

## Eden Valley Museum OBJECT OF THE MONTH JUNE 2023

### The Allchin Royal Chester Traction Engine – scale model



EDEV: L95

Currently on long term loan to the museum is a scale model of the Allchin Royal Chester Traction Engine. The model was made by Les Jupp, a former resident of Hilders Lane, Edenbridge, and a skilled engineer employed for many years in the aircraft industry at Gatwick Airport. Work on the model took a period of some 30 years and his friend Dennis Leigh watched the progress over the years, admiring the patience and skill that Les showed. Les passed away some years ago after selling his pride and joy to Dennis Leigh who has kindly loaned it to the museum.



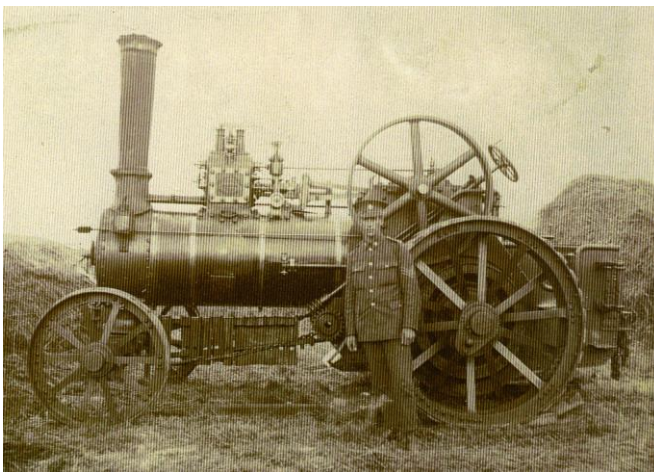
The real Royal Chester, no 3251 was the last traction engine made by Allchins of Northampton in 1925. It was tentatively given the name Royal Chester as it was intended to be shown at the Royal Show in Chester. Although she was never fitted with name plates, the name stuck. This engine has been popular with model engineers for 60 years when a model in 1:8 scale was described in *Model Engineer* magazine by Bill Hughes (who added the Royal Chester nameplate). This was the first time that instructions were given on how to build a true-scale live steam working traction engine. The design has been adapted to larger and smaller scales by model engineers. This model engine has been fired up on numerous occasions. Building these scale engines is an incredibly painstaking and skilled process and, as happened with Les can take many years.

Read more about model traction engines at:  
<https://modelengineeringwebsite.com/Allchin.html>

## Traction Engines

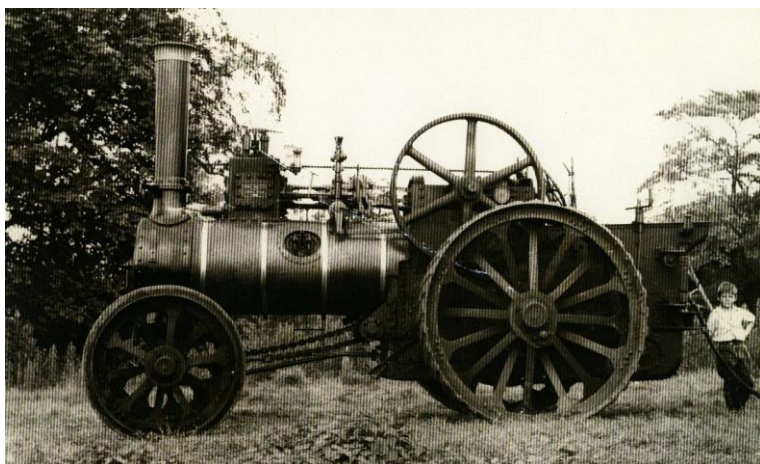
A traction engine is a steam-powered tractor used to move heavy loads on roads, plough ground or to provide power at a chosen location. The name derives from the Latin *tractus*, meaning 'drawn', since the prime function of any traction engine is to draw a load behind it. Whilst they are generally large, robust, and powerful, they are also heavy, slow, and difficult to manoeuvre. Nevertheless, they revolutionized agriculture and road haulage at a time when the only alternative was the draught horse and they became popular in industrialised countries from around 1850, when the first self-propelled portable steam engines for agricultural use were developed.

The museum has several images of traction engines in use around the Eden Valley.



Frank Tester with traction engine used for threshing 1914-1918. Image: P2003.769

Frank Tester set up an agricultural business on his father's farm as the farm income was inadequate to support four sons. He took the engine from farm to farm to power threshing machines. The engine pictured was built in 1900 by Wallis & Steevens Ltd of Basingstoke and bought by George Tester (father of Frank) in 1909 from Wallis & Steevens who had taken it in from its original purchaser. This engine took the registration number KE4224 when registration was made applicable to agricultural traction engines. Mr Tester sold it in 1929 in part exchange for another engine which he used until 1944.



Daphne Ann, a Marshall traction engine owned by Dave Harding on show at the Rugeley Steam Rally in August 2002. This engine was previously owned by Mr Tester. The engine was named after his daughter. Image: P2002.317

In 1916 Mr Tester bought a further engine from George Thurlow & Sons Ltd of Stowmarket, Suffolk who were engine dealers and agents. This was built by Marshalls of Gainsborough in 1902 and carried their works number 37961. This, too, was sold in 1929. It was registered as KE4225. The engine which he bought new in 1929 (via the agency of Thurlows) was also by Marshalls and was registered as KP6969. He sold it in 1944 to Christ Lambert of Horsmonden and it eventually came into the hands of David Harding.