

Carriages, Coaches and Horses 'bygone transport'



Over the Christmas period an ex member of the history group Bill Mitchell died - some of you may remember him more for his presence at the various Carnivals and Fetes in the area over many years.

Bill was a Feltham man born and bred – raised in Ruskin Avenue Feltham in 1928 who before coming to reside at Sparrow farm Drive had lived at a number of other addresses – Sparrow Farm is much the poorer for his absence

Bill, over the years had many a horse driven carriage 'large and small' with which he would give the young and not so young rides on his Pony and Trap

Whereas Bill mainly had the smaller horse drawn type of carriage there was of a time when the people of the district, until the mid-twentieth century, would have had much larger ones

As can be seen from an early age Bill was a horse man – this image we believe was taken back of Feltham Arena on the Poores land



Stagecoach 17th–18th century

I ask you now to cast your mind back to an earlier age before the internal combustion engine when the methods of transport were via horse propelled means 'such as' Stagecoach and Mail Coach although the latter locally would have been seen along Staines Road (19th century) - -also the Post Chaise 'which was lighter' than the stagecoach and drawn by two or four horses and a Barouche which was an open 4-wheeled carriage and the petite and elegant Phaeton

and the more lumbering farm yard type of carts



This is a water colour of the Black Dog Inn on Bedford Green by the miniaturist George Engleheart It was a Coaching Inn from around 1652 where it is mentioned in the Christ's Hospital Accounts namely as "signe of ye Dog" It was a spacious and Capital Inn subject to a trifling rent of £50.00 per annum as the sales blurb goes in early nineteenth century – it comprised of stabling for 50 horses and other suitable

accommodation – all "*in excellent order*"

The Benson two or four in hand club had as its main rendezvous point the Black Dog Bedford they were one amongst a number driving associations in the country

between late eighteenth and mid –nineteenth century – whose main purpose was to race from place to place as quickly as possible – today we have ‘boy and girl racers’

A major player was one Lord Onslow whose dexterity as a *‘whip’* was well known
The carriage in the main was a *phaeton* with either two or four horses
The club often dined at The Black Dog where they had their own Wine Cellar - and one night after dinner, it is said, King George 1V stopped to change horses and made enquiry as to a certain member being present – the member being known to the King because of the way he made call! “the King saying ‘it is said’ “I thought I knew his holloa”

For us locally amongst the Buck’s and Corinthians was one Henry Villebois of Feltham House - and he, Villebois, in a poem of the time is mentioned

*‘ Those were the days when Peyton’s greys
To Bedford led the way Sir
And Villebois followed with his Bays
In Beautiful array Sir*



Well - gone are those hectic furious races and although the speed limit today is 30 it is faster than the Fops and Dandy’s attained –

Opposite the ‘Dog’ was The Bell, or as it is known today ‘Bell on the Green’ this was a Coaching Inn and was where, in addition to stage coaches, many a Coach party on their way to Ascot races took refreshment.

Also along the Staines Road was a Toll Gate one such ‘gate’ existed near the Load of Hay at Bedford and the Horse and carriage such as here depicted would have been seen



Feltham, although not being on a major carriage route would have paid host occasionally to Stage Coach’s - one can envisage passengers alighting and flooding into the Red Lion and/or the Rose and Crown. – no such scene today!!



Another Inn where hospitality and a change of horse would have been available was The Three Horse Shoes in Spring Road Feltham with its associated Stabling and Paddocks at the rear - also had its own Blacksmith's shop

The landed gentry of Feltham and Feltham Hill had carriages which were the most luxurious of their day -

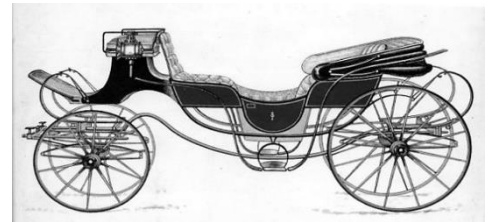
Mrs Villebois of Feltham House who was very well known in the court circles about the time of King George the Third – had even her very own carriage way from her house to the Longford River where her dainty Phaeton would skip across the bridge!



This is a Phaeton carriage and was typical of one used by members of the Benson Driving Club



Major General George Tito Brice CB from his Mansion home 'Grovelly' at Feltham Hill would have been conveyed to and from Feltham Station

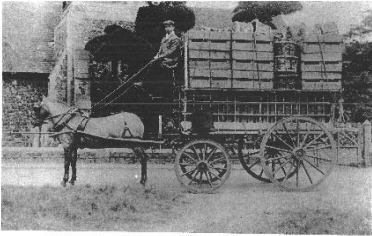


in his Barouche on his 'daily' visit 'we understand' to his club in Pall Mall London.



This is Dr Blundy outside St Georges Church Hanworth

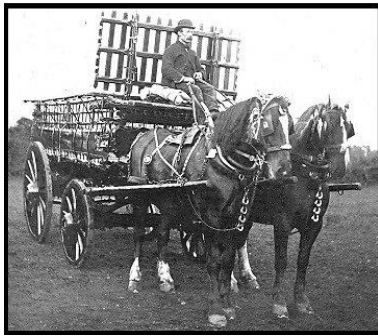
Locally many others would have had Carriages and small carts by the dozen Whether they being for farm purposes or conveying goods to and from markets but all requiring hundreds of horses and to properly support these were the various 'Smith's and Farriers and Harness Makers



The Gibbs family who came to Bedford in 1844 -- originally their trade was in Farm Carts and various farming implements were also blacksmiths – one such cart is this Strawberry cart piled precariously

high – and this specialised cart made for Mr Curtis of Feltham

At the Middlesex Agricultural Society Show on the 5th October 1900. Gibbs secured a first in this class



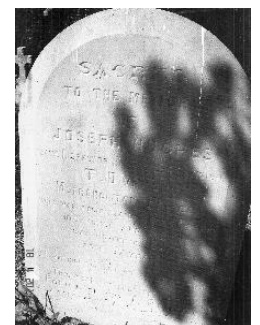
- and here outside William Whiteleys enterprise at Hanworth a 'small produce cart'



This is Percy Lewcock who worked for Famer Reynolds of Hanworth – he would make many a Journey to various Markets in London with soft produce in a farm cart such as here depicted



Here is a member of the mounted patrol outside the Police Station in Staines Road Bedford – one such officer - Inspector Hughes - met an unfortunate end in Bedford Lane - he is buried in the church yard extension of St Mary's Bedford – he died 27th November 1882 aged 37



But what of the 'bi-product' of these equines

Personally, I remember “old Driscoll” the rag and bone man who when he came down our road shouting “rar bone” my Father would tell us to get the shovel and bucket and scoop up the horse droppings – there was also old Charlie Corke from New Road Hanworth who apart from general carting he would also dual as a furniture remover and removal man – often he would on a Sunday lunch time ‘tether’ his horse to the open window of the Airman with the horse poking his head in the window feasting on those large ‘dog biscuits’

AW Smith Feltham's major Market gardener of the late 19th early 20th century was one amongst many who would import horse manure or 'dung' from various places along the return trip from London so as to 'spread' it on the land and thereby improve the quality of his Feltham Fields!!



- And with regards Leisure

Small carriages and carts for recreational purposes were also abundant such as here Miss Armstrong with her friend and brother, he is the lad leading the Pony and Trap – they won the 'Month of Roses' competition in the year 1900 'note the dung' – this was taken outside St Catherine's Church 'note ornamental railings'



This is an outing to Burnham Beeches from St Dunstan's Church

The man with the reins 'in the top hat' was Ken Fryer with standing below a young Tom Parker [Parkers wood yard] and Henry Lee-Uff one time organist at St Dunstan's



More recently the wonderful Hanworth Carnival 1999



This is a Posting Chariot and it was in one such carriage that news of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar was conveyed by (naval vessel HMS Pickle) carrying Lt Lapentiere 'lapenot - e-air'

However all this gave way to other forms of transport mostly motorised 'polluting the air' which we now are having to come to terms with – but long live the humble 'bike'



- here, in this image taken May 1960 in the "Sunday Sunshine", we see Mrs Emma Graham aged 83 and her daughter Dorothy of Fawns Manor Road, Mrs Graham said that she "regularly used it for shopping and paying calls" they are here seen zooming along Staines Road with Fairholme behind them



'And returning to where we began - this is Bill with his Pony and Trap



And here again at Feltham Carnival 1995

I miss those Carnivals such wonderful ways they were to bring people together
Thank you