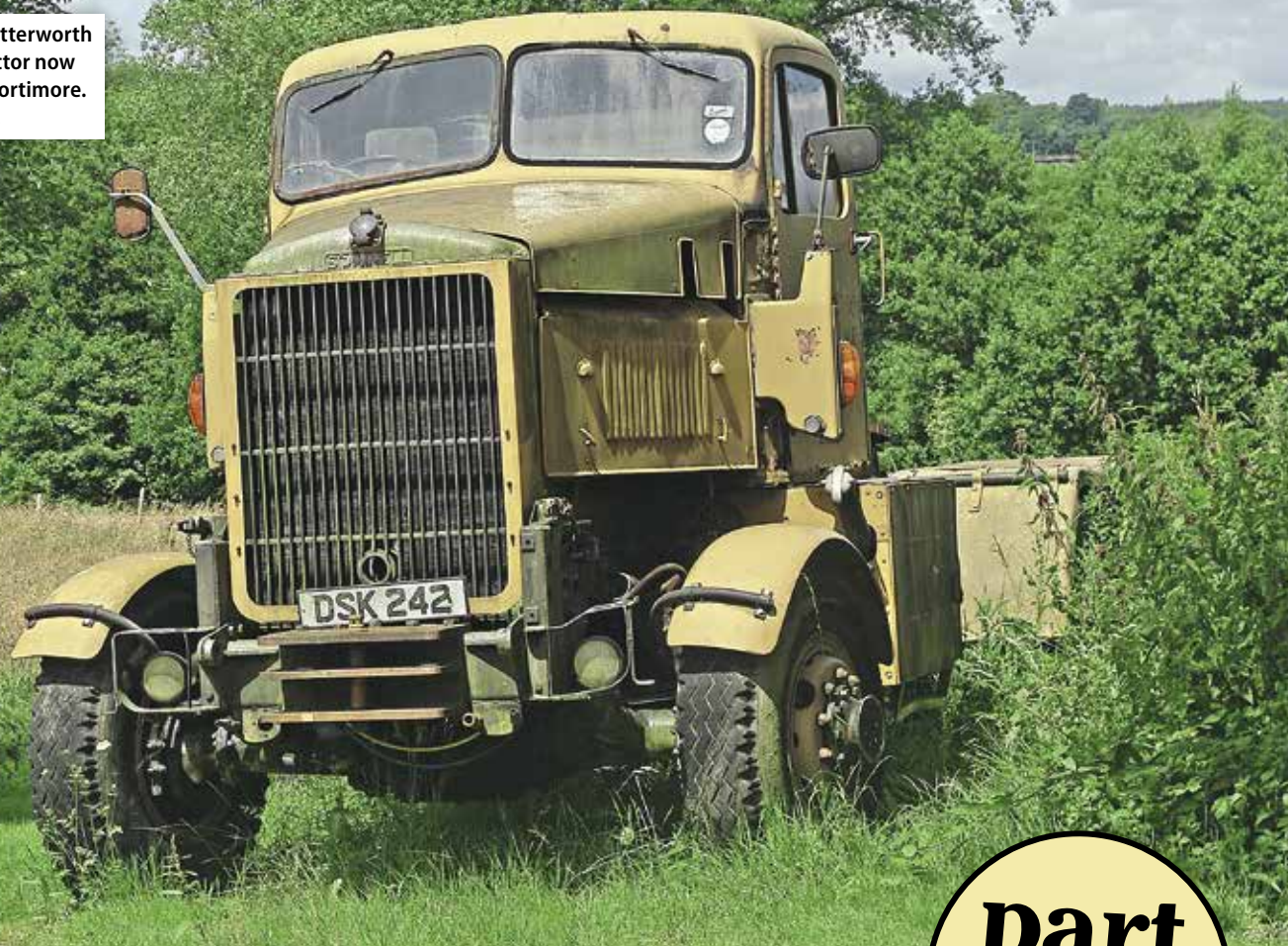


The restored ex-Butterworth Scammell Constructor now owned by Roger Mortimore. Photo Alan Barnes.



## part 1

# A LINK TO THE PAST

A classic lorry stored away for decades gets **Alan Barnes** researching an innovative company from times gone by.

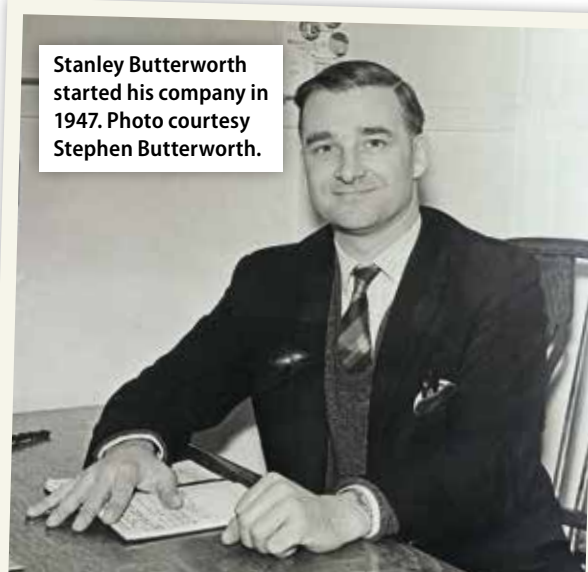
**A**lthough the Scammell Constructor has been tucked away in a shed for more than 30 years and is now covered in quite a thick layer of dust, the company name – Stanley Butterworth Cranes Ltd – is still clearly visible on the fading red paintwork of the cab doors.

Just how the lorry, once owned by a company based in Scunthorpe, came to reside in a farm building in Kent was explained by my good friend Roger Mortimore who is the current owner of the Scammell. “It certainly does not seem 30 years ago that I bought the Constructor – or perhaps to be more accurate I should say that I bought three of them.”

The world of classic commercial vehicles is not generally known for its ‘Buy Two Get One Free’ offers and this particular deal had been no exception. “At the time I had been looking for a restoration project for my son Steven, and he wanted something old and large,” said Roger. “I had heard about a Scammell Constructor owned by Mr Brian Hawkins and went to see him at his yard in Dartford. The lorry had restoration potential and was certainly old and large enough to meet my son’s requirements.

“We agreed that Steven would pay for the lorry in instalments and that the Scammell would remain in the yard until the full amount had been paid.”

Stanley Butterworth started his company in 1947. Photo courtesy Stephen Butterworth.



Words: Alan Barnes Photography: As stated

“So the lad was happy he had his lorry – or at least he would be when he had paid for it – and it was then that Brian invited me to have a look in another of his sheds as there were a couple more Scammells in store which he thought might be of interest.

“Opening the doors of the shed revealed two fairly dusty but reasonably complete Scammell Constructors both still wearing the brick-red livery of their last commercial owner, Stanley Butterworth Cranes Ltd. Having looked them over I considered that the two vehicles certainly had potential although one was in slightly worse condition than the other. Both would need a lot of work but after all, in my opinion, any Scammell Constructor has restoration potential. In the back of my mind I also had the idea that such a lorry would be a useful addition to my fleet of heavy haulage vehicles and you never know when a Constructor will come in handy.”

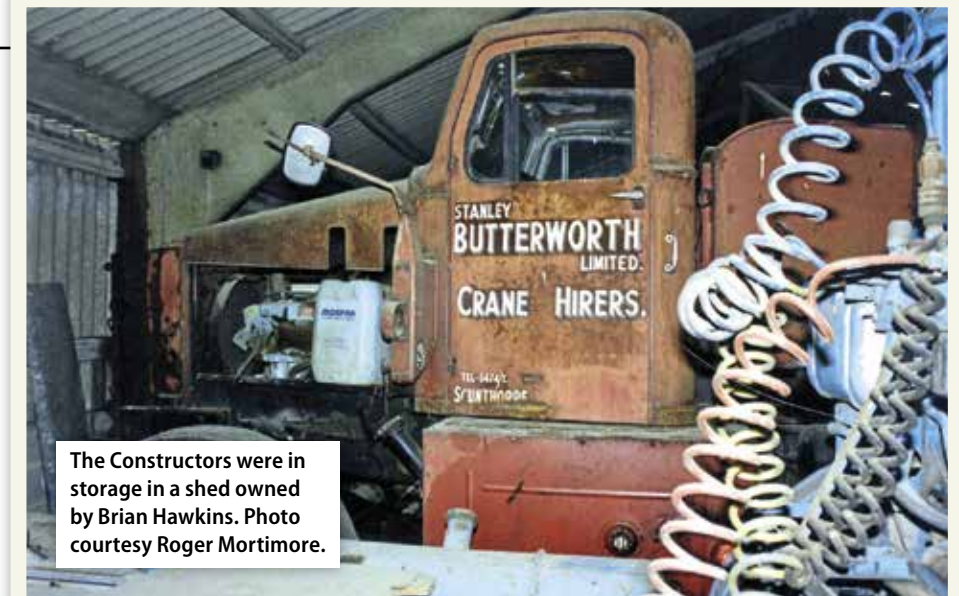
The Scammell registered as TBE 450H started life as a ballasted gun tractor with the British Army and was officially classified as an FV12101, GS, 20 ton, 6x6 Scammell Constructor for 20-ton trailer, and carried the military registration 82-BL-10. It was built in 1955 as chassis number 8492 under Sales Order number 10729 and was fitted with a 10.35-litre Meadows 6PC630 six-cylinder petrol engine, twin Solex carburettors and a six-speed Scammell gearbox.

Following its military service the Constructor was bought by Butterworths and was modified and re-registered for civilian use. The cupola opening in the cab roof was filled in with a steel patch, the Meadows engine was replaced with a Leyland 0.680 and the vehicle was rated at 100 tons gross weight.

*“the Meadows engine was replaced with a Leyland 0.680 and the vehicle was rated at 100 tons gross weight”*

### THE OTHER SCAMMELL

The second of the Scammells also saw service with the British Army and carried the registration 82-BL-66 and like its sister Scammell was acquired by Butterworths probably in the early 1960s. This vehicle was built as chassis number 8548 to the same specification as TBE 450H and was again re-engined by Butterworths when added to its fleet. Although the registration plate had



The Constructors were in storage in a shed owned by Brian Hawkins. Photo courtesy Roger Mortimore.

been removed by the time Roger bought the vehicle the Constructor is believed to have been registered as TRY 494H, although with the original documentation missing this has not yet been confirmed.

Among the paperwork relating to the vehicles which Roger did acquire is a copy of an authorisation under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles General Order 1969 dated March 25, 1972, relating to TRY 494H. This covered the movement of a Pennine II Crawler from the site of the Jodrell Bank telescope, where construction work had been in progress, to Reading. This may well have been one of the last duties which the Scammell performed under Butterworth’s ownership as the sale of the Crane Division to Sparrows had just been agreed at this time.

Roger continued the story of the Scammells: “A deal was done and in the course of a few short days the Mortimore family became the owners of three Scammell Constructors – we are not really mad you know! We never did finish the restoration work on all three – in fact only one of them was eventually restored. One of the ex-Butterworth lorries has been in store almost since the day I bought it and only the remaining Butterworth vehicle was put back on the road and this even saw service with my company, R Mortimore Heavy Haulage. However this proved to be only a brief return to ‘active duty’ as it was only used a couple of times but I did have a lot more fun ‘playing’ with the Scammell at various shows and rallies over the years. It made light work of hauling the traction engines owned by my friends, and the Scammell also made several trips to Holland, Belgium and France to attend various rallies. The lorry is still with me and is at the moment parked in the garden but it does not get much use these days and is now beginning to look a little on the shabby side.

“I suppose it is now more than 30 years ago since I bought the Constructors and although at the time I was fully occupied with running my transport business – you know the sort of thing, 25 hours a day and eight days a week – I did make a start on restoring one of the Scammells. The work had to be done outside and it was very much a project which I worked



This is the second Constructor, which has been in storage since Roger bought it 30 years ago, and was the inspiration for this article. Photo courtesy Roger Mortimore.



on now and again when I had a little spare time. I seem to remember that the days chosen to work on the lorry were always cold and involved snow – there must have been some fine days as well but they don't seem to stick in the mind.

“There were no real problems as far as the restoration work was concerned, the engine needed no work at all and the only thing done was to rub it down and then a repaint, and it still runs as sweet as a nut. Likewise the gearbox has never been touched although I have noticed recently that it has begun to jump out of gear from time to time but fortunately I have a spare gearbox in store – well, you never know when something like that will come in handy.

“One of the problems with restoring something like the Constructor is that a lot of the parts are large and very heavy which is fine if you are working on the vehicle in a well-equipped workshop with pits and overhead lifting gear. If you are working under a sheet in the garden it is a different story. One morning I had decided to remove the radiator as I had some time before I had to set off to work. The unit weighed over 2cwt and I thought the best way to handle it would be to place a table in front of the Scammell and lower the radiator gently on to it. This operation went very well and I went off to work leaving the radiator sitting on the table. It was a different story when I returned home later that day to find the radiator sitting in the middle of the remains of a collapsed table.”

## OTHER WORK

“The brakes needed a lot of work, especially as when driving something of this size you want to feel confident that you can actually stop it when you want to. All the brakes were completely stripped and rebuilt with new linings and seals fitted and the hubs were rebuilt as well. The chassis itself was in good condition with only minor surface rusting and this was easily removed prior to priming and



The now restored Scammell as purchased and driven to Roger's Kent premises three decades ago. Photo courtesy Roger Mortimore.

repainting. The fifth wheel was still in place and apart from cleaning and greasing needed nothing in the way of further repairs.

“The interior of the steel cab was stripped out and the dash and instruments cleaned and refitted. All the bulbs in the instrument panel were replaced and everything worked when tested. The cab shell itself needed some repair work, especially to the roof, and my friend John O'Sheen helped with this as well as the painting. I fitted air horns and also removed the Army pattern couplings from the front and the rear and replaced them with heavy haulage couplings.

“Although the work was hardly a ground-up nut and bolt restoration it took nearly three years to get the Scammell back on the road but it was a 'spare time' project and with a business to run the problem was that I just didn't have a lot of spare time.

“My son's enthusiasm for his Constructor

waned fairly early on when he discovered girls and Land Rovers so although we kept it for many years no restoration work was carried out and it has recently been sold. Perhaps I will get around to smartening up the one in the garden but the work seems to be well down the order on my ever-lengthening 'to do' list.

“Having owned an ex-Butterworth

*"I returned home later that day to find the radiator sitting in the middle of the remains of a collapsed table."*

vehicle for so many years I was surprised to be contacted by Stephen Butterworth, the son of the founder of the company, Stanley Butterworth, who now lives in Switzerland. His father had passed away and while going through his father's documents he came across photographs of the Scammells and a number of the cranes and vehicles which the company operated. He knew very little about his father's business, having been away at school, and he was not involved with the company when he started work, but he agreed that I could have the photographs and perhaps see what else could be found out about the company.”

## FOUNDING A COMPANY

Stanley Butterworth had served in the RAF during the Second World War, and after leaving the forces started his own business, a firm of structural engineers and fabricators at the Victory Forge in Scunthorpe. His wife Liana also worked with him in the new business which was incorporated as Stanley Butterworth Ltd in 1947. Although a



The restoration under way. Very little actually needed doing, and the engine and gearbox were untouched. Photos courtesy Roger Mortimore.



successful business in its own right he took the decision in the mid-1950s to diversify, with the aim of strengthening the company's activities. He realised that the growth of heavy industry in the region with the construction of oil refineries and steel works provided a potential business opportunity and he established a crane hire company providing services to the construction industry in the area. As well as vehicle-mounted mobile cranes the firm also specialised in large heavy-duty cranes which were bought from specialist crane companies overseas.

A new company, Stanley Butterworth Cranes Ltd, was formed for the business which operated from a new yard a few hundred yards from the foundry. As well as plant the company also bought support vehicles ranging from small Bedford vans to heavy haulage units like the two Scammell Constructors. There were also several specialised low loaders which were needed to move the largest of the cranes.

The move into crane hire was understandable as the engineering and fabrication arm of the Butterworth business could provide a complete design and fabrication service for a wide range of structures, large and small, and the availability of its own cranes meant that the business could



One of Stanley Butterworth's Constructors at work back in the day moving part of a Manitowoc crane. Photo courtesy Stephen Butterworth.

also offer full erection services if required. To this end the company ensured that its plant and equipment was the most advanced type then available. Butterworth was looking not only at the home market but also to the possibilities of providing services across Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The cranes operated by the company

spanned the whole range of capacities from five tons to 300 tons and included both crawler and lorry-mounted cranes. According to its advertising: “The range represents an outstanding service, particularly for heavy lifting.”

Continued next month.



The restored Scammell actually went back to work with Roger's company. It's shown here working at the Erith Oil & Cake Works in the mid 1990s. Photo courtesy Roger Mortimore.



The Constructor moving Peter Stanier's Fowler ploughing engine. Photo courtesy Roger Mortimore.

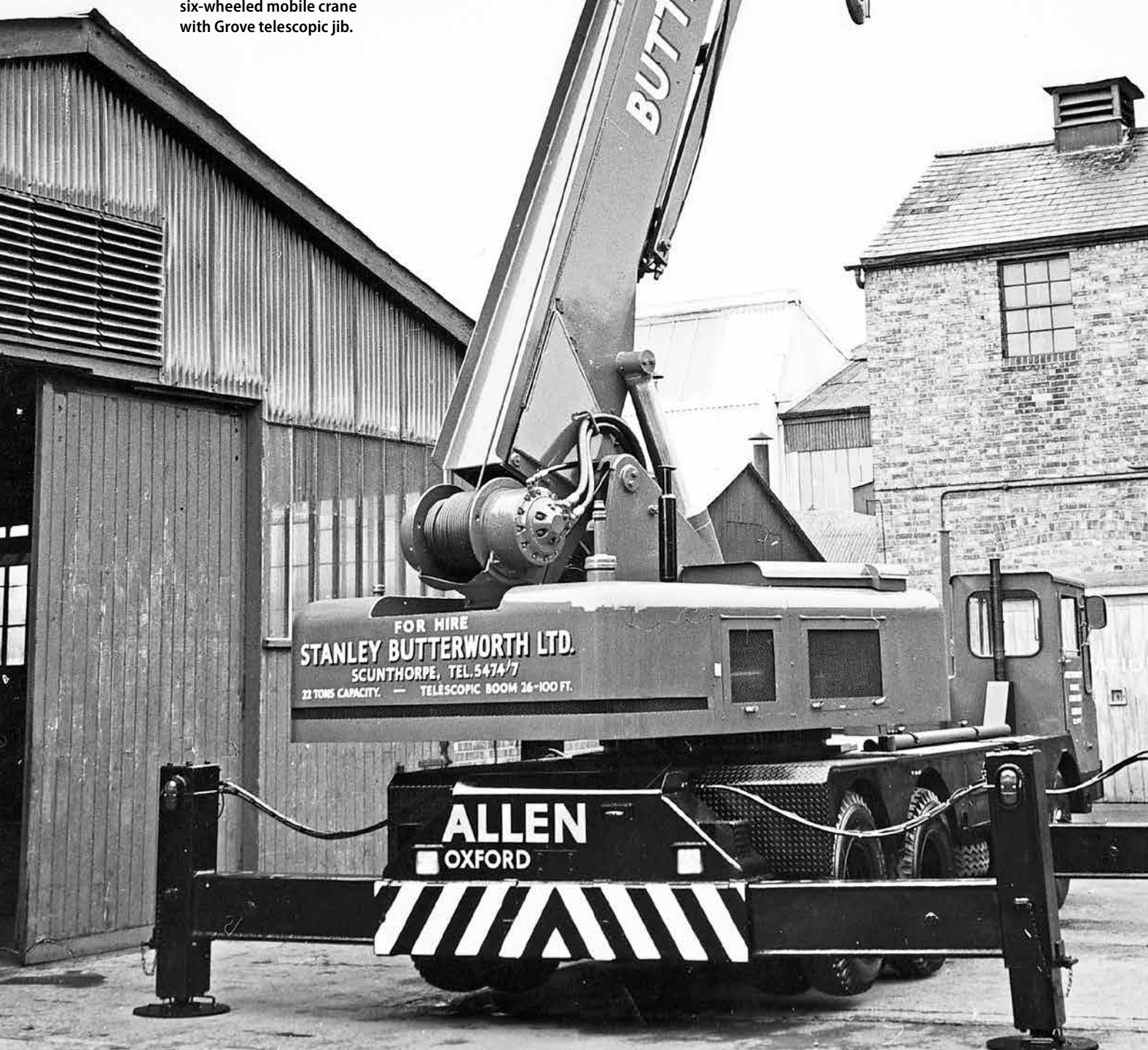


# A link to the PAST

**Alan Barnes** concludes the story of an innovative company from long ago.

A new Oxford-made Allen six-wheeled mobile crane with Grove telescopic jib.

part  
2



**F**or the heaviest construction work the company bought two Manitowoc 300-ton 'ringer' cranes which at the time were the only such machines in the whole of Europe. These specialist cranes were built by the Manitowoc Engineering Company in Wisconsin, US, and were an adaptation of its Model 4000W crawler crane. The 'ringer' adaptation increased the lifting capacity of the crawler-mounted base unit from two to four times its normal maximum rating, the capacities varying with the type of boom selected. The 4000W crane was effectively mounted on a 36ft diameter steel ring which was fabricated in four segments and box beam extensions held the crane on what was effectively a circular roller track with four hydraulic levelling jacks. The unit also had self-contained hydraulic pump controls mounted on the side beams.

One of the Butterworth 'ringer' cranes was used during the construction of the Lindsey Oil Refinery at Killingholme in Lincolnshire as detailed at the time: "One of the only two Manitowoc 300-ton ringer cranes in Europe was used recently to lift a 22½-ton load 250ft to the top of a fractionating column at Lindsey Oil Refinery. Both the cranes are owned by Stanley Butterworth Ltd, Scunthorpe, and the other is currently working on the construction of a new ICI plant at North Tees."

"Since Butterworth bought the two 'Ringer Cranes' last year they have been used extensively on petrochemical and refinery construction. The 'ringer' – a new concept in crane design – consists of 36ft diameter beam enclosing the base of the crane to take the full all-up weight. By using 75% of the tipping weight as a counterweight complete stability is obtained through a 360-degree radius. With a 290ft boom and 60ft fly jib the cranes are the highest in Europe. They can be converted to tower cranes, crawler mounted, with a 213ft tower and 160ft boom."

The crane was also used to erect a 100-ton furnace shell for the Steel Company of Wales and it was recorded at the time that this was "a job that could not have been handled by any other single crane operating in the United Kingdom".

Scammell Constructor outside Menrick Motors in Scunthorpe. From left, Eric Jones, Cyril Wattan, George Theakston.



Stanley Butterworth pictured with a new Lorain Moto-Crane in 1964.

## PROMOTING THE BUSINESS

With Stanley Butterworth's background in engineering it was understandable that the advertising for his crane business should highlight this expertise with the "Butterworth approach to heavy lifting – we believe that heavy lifting operations should always be considered in the light of basic engineering principles. Our service is at its most effective when we are given the opportunity to discuss all aspects of the lifting procedure with the client during the initial design stage of the particular item of equipment."

This also held true in terms of the fleet of smaller mobile lorry cranes which the firm also operated, declaring: "Pounds, Shillings and Sense... we can save you time and money with our new 22-ton capacity Hydraulic Crane." In the main these vehicles were six- and eight-wheel Lorain 'Moto-Cranes' with 45, 50 and 110-ton lift capacity which were based at the Winterton Road depot in Scunthorpe and also at a new depot which had been opened at Eastfield Road in Killingholme. In addition to these cranes, which were imported

from the US, the firm also used NCK and Allen's of Oxford equipment and it would seem that Mr Butterworth always invested in brand-new, high-quality machines.

It would seem that by the early 1970s Stanley Butterworth was trying to plan for his eventual retirement and he arranged to sell a part-interest in Butterworth Cranes to London & Northern. This was the banner under which a group of very diverse family-owned businesses were brought together by a group of wealthy businessmen.

Under the terms of the agreements it would seem that the individual companies, including Butterworth Cranes, would continue to be run by their respective management teams. However it would only be a couple of years later that Stanley Butterworth would arrange to sell the crane division of the business.

I spoke to Joyce East who worked in the Butterworth office from 1964 until the company finally closed in 1979 and she obviously had a high regard for her old boss. "Mr Butterworth really was one of the best and it really was a sad day when the business





A Lorain Moto-Crane, Scammell Constructor and Land Rover in Butterworth's Scunthorpe maintenance workshop.

came to an end. I think that by the late 1970s Mr Butterworth was looking to retire completely and having sold the crane division to Sparrows in 1972 he decided to sell up the remaining part of the business in 1979 and all the employees were unfortunately made redundant but it was handled in a nice way.

"I remember the dark red lorries and cranes coming in and out of the yard, although Mr Butterworth would obviously prefer to see them out, as then they would be on jobs earning their keep. The company had its own workshops and maintenance areas where all the servicing and repair work was carried out as the company prided itself on the quality and condition of its equipment. While all the plant was kept very busy Mr Butterworth did make arrangements for one of the mobile cranes to be parked outside the church when one of the girls at the company got married which I thought was a nice gesture.

"There is little left of the old Butterworth premises. The offices are now occupied by a vet and the site of the old steel works is now occupied by a building company. I am quite surprised to learn that a couple of our old lorries have survived as I assumed everything would have been scrapped years ago."

## A DRIVER'S VIEW

Colin Jacklin was a driver with Butterworths and recalled his days with the company. "As far as crane drivers were concerned Butterworths was the place to be and there was no shortage of men wanting to drive for the company if a vacancy ever opened. When I worked for the company during the 1960s there were around 30 crane and truck drivers along with the maintenance crews in the workshops and the office staff. The main administration offices were at the steelworks and from there the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Butterworth operation was controlled.

"We had cranes working all over the country as well as abroad although as far as I was concerned I only ever worked on the

jobs in the UK. The drivers formed a very close-knit band and remained friends long after the company had closed down and although many of the 'gang' are sadly no longer with us there are still four or five of us in this area who remain in contact. Mr Butterworth was a true gentleman and was held in high regard by his staff.

"I was very surprised to hear that the old Scammell Constructors were still around as I used to drive one of them. One was fitted with a fifth wheel while the other had a ballast body and that was the vehicle which I drove on many occasions. Nice to know we are both soldiering on.

"I also drove the Lorain mobile cranes as well as the smaller Hydrocons and the company also had one of the first Gottwald cranes brought in from Germany as well as the NCK Pennine crawlers. All the equipment was bought new and the firm really was a pioneer when it came to crane operations and it was the first company in the area to buy the Allen



Overhead view of a Manitowoc 'ringer' crane.

mobile crane which was fitted with a Grove telescopic jib.

"I left the company before it was sold to Sparrows but later I worked for that company and found myself back in the old Butterworth Scunthorpe depot where I had spent many happy years."

It was Colin who provided some additional information about one of the photographs of the Scammell Constructor. "Having spoken to one of the other drivers we think this photograph must have been taken in either 1967 or 1968. The Scammell and the trailer are parked on Glebe Road outside Menrick Motors which was a commercial repair garage. This was about mid-way between the crane yard and the Butterworth steel fabrication works. The three men standing in front of the lorry are Eric Jones on the left who took over driving the Scammell from Cyril Wattan who is standing in the middle. The chap on the right is George Theakston, who was the firm's main mechanic."



1964 eight-wheel Lorain Moto-Crane.

## SPARROWS TAKEOVER

When the business was sold in 1972 Frank Sumsion was involved with the takeover of the Butterworth Cranes business by Sparrows and he recalled the acquisition. "The Sparrows operation had begun in 1948 using small home-built cranes with a maximum lift of around 10 tons and these were still in use until the late 1950s. However from humble beginnings Sparrows would eventually own and operate the first 1000-ton capacity truck crane in the world. I joined the company in 1957 and worked with the Sparrow brothers in various fields of operation including vehicle recovery, machinery moving and of course operating the early mechanically operated cranes including some of those built by the brothers themselves in their own workshop.

"As the business grew my role changed and by the late 1960s I was one of the company's sales representatives and I eventually became managing director of Sparrows Heavy Crawler Cranes Ltd. I was personally involved in the takeover of Stanley Butterworth Cranes and I became the depot manager at Scunthorpe a few weeks after the initial purchase. At that time Sparrows was interested in moving into the heavy construction side of the business and had just purchased Plant Sales, a heavy lift company based in London which owned American Hoist and Derrick cranes. The main interest as far as Butterworths was concerned was the two Manitowoc 4000W cranes with 'ringer' equipment.

"Sparrows was also expanding across the UK so the depot in Scunthorpe was also of interest to the company, and as British Steel was also expanding in Scunthorpe it was a very good time to move into the area. At the time of the takeover Butterworths had several other large Lorain truck cranes plus around 12-14 smaller cranes, and as well as the equipment Sparrows also bought the Crane offices, the workshop and the yard, while the engineering side of the company remained independent for a few years until that was closed in 1979."



It would appear that Sparrows had no use for the Scammell Constructors and it seems likely that these were sold on fairly soon after the takeover was completed as they were certainly never repainted in any new owner's colours. As the two lorries eventually went into store, having been acquired by Mr Hawkins, still in the Butterworth colours, it is assumed that their commercial working days ended when the company was taken over.

Apart from the Scammell Constructor which still wears the Stanley Butterworth Cranes Ltd livery, little evidence remains of a company which during the early 1960s was a pioneer of sophisticated crane technology. The premises have gone, as have the cranes, but those who worked for Stanley Butterworth at the Scunthorpe depot have some fond memories of a well-regarded employer and a good company to work for.

My thanks to Stephen Butterworth, Brian Tighe, Joyce East, Colin Jacklin, Frank Sumsion and Roger Mortimore for providing the information and photographs used in this feature.



A Manitowoc 'ringer' crane at work at the Lindsey Oil Refinery, Killingholme in Lincolnshire.



100-ton furnace shells were delivered to The Steel Company of Wales by Sunter Bros and lifted by Butterworth.