

Gaydon 2008

by Mike Thomas

Despite not being run by the CVRTC this year, the rally at Gaydon seemed to be as popular as ever with the show being pretty well packed out on the Sunday. The Register display lorry was in a good position with four Scammells in close proximity.



Immediately on our left was Member Alan Edgar's S26 with its very attractive fictional livery, as shown above. Currently registered on a Q plate as Q260 GFD, it is a nice coincidence that the first numbers are 26! The lorry is a 6x4 S26.30 rated at 65 tonnes GTW and was new to the RAF in 1985 as a 5th wheel tractor with demountable ballast box which is still fitted. Alan tells me it was the 7th in a batch of 8 and was used to tow a secret radar unit. He bought it in April 2007 as a non runner having been stood for 14 years. It is now fully restored and in very nice condition. This was only its second outing and I'm sure we'll see it around in the future.

Immediately on our right was Member John Wynham's 20LA ballast tractor GOG 756, powered by a Gardner 6LW diesel. It is chassis number 6203 and was purchased new in July 1946 for £1, 872 by Fisher and Ludlow of Birmingham. It passed to Pickfords in 1948 and in 1965 to travelling showmen, Messrs Pelham of Reading to draw a "Jungle Speedway" ride. The lorry was rescued for preservation in 1994 and shown in the "rust and rot" section of the Knowl Hill Steam Rally. It was restored by the present owners over a 4 year period, commencing in 1996 and John kindly gave me the following notes on the restoration.



“The first job was to overhaul the Gardner 6LW engine which was in pieces with the injection pump seized. After this work, the chassis and transmission were refurbished. Air brakes were rebuilt from the compressor back. Rear axle was replaced for a higher ratio one (improving top speed from 28 to 38mph). With the engine back in, a chassis test ride was carried out in 1998. The cab was the next major chapter - most of the original was gone. The windscreen was reproduced using material salvaged from a rotten AEC Matador cab. Repairs to the original front wings were performed in a jig with much new material being let in. Instruments, upholstery and a completely new electrical system followed.

GOG 756 made its first public appearance at Banbury Steam Rally in 1999. The last stage was fabrication of the ballast box (shape and style based on the Scammell Showtrac prototype). The HCVS London to Brighton run was accomplished in 2001. During 2005 it became increasingly apparent that the Gardner engine needed further work. When descending long hills she belched out sufficient smoke for the truck to be likened to a destroyer laying a smokescreen!

Early 2006 we removed the engine and found that two pistons had broken compression rings and the ridge of wear in the bores was quite frightening. We decided to re-bore the engine using blocks from a donor engine that we have with sufficient material left to enable a re-bore within Gardner’s limits. The work took much longer than anticipated and the Scammell was not able to attend many of our normal events. However the work is now complete and you will see us out and about with the Scammell.”

Just to the right of the 20LA was our youngest Member Freddy Simmonds with his dad and their Handyman which last month featured on the front cover and in an article in Heritage Commercials as reported elsewhere.



Finally, Paul Hammond was a few vehicles away with his Yeoman liveried Junior Constructor as featured in the centre spread of the last issue, complete with the pair of ex-Pickfords’ Crane bogies. They were displayed with loads of realistic accessories, just as they would have run home “light” from a job. For me, they really make the display as it is great to see a complete unit.

Other Scammells which I saw were Dave and Andy Walker’s Highwayman and 20LA, a Pioneer recovery, an unrestored ex military S26, a sheeted Routeman flat and the Barton liveried Handyman.