

This is a short story from **STEAM PLOUGH TIMES NO 23** which would be from about 1972.

Mr F H Willett was telling his uncle, Bert Willett, a few weeks ago about the steam ploughing at Gt. Wymondley in June. He has lived all his life in Hertfordshire, not far from Ware," I would like you all to meet him" he says, "as he has had an interesting life in the steam ploughing world."

In the 1914 War, his work included going to the John Fowler Works at Leeds and bringing home new sets of engines and tackle by road 200 miles in 4 days, and having to take it steady as they were brand new and it was in November.

On one such trip, they took a wrong turning in a town and the street got narrower, and the bends sharper, and as the plough took the bends, it also took the blinds and shop signs with it. The local barber came flying out of his shop, scissors in hand, "What the \*\*\*\* hell's going on?" as the tip of the plough caught his red & white barber's pole and sent it crashing to the ground.

At this point, the police arrived from nowhere, " Stop! stop! Where do you think you are going? You can't come down here, it's market day, you'll have to go back!" "Go back? Wot yer talking about? We can't go back, it's as much as we can do to go forward! "After names, addresses, and damage were noted, the market stalls had to be moved back to make room for the engines and tackle to go through, thinking themselves lucky to see the open road again. Next stop - the Wagon & Horses - half a mile up the road!

Of course, in those days, uncle was in his twenties, and now, in his seventies, he is still saying that those were the happiest days of his life. I wonder how many people living today can say they have collected new plough engines from Leeds!

It was through hearing and seeing so much of these engines that I felt I must build a model, just like you would write a book.

*Afternote, Mr Willett succeeded in completing his ploughing engine model and went on to exhibit it frequently. We wonder where it is now?*

*The demonstration at Gt Wymondley was reported in Steam Plough Times No 22. It took place in June 1972 on land belonging to Brian Hailey, with Frank Pratley's BB1 15139 and Bill Colebrook's AA 13880, cultivating with a Taylor Bros of Wimbish implement, and Alec Ibbott's BB1 15336 with Ron Ruff's BB 14383 ploughing with Mr Ruff's plough.*

*The Saturday was fine though Sunday was wet and windy. Nevertheless there were about 1,000 spectators raising £270 of which £50 went to the club, Village Church and Hall.*

*Notably, the knowledgeable Rev Stebbing was present joined the SPC.*

JB.