

# Chapter 8: The Shire's Sentinel Steam Waggons



### Council's dilemma

When the Blue Mountains Shire Council decided to open its Victoria Pass chert quarry they were faced with a dilemma. How could they move the chert road metal up the very steep hill of Victoria Pass with grades of 1:8?

An earlier suggestion had been an aerial ropeway, such as those in use at Charbon limestone quarry at Kandos and the Murrurundi shale project in the Hunter Valley.

The Chert Road Metal and Timber Company's 1920s chert venture on the southeastern side of Mount Victoria had decided to use an incline railway.

However, there was limited space on the Victoria Pass slopes for either of these transport solutions. There may also have been an outcry from the public if the scenic value of this area was defaced by an industrial structure.

The Council decided to use road transport and investigated several makes of steam wagons. They had a Foden steam wagon already (*possibly pictured in Figure 8.2*), but their neighbouring council at Katoomba regarded its Foden as a white elephant as it was plagued with problems.<sup>1</sup>

On 18 March 1922 the Blue Mountains Shire Council purchased a Sentinel Steam Waggon (*Figure 8.3*) from William Adams & Company Limited. (*Also see Figures 8.1, 8.4.*)

<sup>1</sup> *BM Echo*, 8 July 1921, p1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article108238439>; *BM Echo*, 6 January 1922, p1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article108234817>.

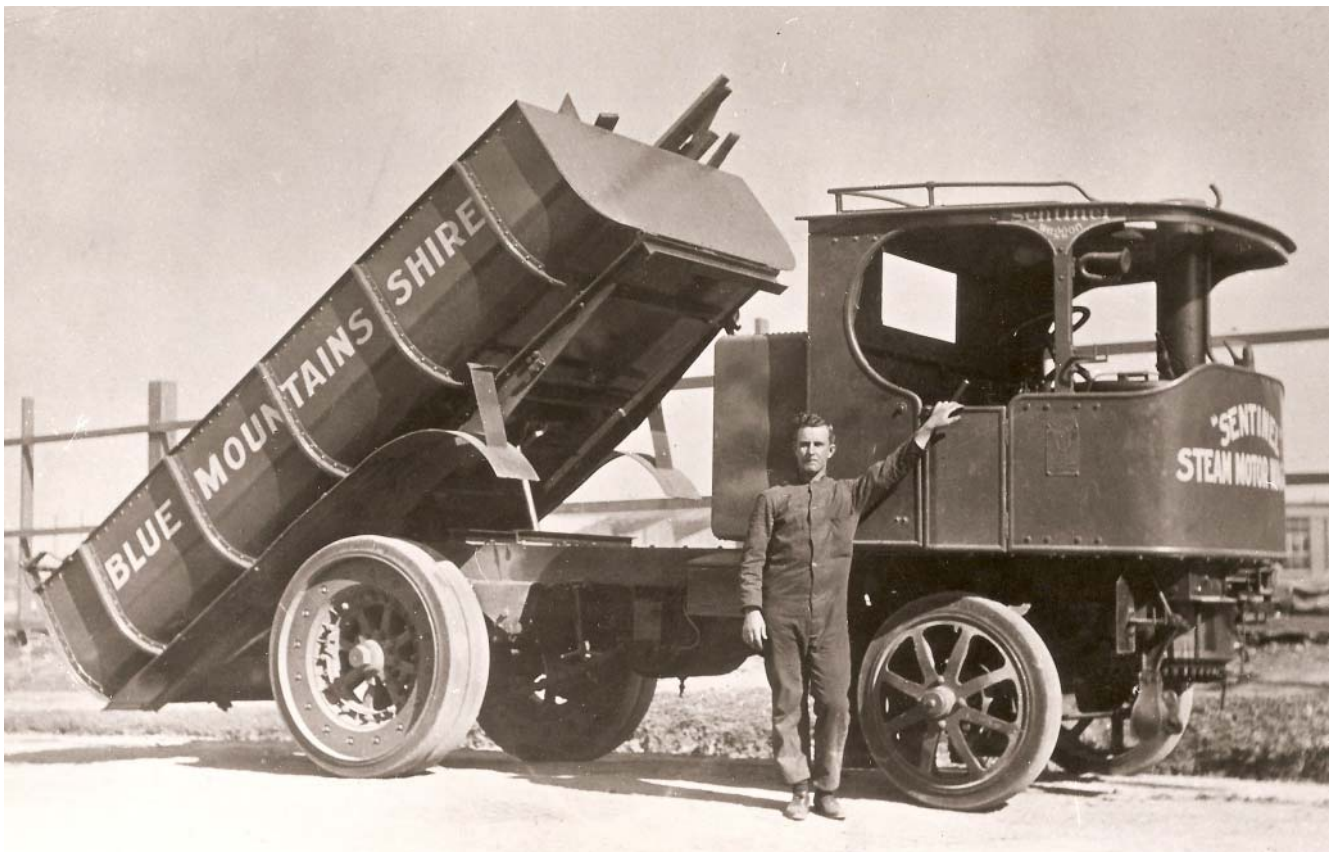


**FIGURE 8.1:**  
Sentinel logo from *Instructions to Drivers For Running and Tending The "Sentinel" Steam Motor Waggon*, The "Sentinel" Waggon Works, Ltd, Shrewsbury, c1920, title page.  
Mount Victoria and District Historical Society.



**FIGURE 8.2:** Could this be the Blue Mountains Shire Council Foden steam wagon? The fence in the background is the same type of fence that was on Berghofers Pass where the Council had their first chert quarry lease. The rock in the truck is "blocky", similar to chert.

*Motor Life*, 28 July 1923, NSW State Library, courtesy Stefan Indyka's research.



Above — FIGURE 8.3: The brand-new Blue Mountains Shire Council Sentinel Steam Waggon with a William Adams & Co driver. He features in photos of several new Sentinels. The waggon was delivered to Council about mid-1922.

*William Adams photo, Alex Williams Collection.*

Below — FIGURE 8.4: The Shire's Sentinel waggon photographed beside the Centenary Monument at Mount York. Leaning on the waggon is the driver Walter Wilkinson. His brother Charles, who also drove the waggons, is at the left. *Photo from Mount Victoria & District Historical Society.*

