in fact they only had one, FBY 300 "Uno". The other tractor Bottons had was a Foden, ARE 164 "The Atom". The Foden had an enclosed coachbuilt body similar to the ERF and was also painted to match the ERF. One difference between the two tractors was that the Foden was much shorter, it was built using a probably reconditioned 1934/5 chassis. In 1960 the Foden was sold to Traylens but was not used for long.

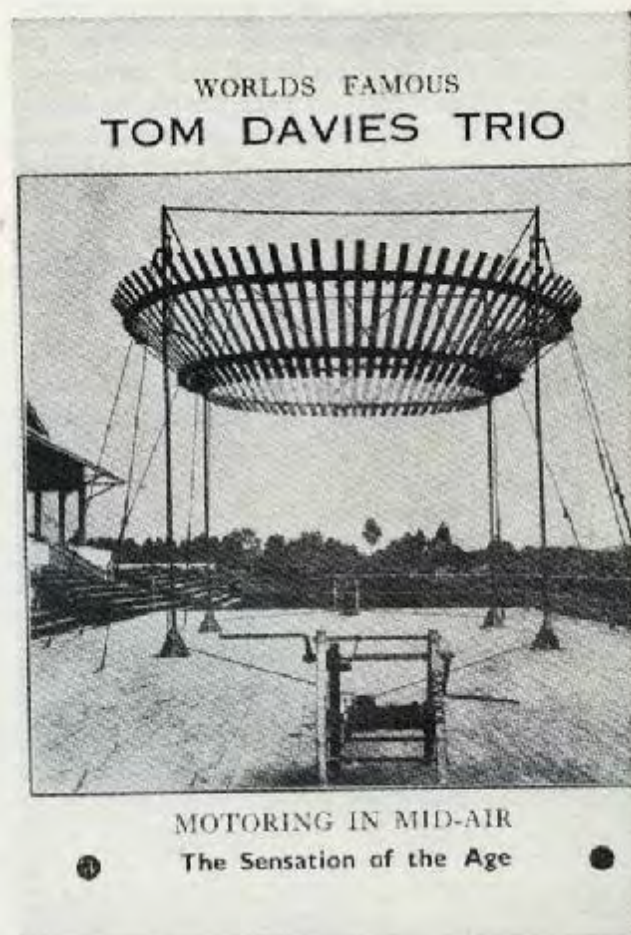
The Foden Tractor, EXO 283 "Essex", new to W. Nichols in 1938 is not as stated in my article unique. Linsey's of South Wales had a similar vehicle, EWN 131 "Lonesome". The tractor was probably new to them.

My thanks to Philip Bradley for passing on the above information.

Barry Brown

## Daredevil mid-air motorists

This season has seen continuing growth in the use of speciality acts in support of fairs and shows. From one of our veteran members, Seth Rogers of Bristol, comes this postcard and the recollection of such an act over forty years ago. Seen at the Bristol Hospital Carnival in 1938, the Tom Davies Trio performed on what they billed as 'The World's Smallest Track'. As Seth recalls it, the riders push started their belt driven Levis bikes and rode on to the chestnut paling-like track which was then winched up the four supporting pillars. Members of the public were invited to ride with Tom Davies seated on a second saddle fitted to a 'T' bar. 'A thrilling experience!' as Seth recorded on the back of the card at the time, having been one of those brave enough to take up the offer. Seth, now 76, has always had a keen interest in this type of daredevil act and reckons the only one he hasn't seen is



Tommy Messham's Wall of Death using a go-kart. Seth would be interested to hear from other members with a similar interest. Please write to him direct at 90 Thornleigh Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 8PJ.

## Small Ads

Members are reminded that all items in the Small Ads column are printed free of charge. Send details of your sales or wants to the editor.

**FOR SALE** Guy Warrior 6 wheel tractor (D reg.) ballasted with concrete. Suitable for restoration and rallying. Only out of service six months. £800.00 o.n.o. Write for appointment to view: Arthur Herbert, Grove Street, Redditch, Wores.

## Diary

Saturday 4 October  
Goose Fair Get-together  
Hyson Green Community Centre  
12.30–5.30 p.m.

Sunday 12 October, 7.00 p.m.  
Stratford Mop Social Evening  
The Wildmoor Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon.  
The hotel is approx. 400 yds beyond the town boundary on the Alcester road (A422). A shuttle service will be run from the town centre fountain to the hotel. For further details ring Rod Spooner, Studley 3869.

October 10–November 1.  
From Cows to Carousels!  
700 years of Neath Fair, an exhibition at the Maritime and Industrial Museum, Swansea.  
10.30 a.m.–5.30 p.m.

### Special day for members

Saturday 18 October: see behind the scenes.

Saturday 15 November  
Model Fair Spectacular  
Town Hall, Loughborough  
Details from Jim Lawson  
Tel: Leicester 609804

Saturday 20 December  
Barton-on-Humber Social Evening at the Coach & Horses. Screetons' Gallopers in steam opp. the pub. All members and friends welcome. Bring your photos and models.  
Details from John Clay  
Tel: Lincoln 791300

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## SALES

## Magazines

Back numbers of magazine currently available:

Volume 1 No. 1, 10; No. 2, 25p; No. 3, 30p.  
Volume 2 No. 2, 40p; No. 3, 40p.  
Volume 3 No. 1, 50p; No. 2, 50p.  
plus 20p p&p per copy.

## Badges

Gilt metal badge in the form of the Association's Mercury motif with fastening suitable for use as lapel badge or tie pin. Price £1.00 plus strong s.a.e.

## Car Stickers

Plastic, size 6" x 4", printed in four colours. 20p each plus s.a.e.

All available from the Sales Officer,  
Paul Angel, 10 Norton Avenue,  
Hereford, HR2 6DN.

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Published by the Fairground Association of Great Britain.

