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The National Trust Carriage Museum at Arlington Court

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Introduction

The National Trust Carriage Museum at Arlington Court forms a representative collection of carriages, any of which might have been found in the ownership of the wealthier or aristocratic classes at their country estates, or town houses in the nineteenth century. The collection was started in 1966 as a result of the growing interest in this area during the mid-twentieth century when so many vehicles were being restored and sold to America. It currently includes on display, the remarkable Speaker's State Coach, on loan from the House of Commons. The carriages are accompanied by related harness, costume, and a substantial range of coaching paraphernalia.

Aristocratic Carriages

Speaker's State Coach

The Speaker's State Coach is a very rare example of coach design of the late seventeenth century and is of both national and international significance. It is a magnificent symbol of the power and status of the Speaker of the House of Commons. It was privately owned by successive speakers during the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries and although the frequency of its use decreased during the twentieth century, the speaker still continued to use it at great state occasions, such as coronations and jubilees. The last recorded use was by Speaker Thomas at the Royal Wedding in 1981.

The coach is traditionally thought to have been made for King William III around 1698 to designs either by, or influenced by, the French Huguenot Daniel Marot, before being presented to the speaker a few years later by Queen Anne. The iconography of the paintings supports the theory of this royal patron. The crossed maces at the bottom of the doors, which have been part of the carved decoration for centuries, provide clear evidence that the association of this coach with the Speaker is long-lived. The coach has carried the identity of individual Speakers through the small oval plaques bearing their coats of arms, the most recent of which can still be seen on the coach (Speaker Weatherill and Speaker Martin). Early records of the coach are scarce, the first mention being by Speaker Abbott in 1802, who paid his predecessor Speaker Mitford (Lord Redesdale) £1,060 for the State Coach which he described as 'built in 1701 and repaired in 1801'.

The carved woodwork of the coach body is of very high quality, fitting for a state coach, and shows Dutch influence. For a piece of this complexity a number of skilled woodcarvers would have worked together, those with greater sculptural training fashioning the three-dimensional carving, whilst others undertook the more two-dimensional carving

on the flat areas and on the frames around the windows. The quality of the metalwork is similarly impressive. The two arched swan necks to the rear of the front wheels are the most technically complex pieces of wrought iron, and the fact that each is almost identical, is a particular tribute to the skill of the metalworkers.

The painted panel on the door shows a seated figure traditionally identified as King William III who is being presented with two scrolls (Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights). Beside him are the allegorical figures of Liberty, Fame and Justice (blindfolded). The door on the other side of the coach has a matching painted panel with a seated female figure identified as Queen Mary.

Over the last 300 years the coach has undergone many repairs and refurbishments in order to keep it in roadworthy condition and to maintain the splendour of its decorative fabric. Some of the modifications have been detrimental to the original design, for example, the replacement of the original elbow springs at either side of the coach body with a different form of suspension, which has left incongruous gaps beneath the carved woodwork. Elements with a high degree of wear and tear, such as the wheels, have been replaced the most frequently over this period and the current wheels are much simpler in design than the originals would have been. By contrast the elaborately carved coach body has survived the centuries with only minimal woodwork repairs, although successive layers of gilding, often thickly applied, were responsible for masking from view much of the intricate carving.

After the coach ceased to be used at state occasions, it was displayed at Whitbread's Brewery in London in a specially designed room, which was opened by Speaker Weatherill. It was then moved to Westminster Hall at the Palace of Westminster. The failing condition of the coach, compounded by unsympathetic redecorations, meant that for many visitors the original magnificence and historical importance of the coach was not recognised. Concern by the House of Commons about the poor condition of the coach led to a full inspection and survey being carried out. In 2005 the coach





At this moment appeared in the stream of vehicles moving in the contrary direction a chariot presenting in its general surface the rich indigo hue of a midnight sky, the wheels and margins being picked out in delicate lines of ultramarine; the servants' liveries were dark-blue coats and silver lace, and breeches of neutral Indian red. The whole concern formed an organic whole, and moved along behind a pair of dark chestnut geldings, who advanced in an indifferently zealous trot, very daintily performed, and occasionally shrugged divers points of their veiny surface as if they were rather above the business.

Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 1873

was removed from display and Plowden and Smith Ltd, was commissioned by the Parliamentary Works Directorate to undertake a comprehensive programme of cleaning and conservation. With the age and historical significance of the coach, the House of Commons agreed that it should be treated as a museum object, with great emphasis placed on retaining and conserving the existing historic fabric and reintroducing the correct visual balance which had originally existed between the various elements, so that the coach would once again be appreciated as originally conceived. Professional expertise was sought from Julian Munby who was commissioned as coach consultant and the project was managed by the curator's office at the Palace of Westminster.

The most challenging part of the work, and indeed the most painstaking, was the removal of the later layers of gilding, which in turn had been coated with thick varnish layers which had discoloured to an unsightly dim yellowish brown. Over 14 different layers of gilding were removed by conservators and what emerged was intricate carved detail of an unexpectedly high quality, which had for centuries been hidden from view. The quality of this work allowed the importance of the coach to be re-evaluated. Tests were also carried out on the painted panels. The removal of the later gilding on the panels revealed oil gilding which matched exactly that of the coach body. Unsympathetic repainting of the pictures was also found, which left each of the designs unbalanced and difficult to read. Tests were carried out and paint samples were sent for analysis before Plowden's conservators set about the delicate task of removing the overpaint, and re-touching the damaged areas exposed on the original paint surface. The freshness of the original colours they revealed has added greatly to the vibrancy of these paintings and, in keeping with the overall approach to the coach, has succeeded in re-establishing the original balance between the gilded and painted elements.

With this programme of conservation work at an end, the magnificence of the Speaker's State Coach can once again be appreciated as originally intended 300 years ago.

State Coach

This fine coach was built by Peters & Son, London, for the Earl de la Warr who lived at Knole in Kent, now owned by the National Trust. Being a coach, it could carry four passengers in the body. It would have been pulled by a pair of horses driven by a coachman. The decorative seat cloth covering his seat is called a hammer cloth. Two footmen would stand on the footmen's cushion, the padded platform behind the body. The silver plated fittings and furniture are unusually fine, including crested door handles, snake-head body loops decorated with acanthus leaves, and heavily ornamented lamps. The interior trimming, although sadly dilapidated but currently being conserved, is in beautiful ivory silk and Melton cloth, with superb carriage laces (the coach trimmer's term for braids). It probably dates from the mid-1800s.

State Chariot



This chariot is one of the most important carriages in the collection. Not only is it in original unrestored condition, but also it is an example of the work of Hooper & Co., one of the very finest London coachbuilders of the nineteenth century. It has silver-plated furniture including axle caps and stock hoops, head plates (the crests of the Craven family on the upper quarter panels), snake-head body loops and beautiful decorative terminations to the plated pin beads. It also has the silver-plated

coats of arms of the family on the hammer cloth. The interior is beautifully lined in a bright, very rich shade of blue damask.

It is called a chariot because of the shape of the body. A coach seats four inside the body, and therefore has a seat ahead of the doors and one behind them. A chariot only seats two on a seat behind the doors. This chariot was built for the Earl of Craven, probably in the mid-1800s. State carriages were only owned by the nobility and used on very important occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament, society weddings and grand receptions. This very limited use has kept it, and other vehicles like it, in excellent condition.

State Chariot



This fine carriage was built for the Earl of Onslow of Clandon Park, Surrey (now a National Trust property), by Adams & Hooper of London. They were in business from 1830 to 1846, so it was built between these dates. It was used only on state occasions and was driven by a coachman in full livery with powdered wig, tricorne hat, braided livery coat, white plush breeches, white silk stockings and silver-buckled shoes. Two footmen, similarly dressed, except that they wore bicorne or cocked hats, stood on the 'footmen's cushion', the padded platform behind the body, steadying themselves with the 'footmen's holders'. They carried silver-topped staves, known as wands, which were earlier used to keep the crowds away from the carriage. They were expected to stand motionless and bolt upright. Unfortunately, the hammer cloth is missing, so this chariot is displayed with a hammer cloth cover.

Postillon (Ascot) Landau

A landau has the same profile as a coach and, like a coach, the body is symmetrical about a door in the middle of each side, and has a forward-facing internal seat behind the doors and a backward-facing seat ahead of them. The essential difference is that a coach has a fixed roof whereas a landau has a folding leather head in two parts, joined over the doors, that can be lowered front and back.

Postillion-driven carriage were used either for travelling, when they made use of the posting

system, or for ceremonial purposes for which they are ideal, and landaus are particularly suitable because, with the head lowered, the occupants are fully visible to the watching crowds. The Royal Mews still has a fleet of five postillion landaus suspended on C springs and under springs with perch undercarriages, that they call semi-state landaus as opposed to the state landaus that are coachman-driven. They also have five slightly lighter landaus suspended on elliptic springs in front and three springs, Dennett-style, behind. They have sham cane on their panels which gives them a less formal and summer country style. Because they are always used for the royal procession down the course before racing on each day of the Royal Ascot meeting, they are known as the Ascot landaus and are kept at Windsor Castle. Her majesty always rides in the first landau, which is pulled by four greys preceded by two outriders, also on greys. The other landaus are pulled by bays. Many years ago there were eight of these carriages and this is one of the three that were disposed of. Like two others that are still in use this beautiful carriage was built by Cook & Holdway of Slone square, London, probably towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Barouche



Barouches were introduced from Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century, and were then known as German Wagons. These early barouches were heavy versatile carriages, often used for travelling as well as everyday driving. After the railways made travelling carriages redundant in the mid-nineteenth century, barouches became the ultimate park vehicle for taking the air and seeing society and, perhaps more importantly, being seen. Park barouches had bodies much shallower than this one – better to be seen in.

A barouche is superficially similar to a landau but, whereas a landau has two heads which completely enclose the body, a barouche only has one, over the principal seat at the back. The front seat is covered by a knee flap, which was closed in bad weather, but could be hinged up to form a seat back for this additional seat in fine weather.

This example was built for the 5th Marquis of Lansdowne, by Barker & Co., London. It was used when King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra visited Calne, in Wiltshire, and had lunch at Bowood House, the Lansdowne family seat, in 1907.

The barouche was one of the most elegant family vehicles, but only used by the very wealthy. On this example, four horses would have been used with postillions riding the nearside horses. A footman rode on the rumble seat and operated the hand brake when travelling down hills (the rumble is an alternative name for the hind boot).

They will have their barouche-landau, of course, which holds four perfectly; and therefore, without saying any thing of our carriage, we should be able to explore the different beauties extremely well.

Jane Austen, *Emma*, 1815

The Miss Bertrams laughed at the idea, assuring her that the barouche would hold four perfectly well, independent of the box, on which one might go with him.

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 1814

Mrs John Dashwood wished it likewise; but in the mean while, till one of these superior blessings could be attained, it would have quieted her ambition to see him driving a barouche.

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811

Travelling Barouche

This carriage could be either coachman or postillion driven and was used for making long journeys. As on all barouches, only the principal seat at the back of the body is protected by the folding leather head. There is another seat at the front which was only used in fine weather, when the knee flap would be raised to form a seat back. This example has a series of hinged boards, known as a water deck, which can be folded up and strapped onto the knee flap. When they are unfolded they protect the legs of the occupants, who have the additional protection of a screen of small glazed windows. These can be folded together and strapped into the head frame when they are not needed.

The coachman's seat board is actually two boards, and the top one can be hinged over to make a large platform to carry luggage. Like the travelling chariot it has a sword case. This carriage, which is another that was donated by the Marquis of Bute, was built by Turrill of Long Acre, London, who built most of the Bute family carriages.

Britzschka

This word comes from Poland where the original britzschkas were travelling wagons. They were refined in Western Europe and introduced into

Britain in the 1820s, where they became the most popular of travelling carriages until the advent of the railways made them redundant. A britzschka has the same configuration as a barouche – an open body with the principal seat at the back protected by a folding leather head (carriage terminology for hood), and an additional seat at the front of the body which is accessible when the knee flap is hinged up in fine weather to form its seat back. Whereas a barouche has a canoe-shaped body, the body of a britzschka has a straight, or nearly straight, bottom line and the end panels are either concave or ogee shaped. The earliest britzschkas were suspended on C springs, and under springs were added soon after they were introduced, about 1818.

Although some britzschkas could be fitted with a coachman's seat so that they could be driven in town, they were principally used as travelling carriages and were therefore postillion-driven. In this configuration they had a rumble seat behind the body to carry two servants, usually a valet and a lady's maid, and some of them had a dormeuse boot so that the occupants could lie at full length and sleep while they travelled. The name became spelt in many ways including the anglicised versions 'brisker' or 'brisky', popular with ostlers and post boys who had trouble pronouncing and spelling the original name.

They were used by wealthy families for travelling at home and abroad including the Grand Tour of European cities of cultural interest, also by king's messengers travelling from London to our foreign embassies when speed was all-important, and occasionally for business travel. Later in the nineteenth century when travelling carriages had been driven off the road by the railways, smaller versions were produced suspended on elliptic springs, sometimes small enough to be pulled by one horse, but these had none of the character of the fine and impressive britzschkas of 20 or 30 years earlier.

This example, which is a very important carriage because it is believed to be one of only two surviving britzschkas in Britain, was built by Tapp & Co., London, probably in 18s 0s or 30s. It is on loan from the Science Museum in London.

Travelling Chariot

This is one of the earliest carriages in the collection. It was built by How & Shanks of London, in around 1815. The age can be judged by certain features such as the grease axles, whip springs and the doors hung on exterior butt hinges.

This type of carriage was used for long journeys, including the Grand Tour of Europe, which every young nobleman and gentleman of substance made in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The carriage was postillion-driven, and the horses and postboys would be hired for it from post to post. Post was the name given to the inns, which hired horses and postboys all over Britain and Western Europe. There is a sword case at the back of the body, accessible only from inside. The

Coachman-driven Carriages

Double Brougham



This brougham was built as a wedding present for Colonel F.M. Hext of Redhayes, Pinhoe, near Exeter, in 1893 by W. Cole & Sons, Kensington, London, and used by him on his honeymoon on the Isle of Wight. It is painted in the family colours of chocolate and gold, and the superb interior trimming is in the same colours. The front seat in the body can be folded away when not in use but, with it in place, it can seat four. It would be coachman-driven, with a groom beside him, and pulled by a single horse or a pair.

The first brougham was commissioned in 1837 by Henry Peter Brougham (1778–1868) first Baron Brougham and Vaux, Whig politician, lawyer and Minister of State. He wanted 'a refined and glorified street cab, which would make a convenient carriage for a gentleman', unlike his usual form of transport, probably a town coach or chariot, both far larger and heavier. He designed a carriage that would be light and compact, needing just one horse and a coachman – ideal for use on busy streets. The body would be low for easy access and should carry two people and be 'closed and intimate thus allowing the occupants to conduct a private conversation whilst travelling'. His ideas were rejected by his usual coachbuilder so he took them to another, Robinson & Cook, just round the corner. They agreed to build the vehicle and it was called the Brougham by his Lordship's express permission.

Lord Brougham's brainchild was an instant success and, within a few years, broughams were being built in vast numbers wherever carriages of Western European style were used. They were particularly popular with professional and middle-class families, and became the everyday carriages of the wealthy and the aristocracy.

Single Brougham

The Brougham was named after Lord Brougham, who designed the prototype of this closed carriage in 1838. This example, built by Turrill & Sons, South Audley St, Grosvenor Square, London, was an ideal town carriage. A single Brougham seats two, and a

extension on the front of the body is known as a dormeuse boot. It has folding panels which can be let down to enable the inside passengers to stretch their legs at full length into the boot and sleep while they travelled. Behind the body is a hind boot or rumble, with a seat for two servants, usually a valet and a lady's maid. The extended front body loops above the platform boot show that a coachman's seat could be fitted to make the carriage suitable for town driving. In this case the rumble would be removed, so that footmen could stand on the hind footboard.

This carriage was donated by the Marquis of Bute in 1964.

Travelling Chariot



It dates from the early 1800s and was donated by Colonel Antrobus. It is believed that his ancestor Gibbs Crawford Antrobus used this travelling chariot in his career as a diplomat which took him through Europe at a time of political change.

As a junior secretary under Lord Castlereagh he attended the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) that marked the end of the Napoleonic War. In 1824 he was created Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for George IV to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which was governed from Naples. His official accreditation, signed by the King, with the royal seal attached, was his letter of authority. A silver case mounted with the royal arms protects the seal. As part of his official uniform he wore a dress sword, and there is a sword case at the back of the body in which it would have been carried.

It has its original imperials (light wooden cases covered in leather) carried on the roof and, in this case, also on the front boot. On long journeys it would be pulled by pairs or teams of post horses hired at inns along the way, ridden by post boys who would then hack the horses back from the next post. The horses were changed every 10–12 miles. It could seat two passengers inside and two servants in the rumble seat (hind boot). It would be postillion-driven for travelling and, by fitting a coachman's seat; it could be converted for town use, when a coachman would have driven it.

Susan Henchard entered a carriage for the first time in her life when she stepped into the plain brougham which drew up at the door on the wedding-day to take her and Elizabeth-Jane to church.

Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1886

But between these and herself there was a carriage, apparently a brougham, coming in the same direction, with lighted lamps. When it overtook her--which was not soon, on account of her pace--the scene was much darker, and the lights glared in her eyes sufficiently to hide the details of the equipage.

Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, 1887

double Brougham has an additional front seat and can carry four.

In 1810 Obadiah Elliot registered a patent for his idea of mounting four-wheeled carriages on elliptic springs, instead of the large, heavy and expensive perch undercarriages previously used, and this new principle was adopted for all relatively small four-wheeled carriages. Though much cheaper and very practical, this new development was not as comfortable, and certainly not as stylish. In 1840 the first brougham was built that was mounted on a wrought iron perch with C springs and under springs. This had the added advantage of showing that the owner could afford this much more expensive style and extra comfort.

This is an example of this style. It was one of several carriages donated by the Marquis of Bute. It was probably built with no brake, and probably originally had a drag shoe, like the Marquis's Victoria, and the brake was probably added later. It has some very attractive interior fittings including a bell to attract the coachman's attention. There is also a cord that attaches to the coachman's finger for the same purpose.

Canoe Landau

At the start of the nineteenth century landaus were big heavy carriages, open versions of the contemporary coaches. Later in the century, when many more people could afford to own carriages, everyday carriages became smaller and lighter. A successful professional family who could afford to employ a coachman would very likely own a brougham, a closed carriage for bad weather and night-time use, and a Victoria, an open carriage for use in fine weather. This was an ideal combination but, if they owned a landau, they only needed one carriage for both uses because, with the head raised, it was a closed four-seat carriage, but it could be quickly and easily converted to an open carriage simply by lowering the head.

Several different styles of everyday landaus were developed. The canoe landau was obviously so

named because it has a canoe-shaped body. If a canoe-bodied landau was so small that it could be pulled by one horse it was called a Sefton landau, after the Earl of Sefton for whom the first one was built in 1885, and it was considered a breakthrough for a landau to be so small at that time. If the body had an angular profile and a deep foot well it was called a Shelburne landau, after the Earl of Shelburne who had the first of that pattern built. Early landaus had head joints, the hinged stays visible outside the leather of the head, which kept it tightly stretched, but a servant had to get down to raise or lower the head. Many types of head lifts were developed, spring-assisted mechanisms that were fitted between the head leather and the fabric head cloth 'which facilitate the closing and opening of the heads, almost as simple in action as the opening or closing of an umbrella or a parasol' as the celebrated carriage builder G.N. Hooper wrote in 1890.

This canoe landau was built by Holmes, Derby and London, and was used by Sir Alexander MacDonald and given by him the town of Bridlington for the use of the mayor.

Victoria



This carriage was built in the early 1900s and was a gift from the Trustees of the Chevening Estate, Kent. It has been fully conserved. It belonged to Lord Stanhope and is painted in his colours. It could be driven to either a single horse, when shafts would be fitted, or a pair, which need a splinter bar and a pole.

Victorias are open carriages, driven by a coachman with a footman sitting next to him. The low comfortable body carries two, or occasionally three if it has a folding seat stowed in the back of the boot. The low access, elegant style and comfortable seating made the Victoria very popular with ladies for fine-weather use.

Victoria

This carriage was built by Turrill & Sons of Long Acre, London, in the late 1800s and was a gift from the Marquis of Bute. Victorias were popular in the late nineteenth century, particularly with ladies, the low body providing easy access for them in the

full dresses then worn. Although essentially open carriages, they have a folding leather head over the principal seat. This example is a panel boot Victoria (the boot being the structure beneath the coachman's seat) and it has a small extra hinged seat which stows in the back panel of the boot. There are spikes on the hind axle bed to discourage small boys from jumping on for a free lift.

Victorias were coachman-driven, with a groom beside him, and could be pulled by a single horse or a pair.

It is difficult to fit a brake satisfactorily to a carriage with a body hung on leather braces from C springs, so a drag shoe is fitted, which is placed under the nearside hind wheel to brake it when going down hill, and hung under the carriage when not in use.

Punch Carriage

This unusual carriage type is said to have been designed by a coachbuilder named Clark, of Aberdeen, for a country doctor. The derivation of the name is not known, but it has been suggested that the profile of the back of the carriage is like the silhouette of Mr Punch. This example was built by Hayman & Co., the well-known Exeter coachbuilder, in the late 1800s. The design provided easy access to the body, with room for the doctor to write up his notes while protected from the elements. It was also useful should the doctor want to transport a patient in reasonable comfort. It can carry two passengers and was driven by a coachman with a groom beside him, and pulled by one horse. It is evident that the design was not popular, because carriages of this type are not seen in old photographs, and this is believed to be the only example to have survived. It is on loan from the Science Museum London.

Two-wheeled Owner-driven Carriages

Cabriolet

The Cabriolet was introduced from France about 1810 and, by about 1830, much refined and improved, it had become the carriage for a stylish man-about-town to be seen driving himself, the successor of the curricle in this role. In 1837 it was said to be 'a very convenient vehicle for unmarried men to go out in at night, and return either from a dinner, or from a theatre or opera, or houses of parliament.'

It is a two-wheeled carriage with a body to seat two, shaped like a nautilus shell and fitted with a folding leather head, which is suspended on elbow springs in front and C springs behind. The apron that protects the legs of the occupants is usually stretched over a light wooden frame that is hinged at the bottom to lie against the dashboard when it

is open. There is a little platform behind the body to carry a servant, no bigger than a flat race jockey, who was known as a 'tiger' because of his yellow and black striped waistcoat, who was carried on no other carriage type. Cabriolets were built for a large horse, so large that the tiger could hardly reach his bridle when he was standing at his head. Horses of the necessary size, style and quality were expensive and, if the owner had an active business and social life, he needed two or three, so only the wealthiest young men could afford to drive a cabriolet. They lasted for 20 or 30 years in fashion, and the cost of horsing them undoubtedly contributed to their demise.

Only three cabriolets are believed to have survived in Britain, so this is a very important carriage. It was built in the 1830s or 40s. It is on loan from the Science Museum in London.

Whitechapel Cart



The Whitechapel Cart is a dog cart variant identified by the panelled sides and back. The tail board can be hinged down to act as a footboard for two passengers facing backwards, as well as the driver and passenger facing forward. All two-wheeled carriages with this arrangement need to have a sliding front seat, to adjust the balance depending on the number, position and weight of the people carried. In this case there is a crank handle which can be wound to move the front seat forwards or backwards. Bright yellow and black paintwork is typical for a sporting carriage.

This example, built by Linington of Portsmouth, probably in the late 1800s, was used in recent years for driving tandem by Sir Dymoke White, one of the finest amateur whips of his day. Tandem driving is when two horses are driven one in front of the other, a pair being driven side by side. The springs are on deep blocks and they have more compass (carriage terminology for curvature) than usual to raise the body for better control and vision when tandem driving.

Hooded Gig



A gig is a two-wheeled carriage seating two in the body, always driven by the owner, usually to a single horse, but occasionally to a tandem. This very elegant example was built in the mid-1800s by Holland & Holland, the celebrated London carriage builders (not connected with the well-known gun maker of the same name). It has a folding leather head, with small 'eyes' in the sides to provide very limited sideways vision and, unusually, a seat for a groom behind the body.

There is a basketwork cover for placing over the wheel by the groom, to protect the clothes of the passengers when getting in or out of the gig. The seat squabs are dark brown Morocco leather, which matches the body paintwork. The body has 'sham cane' on the panels, which can be applied like piped icing or, as in this case, in a sheet like wallpaper and sealed with varnish.

Stanhope Gig

The Hon. Fitzroy Stanhope used a coachbuilder called Tilbury and, between them, they designed two very different styles of gigs which bore their names, early in the nineteenth century. The Tilbury gig was very comfortable, but was also rather heavy and expensive and did not last long in favour, whereas the Stanhope gig was an immediate success, was built in large numbers, and provided the basis for the designs of many later gigs. It has two distinctive features. The body is mounted on 'telegraph' springs, consisting of two side springs and two cross springs, the same as the front or back set on a four-in-hand coach, and the shafts are continuous and wrap around the back of the body. Its large boot made it very practical and, in addition to being used by country sportsmen, sometimes driven tandem, it was often used by commercial travellers in making their calls. They would hire one in each town visited, make their rounds, and then move on by train.

This example, although undated, is undoubtedly old, and is possibly the only early example to have survived, which makes it a very important carriage.

Governess Car



Built in the early 1900s by R.E. Sanders & Sons Ltd, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, this informal little carriage was given to us by Mrs Swannack. Governess cars, sometimes called tub carts for obvious reasons, have a deep tub-shaped body with access through a door at the back, and seats each side, to carry four. They were often used by a governess (hence the name), or possibly a mother, to take the children out for a drive. She would drive sitting diagonally in the back right-hand corner. Although the seat and the cushion on the right hand side have been shaped for this purpose, this would still have been difficult and uncomfortable. Only the quietest pony, or sometimes a donkey, was suitable to be driven to a governess car, not only because of the awkward driving position, but because it was difficult to get out quickly and run to his head if she needed to. The cranked axle allows the body to be mounted lower, dropping the centre of gravity and making it difficult to overturn.

Shetland Pony Gig

This is a very simple little gig with a round-backed seat on a cut under body, mounted on elliptic springs. It has bicycle type wire wheels with solid tyres. It is so small that it could only be pulled by a Shetland pony or a donkey and, like all gigs, it can seat two.

Like the majority of young practitioners in his position he was far from having assumed the dignity of being driven his rounds by a servant in a brougham that flashed the sunlight like a mirror; his way of getting about was by means of a gig which he drove himself, hitching the rein of the horse to the gate post, shutter hook, or garden paling of the domicile under visitation, or giving pennies to little boys to hold the animal during his stay.

Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, 1887

Four-wheeled Owner-driven Carriages

Park Drag (Private Coach)



Built in the late 1800s by J.A. Lawton and Co., Liverpool, this private drag can seat 12 on the roof – the owner who would drive, nine passengers and two grooms – and four inside. The name drag is a slang term for a gentleman's private coach driven to four horses by the owner. Drags resemble stagecoaches and were used to attend meets of coaching clubs and for driving to sporting events, such as cricket matches or race meetings, where they made excellent grandstands. This coach has many of the fittings you would expect to find on a private coach, including a basket for umbrellas, a folding step-ladder for access to the roof seats, zinc-lined mahogany boxes and a baize-lined drawer in the hind boot for the stowage of food, drink, cutlery, crockery and glasses. The boot door is hinged at the bottom edge so that it can be used as a serving table.

Sir Dymoke White of Havant, Hampshire, the former owner of this fine coach, was a member of The Coaching Club from 1939 until his death in 1968 and was president from 1956 to 1968. During this period he attended nearly every meet of the club with his coach and was also one of the most successful competitors in coaching marathons at horse shows. He died shortly after the conclusion of a coaching marathon at the Aldershot Show in 1968.

Mail Phaeton

Built by Holland and Holland, London, a premier builder of sporting carriages, probably in the mid-1800s, this mail phaeton was donated by Sir Dymoke White of Havant, Hampshire. Mail phaetons were owner-driven to two or four horses with one or two grooms, and could carry one passenger in addition to the driver.

A phaeton is a four-wheeled carriage that was driven by the owner, and never by his professional coachman, so the principal seat is always in front, with a seat for a groom, or in this case two grooms,

Arthur Showell, former head coachman at the Royal Mews, worked for Sir Dymoke for nine years, described by him as the happiest years of his life. 'He had a black Lawton coach which was the best one, used when we went to Ascot or anything like that. Race days we would get to Ascot at 12 o'clock. Sir Dymoke loved to drive up the High Street with all the traffic and hustle and bustle, and he would have George Abbott blowing the horn all the way!' At the last show they attended, Aldershot 1968, Sir Dymoke was driving with his sister beside him. Arthur recalls what happened - "We were trotting, and I was sitting at the back. The next thing I heard was Miss Pauline calling, "Arthur! Arthur!" and Sir Dymoke had fallen backwards; and do you know, those horses stopped quick as anything, although we were trotting!"

A doctor was called and Sir Dymoke was taken to hospital, where he died. Arthur finishes this sad incident: 'A chap came up and says to me, "If I were you I would load up and go home", and that remark really brought me up short because nobody had told me what to do for nine and a half years. Sir Dymoke never told me what to do. He knew he never had to, we just talked roughly about what was going to happen.'

behind. The mail phaeton was considered the undoubted head of the phaeton family and, because of its size and its style, was the ideal carriage for a country sportsman to drive his coach horses as a pair or a team, if the occasion did not justify the use of his drag. It is called a mail phaeton because the springs are similar to those of a mail coach.

Mail phaetons were occasionally postillion-driven for travelling, but were principally used by sportsmen who enjoyed driving their own horses.

Spider Phaeton



The Spider Phaeton became the carriage for a fashionable young man to drive around town towards the end of the nineteenth century.

They are light and elegant and the skeletal construction of the body shows that they were never intended for serious purposes such as making long journeys or carrying luggage, hence the name 'spider'. They were ideal for showing off a pair of light, spirited horses and could also be used with a single horse, but to less effect. The body is suspended on elliptic springs in front and side springs behind.

The name 'Phaeton' is derived from Greek mythology. Phaeton, the son of Helios the Sun God, drove his father's chariot. The horses bolted and almost set fire to the Earth before they were stopped. At the end of the eighteenth century excessively high phaetons were fashionable but, by the time spider phaetons were popular, lower, safer, and more practical carriages had been developed.

This carriage was built for the Earl of Onslow of Clandon Park, Surrey, which is now a National Trust property.

From the drawing room they could distinguish nothing in the lane, and were indebted to Mr Collins for the knowledge of what carriages went along, and how often especially Miss De Bourgh drove by in her phaeton, which he never failed coming to inform them of, though it happened almost every day.

Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, 1813

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Pony Phaeton

This little carriage was built by Cheverton, Newport, Isle of Wight, for Queen Victoria and was used by her at Osborne House. It is painted in the royal colours of maroon, lined bright red, and has a Royal cypher on the side panels. The position of the brake lever shows that the attendant (often, no doubt, the celebrated John Brown) walked behind the carriage and could apply the brake when necessary. This vehicle appears in numerous photographs.

Pony Phaeton

This carriage has a splinter bar and pole so that it can be driven to a pair of Shetland or small Welsh ponies. It also has a pair of shafts so that it can be driven to a single pony. At the time it was built, in the early 1900s, a little carriage like this would probably have been used by a lady to make short distance social calls or simply to drive round the lanes. Now it would be suitable for show driving.

Four-wheeled Dog Cart



Dog carts were so named because they were originally used for carrying sporting dogs in the boot, the louvered sides of which provided ventilation. First built at the beginning of the nineteenth century as two-wheeled vehicles, they were later built with four wheels. They carried four passengers sitting in pairs, back to back, and were so useful for all country pursuits that they were found in every country house and used well into the motor age, many of the later examples never being used for the purpose for which they were originally designed.

This carriage, the ultimate large sporting four-wheeled dog cart, was built by Morgan & Co. Ltd, London, and is on loan from the trustees of Col. Ernest Ryan who was photographed driving it and featured in an article in the autumn 1942 edition of the magazine *Riding*. It is very unusual for many reasons including the perch undercarriage in combination with elliptic springs, and the fact that it could be pulled by a single horse, a pair, two horses in tandem, or a team of four.

Four-wheeled Ralli Car

Ralli cars, a variation on the dog-cart theme, were mostly built as two-wheelers, but a few four-wheeled examples were also built. They were popular from the end of the 19th century until the time when carriages stopped being built. The name is believed to be that of a Greek family who ordered the prototype, but there is no record of why they are called cars and not carts. Their defining characteristic is the upper panels that curve out over the wheels and form mud guards. This very attractive example was built by Gold & Son, 124 Long Acre, London, and Windsor. It was given by the trustees of the Chevening Estate. The louvers on the body sides are false.

Eridge Cart



This vehicle was built for the Earl of Abergavenny, by Rock, Thorpe & Chatfield of Tunbridge Wells, Kent, in the late 1800s, and named after his nearby property Eridge Castle. This is a dogcart variant with the characteristic back-to-back seating for four passengers. The unusual style of painted ironwork combines very nicely with the varnished wheels and the body, with alternate planks of contrasting timber, as well as the tan corduroy trimming, to produce a most attractive little carriage for informal country driving with a single horse. The Earl wanted a low vehicle when he was less mobile but still able to drive himself. To lower the body the front wheels are placed ahead of it, instead of underneath it in the usual way, giving the carriage its distinctive look.

Informal Carriages

Lonsdale Wagonette

This late nineteenth-century carriage, believed to have been built by Hooper & Co., London, is on loan from The Science Museum, Kensington. It is one of a number of carriages from the Royal Mews that were surplus to requirements and were given to the museum by King Edward VIII.

The special feature of this carriage type, which the Earl of Lonsdale, the famous Yellow Earl, claimed to have originated, is the folding head, each half of which folds down over the side of the vehicle. When the Earl's prototype was produced, several other carriage builders said they had built a similar carriage before him, but his character and his fame as a sportsman ensured that it was always associated with him, and continued to be named after him. As on all wagonettes, access to the body is through a door at the back and the seats are arranged lengthways on each side. It can carry six passengers, was pulled by a pair of horses and, again, it would be driven either by the owner or his coachman.

Portland Wagonette



This vehicle was built by Silk & Sons, London, for the Wiston Estate at Steyning, near Brighton. Two or four horses would be driven to it, and wagonettes were one of the few carriage types that were suitable to be driven by either the owner or his professional coachman.

The prototype of this vehicle was designed in 1893 by the Duke of Portland who wanted a large carriage to drive to hunt meets, which provided more protection than an open wagonette. He devised a method of fitting a leather head (carriage terminology for hood), which folds down forward. The seats, that are not now fitted, could be removed enabling a lot of luggage to be carried when required, making it very useful for station and estate work. With the seats fitted it could carry six passengers in the body, and the driver and one more on the box seat.

Since the head provided very limited protection compared to that of a Lonsdale Wagonette, and it also looks much less attractive, it is not surprising that this style did not become fashionable, and this example is probably the only survivor.

Carriages for Other Uses

Hansom Cab



The first Hansom cab was designed in 1834 by Joseph Hansom of York, but it had little in common with the highly successful and long-lasting design that appeared two years later. Hansoms, the 'gondolas of London', immediately conjure up

images of traffic-packed, smog-filled Victorian London, and Sherlock Holmes. They competed for trade with four-wheeled cabs, which were regarded as safe and respectable, whereas hansoms had a racy and disreputable image. A middle-class lady would never travel alone in a hansom.

The cabman drove from a high seat behind the body, from which he had a good view of the traffic, and hansoms were more manoeuvrable, and therefore faster, than the four-wheelers in the ever more congested city streets. There is a roof hatch for passengers to communicate with the cabman and to pass their fare to him, and a handle with which he could open the doors when he had received it. His position behind the body also helps to balance the carriage. Without him there the carriage is front-heavy and the load would be transferred through the shafts onto the horse. The steps are mounted on gravel irons which support the cab when the horse is taken out.

This carriage was built, probably around 1900, by Forder & Co. Ltd, London and Wolverhampton, the premier builder of hansom cabs, and was used until the 1930s. It is on loan from the Bristol Industrial Museum. It suffered some damage to the body and one wheel when the Bristol City Museum was bombed during the Second World War.

Veneering again blesses him, plunges down stairs, rushes into his Hansom, and directs the driver to be up and at the British Public, and to charge into the City.

Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864/5

I followed running, though not so fast but that when I came to the right-hand Canal Bridge, near the cross-path to Chalk Farm, the Hansom was stationary, the horse was smoking hot, the long pole was idle on the ground, and the driver and the park-keeper were looking over the bridge parapet.

Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, 1860

Bath Chair

This little carriage would carry one passenger who used the tiller to steer, with an attendant on foot pushing from behind. It is on loan from the Garwood Trust and it was used by Julia 'Nellie' Lloyd to travel around the grounds of the family estate of Coombe House, South Croydon, from the late 1890s to her death in 1925.

Invalid Carriage

Built by J. Waude of Leicester Square, London, this carriage, painted in the colours of the 7th Marquis of Bute would appear to have been specially built to accommodate an invalid chair, which can be wheeled into it up a hinged ramp at the back. The wheels are no longer fitted to the chair. A small

pony, driven by the invalid, would draw the carriage. The wrought iron shafts are, unusually, in the shape of a wishbone.

Coffin Carrier

This hearse body is probably a unique survivor of a type common in the mid-nineteenth century and patented by George Shillibeer. It would have been mounted on a flat bed undercarriage with four wheels. However, the original undercarriage and wheels have deteriorated and replacements are needed. The coffin carrier is displayed with 11 horsehair plumes.

Hearse



Built in the late nineteenth century by Kay of Margate, Kent, this hearse was owned by Partis Undertakers of Faversham, Kent, and used by them until the mid- 1900s. It would usually have been driven to a pair of horses, but it could be drawn by a single horse if required, presumably for economy. The horses used for funerals were always black, and they often had black ostrich feather plumes on the head pieces of their bridles and on their pads. This hearse was given to The National Trust by Maidstone Museum in 2006.

Fife Car

Little varnished carts of this sort were known as mail carts, although the builder called this particular model a Fife Car. It has unusually light solid rubber tyres on the wire wheels. Although these carts were sometimes fitted up so that they could be pulled by a donkey or goat, there is no evidence of this, and the occupants were probably pulled by an adult.

Two-wheeled Child's Carriage

This little cart was built by John C. Oke, St Johns, Newfoundland. It has an attractively shaped natural wood body on bicycle type wire wheels with solid rubber tyres. Carts like this were often pulled by a large dog, perhaps a St Bernard, but in this case more probably a Newfoundland.

Four-wheeled Child's Carriage

Built in the 1880s. We have this on loan from The Bristol City Museum via Dyrham Park, Somerset. The upholstery is made from waterproof canvas, trimmed with braid and marked, 'C. Bodman Marshfield'.

General Tom Thumb's Miniature Coach



This unique vehicle was built for General Tom Thumb of Barnum's Circus and probably used by him during one of the circus's four English tours. It was driven by the general himself and, like the full-size private drag could seat up to twelve passengers on the roof and four inside. It was purchased in 1894 by Alfred Ash for his five-year-old son, Graham Baron Ash, later the donor of Packwood House in Warwickshire, to the National Trust in 1941. The coach was given to the National Trust in 1983.

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