

# Knutsford Guardian

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## Preserving a British Hero

Michael wants future generations to enjoy historic steam engine

By JAMES WILSON

A SHOWMAN'S locomotive is the latest addition to a Knutsford businessman's impressive collection of vehicles.

Michael Oliver, the founder and chairman of Knutsford manufacturing firm Oliver Valves, has bought the only full-sized Garrett Showman's road locomotive ever built to ensure its upkeep.

It was bought from its owner in Ireland for an undisclosed figure, and adds to Mr Oliver's extensive engine collection, which includes the late Fred Dibnah's famous Aveling and Porter steam engine.

The road locomotive, built in 1908 by

Richard Garrett and Sons, is works number 27160 and is known as the British Hero. It was restored by Stan Burgess between 1991 and 1997.

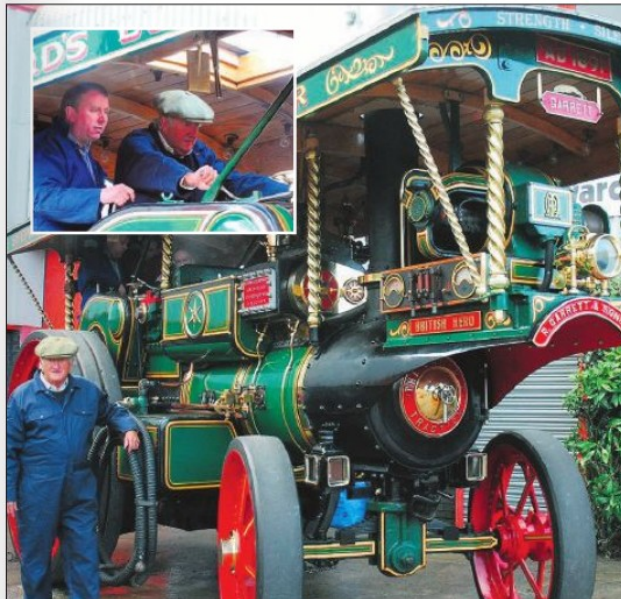
Showman's steam engines were originally built to generate electricity to illuminate and power fairground rides, and were distinguishable by brightly-coloured paintwork and ornate decorations.

British Hero has had many different owners since 1908, and has been showcased across the country at steam and engine rallies.

TV star Barbara Windsor officially named it at the Carrington rally in 1999.

Michael said: "It is essential for the manufacturing heritage of this country that brilliant engineering examples like the Garrett Showman's road locomotive are preserved.

"As an engineer, I see myself as a custodian of the engine rather than an owner, as I want future generations to be able to enjoy this historic machine."



Above, Michael Oliver is dwarfed by the impressive British Hero, and inset, at work on the steam engine n110834/n110830