
F V L C R U M



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FULCRUM is the newsletter of ISASC(E), the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors (Europe). It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.



Old Man Kipper

Members have been sending me their holiday snaps!

Not for us, sublime crags or swirling cataracts nor even noble architecture but hefty lumps of old iron in the best ISASC tradition.

Julie Davey spent a weekend in the Isle of Man which, she says, was foggy and smelled of kippers

She popped into the Railway Museum where a number of interesting items caught her eye.



Above we see a 6 pint iron cooking pot made by Kenrick of West Bromwich, whom we know as the maker of stylish and desirable weights, especially the flat circular 7lb. An arbitrary date of 1800 has been ascribed by the museum to this item. We know that Kenrick operated between 1791 and 1966 and given the generic nature of cast iron it could have been made at any time during that period. Left there is a parcel scale, of transatlantic mien with a few bits missing. Immediately above is an item that Julie could not identify (me neither) but which carries a load marking. Railway man Gordon Maslin advises that it is simply a bottle jack with a lifting capacity of 16 tons, rather than a high capacity megaphone

David Apps also visited a Railway Museum, or more precisely a heritage railway in North Norfolk. He came across some nice platform machines exhibiting the evolution of the beast. As usual with loose poise machines the hanger and poises seem to have gone walkabout in the case of the machine on the left.



Blaster from the Past

Some years ago I came across some records by a gentleman who went by the sobriquet of Blaster Bates. Derek Bates was a demolitions expert, in some ways a John the Baptist to the later and much better known Fred Dibnah who graced televisions in the UK with tales of structures he had

reduced to rubble.

Blaster Bates was in the same line of work back in the sixties and seventies, but very much relied on explosives to perform his acts of demolition. He committed some of his experiences to vinyl under such evocative titles as 'Watch out for the Bits' and 'TNT for Two'.

I mostly found his reminiscences amusing but did find his much vaunted love of firearms and slaughtering wildlife not altogether to my taste.

He did however, en passant, explain one mystery of firearm terminology which I found of interest (pre Wikipedia). The bore of a weapon was apparently originally based on the weight of the solid lead ball that the gun would fire. Thus a twelve bore gun would allow a lead ball weighing 1/12 of a pound to pass through it, a twenty bore 1/20 of a pound etc.

This being the case, musket and pistol balls could be used as rudimentary weights.

This happened, to some effect, in 1789 during the aftermath of the mutiny on the Bounty. Captain William Bligh was overthrown by the crew of the said ship and was cast adrift in a small boat with 18 loyal crewmen and a limited quantity of food and water. Bligh, who probably should have worked more on his people skills, was, nevertheless, an excellent sailor. As evidence of this he managed to sail the overcrowded boat over 4000 miles from the hostile Tonga Islands to a British settlement on East Timor, a voyage of 48 days duration. He achieved this with the loss of only one crew member.

He had to severely ration the food and water to ensure the survival of his crew and recorded how he managed to do it.

Bligh's lead pistol ball now held in the National Maritime museum at Greenwich





‘I now made a pair of scales with cocoa-nut shells, and having accidentally some pistol-balls in the boat, 25 of which weighed one pound, or 16 ounces, I adopted one as the proportion of weight that each person should receive of bread, and a quarter of a pint of water, at eight in the morning, at noon, and at sun-set. Today I gave

about half an ounce of pork for dinner, which, though any moderate person would have considered only a mouthful, was divided into three or four’

A Scale by any other Name

We have received another post card from **Kath Malcolm** for which we are grateful. The inn known as the **Scale and Compass** once stood in Birchfield Road, Headless Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire. The photograph, shown above, dates from 1930. The licensee at this time was one Harry Carwardine who is, presumably, the natty gent shown standing outside the pub.

It is difficult to know whether the name refers to actual weighing activities as the word has various meanings. The plaque, shown right, stands in **Scale Lane** in the English city of Kingston upon Hull (better known simply, as Hull). The king in question was Edward 1 who founded his new town, at the end of the 13th century, on the north bank of the Humber Estuary. It is, therefore an ancient city and port but much of its tangible history is lost, thanks to a degree of civic remodelling by the Luftwaffe in the 1940’s. The ‘old town’ part of the city does retain some elements of its heritage and one street in the old town carries the interesting name. This thoroughfare has gained some notoriety recently as **‘the road to nowhere’**. An elaborate and ingenious swing bridge was constructed to continue Scale Lane over the River Hull to connect to a new area of development on the east bank. Up to now, however, no development has actually occurred on the other bank so the hi-tech bridge (**below left**) actually connects to nothing at all and sits in a permanently open condition as nobody has any reason to cross it.



I fondly imagined that Scale Lane referred to a once thriving scale making quarter in the late middle ages, along the lines of that previously discussed in Old Street in East London. It was a considerable disappointment when I was advised by a Hull historian that the lane was simply named after a local worthy of that name, who had some historical connection with the area.

Management Committee Bulletin 2014-02

During the ISASC(E) Management Committee Meeting of 16.07.14 the following points were discussed:

Treasurer Mike Sharpe would like to remind members who have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2014 to do so immediately if they wish to renew their membership - non-payers will be removed from the mailing list.

He reports finances are still in order with funds declining slowly as previously reported. We have received and paid the bills for *EQM* production of 2012 and 2013 totalling around £6000. Audited accounts will be available in time for the mailing ahead of the AGM.

Talking of which this will take place at the Warwick Hilton on the 12th October 2014. The theme is "The Healthy Weigh" and there will be talks from Barry Oliver, Diana, Norman and Peter Elliot as part of the programme, on weighing for health, medicine and related subjects. Members planning to attend are invited to bring interesting items for display and show-and-tell.

On this occasion the officer's elections are due after another successful 3 year term. Members will be sent voting papers and further relevant documents prior to the meeting. John Knights has indicated his willingness to stand for the post of Chairman, with all other serving officers willing to stand for another term in their relevant positions. We have a volunteer who is willing to give the Meetings Secretary post a try. We are however still short one of person to run the Membership department - if you feel you could help, please contact any Committee member.

Jan Berning the editor of *EQM* reports a shortage of material beginning to affect timely production of our journal. Please think of suitable contributions you might have or be able to produce and submit them to her or to John Knights. Very laudably John has also confirmed the continuing editing of *Fulcrum* despite the extra work he is taking on as Chairman.

Take a Butchers

Bob Myers has sent some more interesting reminiscences of his days as an Avery representative which also serve to reveal the dark underbelly of the retail trade as it was in the 1950's and 60's. The Avery Company was ever keen for traders to replace their old, but still viable scales with a newer model and relied upon the salesman to demonstrate the technical innovations and the advantage that these would present to the trader's business. The traders, used to their familiar models and happy with the performance usually took some persuading to invest large sums of money in some fancy new device.

The developments in equipment at this time were usually in the area of enhanced indication, but as these often allowed the customer to see more of what was going on in the transaction this was not of obvious attraction to a trader with something to hide.

In 1961 Bob was a sales rep. in the Composite section (a wide ranging organisation selling scales to industrial, retail and agricultural customers) in the Burton-on-Trent area of England.

He went to see a butcher carrying one of the new Avery Aristocrat machines (and probably, given the size of these scales, wearing a gentleman's support), a device which, worryingly, showed both weight value and a wide range of price indications to both retailer and the customer standing on the other side of the counter.

This excess of clarity was not greatly attractive to most retailers but this particular trader seemed enthusiastic, describing it as '*the finest fiddling machine ever!*'

He reasoned thus! The dual display immediately presents a face of scrupulous honesty to the customer who will probably, given the novelty of a price display, observe the transaction in its entirety on one or two occasions. Provided the scale was carefully located at some distance from the preparation/serving area, requiring the customer to move along the counter to see the indication, he reasoned that customers would soon tire of the journey. To move to the scale each time would be both inconvenient and un-British as it would appear to betray a lack of trust in the Butcher and cause embarrassment (the English in particular fear embarrassment above all else). The butcher would thus be free to invent both weight and price at his leisure.

Bob is of the opinion that customers were often authors of their own downfall during transactions in that they would ask for their purchase by reference to the amount they wanted to pay. Thus they would ask for 'some of those chops for 12/6 (62.5p); as he says 'those were the days'. The customer immediately indicated how much was to be paid and the dishonest seller could construct the transaction accordingly.

ISASC (Europe) Autumn Meeting

A very successful meeting was held on 12/10/14, again at the Warwick Hilton Hotel.

The theme of the meeting was '**The Healthy Weigh**' and dealt with the weighing in connection with matters medical.

Barry Oliver gave a fascinating presentation on 'weighing the baby' which was partly based on some research he had done in connection with the little known maker C Pollard Scales who became part of the Avery empire and had connections with the Oertling Division which, of course is Barry's first love. He found advertisements indicating that Pollard made, in addition to person weighers, precision balances. Barry was unaware of any such balances and would welcome news of any sightings at antique fairs etc. He illustrated the talk with some interesting baby weighers from the John Wintour collection and John had brought along some of these scales as display items. Barry also spoke on the subject of 'Weighing for Drug Research' which, of course, he was able to do with great authority as it was his profession.

Other talks were given by Norman Biggs who produced examples of person weighing ephemera and Diana Crawforth- Hitchins who spoke about an early person scale that she had brought along to the meeting (below left)

We also heard from Peter Elliot who brought along fine examples of person weighing equipment from his collection of Salter scales, John Knights who spoke about prescription scales and Frances

Simmons who had some photographs of a rare Herbert counter machine. Peter Kerridge gave a brief update on the state of the Avery Museum at Smethwick. He also



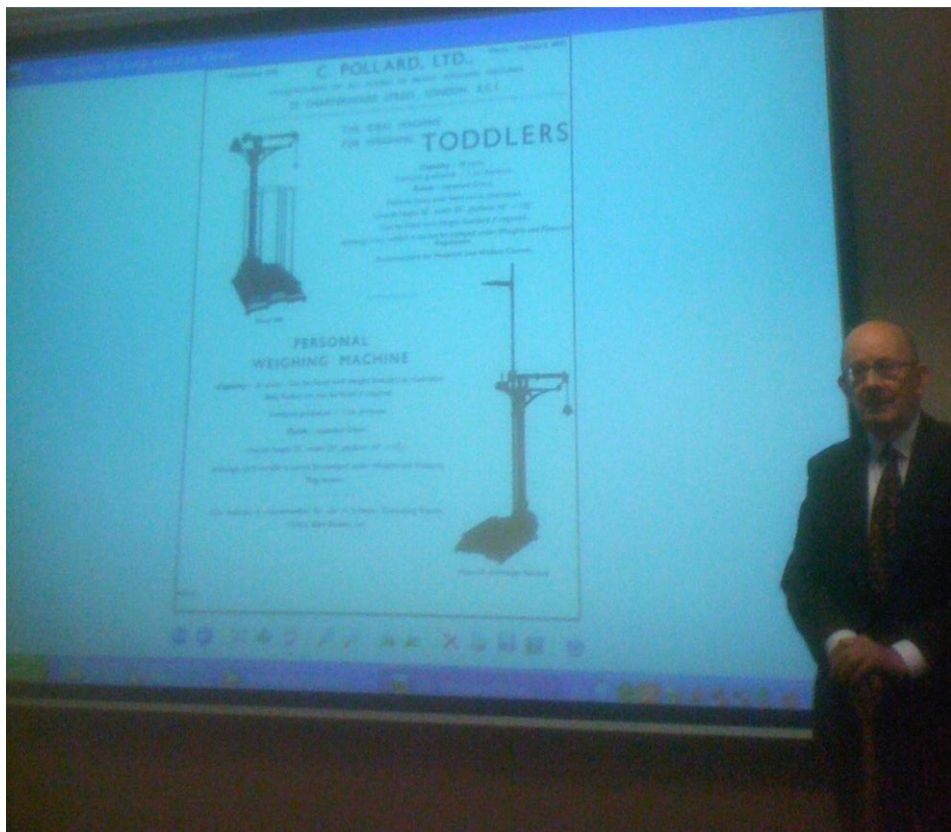
brought along two early Avery person weighing machines which he had worked on and managed to return to full working order (above right)

The Warwick Hilton has proved to be an excellent location for our meeting being conveniently placed for members from various parts of the UK and the facilities in the meeting room are impeccably organised for our function. It is also excellently located for members who wish to extend

their stay and visit Warwick, Leamington Spa and Stratford on Avon. My only reservations are the 'Roundabout from Hell' which has to be negotiated from the M40 and the fact that the management are apparently unaware that the floor at ground level is the **ground floor** rather than floor 1 (that's upstairs American people!).

It is anticipated that we shall return to Warwick next year for our formal meeting in October.

This year we had an informal get together, in July, in the Forest of Dean, courtesy of John Wintour and Mark Haines. Next year it is currently anticipated that we will arrange a midweek, informal meeting in Leicestershire at Sutton Cheney or Desford if a demand is demonstrated. It would be useful if members who would appreciate such a meeting



Barry Oliver, pretending to talk about baby and child weighing instruments, whilst really seeking information about the business trading as C. Pollard Ltd. This company variously had premises at York Road and Charterhouse Road in London and were allegedly, also a maker or supplier of precision balances. Barry would clearly love to discover such an instrument but feels that they probably don't really exist

could indicate at the time they return their membership renewals for next year.

In line with our meeting topic I recently came across the postcard shown left, which is a rather charming picture from New Zealand from some years ago showing some antipodean babies being weighed on a nice set of counter scales.

