

Museum of *The Wagoners Special Reserve*



Newsletter Spring 2021 Reg Charity 1119052

New Vehicle display

The museum is putting on display three historic vehicles, the Wolds wagon, GS wagon and Horse Drawn Horse Ambulance. Thanks to the generosity of Sir Tatton Sykes we have been able to set up the historic vehicles in the Carriage House in the Sledmere House Stable block. This is a wonderful and most appropriate site. The 1861 Sissons Wolds Wagon purchased two years ago will go on show with the GS Wagon donated by the Royal Logistic Corps Museum. The ambulance was discovered by Rodney Greenwood and he has kindly let us borrow it for the display. This display is being supported by a generous grant from Museums Development Yorkshire and Arts Council England.

Supported by
Museum Development Yorkshire



Save the wagon

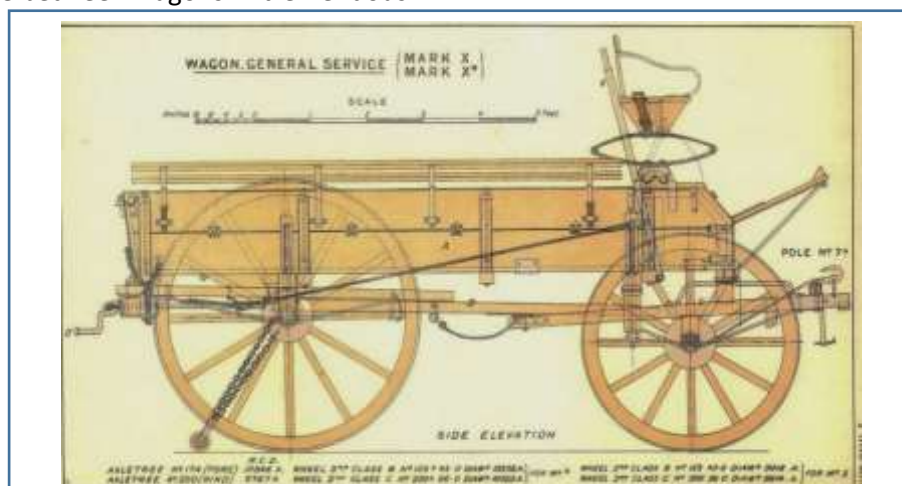
The museum has been given a WW1 General Service Wagon Mark 10 for restoration. The wagon has had a chequered history. Built in 1915, the wagon was initially collected by the Imperial War Museum and then went to the Royal Logistic Corps Coaching Board. The wagon requires lots doing to it, including a new set of wheels, replacement metal work and undercarriage woodwork.

Tens of thousands of General Service wagons were made during the war. They were all made to a standard pattern and all the parts were fully interchangeable between wagons. A tremendous

advantage when in active service. In many ways these wagons were the first mass produced vehicle.

Despite the huge numbers made only around a dozen still survive in the UK including ours for restoration.

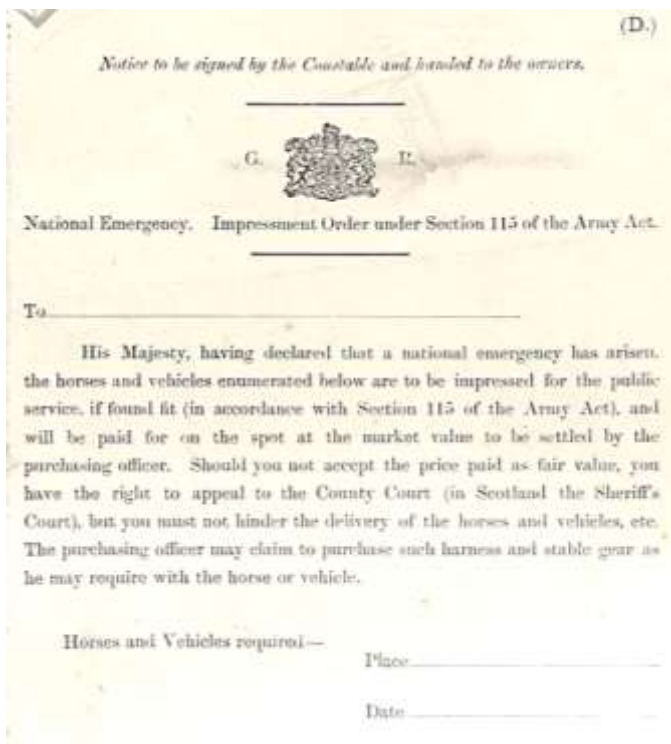
The plan is to restore the vehicle to working order when we will work with the Sledmere Shires and the Sledmere estate to drive it at events and open days. Our wagon will be on display in the Carriage house at Sledmere alongside the Wolds wagon.



Horse display.

This year's small display in the museum is on the horses and the support from the Blue cross and RSPCA. After the wagoners were called up they were sent to Bradford to get their uniforms and many went to Aldershot where they were put in charge of a pair of horses. Together soldier and horses went to Flanders.

The horses had also been "called up" and were newly recruited into the Army they were compulsorily purchased at the outbreak of war.



Wagoner Cyril Gardiner CHT 1126 with a convalescent horse.

The horses had to learn the Army system of being driven postilion without blinkers in a pole wagon as a pair. Most of the horses would never have been driven postilion or without blinkers and they had to be quickly trained up before embarkation.

Over fifty thousand horses went out with the British Expeditionary Force in 1914 around sixteen hundred of them under the care of a wagoner. By the end of the war over 6 million horse and mules had been sent to France.

This horse is wearing the standard military bridle. These were a clever design. By removing the strap that held the bit it could be transformed into a head collar that the horse could wear in the stable or on the picket line. The strap could be attached and detached without taking the bridle off the horse. Also the buckles on a military bridle all had rollers to allow for quick removal. This horse is in a double ring bit.



Veterinary care

Horses were very valuable and the army set up a huge system of veterinary care. The terrible deaths amongst military horses in the South African war led to the founding of the Army Veterinary Corps in 1903. (later the Royal AVC). Each division had a Mobile Veterinary section that went wherever the division was sent. There were then base veterinary hospitals, at least six, where horses could be sent for more complicated and serious injuries.

Horses suffered from a range of problems from lesser ailments; saddle sores, sprains and strains to exhaustion, gassing, shrapnel wounds, mange and very contagious diseases such as influenza and strangles.



Illustrated War News 16th dec 1914

Horse drawn Horse Ambulance

Horses that could not walk to the base hospitals were taken by the Mobile Veterinary Section horse ambulance either direct to the hospital or to a railway. The Horse drawn horse ambulances could pick up seriously injured horses unable to stand by removing the floor of the ambulance reversing over the casualty putting a strap over the hoop axle and lifting the casualty up and replacing the floor under it. They also had detachable shafts that could be fixed to either end of the vehicle. This allowed for great manoeuvrability in tight spaces. The Army Service Corps provided the drivers for the horse drawn horse ambulances.

Can you help the museum?

The museum has the chance to acquire this original First World War horse drawn horse ambulance and we are raising funds to secure it for future generations. If you can help please contact the curator.



Lionel Edwards 1868 1966.



Unexpected uniforms.

We are so familiar with the uniform of soldiers from the war. However thanks to Chris Gilbert who is a descendant of wagoner John/ Johnson Leighton CHT 1005 and Henry "Harry" Leighton CHT 872 we have learned more about an unusual type. Both these soldiers died during the war. Chris Gilbert sent through some photos of them and we matched them up with a photo we have in the museum. This shows Henry Leighton wearing what became known as a Kitchener Blue uniform.

Due in part to the huge response to Kitchener's call for volunteers there was a shortage of military equipment including uniforms. The War Office adopted a temporary strategy of making simple uniforms in cloth that was available. It is thought that the Kitchener blue uniform was made from the same cloth as policemen, railworkers and postmen.

The other mystery of the photo is that Henry Leighton went out to Flanders in August 1914 and he would have had a Khaki uniform, and we can only surmise that for one reason or other he is wearing a temporary uniform for this studio portrait.



Message from the Curator

The museum will open on the 18th of May. When we open there will be the GS wagon and horse drawn ambulance in the Carriage House. Also a temporary display in the museum on the Blue Cross and RSPCA and the military horses driven and cared for by the wagoners.

Please keep an eye on the Website WWW <https://www.sledmerehouse.com/things-to-do/wagoners-museum?/attractions/wagoners-museum> for latest opening information and we will be notifying friends of the museum directly.