

## Third generation for Lord Mayor's Coach

One of the main showcases for the Shire breed is their horsing of the Lord Mayor's Coach each November in the Lord Mayor's Parade in London. For some years now David Lawless has been the driver, following in the footsteps of his father, John, and now his son Ben, aged 13, became the third generation of the family to be involved, taking the role of doorman (pictured with father David). Many of our most experienced horse people take part in this extraordinary pageant, involving rehearsals in the dark streets of London before the city wakes up. David explained that this year's wheelers were Heathfield Harvester and Arclid Bronty, with grooms Barry Coffen and William Sheen. Centre were Bettws William Henry and Pantyrhuad Brynmor, with grooms Jo Wadsworth and Bill Sheen, and the leaders were Primrose Hill Boy and Landcliffe Ben, with Sarah McLellan riding postilion, and David Scott and Pip Read as grooms. The coach has been used since 1757.



## New class for 2020 Two-Wheel Cart Championship

**Following the success of the first ever two-wheel cart championship last year David Curtis and his team aim to build on this at the 2020 show with a new class – Ride & Drive.**

This year's show will be on 5 September 2020 at the same venue, Oakridge Arena, near Newark, and all profits will go to Cancer Research.

"Last year everyone had a great day enjoying their heavy horses in two-wheel carts," says David. "This year we are adding a Ride & Drive class. The judges will judge the ridden element at walk and trot and include a specialist ridden judge; competitors will swap to the cart for the driven element. The rider and driver do not have to be the same person, demonstrating the versatility of the horse".

The full complement of classes is: Young Driver, Novice Driver, Tandem, Skills Test, Ride & Drive and Main Cart Class.

"We are actively looking for sponsorship," David added. "We offer £100 packages that go towards the running of the show, aiming to



Pictured at last year's show by Kevin Wright is championship winner Elaine Ramsay with her Clydesdale, Yorkie.

provide free entry and stabling, and travelling money".

To offer sponsorship or to exhibit at the event contact David Curtis at

david@mppower.co.uk or 07752 066619, or follow Facebook 'Two wheeled cart showcase and championship'. Schedules will be out this spring.





## Sledmere House Shires join SHS approved centres

**The Shire Horse Society has designated another new Approved Centre to join the five others around the country. Sledmere House & Estate at Driffield, East Yorkshire is home to the Sledmere Farm Park & Shires, and visitors can also explore the restored historic stable block with its tack room and 'lads' room. The park is also accredited by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.**

The stables have been in constant use since 1780 when they were first built and were part of the famous racing tradition at Sledmere and its important stud of Thoroughbred horses. The carriage house is home to a range of vehicles including an exercise cart for daily use, a passenger dray and a Wolds wagon, which is owned by the Wagoner's Museum, based at the house. This tells the story of the Wagoners' Special Reserve, the brainchild of Sir Mark Sykes, 6th Baronet, and the men of the company who were some of the first to go abroad in the First World War. They drove horse-drawn wagons in the east Yorkshire style, carrying supplies of food, fodder and ammunition for the frontline. The Farm Park is home to a range of farm animals including Leicester Longwool sheep and rare breed pigs and chickens.

Sledmere Farm Park's equines began with horses that would have been on the estate in the past, a former racehorse (representing the estate's racehorse stud), a small child's pony and a driving Cob, with a plan to add a Shire to represent farming on the estate, and the Wagoners Special Reserve.

In August 2015, under newly appointed manager Laura Clark, the estate bought its first Shire, Southram Diana, from Rodney Greenwood. Staff had little experience of driving, so they took driving lessons at Sledmere with Robert Wilmott and travelled to Caroline Dale's stables in Derbyshire, gaining their driving road safety certificates.

In November 2017 the estate bought a driving pair from Rodney Greenwood, Camalter Amy and Camalter Poppy. Amy and Poppy have been shown successfully in pairs agricultural turnout classes, the biggest achievement winning the 'newcomers' award at the Great Yorkshire Show.

Laura who became farm park manager in early 2017 had a vision to bring Shires to the park. "They've been my favourite animals since I was young and I spent most of my summer holidays at Staintondale Shire Horse Farm," she explains. "My great grandad spent his life with Shires on the farm, and whenever I enter the show ring or have an event at work I wear one of his flat caps." Laura worked with racehorses for eight years and has her own ex-racehorses.

Laura is assisted by Lorna Yates who came to Sledmere in May 2019 for one week's work experience, but was employed part-time and is gradually building up her experience of horses. Katie Norris joined the team in December 2019 full-time and comes with a varied equine background.

"We have a very close connection to the Wagoners Museum," Laura says. "They purchased a Wolds wagon a couple of years ago allowing us to use our horses to bring it to life, and we take any opportunity we can to showcase the history."

Monthly 'wagon days' are held from April to September when Martin Watts from the museum joins them to talk about the history of the wagoners and



(1) Camalter Amy and Camalter Poppy in a Wolds wagon driven by Rodney Greenwood on a wagon day. (2) Taking part in Malton Show. (3) Driving up to Sledmere House in the snow. (4) Cottage Farm Julie with her foal, Sledmere Masterman (Walter).





Fig 1

Jobs with working horses, with *William Castle*

# Rolling with horses

**O**ne of the most common and useful tools for anyone with land is the roller. They have been used for centuries, originally made of wood or stone, but since the Industrial Revolution most are of cast iron or steel. Their function is to consolidate the soil, but when and how you use it depends on the type of roller and what you want to achieve.

Rollers made during the horse-drawn era most commonly had a pair of shafts mounted centrally, for a single horse in cart harness. With a roller of 6-8ft wide, one horse was usually adequate, though you could also hitch a trace horse in front of the shaft horse if necessary.

Other rollers had a set of shafts offset to one side, with a hook on the other side to attach a swingletree for a second horse, so the two horses were working abreast. The disadvantage of this set up was that the horses' efforts were not balanced with a cobbletree, so getting the horses to work evenly relied on the abilities of the horseman. In East Yorkshire where pole wagons were common, and perhaps elsewhere, some rollers were fitted with a pole for two horses. Two chains were attached to the front of the pole, which were hooked onto the inside hame hooks of each horse to allow the roller to be steered, whilst at the back a pair of

swingletrees and a cobbletree equalised the load.

Nowadays, many people use a roller with a hitch cart, which fulfils all your needs regarding steering, stopping and pulling, so without any modifications you can use rollers made for tractors or quad bikes. The disadvantages of this method are the extra weight of the hitch cart, a rather uncomfortable ride when rolling ploughed ground (so you may prefer to walk) and the difficulty in making sharp turns. The problem when turning is to avoid jamming the hitch cart's wheel on the drawbar of the roller, particularly when the drawbar is short, such as on many ballast rolls.



Fig 2



Fig 3





## Derek Hilton wins Forest of Arden

(1) Derek Hilton took first place with his pair of Shires, Major and Ivan, at the Forest of Arden Ploughing Match in October, also taking best finishing furrow and best decorated team. (2) Second was Gerry Vernon from the Isle of Man with his pair of donkeys, who also took best working pair. (3) Paul Brook Nolan, pictured completing his finish with two in line, took third place. (4) Kevin Morris turns his pair at the headland. (5) Ethel Worthington helped Gordon McKay to finish with his Norwegian Fjord ponies after his plough broke. (6) Fortunately she had just finished her plot with her own horses.

Photographs: *Kevin Wright*



**W**e held a celebration last summer at Witton, Norfolk to mark '100 Years Man and Boy'. My father, Sydney, took charge of a new Massey Harris No 5 binder in 1919. He used the binder up until the late 1940s. He also operated Hornsby and Albion binders but his favourite was the Massey Harris.

On one occasion in the late 1920s he single-handed took two sets of horses (six) some five miles from the farm to fields of wheat near Aylsham. He started cutting with the Massey Harris binder at 5.45am. The day involved looking after the horses, periodically changing them over, frequently oiling the binder (no grease nipples), replenishing twine, changing knives – and completing cutting 21 acres of wheat. Then he returned to the farm with the horses, some 19 hours' work. He was quite a modest man but considered this was something of a record.

As for me, my first memories involving a binder were going to the harvest field with mother to take father's 'fourses' (afternoon food and drink break). By now the farm had replaced some of the horses with two Fordson E27N tractors. One of them was coupled to another recent new machine, an Albion Power Drive 5A binder. At fourses time the tractor driver and binder operator changed over, thus continuing the cutting operation. As I showed an interest in the binder, the operator 'invited' me for a ride on the backboard. "Just hold onto the seat and you will be alright". Everything was fine until we came round to where the fourses gathering was. Of course, mother saw me and let's just say she was not amused. Both myself and the binder operator got a bit of a telling off but times were very different then.

I can recall only two horses being left on the farm, Prince and Captain, both Suffolks. Prince was a chestnut and Captain a dark chestnut (liver). Father looked after the horses; indeed, in earlier years when there were many more horses on the farm he was the 'team-man'. His responsibilities involved looking after the wagons and he was always adamant that they were frequently backed into the →



**Graham Kirk remembers a century of connection to binders for himself and his father**

## '100 Years Man and Boy'



(1) Graham Kirk operating the 1912 Massey Harris No 5 binder during the '100 Years Man and Boy' celebration last year. Michael Spinks, a member of the group, is driving a Fordson N tractor dating from 1941. The binder is coupled to a binder hitch manufactured by Mr Knight of Stamford during the 1930s. When horses pulled binders, it was possible to turn very tightly at the end of the work, but this was not possible with a tractor. Apparently many farmers complained about this, indeed some would carry on using horses, refusing to operate with a tractor. Mr Knight designed and manufactured the Knight Binder Hitch. When turning left at the end of the work, the binder pole slides along the hitch on a roller thus enabling the binder to turn in a very tight radius. (2) A 'cider break' during the 1922 Harvest, with Graham Kirk's father on the right. (3) Front of the invitation to the '100 Years Man and Boy' celebration.

