

APPOINTMENTS FOR DRIVING CARRIAGES

I have been involved in showing my carriages for many years, and find that joining the American Driving Society and the Carriage Association of America is an excellent start in obtaining the information needed today to compete successfully in carriage competition.

American Driving Society
Cross Plains, Wisconsin
phone 608-237-7382
Web <http://www.americandrivingsociety.org>

The Carriage Association of America
3915 Jay Trump Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40511
phone 859-231-0971 fax 859-231-0973
e-mail <mailto:info@caaonline.com> web <http://www.caaonline.com>

The Carriage Museum of America-Library
3915 Jay Trump Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40511
phone 859-259-2933
web <http://www.carriagemuseumlibrary.org>

The American Driving Society (ADS) publishes a handbook outlining updated rules and lists of what a judge is looking for in a proper turn-out. The Carriage Association publication contains numerous articles of interest on all phases of driving. One of the books they offer, On The Box Seat, by Tom Ryder contains a wealth of information on turn-out. From these publications, together with asking for some help from people in the know, there is plenty of information to assist the novice driver.

With the revival of driving for pleasure and the increasing interest in driving competitions, we see everything from the run-about, to the inimitable marathon "war wagons". The driver who wants to look smart and be as correct as possible in the show ring or in presentation, can be so no matter what he is driving.

There are certain "rules" in driving that cover any circumstance.

- The way you hold your reins is optional but you may be asked to hold the reins in one hand. That does not mean that you cannot assist with the other hand. There are many "styles", pick the one most comfortable for you.
- Sit on the right side of the seat. (age old English etiquette)
- Have a whip in hand (The whip is an aid and the horse should be trained to it)
- Carry a spares kit. (walking home is no fun!)
- Display a slow moving vehicle sign any time your drive on a public road.
- Wear a hat.
- Use an apron. (optional unless showing, to keep you clean and warm)
- Wear gloves. (to save your hands)
- The driver, or whip, is always the first in and last out of a carriage.
- Never take the bridle off your horse unless it has been unhitched from the vehicle.

Harness

Always use a black harness with a painted vehicle and a russet or brown harness, with a vehicle that is entirely finished in natural wood, and iron painted brown. If you have a natural wood vehicle and only own a black harness then paint all the iron on the vehicle black and change all the leather (dash, fenders, shaft leathers) to black. This will make it a correct turn out.

If the vehicle is light, such as a run-about, sleigh, or cart, only a breast plate is needed to pull the vehicle, but if you plan to drive a heavy surrey or a large phaeton, then a collar is in order. Collars are considered more formal and may not be appropriate for every vehicle.

The metal fitting on your turn out should all be the same color i.e. all silver or all chrome or all brass. And if you use lamps then they should match the metal color of the harness. And if your vehicle requires formal livery then the buttons on the coat should match as well.

The saddle of the harness varies in width from 3 inches for a 4 wheeled vehicle to a wide pad for a 2 wheeled vehicle (it is wide because in a two wheeled vehicle all the weight rests on the animals back and the pad will then distribute the weight and make it more comfortable for the horse). There are wide pads that can be placed under a narrow saddle in order to make the harness suitable for a two wheeled carriage. A gig pad is very wide and has tugs that slide through the saddle in order to balance the weight of a gig.

Breeching is required when the vehicle is not equipped with brakes. Some formal turn-outs can use a strap called a "false" breeching. After hearing about some very serious accidents, I discourage the use of clips to attach the breeching to the cart. Take the time to use the straps.

Collars

Collars come in two types. The "K", or closed collar, is used on the more formal harnesses and is often covered with patent leather. Open collars are used more often in work harness. Collars are measured from the inside, bottom to top. The average horse's neck will take about a 21 inch collar. Fit of the collar is very important in order to not hinder the horse in his paces. There are small blocks that can be used to make a collar too big fit better, but there is no way to make a collar too small work.

Whips

The whip is carried in your hand for safety to use as an aid. Whips vary in length. If you are driving a single, then the thong should be about half the length of the stick. If driving a pair then the thong should be the length of the stick. And if driving a tandem or four then the thong should be 6 to 10 feet long. A rule of thumb for size is to be able to reach the shoulder of the horse with the lash to give an aid. There are many kinds of materials used to make whips, the holly whip being the most traditional.

Lamps

I have not found any good books as yet on which lamp goes with which vehicle, but a good rule of thumb to follow is a square glass lamp goes with a formal vehicle, such as a Victoria or Brougham, and a round or oval shaped lamp on a sporting vehicle, such as a trap or Meadowbrook.

American lamps hang on metal hooks attached to the carriage, and English lamps hang in a circular holder.

Clothing

Driving attire is often worrisome to new drivers. What is sporting? Formal? Proper for spring, summer or fall? Tom Ryder offered the best advice I have ever heard, wear what the weather dictates. So, if it is hot, wear a nice light shirt or blouse. If it is raining, wear a raincoat. If it is cold, a jacket is in order. Most of all, be comfortable.

Take the time to rehearse your outfit with a friend who can take your picture in your carriage. If you are still unsure, send the picture to someone who has show experience. You want to look the part, ie, sporting means that you look like you are heading for a picnic in the country and formal means that you are stepping out on the town.

Hat

Hats can make or break the appearance of a turn-out, so take some time picking one that looks good on you. A popular summer hat for a man is the straw boater as it goes with most turn-outs. A cap or Fedora will also work with most carriages. A grey bowler is more formal, but not everyone looks good in one. If the vehicle is formal then a gray topper is ideal for driver and passengers. (Only grooms wear black toppers).

For woman in summer a straw hat with a firm brim, in winter a felt hat is appropriate. In recent years, woman are turning out with larger hats and adding more color. If you are a woman driver look pretty, don't dress like a man, but the overall appearance should still be a little on the conservative side

Apron

The driver and passengers of vehicles wear an apron. It should wrap completely around the body and cover the body from below the chest to mid-shin bone. Passengers may use a lap robe which is large piece of material about 3 1/2 feet square that cover everyone on the seat. These robes and aprons should be of a color which harmonizes with the material of the seat. It is sometimes advisable when having a lap robe or apron made to make it reversible, thus going with the upholstery of different vehicles. It is also correct to edge the apron and lap robe with the color matching the striping of the carriage. Monograms add a nice touch.

Gloves

Gloves worn by everyone and should be dark brown in color. Brown is chosen because the dye from a black glove could come off on your hands. Your hands are very noticeable when driving, light gloves will only add to that.

Shoes

When driving wear shoes that go with the turn out. Brown with natural wood and leather, black to go with a painted vehicle. Remember the judge has a great view of your ankles so be sure your socks and not offensive or your apron covers this area.

Grooms

The rules state that you must have an extra person for a pair and two for a four-in-hand. In combined driving, advanced single drivers must also must carry a groom. If you want to look really smart, then your extra person should be dressed in some sort of livery. It can be as simple as a cap, jacket, tie, buff color pants and leather shoes, brown gloves. If your vehicle is more formal then formal dress livery is in order. This consists of a black top hat white stock fitted body coat (with buttons of the same metal color as the harness), white jods and high black boots with tan leather around the top (similar to what you see in the hunt field) and brown gloves. Grooms do not wear aprons.

A less formal turn-out can carry a person dressed as a passenger to fulfill this requirement. That person should dress in a complimentary manner as the driver (but please, not the same!) and wear a matching apron. The person

should dismount and head the horses, just as a groom would, when asked to stand in a line up.

A note on grooms. Be sure the person you choose is knowledgeable about your horse and vehicle. Please, do not ask children to perform this task as the groom can often be instrumental in preventing a mishap should a situation arise.

To complete the picture of a beautiful turn-out, it is assumed that your horse and your vehicle will have a balanced look. You would not have a small horse pull a large carriage, not a very large horse pull a small vehicle

If I could be of any help in choosing a carriage or locating a harness, please feel free to contact me. Best of luck.

John Greenall, 268 Kings Highway, West Windsor Vermont 05089
phone 802-436-2266 fax 802-436-2828
e-mail greenall@vermontel.net

CARRIAGE LAMPS: From Old England to Contemporary Competition

With the rapid expansion of carriage driving and the constant demand for more information to enhance the sport, it is critical that those interested and involved in the sport understand the historical and contemporary usages of carriage lamps.

Most of our traditions concerning lamps comes to us from England, and it was there that carriage lamps were first introduced, circa 1700.

Then, nearly all transportation of any distance was done by overland coach, and, in order to make "the time", these coaches often ran at night; experience quickly demonstrated the need for some form of lighting. The first and foremost reason was to light the way, a job which most lamps did poorly. Lighting was also needed by the guard. This person sounded the horn and guarded the coach, and he needed light to read the "waybill", check the time, etc. As carriages became more common, a system of lighting was worked out to meet the needs of the passengers and the coachmen.

A coach could be outfitted with as many as seven lamps of

differing sizes, doing many different functions and hung at various points on the coach. First, there would be two large lamps hung on either side of the main body of the coach, just below the first forward seat.

Then, a second pair was sometimes hung on either side of the front boot, just below the front seat, to light the outside flanks of the wheel horses. Another could have been attached to the center of the footboard on the front of the coach to throw light down the pole to the pole-head, where the PHOTOGRAPH (Candle fount) lead horses were attached to the vehicle.

The sixth light would hang on the rear, near the side of the coach and act as a tail light. It would be much smaller than the outside lamps and be easily removed so that the guard could use it to walk ahead to see if the road was safe, and to read names on packages and check his waybill.

The seventh light would be used inside the coach for passenger convenience.

Overall, it was important that coaches be well lighted to show their approach, just as sleighs used bells to signal their presence when quietly gliding over the snow.

Just before the turn of the century, newly industrialized America was creating a new class of wealth, and the emerging upper class needed a guide to help them turn out correctly with their horses and carriages.

To fill this need, several books were published. All areas of coaching and turnout were discussed, including the proper use of carriage lamps. However, one must remember that what was described as proper reflected heavily the personal taste of the authors.

At this time, it was considered acceptable to use square lamps on more formal vehicles, such as Broughams, Spider Phaetons, Stanhop Gigs, etc., and round lamps on sporting vehicles, such as a roof seat breaks, traps, etc.

However,, on vehicles that were strictly American in design and use, such as surreys and top buggies, either square or round lamps were considered correct. All that was required was that they were in good balance with the vehicle (i.e., not too large or too small).

I have done extensive research on the use of vehicle lamps and have looked at many vehicles with "original" lamps. I believe that on some vehicles, you simply used what you like, much like picking out extras for a new automobile. Yet, the rule of thumb of square and round is good to follow.

Lamps are usually powered by either candles or kerosene. I personally prefer using candles as they are cleaner and safer to transport. Spilled kerosene could cause a fire hazard. When using kerosene, though, use fresh, clear fuel as it makes less smoke and burns cleaner, but be sure to keep the wick trimmed.

When caring for your lamps, use hard, slow-burning candles. Bees wax makes a very good candle. By the way, you may want to get the two or three inch stub ends left when church candles burn down. They are great--just whittle them down to the size you need.

Candle-powered lamps work by way of a spring that is stored in the tail of the lamp. It pushes up on the candle into the tapered fount, so, when you see a candle lamp burning, no wax shows, only the flame.

Always light a new candle so the wick has been burned. This PHOTOGRAPH (Large Sporting Lamp) makes it much easier to light on a windy night. Tip the end of the wick toward the direction of the way the lamps opens. This will also make it easier to light.

Lamps attach to the vehicle in generally two ways. Most all English lamps slide into a socket tail first, resting on the collar. The other, which is American, is the stem type. This is a finger-like spindle that attaches to the carriage, and the lamp slips over it.

The shape of each pair of lamps reflects the taste of the person who designed it. All lamps, of course, are made with glass, much of which is beveled to reflect the light to a greater degree. They also have a tail where

the candle or kerosene is stored. The interior is a reflecting surfaced metal, often copper and plated with silver.

To allow an air flow, there are smaller vents around the collar and near the top of the chimney. Each lamp also opens in some way for lighting and maintenance, and many have a piece of red glass to the rear to work as a tail light.

At one time, it was considered in poor taste to display lamps during the daytime. There were even lamps designed that had metal shutters to cover the glass during the day. Park drags were designed to store the lamps inside during the day. But, today, with the emphasis on show and turnout, we want our lamps to be seen, as they add so much to the entire look of our turnout.

Please keep in mind that not all carriages had lamps. Some vehicles were meant only for use during daylight hours so they didn't have lamps, but they certainly could have had if the original purchaser had wanted them.

So, as you can see, lamps can be added to any vehicle, even if the lamp brackets are missing. The bracket may have been removed or lost over the years. You may find just the right pair of lamps, but they don't fit on the PHOTOGRAPH (Toe board lamp), ADD. (Carriage Lamp Manufacturers), SKETCHES (5 different lamps) lamp brackets on the vehicle. Don't panic! You can have a new pair made to fit. Any clever blacksmith should be able to copy, bend, and fit you with a new pair. One note on turning out: if you use brass furnishings on your harness (i.e. buckles, harness, etc.), then choose lamps that are trimmed with brass, and, likewise, for nickel or silver.

Lamps are, without question, the most beautiful part of any carriage and great care should be given to choosing just the right pair for good balance and taste.

Carriage lamps are quite diverse, so there are literally hundreds of styles. This brief introductory study only scratches the surface and invites you to investigate further the fascinating study of carriages and their proper lighting.

ADD> Carriage Lamp Manufacturers

compiled by Ken Sowles, Carriage Association of America
White Manufacturing Co., Bridgeport, CT. Made lamps for Brewster and Company of New York.

Atwood Brothers Manufacturing Co., Amesbury, MA.

English & Mersick, New Haven, CT.

Gray & Davis, Detroit, MI. Later made lamps for Ford & Maxwell automobiles.

There were many companies that made lamps throughout the United States. Most lamp manufacturers were near large cities that contained carriage manufacturers. [1316]□