Boots, Bacon and Blankets
The war diaries of the 4th Reserve Park Army Service Corps

Men of the 4th Reserve Park Wagoner Harry Dunn CHT 573 is the tallest man standing in the doorway.

August the 5th to the end of October 1914

The museum has been working on the 4th Reserve Park diary. Many wagoners were sent to the 4th Reserve Park. War diaries were written by every unit in the army and they capture the day to day life of the unit. The medical officer Lt E.W Wade of the Royal Army Medical Corps writes the diary at the start of the war. The diaries begin.

August 5th “camped on the sands at Thornhill Aldershot it was raining hard”

August 19th “left for Southampton and embarked on the Mount Temple”.

August 20th arrived at Le Havre “The latrines were filthy and the troops slept
under the wagons to which the horses were tied”

They moved up to the front line and are swept up in the retreat from Mons. The soldiers are on the whole very fit there were no deaths or casualties. But some of the diseases and accidents they suffered included enteric or typhoid fever, impetigo, accidentally shooting off fingers, crush injuries from wagons and kicks from horses.

By October the boots were wearing out.

“Several men for the last two days have complained about their boots, certainly they are very bad the toes and heels are out and the boots are too far gone to be repaired “

“Several men (about 50) in each park have worn out their boots and are walking about with the soles held on by a strap or else in their socks ... “

“Bought 30 pairs of sabots for those men whose boots are worn out.”

The new boots arrived a week later.

As the medical officer Lt. Wade was ordered to inspect the bacon for its fitness for issue. The board condemned 9880 lbs as unfit and “all the bacon was buried”

The end of October sees the first mention of lice.

The health of the horses was very much in the mind of the Commanding officer Captain Philmore who records the routine day for the horses when not on the move.

6.15 roll call
6.30 grooming
7am water
7.30 feed 6lbs of oats 1lb of hay
12.00 groom and water
12.30 feed 6lbs of oats and 2lbs of hay
3.30 grooming
4.00 water
4.30 7lbs of oats and 12lbs of hay.

General Landon comes on an inspection and “ particularly asked if we had sent indents for horse rugs blankets and horse shoes, I said we had sent three times! “

General Landon had first seen the Wagoners at Sledmere in 1911 when on the invitation of Sir Mark Sykes he had come to see the wagon driving competitions. Sir Mark wanted his support to set up the Wagoners Special Reserve.

The 4th Reserve Park War diaries are made available by the National Archives.

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New Trustees

We are delighted to welcome three new Trustees

Major Tony Sugdon served over 30 years in The Royal Corps of Signals before returning to East Yorkshire. On leaving the Army he worked as an interim business manager, with an Educational Charitable and then for the MOD based on Leconfield. He has been a long term supporter of the Museum.

Professor Michael Cardwell was born and brought up at Sledmere his father was the agent for the estate. He is Professor of Agricultural law at Leeds University. During his childhood, he most clearly recalls the farmworkers on the Estate who had joined the Wagoners.

Clair Douglas is Head of the Agricultural Law Team at Crombie Wilkinson at Malton. She lives locally and has a great interest in the countryside, conservation and sharing the heritage of the East Riding countryside, conservation and sharing of the heritage of the East...
New acquisitions for the Collection

Mr Michael Hodgson has most generously donated the medals awarded to his Grandfather Wagoner Herbert Hodgson CHT 352. Wagoner Hodgson’s story is a timely reminder of how young some wagoners were.

Wagoner Herbert Hodgson

Herbert Hodgson CHT/352 joined the Wagoners Special Reserve when he was 14 years old, a month short of his 15th birthday. He weighed nine stone and stood 5 feet 7 inches tall and was working at Wetwang as a carter. In the official AB 303 Army Register he is recorded as 18 years old. You had to be between 18 and 38 years old to join the army unless you had previous military experience in which case you could be 42 years old.

251 Wagoners are recorded as aged 18 in the AB 303 register held at the museum and it is quite possible that there were other underage recruits including Arthur Walker whose service we recorded in a previous newsletter.

The recruiting officers not only turned a blind eye to the age of wagoners but also recruited men below the minimum height of 5 feet 3 inches tall. 72 wagoners were recorded as below the minimum height. It was not just the young recruits that had the rules winked at. The oldest wagoner was John William Crosby CHT 413. At 43 he was a year older than the maximum age even for an ex-soldier. (Later in the war conscription raised the age limit to 41 years old and in 1918 it was raised again to 51 years old)

Herbert Hodgson was called up in August 1914 aged 15. Most likely celebrating his 16th Birthday in France as he drove his wagon number 72 loaded with oats for the 5th Reserve Park. He was driving two bay geldings both with white blazes on their fore heads.

His brothers Mark CHT 312, Fred CHT 507 and Ernest 57 all joined the Reserve. Herbert served right through the War. In 1917 like many wagoners he was transferred compulsorily “in the interests of the service “to an infantry battalion the 1st East Yorkshire Regiment.

Herbert was gassed and whilst serving with the East Yorkshire Regiment was captured and spent some time as a prisoner of war.

All the brothers survived the war and Herbert died in July 1971. Mark and Fred joined up and although Ernest was called up and went to Bradford he failed the medical examination and was sent home.

With thanks to Keith Ireland and Colin Appleby for help with the background information. Colin Appleby’s grandmother was Herbert’s sister.
6th Reserve Park, Who’s who?

We are very grateful to David Ward the grandson of Wagoner James Ward who has allowed us to share this photo. Further research has revealed Wagoners Charles and Richard Taylor. Can anyone else identify anyone else in the picture?

Back row first left Wagoner Richard Taylor CHT. 723 second from the right Wagoner James Ward CHT. 1111 .Middle row second from the right Corporal Charles Taylor CHT. 779

New display for the Wagon see it on line at www.sledmerehouse.com/attractions/wagoners-museum

We have devised a new exhibition on the history and construction of the Wolds Wagon. It will be installed in the Carriage House at Sledmere to accompany our Wolds wagon. It explains some of the trades, trees and equipment that were used to make a wagon. All the equipment used with our historic wagon is on display including the original greedy boards, jack, skid shoe and swingle trees. We have been working in partnership with Beck Isle Museum to promote the history of the wolds wagon. If you go to Beck Isle Museum as well as wagons, photos and models be sure not to miss the extremely rare and unusual saddle used when riding postilion with a wagon. We are very grateful to Museums Development Yorkshire who have grant aided this project.

Cyril Sissons wheelwright from Beswick demonstrates making a wheel. Photo The David Morgan Rees collection at Sheffield Hallam University

Supported by
Museum Development Yorkshire