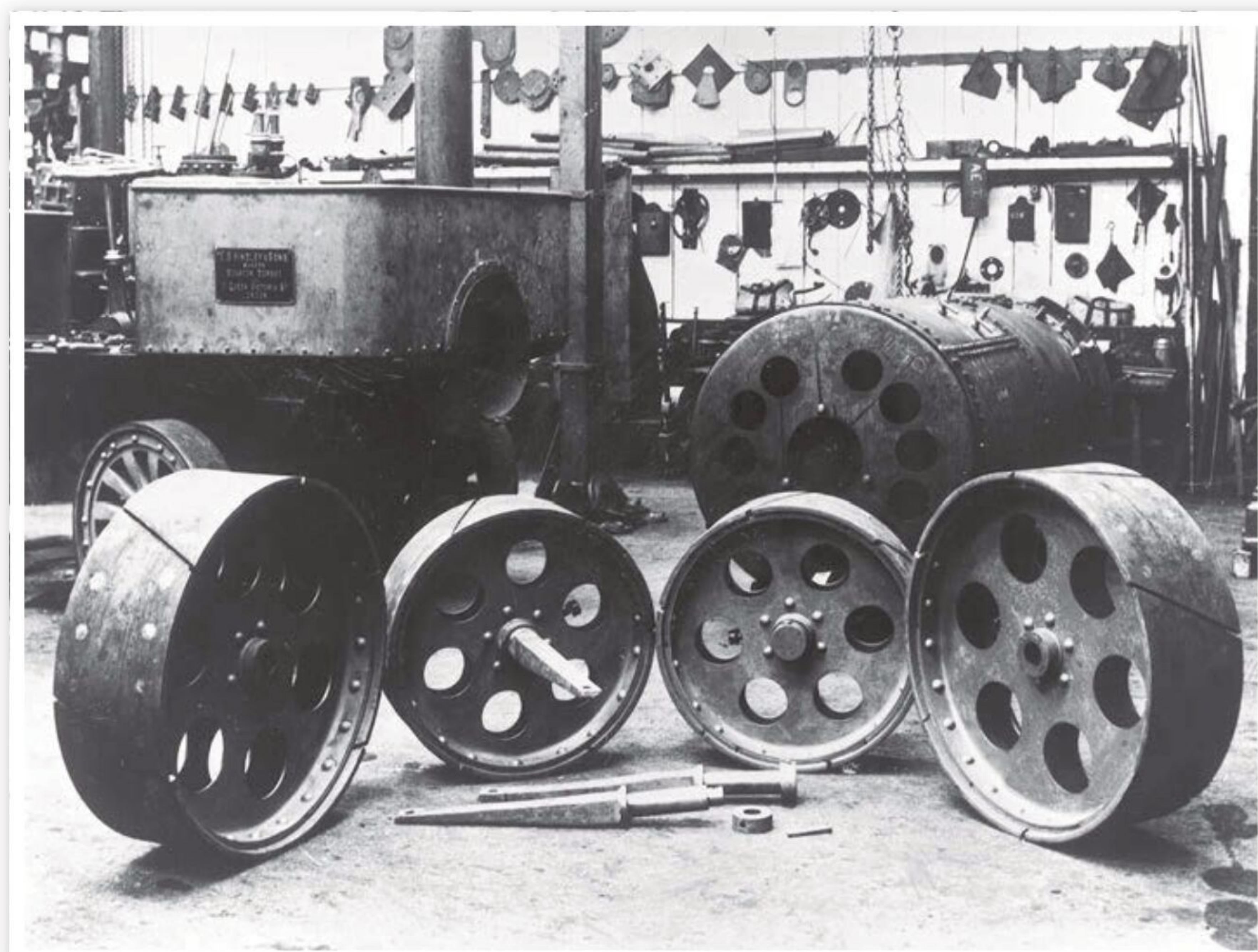


## E.S Hindley & Sons steam wagons Bourton, Dorset



Inside the Hindley steam wagon works at Bourton, Dorset.

**I**t is highly possible that a Mr E.S Hindley, the owner of a small engineering company in Dorset, had his attention focused on the steam wagon as a result of the press coverage given to the December 1901 Aldershot Trials, undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining the best commercial vehicles that would be suitable for use by the modern army.

Hindley already had a very good reputation for its high speed stationary steam engines and portable engines – the latter including a two-wheeled portable which had two shafts so that a horse could move it around. Having made up his mind to proceed with wagons, work started on the design and production of suitable working drawings.

He now decided it was time to form a new company, E.S Hindley & Sons, to cope with what was hoped to be a considerable increase in business.

Their first wagon appeared in January

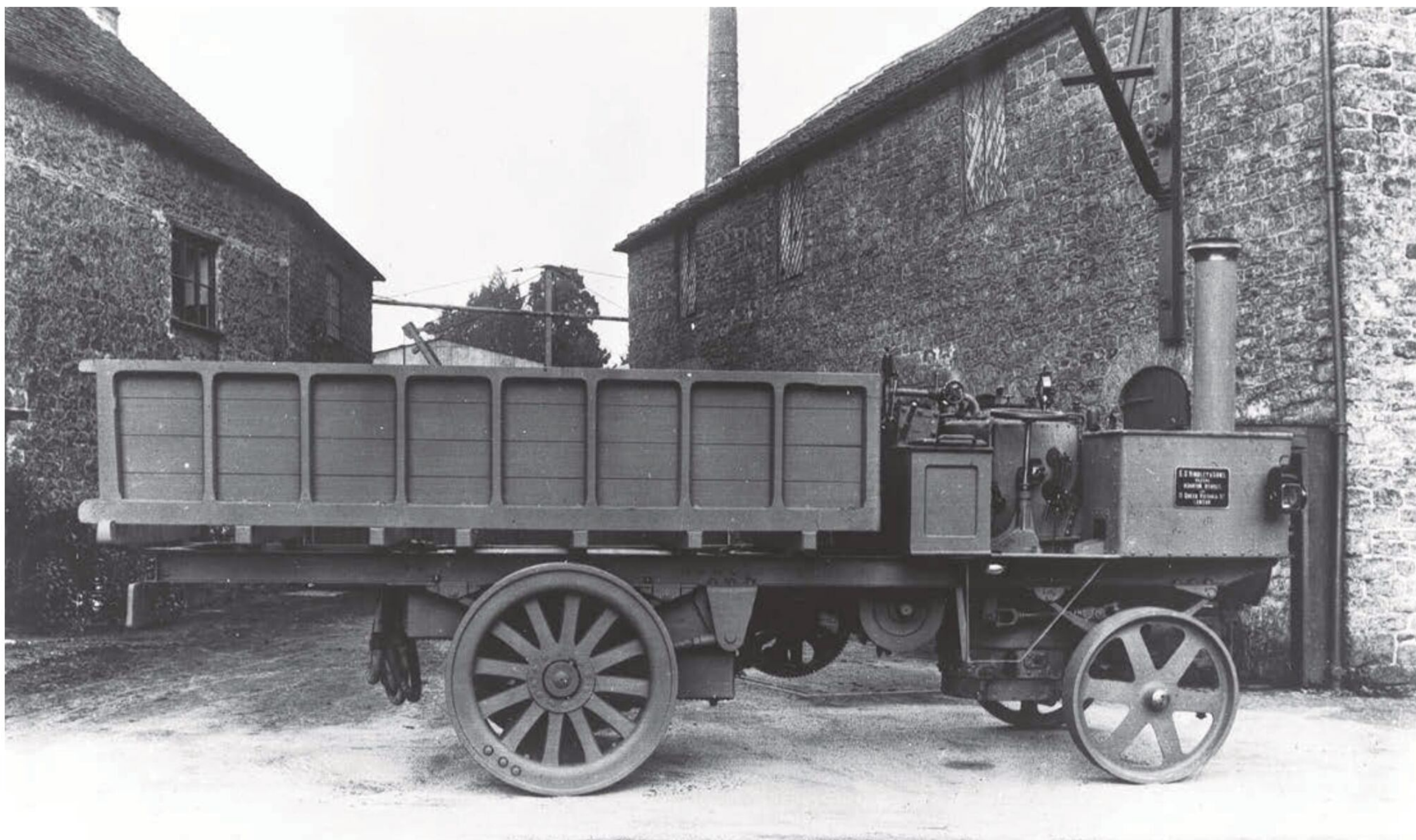




The new wagon under construction by Turbo Vincent for Ron Harris.



The new replica Hindley wagon on display at the Great Dorset Steam Fair, which utilises some original Hindley wagon parts.



A 3-ton Hindley wagon fitted with the 2-cylinder compound vertical engine.

1904. This was a 3-ton light van with fixed box sides. The company retained this vehicle, not only as a demonstrator, but for regularly fetching coal from the LSWR station at Gillingham for use in the works, for which it was duly licensed and received the registration FX 85. It was designed to carry three tons on its own platform, with a further one to two tons on a trailer at speeds of up to 8mph on average roads. Being easy to manoeuvre, the company advertised it as the ideal vehicle for where a number of collections or deliveries needed to be made as quickly as possible.

A vertical boiler provided steam at a working pressure of 225lbs per square inch for the 2-cylinder compound engine, which

was mounted vertically on the rear of the boiler. She had two bores of 31/2 x 5in with a stroke of 6in.

Two fuel bunkers were provided, one on each side of the boiler, and accessible to both fireman and driver. These carried either gas coke or steam coal which was sufficient for a day's work. A galvanised wrought iron water tank, holding 180 gallons, was suspended between the ends of the chassis. This gave a range of 15 to 20 miles on good roads.

The year 1905 saw the introduction of Hindley's new 5-ton (or 'Standard') wagon. This had many new features, the most important of which was the new improved locomotive type boiler, the design of which

was patented by Hindley & Bretherton.

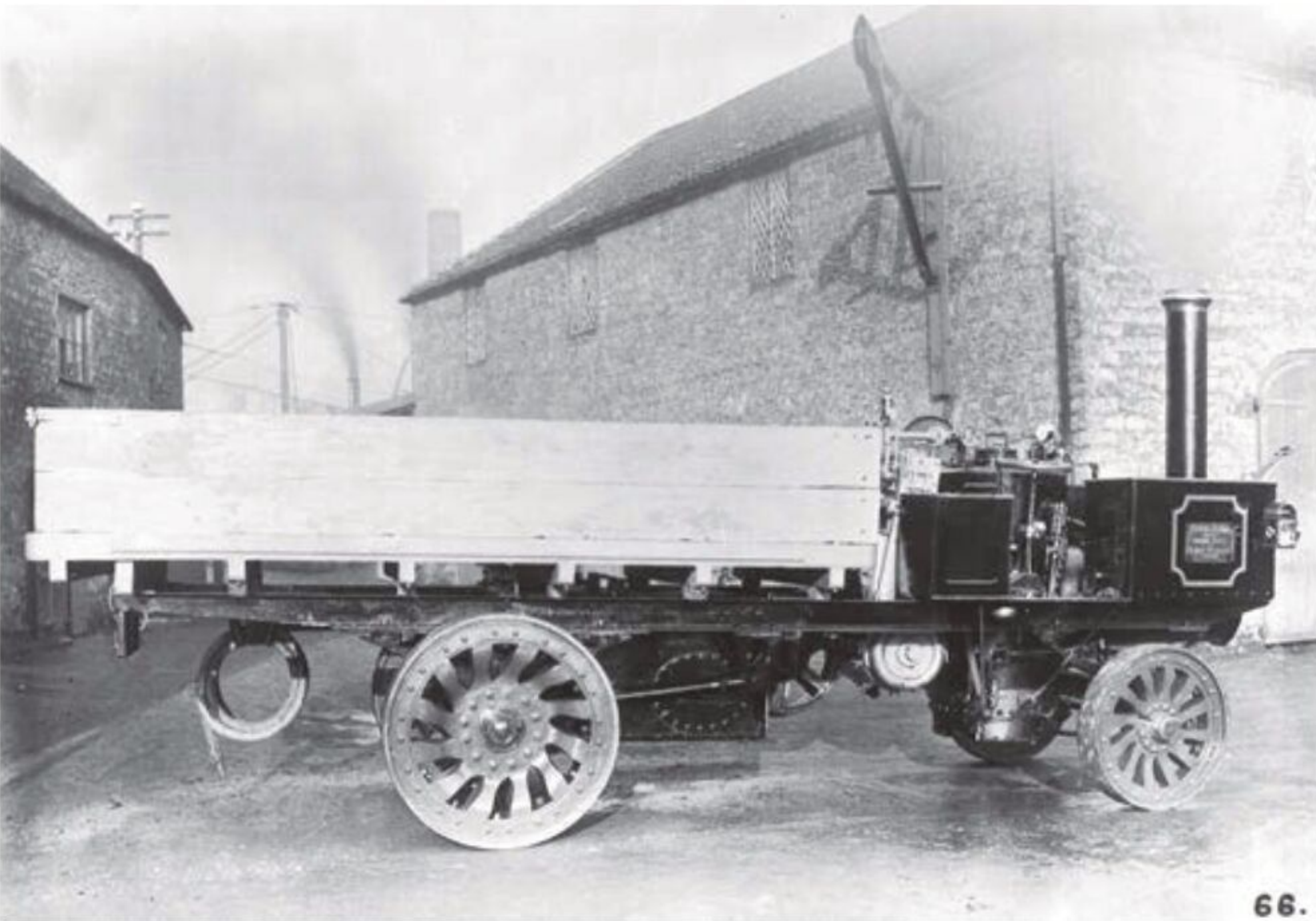
The ordinary locomotive boiler had been proven by over half a century to be a most reliable, durable and economic boiler, as well as being an excellent steam-raiser for almost every kind of work.

But Hindley deemed it was not so suitable for steam wagons because when descending even a moderately steep hill, the water level was so deflected as to leave the firebox crown uncovered. In the same way, that when ascending a steep hill, the front of the tubes would be uncovered with the result that these parts would be damaged by overheating.

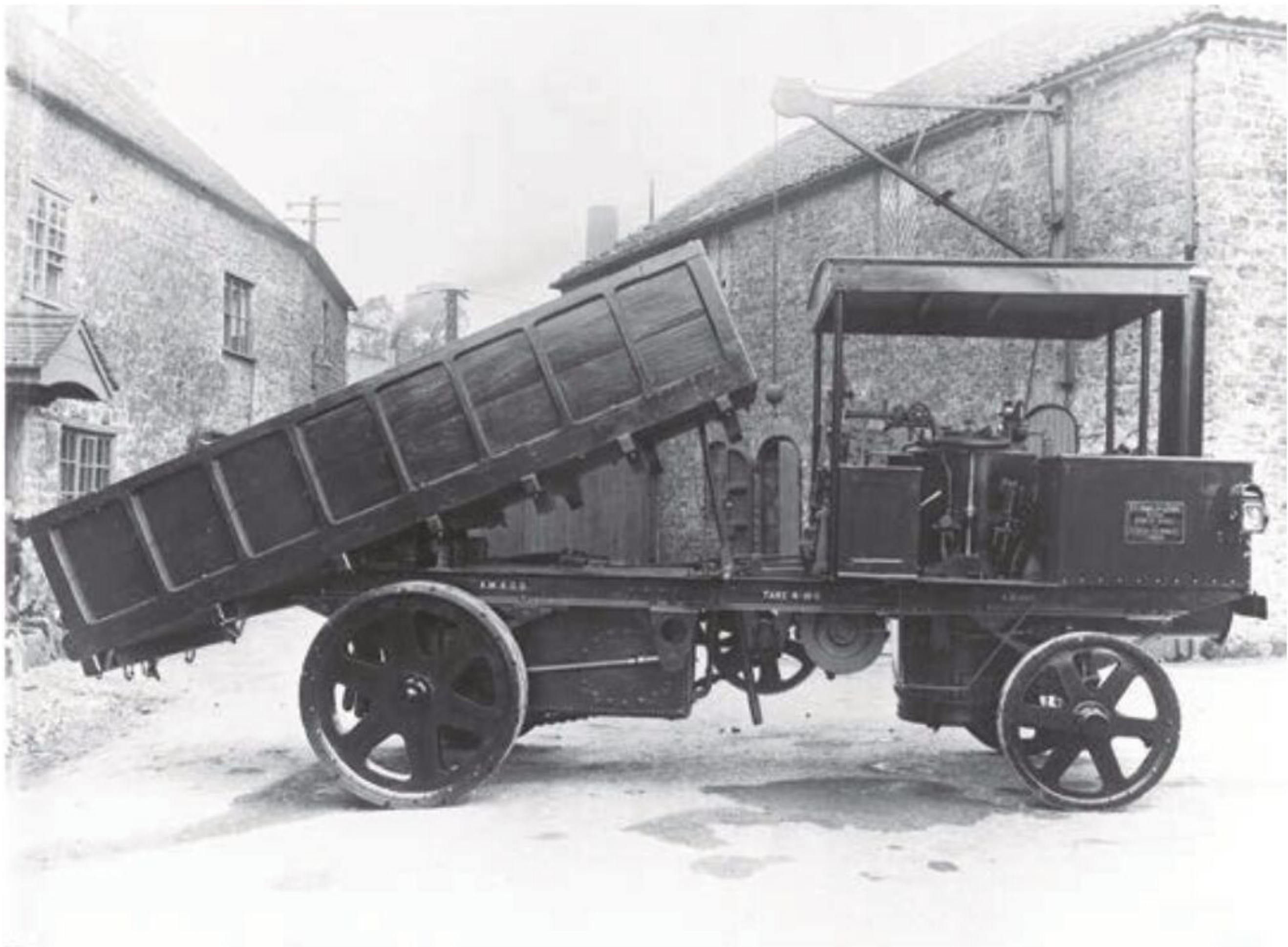
This problem was obviated in Hindley's new design. In this improved boiler,



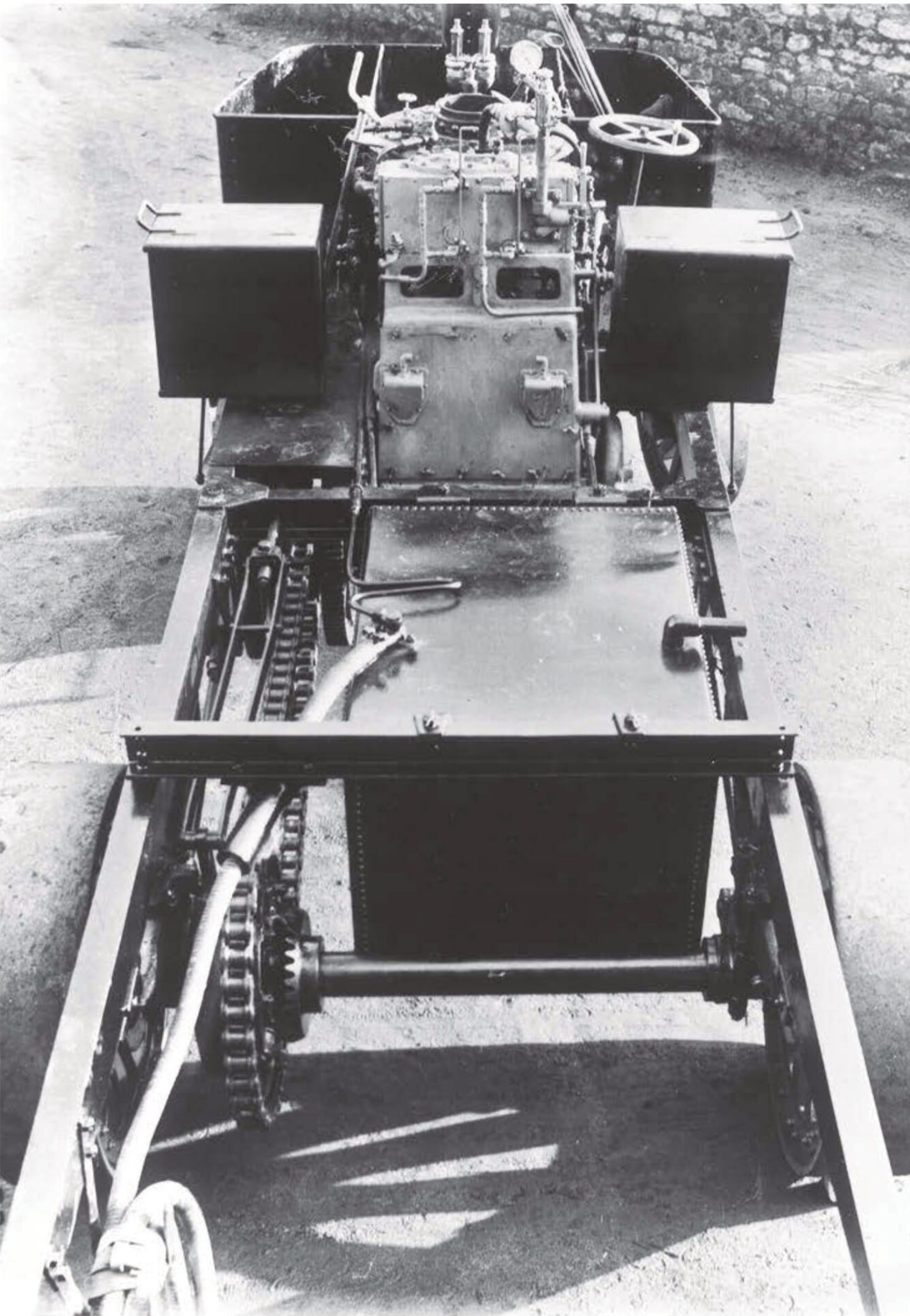
# STEAM WAGONS



The body is still painted in primer on this works photograph of a 3-ton chassis wagon.



Wagon with 3-ton chassis and end tipping body.



General layout of a Hindley wagon chassis with vertical engine attached to the boiler and the chain drive to the back axle.

the outer firebox casing was carried up considerably higher than the top of the boiler barrel. On this the barrel was always full of water and the steam space was above the firebox portion of the boiler only. The firebox crown and the whole of the tubes were well below the water line, even on the steepest hills. In fact the company advertised that with this boiler, gradients of 1 in 8 could be tackled without any damage being incurred.

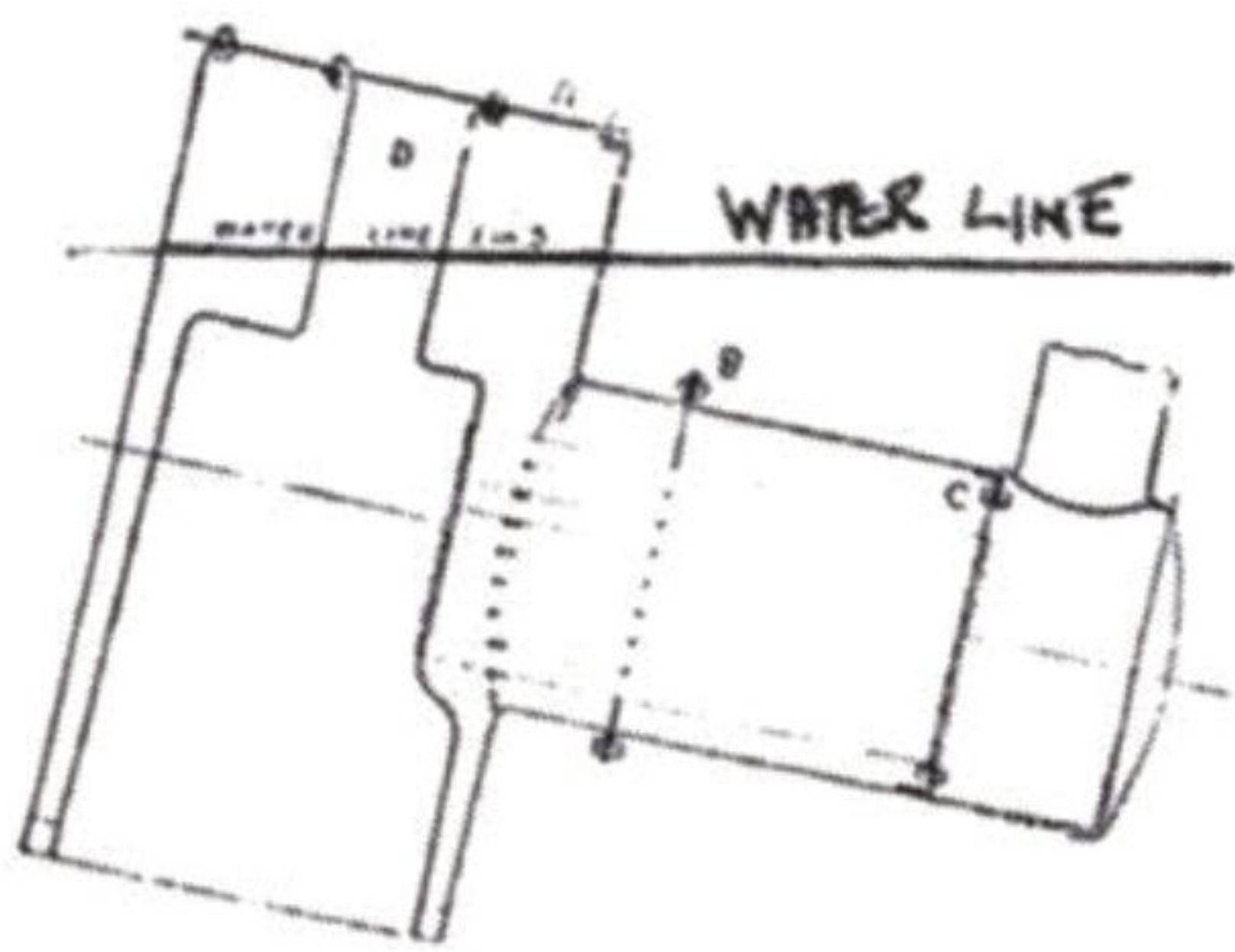
The boiler had 48 1¼in diameter tubes and had a working pressure of 225lbs per square inch. Boiler feed was taken care of by a Gresham & Craven injector and a feed pump driven off the engine crankshaft. A horizontal compound engine was fitted with cylinders of 4½in x 7in with a stroke of 6in.

The engine was mounted beneath the



Cab view of the replica Hindley wagon.





The layout of the Hindley-Bretherton patent boiler, depicting how the water line level works in relation to the boiler position.

chassis, the bed of which was a casting and formed an oil bath into which the moving parts dipped automatically – thus lubricating the cross heads and slides. No chains were used in the transmission, power being entirely transmitted by machine-cut gear wheels. Fast and slow gears were provided.

As in the 3-tonner, it was necessary for the driver to stop and get down from his cab (with his mate having blocked the rear wheels to prevent the wagon from running away when it was out of gear) so that the driver could then slide the gear wheel no longer required to one side and replace it with the alternative gear wheel. When this was in position he could return to his cab and the journey resumed.

Two fuel bunkers were provided, one on each side of the boiler. These each carried 3cwt of either gas coke or steam coal, which was enough to cover 50 miles. A galvanised wrought iron water tank was suspended beneath the rear of the chassis and carried 180 gallons, which was sufficient to cover 10 miles on average roads. It was designed to carry five tons on its platform and a further two or three tons on a trailer.

This first 5-ton Standard wagon was sold to Pickfords for parcel delivery and received the registration A 5008 and became No 30 in its fleet.

The Hindley must have created a good impression with Pickfords' transport manager as Hindley received an order for a further 16 wagons. Whilst this must have been very satisfying for the company it was one of the reasons for its later demise.

I had a friend who started a business just after the last war in providing washed and packed potatoes. It had gone very well and one of the large supermarkets gave him a big contract. This grew and grew so much that he had to build up a fleet of lorries delivering over a large area of the country.

When, without any warning, the contract was not renewed, the lack of his core



Another J Long vehicle from Hindley, a light delivery wagon also supplied in 1907. Registered AA 2184 it was last licensed in 1914.

business was insufficient to fund the rest of his business and he had to cease trading. This was exactly what happened to Hindleys – the Pickfords contract was, without warning, not renewed.

The company was left with only 25% of their normal sales. Pickfords had been responsible for 75% of their production, which gave them a turnover insufficient to meet their running costs. With the Pickfords order occupying everyone's time, nothing had been done on a replacement design of

wagon to take its place. By 1910 it just did not compare with the up-to-date designs of their competitors which was another reason for the company's decline.

Hindley didn't keep works numbers or serial numbers. What records have been seen were based on road registrations. I have been cautious with the above information because many references to Hindley are at odds and contradictory to other references, although a total build of between 30 and 40 wagons would not be far off the mark.■



Hindley wagon fitted with an enclosed van body, built in 1907 and supplied new to J Long, jam manufacturers of Whitchurch, Hants. A 2-cylinder vertical compound engine was fitted on the rear of the vertical boiler.