

The Bassetts of Strongford Farm



Joseph Bassett

Joseph Bassett lived and worked at Strongford Farm from about 1880. He used steam power to take the drudgery out of farming and in 1897 established himself as an agricultural contractor and later a road building contractor. He was married to Mary Ellen Hall, with whom he had seven children, and they lived a comfortable life at Strongford. He and Mary both died in 1926 and the farm was sold.



Joseph Howard Bassett

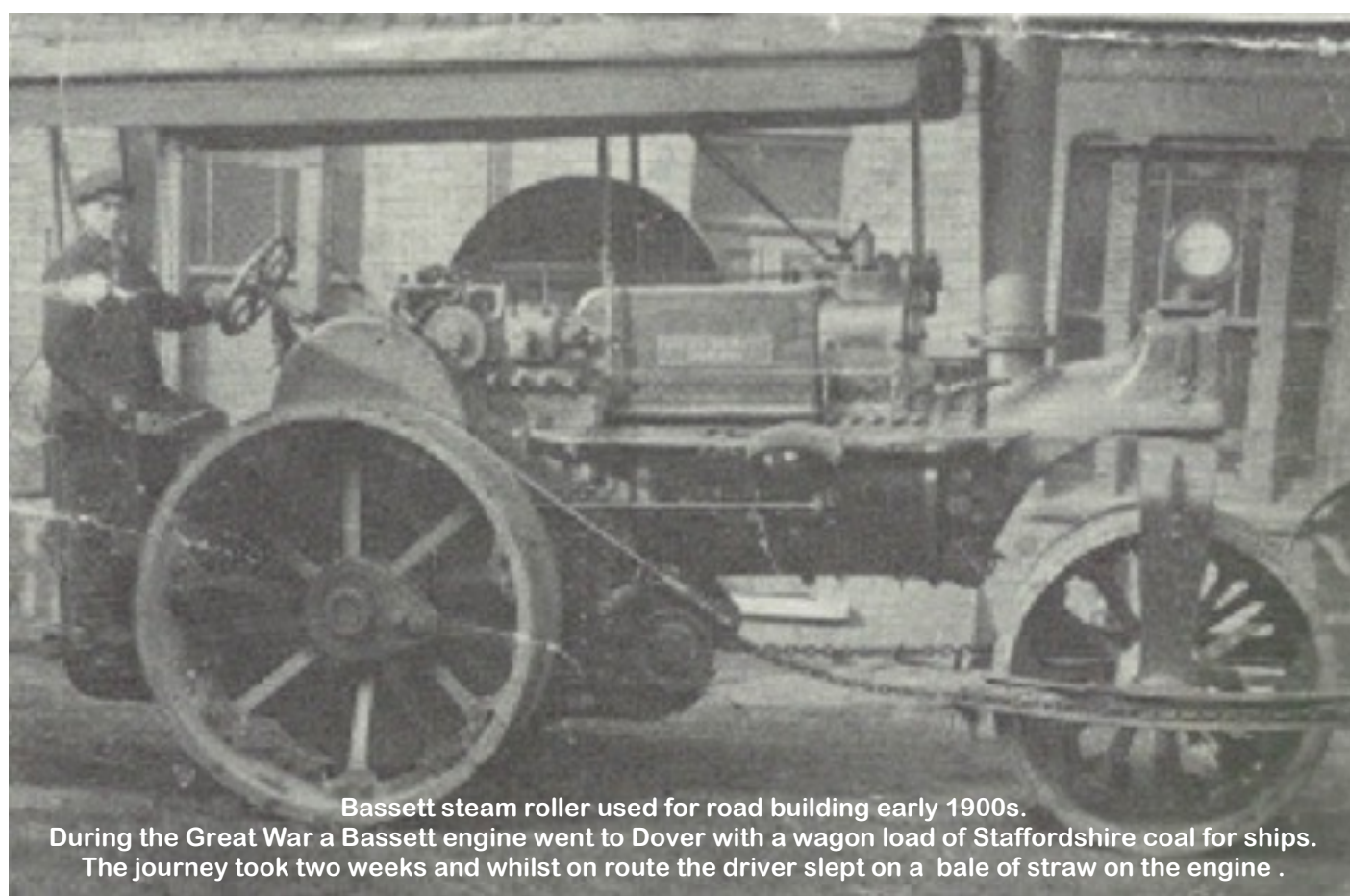


Strongford Farm 1919

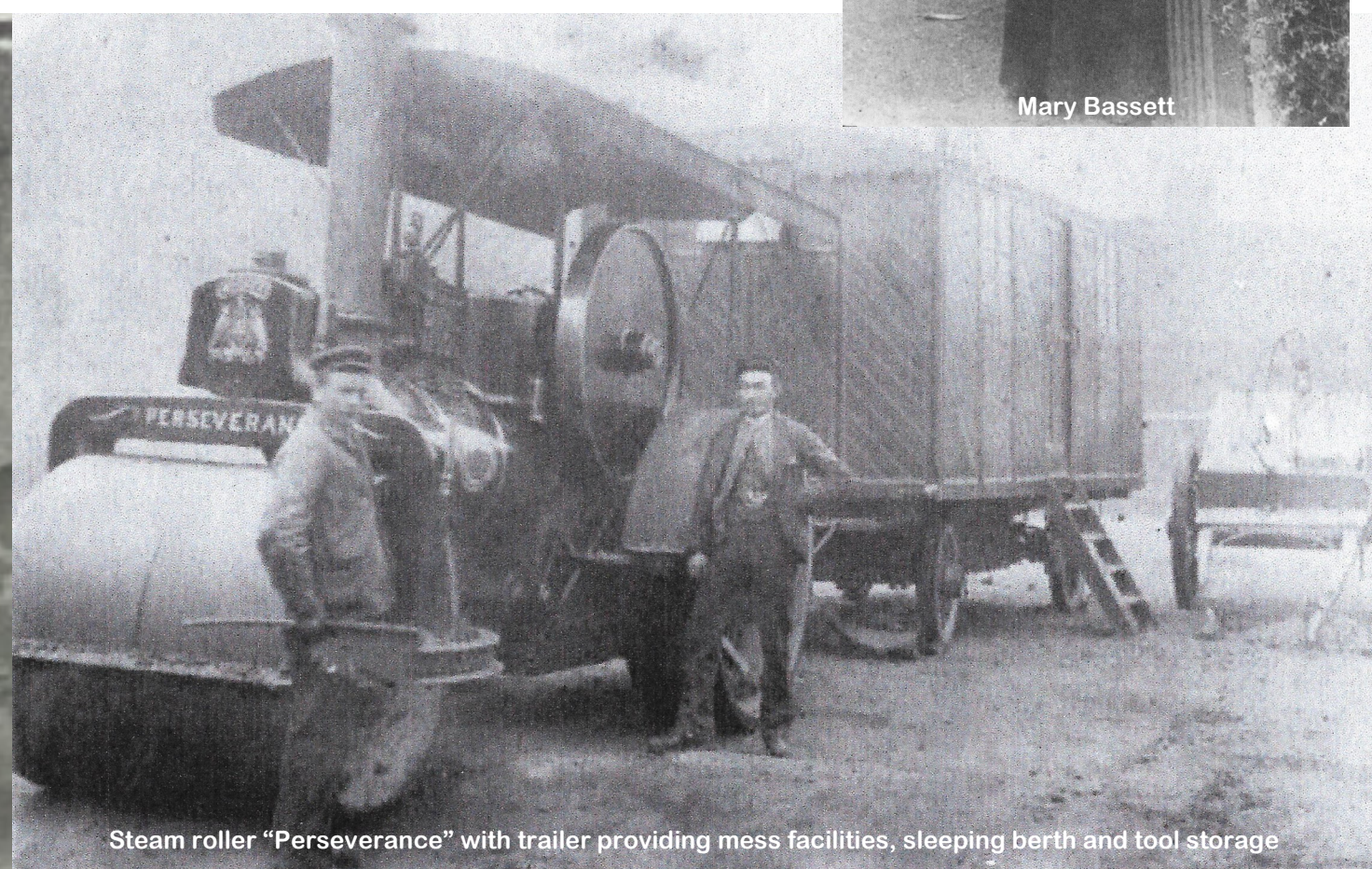
Joseph Howard Bassett was Joseph and Mary's youngest child. He saw active war service with the Machine Gun Corps and died, aged 20, on 6 Feb 1917. He is buried in the churchyard at Tittensor and is named on the Tittensor and Trentham War Memorials.



Mary Bassett



Bassett steam roller used for road building early 1900s.
During the Great War a Bassett engine went to Dover with a wagon load of Staffordshire coal for ships. The journey took two weeks and whilst on route the driver slept on a bale of straw on the engine.



Steam roller "Perseverance" with trailer providing mess facilities, sleeping berth and tool storage



Leonard John Bassett

Leonard John Bassett was the only child to follow his father into the haulage and contracting business. When the Trentham Estate was auctioned in 1919, Leonard became the owner of the former blacksmith's workshops behind Ivy House in Tittensor village, where he had lived since 1910. He installed petrol pumps for public use and kept haulage vehicles at the rear. In 1931 Leonard purchased Grayswood in Tittensor as the family home. When Leonard died in 1935 aged 48, his widow Mary was left in control of the expanded business L. J. Bassett & Son. She was assisted by their son Reginald, who knew the business inside out, and their daughter Hilda, who managed the book keeping and accounts. They opened a depot in Liverpool and later in Birmingham. The size of the fleet doubled during the war. In 1949 the vehicles were taken over by British Road Services, although they were bought back in 1955. Bassett Coachways operated from 1949 to 2003. Today this fifth generation family business is one of the region's leading providers of quality haulage, warehousing and transport industry training services.



Leonard and Mary Bassett with their son Reginald in 1912

Reginald Guy Bassett continued to expand and diversify the haulage business for over 50 years until his death in 1991 aged 78. To escape from the pressures of business, he formed a band, playing drums. It quickly became successful, appearing at many local venues. As the Reg Bassett Orchestra, it won the Melody Maker Dance Band Championship in 1946. It became the resident orchestra at the Trentham Gardens Ballroom, but also appeared at venues across the North West and Midlands. Before retiring from the music scene in 1978, Reg had shared the bill with many celebrities such as Joe Loss, Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk, Ken Dodd and even the Beatles. In 1979 he was awarded Honorary Membership of the Musician's Union.



Reg Bassett, road haulier, during WW2



Reg Bassett and his Band 1946