



Patent Steam wagon Co Hunslet, Leeds

Yorkshire's first wagon was built in 1903 and was instantly recognisable by the position of its boiler, which was placed transversely across the front of the wagon; a position it was to occupy on every subsequent wagon that the company was to build.

Yorkshire was not alone in adopting this arrangement; for the Hercules Motor Wagon Co of Levenshulme, Manchester, built a small number (probably under a dozen) utilising the same design, the first appearing in 1903.

Peter Brotherhood Ltd of Peterborough, Northants, also designed a wagon with this boiler layout. They were all ready to enter the commercial vehicle market in 1921 when they had to suspend operation due to litigation by the Yorkshire company, accusing them of infringing their design of patent boiler. Three wagons had been built, the first going to Schweppes Mineral Waters, 90 per cent of which was owned by the Brotherhood family at that time. The other two wagons, which could not be sold, were not licensed for the road and they remained as internal works transport until broken up in the early 1930s.

Fig. 1 shows the unusual design of the boiler which is self-explanatory. I can do no better than quote its attributes, as given in

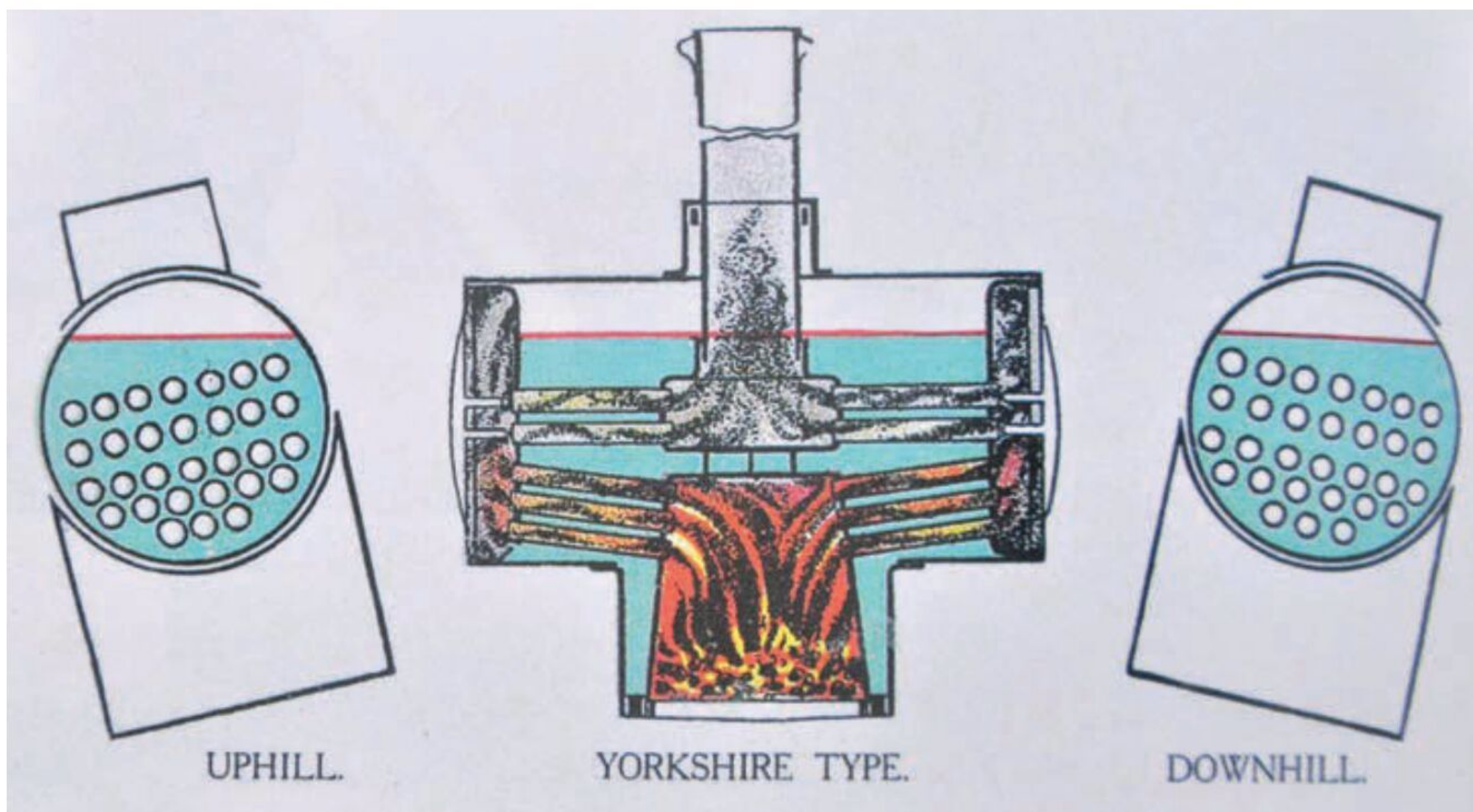


Fig. 1. With the Yorkshire company's patented boiler, it would take a gradient of less than 1 in 3 to cause the tubes to be uncovered.

the company's literature:

The Yorkshire patent double-ended locomotive type boiler gives splendid water circulation and has a large heating surface. It is able to maintain steam on coke alone, thus avoiding prosecution for smoke nuisance.

There is silent and invisible exhaust (from engine) with uniform draught through each tube with no sparks being emitted from the chimney. The minimum length of chassis is taken up, allowing a large platform area with

evenly distributed load over the rear axle.

The water level in the boiler is practically unaffected by gradients, requiring a gradient of less than 1 in 3 to uncover the tubes. The water level is 9in above the firebox top. No burnt fireboxes, leaky tubes or dropped fusible plugs, unless by absolute gross neglect.

The boiler is easily accessible for cleaning purposes. The boiler is easily expanded or changed without any time being wasted in dismantling other parts before commencing



Fig. 2. Yorkshire wagon No. 31 is loaded with six tons of flour with a further six tons on the trailer. The operator declared himself delighted with the wagon's performance.

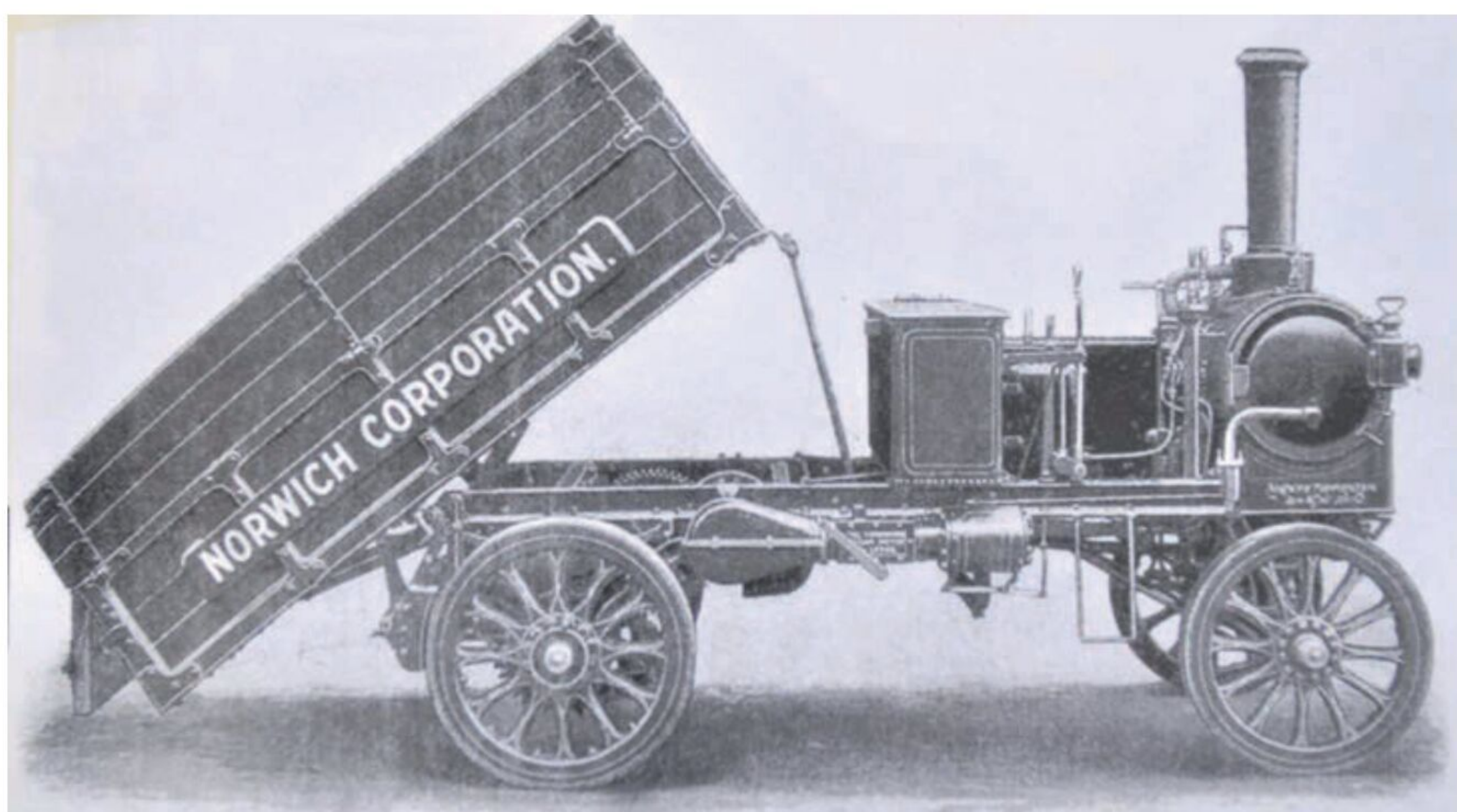


Fig. 3. Yorkshire wagon No. 142 with hand-operated tipping gear, the handle for which can be seen just to the rear of the cylinder.

RIGHT: Fig. 4. Driver and mate pose beside their 6-ton wagon No. 342.

ABOVE RIGHT: Yorkshire's new logo upon its name change to the Yorkshire Commercial Motor Co.

actual work. Good visibility, giving the driver a clear uninterrupted view of the road.' Finally we are informed that a superheater is fitted to ensure dry steam being admitted to the cylinders.

During the life of the company there were modifications to the design, but the general layout remained the same.

Fig. 2 shows 6-ton wagon No. 31, which was built on Friday June 5, 1903, and sold to Derwent Flour Mill Society Ltd of Shotley Bridge, Co Durham.

They were well pleased with the wagon, telling the company that 'it ran 35 miles each day carrying six tons on a trailer. After 12 months daily running in hilly country with gradients of 1 in 7 we have decided to sell our traction engine and wagon and buy two more 6-ton wagons.'

According to the records they bought a further 6-ton wagon, No. 32, in March 1904. In November 1918 they sold the wagon to John Pratt & Sons of Hunslet, Leeds, where it received the registration U 4700.

On Wednesday February 28, 1906, 5-ton tipping wagon No. 142 was built and sold to Norwich Corporation and received the registration CL 206 (Fig. 3). It is recorded that it was sold for scrap in 1934 but it is unlikely that it was working up until that time. With hand-operated tipping gear

RIGHT: Fig. 5. No. 609 looks the worse for wear, being used as internal transport at Hadfield's Steelworks, Sheffield. It was scrapped in 1948, the same year the photo was taken.



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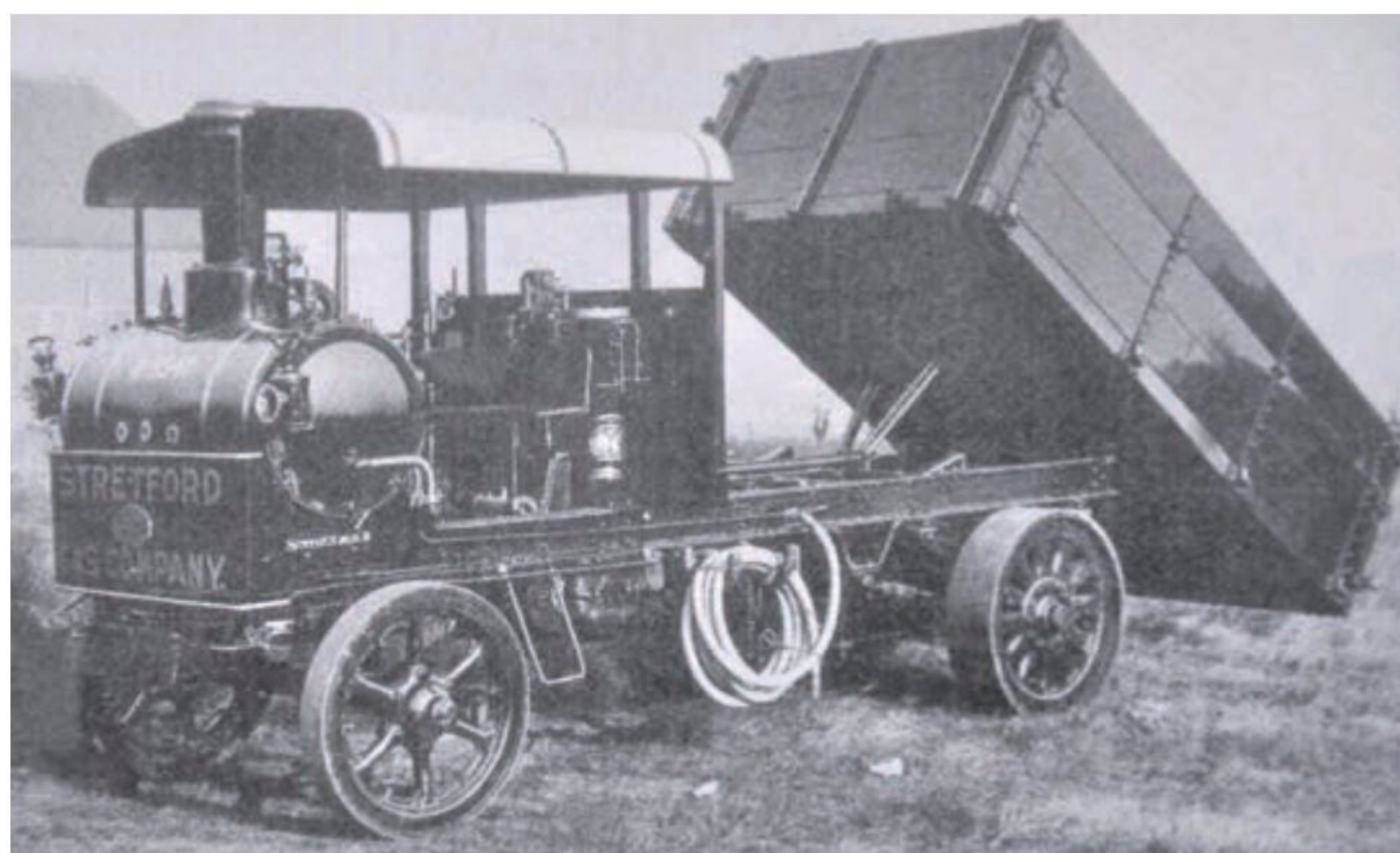


Fig. 6. Wagon No. 745, fitted with a 6-ton hand-operated tipping body.

the body was fitted with three plank side extensions to increase its carrying capacity.

Fig. 4 shows 6-ton wagon No. 342 which was built on Tuesday March 26, 1912, and

sold to Stephen Gilks of Shaw, Lancashire, receiving the registration U 1769. By 1921 the firm had changed its name to Butterworth & Gilks, where it worked until

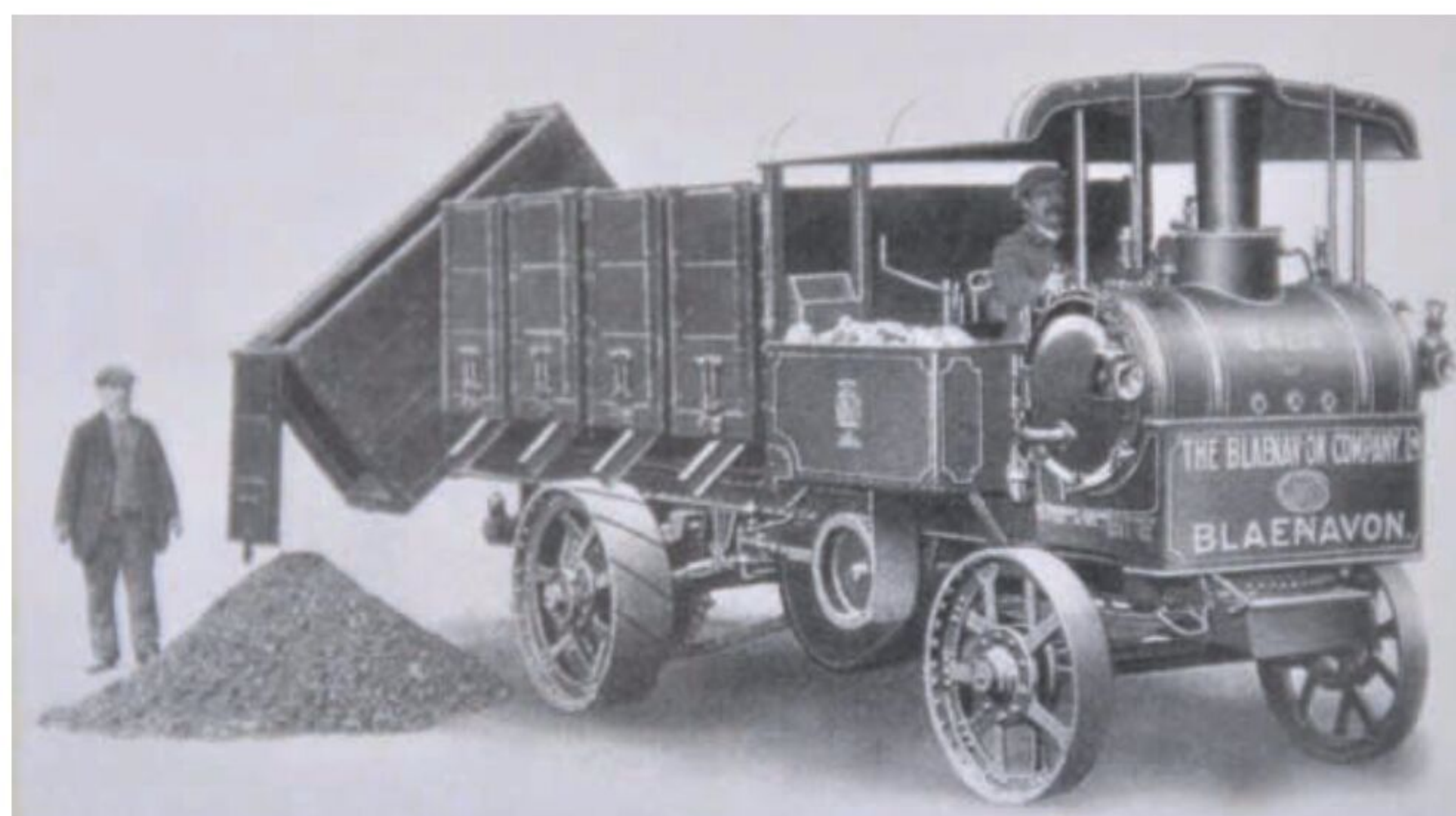


Fig. 8. No. 931 demonstrates how each of the compartments could be tipped individually. They could also be tipped either side of the wagon.

sold for scrapping in September 1939.

Fig. 5 depicts 3-ton tipping lorry No. 609 which was built on Thursday October 9, 1913, and sold to Hadfields Ltd of Sheffield, and received the registration U 2407 and Fleet No. 5. The wagon spent its working life with Hadfields, partly as internal transport within their steelworks, before being put up for sale in 1948.

On Friday November 12, 1915 (Fig. 6) 6-ton tipping wagon No. 745 was built and sold to the Stretford & District Gas Board, Lancashire, and received the registration U 3541. From the records it appears to have spent its working life with this concern.

Fig. 7 shows another tipping wagon, No. 897, fitted with a 4-ton body, which was built on Thursday August 31, 1916, and sold to R&T Howarth of Rochdale, Lancashire, and received the registration U 3955. Here it was employed on road work, but unfortunately no other details are recorded.

Fig. 8 shows 5/6-ton tipper wagon No. 931, which was fitted with a special patent five-compartment double side hand-operated tipping body. It was built on Wednesday March 28, 1917, and sold to the Blaenavon Co Ltd of Blaenavon, Monmouthshire, receiving the registration U 4212. It was reported as being laid up in their yard in May 1919.

Fig. 9 shows 'GF' Type 3-speed 6-ton wagon No. 1377 fitted out as a gully emptier. Built on Tuesday July 10, 1923, it was sold to Newcastle-upon-Tyne Corporation and received the registration BB 7378 – becoming No. 18 in its fleet. It spent its working life with the corporation until sold in December 1933 to T.W Ward for scrapping.

Fig. 10 depicts Type 'WF' 6/7-ton 3-speed wagon No. 1434 which was built on Tuesday April 11, 1922, and sold to the British Petroleum Co, becoming No. 3045 in their fleet. It was fitted with a 1,500 gallon tank body.

In October 1298 it was sold to A Brooks of



Fig. 9. Gully emptier No. 1377. These wagons were popular with the civic authorities and they certainly had a business-like look about them.

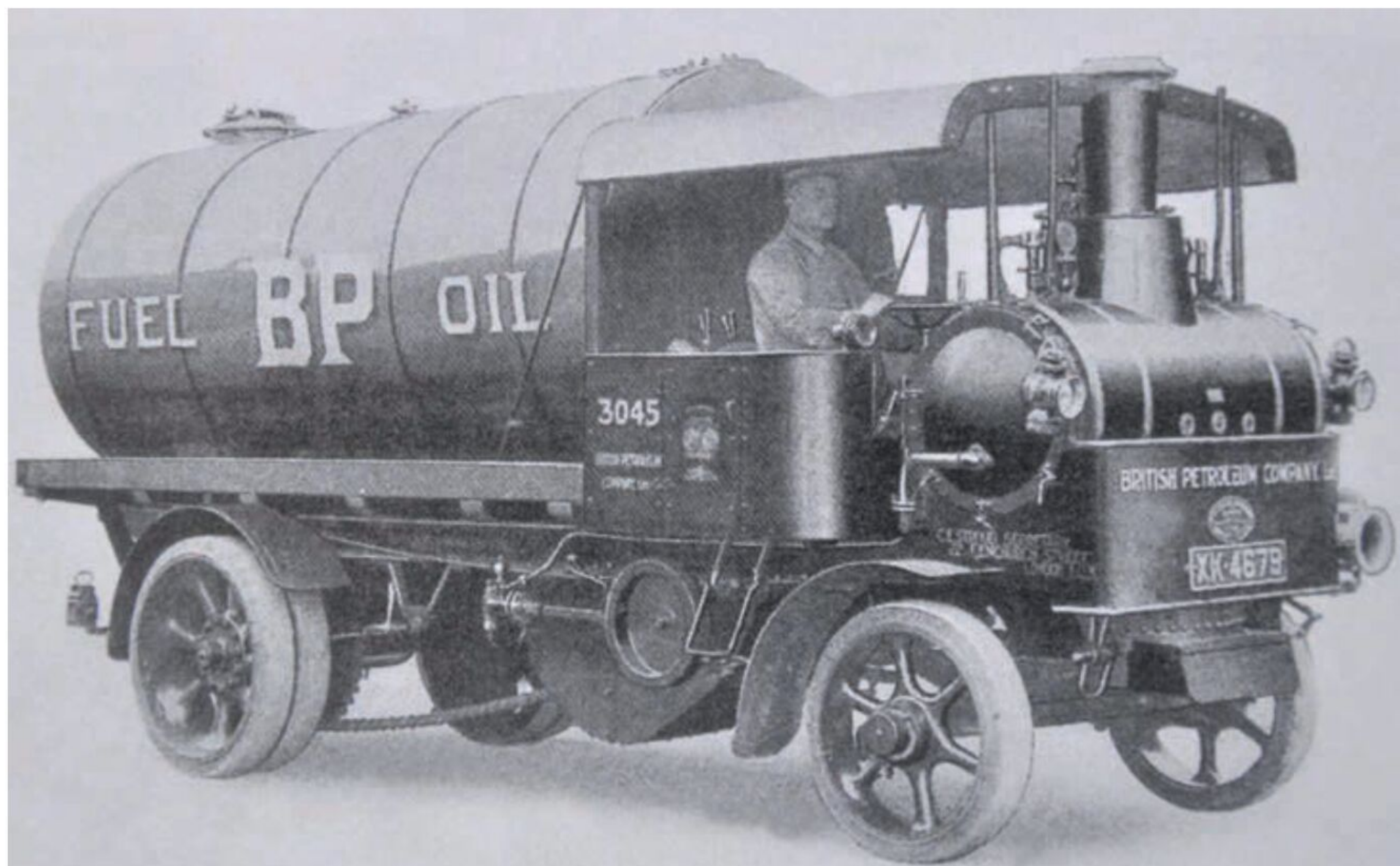


Fig. 10. 1,500 gallon tanker No. 1434, photographed while making a delivery.

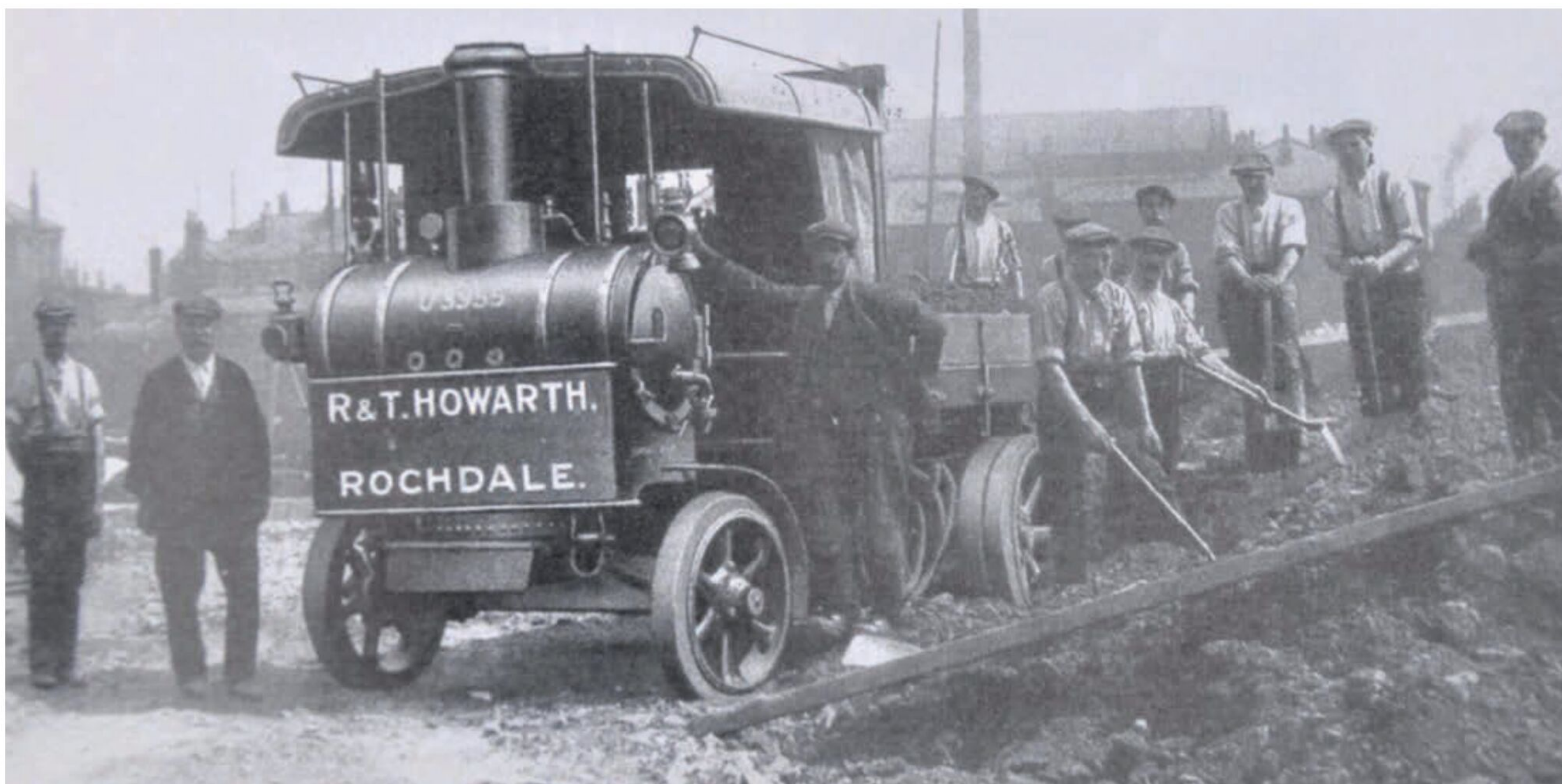


Fig. 7. A nicely posed photograph of No. 897 with the men employed on what looks like construction of a new road.

Tooting, London, and by February 1930 was with P.M Parrish of Merton Abbey, London. By January 1931 the wagon was with the Eyre Smelting Co Ltd of Merton Abbey; its last recorded owner.

Fig. 11 shows 5/6-ton wagon No. 1506 which was built in April 1925 and sold to Doncaster Rural District Council and registered WT 9823. Later subsumed by West Riding County Council, it then became No. 4 in an enlarged fleet. In 1936 it was sold for scrapping to E Sheard of Wakefield.

'WE' Type wagon No. 1526 was built on Friday October 16, 1925, and sold to Sheffield Corporation (Electric Supply Dept) receiving the registration WB 4064 and fleet No. 1 (Fig. 12). It was supplied with a body-mounted crane, having a lifting capacity of three tons. The wagon worked for this corporation until last licensed in March 1932.

'WG' Type articulated wagon No. 2118 (Fig. 13) was built in September 1927 and was sold to Leeds Corporation (Electricity Dept) and registered UA 1163, becoming No. 18 in their fleet. It spent its working life with this organisation until sold for scrapping but happily it was eventually rescued from the scrapyard and is now in preservation in Cornwall in tractor unit form.

Fig. 14 depicts 'WJ' Type No. 2160; a 10/15-ton flat wagon built in July 1929 and sold to the Cement Marketing Co Ltd,

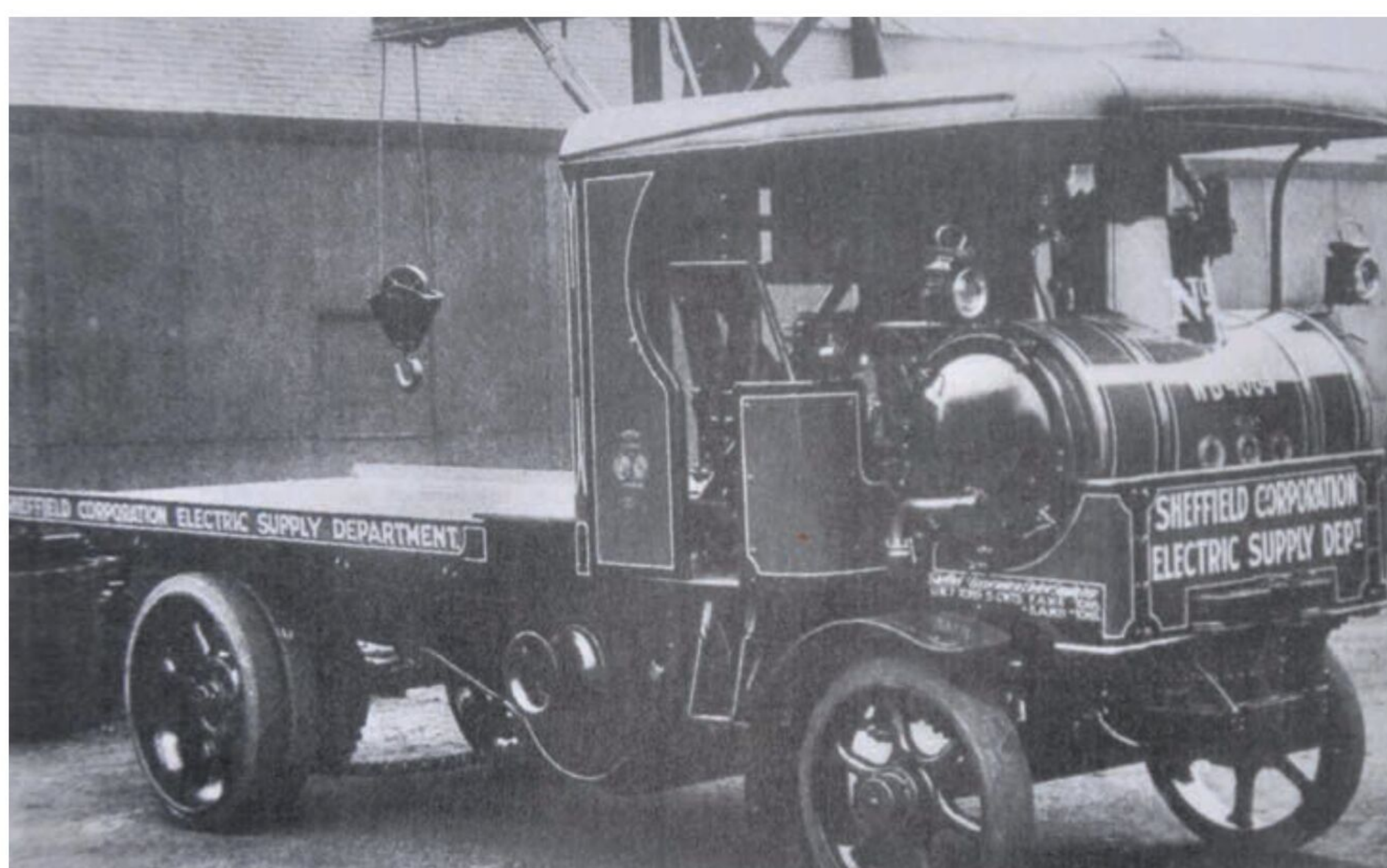


Fig. 12. Sheffield Corporation's Electricity Supply Dept's wagon No. 1526 at the works, ready for delivery in October 1925.



Fig. 13. 'WG' wagon No. 2118. The enclosed cab may be functional but looks plain ugly.

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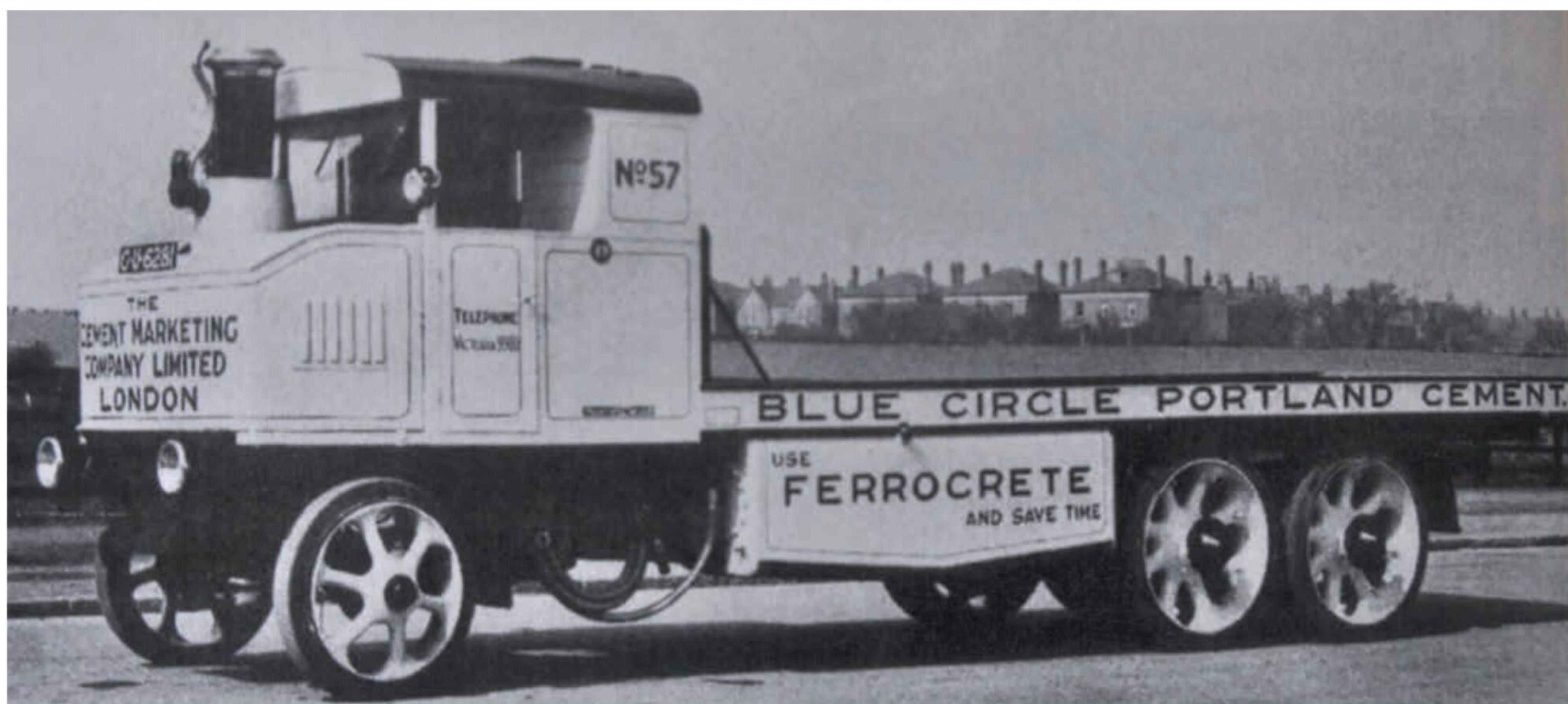


Fig. 14. 'WJ' Type wagon No. 2160 finished in the Cement Marketing Co's yellow and blue livery.

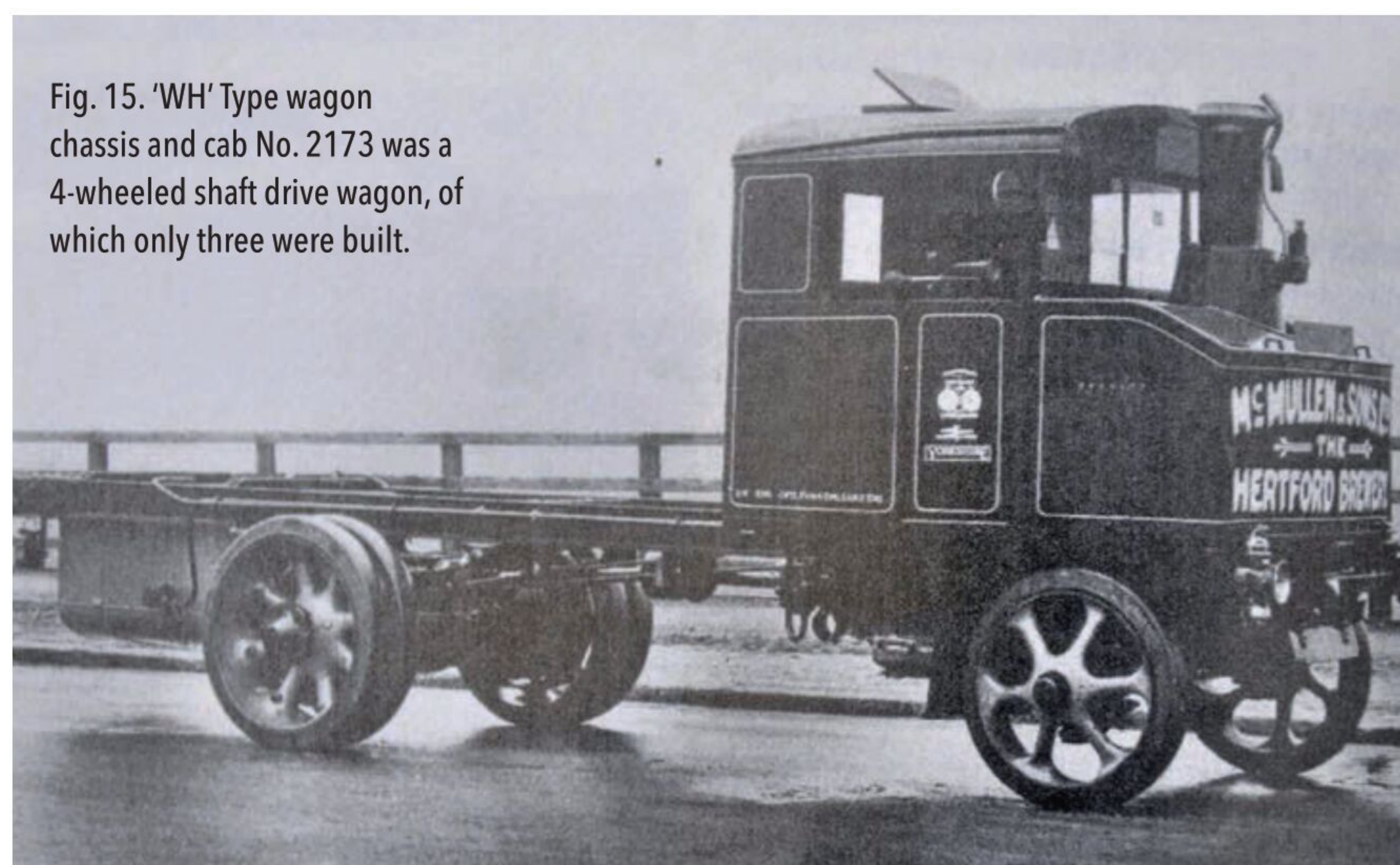


Fig. 15. 'WH' Type wagon chassis and cab No. 2173 was a 4-wheeled shaft drive wagon, of which only three were built.

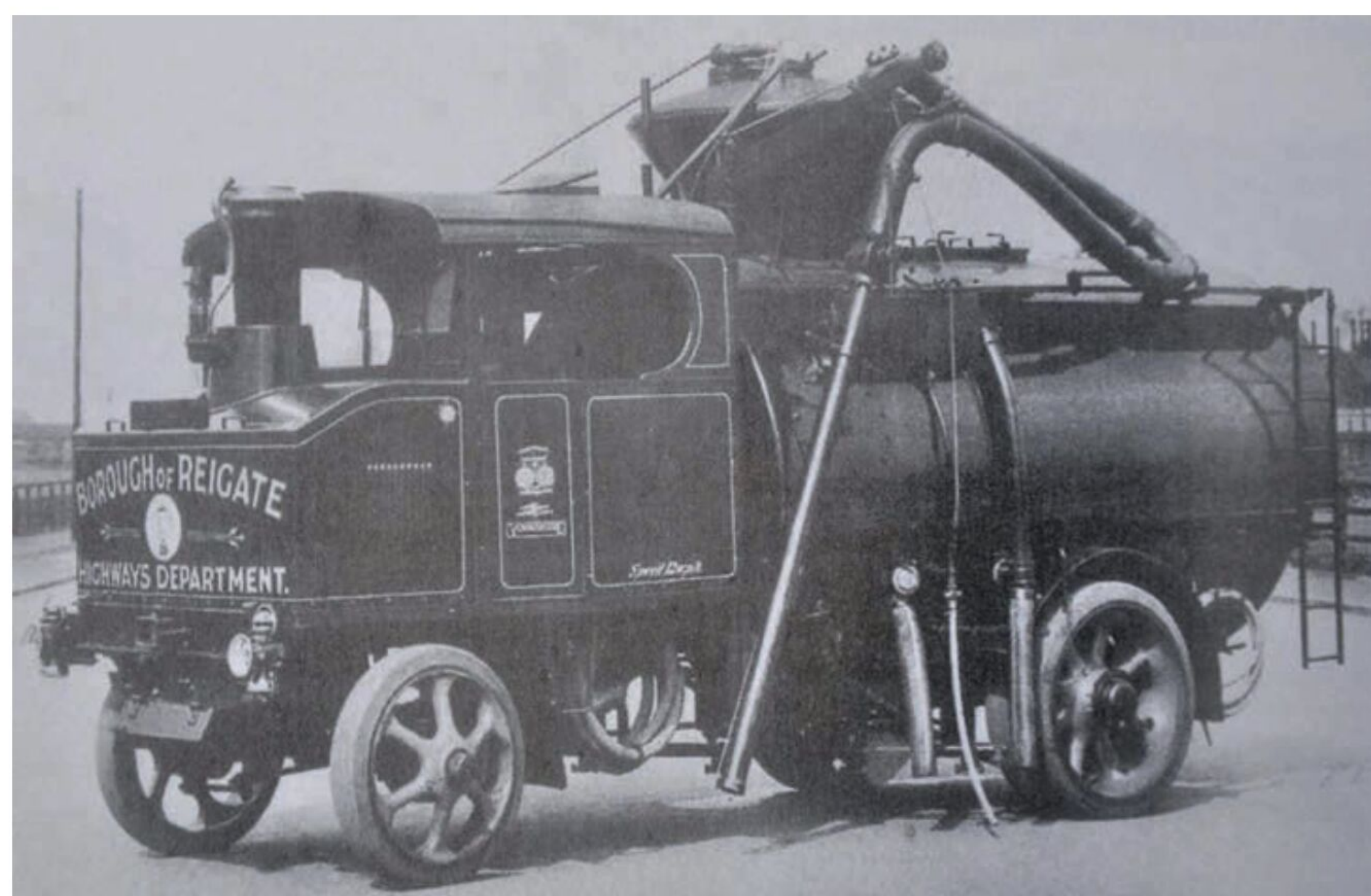


Fig. 16. 'WG' Type gully emptier wagon No. 2176 was No. 5 in the fleet of the Borough of Reigate's Highways Dept.

London, where it received the registration GU 6281, becoming No. 57 in its fleet. No other details recorded but this was the sole example of a 'WJ' purchased by the Cement Marketing Co.

Fig. 15 shows 'WH' Type 6-ton chassis and cab No. 2173 which was built in January 1930 and sold to the brewers McMullen & Sons Ltd of Hertford who made arrangements for a body to be fitted. It received the registration UR 5716 but no further details are recorded.

Finally, Fig. 16 shows 'WG' Type wagon No. 2176, which was built in March 1920 and sold to Reigate Corporation's Highways Dept. It was registered PG 6958 and became No. 5 in their fleet. No further details are recorded.

The Yorkshire Patent Steam Wagon Co Ltd was second only to the Sentinel company in the production of undertype steam wagons. So how many were built? Well the number of the last wagon built (No. 2271) unfortunately gives no real indication as there were numbers omitted. Trawling through the works records there are quite a few numbers marked 'blank' and others are annotated 'rebuilt as No. XX' and so on. Taking all this into account, and assuming that they started at No. 1 (although the first recorded is No. 6) I came up with a total of all types of Yorkshire wagons at 1,356, of which 163 were exported.

I must emphasise that these figures should only be taken as a guide. On Wednesday September 29, 1937, the last wagon (No. 2271) left the works for its customer Sheffield Corporation (Electricity Dept), thus bringing to an end 34 years of illustrious steam wagon building. ■