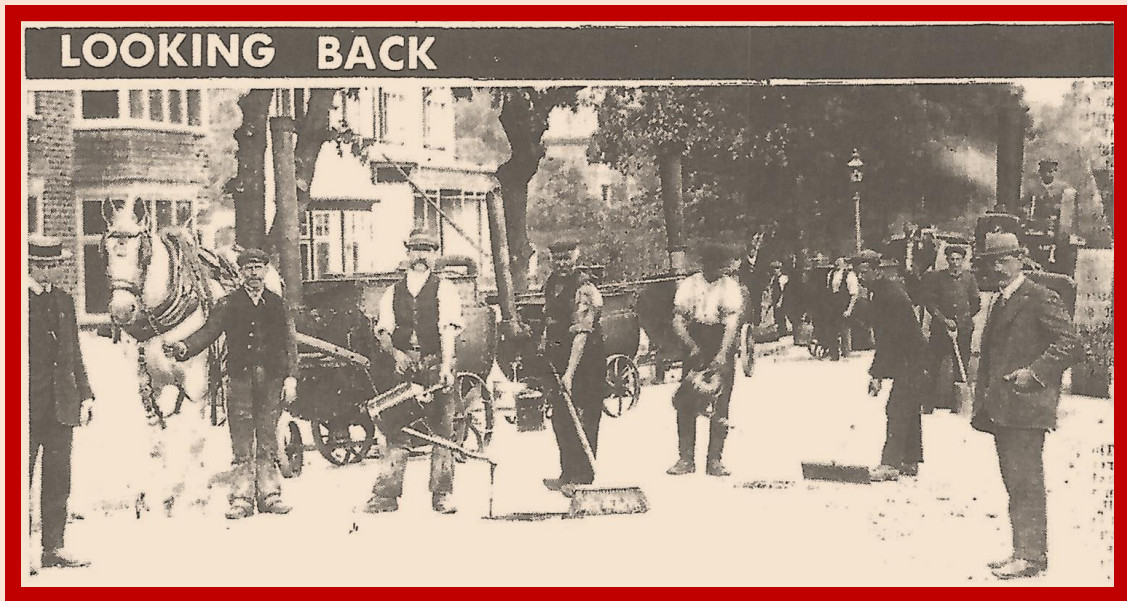


Before and After

JOE SALT'S STEAMROLLER

Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield, 1910



Many years ago, I came across the above unsourced newscutting, but it looked interesting and so I kept it. The description read:

Laying tar is cushy now compared with back in 1910, according to local man Harry Higgs. It was a hard manual job and the men would pour the black stuff on and then shovel sand and grit on to get the finished surface. Harry, who was the clerk to the borough surveyor for many years, worked for the local council from 1914 to 1966, and knew all the lads pictured above.

"It was a hard job and these were tough boys. The tar used to have to be exactly the right temperature otherwise you couldn't spread it, and it was the job of the 'Flasherup' Hartland to make sure it ran properly," said Harry, who lives in College Road and is now 83. He was called 'Flasherup' because of the saying 'Flash her up' he used when the tar was too cool to spray.

The Sutton Coldfield Corporation men, who would have made the 'Boys from the Black Stuff' look like 'pansies' are, from left to right: Young Hartland, Bert Salt, Jack Smith, Bill Whittaker, Bert Eden, Joe Salt (horse driver), Harry Vernon, 'Flasherup' Hartland, Joe Salt (roller driver) and Tom Moore.

The picture was taken in Jockey Road, near Britwell Road, and as well as the steamroller there are four tar boiling machines lining the road.

A search on www.Ancestry.co.uk today reveals that the Harry Higgs mentioned in the newscutting was born on 15th August 1900 and therefore the newscutting must date to 1983 and is possibly from the *Sutton Coldfield News* or the *Sutton Coldfield Observer* newspapers. Unfortunately, neither of these have yet been digitised completely.

In March 2022, much to my surprise, an enquiry was made by Joe True, the current owner of the steamroller, to whom I then sent a copy of this newscutting. He confirmed that this was his steamroller as, to his knowledge, its driver was Joe Salt when it was supplied to Sutton Coldfield Corporation in 1909.

For steamroller enthusiasts, the model is an Aveline & Porter Steam Road Roller No. 6692, Registration Number WD 3284, and was built in 1908.

It still seems to be going strong 114 years later!



Janet Jordan
June, 2022