



The Traveller

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Summer 2024

Western Canadian Wheelwright's Association



Meet You In Wyoming!

Photo shows Museum of the Mountain Man sheep wagon project
See page 15 for full AGM details



The Western Canadian Wheelwright's Association
Serving the interests of Wheelwrights since 1992
www.wcwa.ca



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR W.C.W.A EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT:

Carl Swartz
Okotoks, AB
(403) 601-9946
sharone47@hotmail.ca

VICE PRESIDENT:

Vacant

SECRETARY/TREASURER:

Bonnie McCauley
Box 64
Madden, Alberta
T0M 1L0
(403) 946-2398
bonnie.mccauley@auarts.ca

TREASURER EMAIL:

Wheelwright.Assoc.Treas@gmail.com

B.C. DIRECTOR:

VACANT

ALBERTA DIRECTOR:

Glenn Halvorson
28307 Hwy 596
Red Deer County, AB
T4E 1S9
(403) 347-4599
mywheelshop@gmail.com

SASKATCHEWAN DIRECTOR:

Jean Lavoie
Box 15, Wardlow, AB T0J 3M0
(403) 566-2448; 793-1366 (c)
hippies2@telusplanet.net

MANITOBA DIRECTOR:

Brian Reynolds
Box 338
Rapid City, Manitoba
R0K 1W0
(204) 826-2120
br@haventrading.com

ONTARIO DIRECTOR:

Bonnie McCauley
Box 64
Madden, Alberta T0M 1L0
bonnie.mccauley@auarts.ca

EAST COAST DIRECTOR:

Verne Cook
641 Main Rd
Jeffreys, NL
A0N 1P0
(403) 923-3422
atlanticcarriageworks@gmail.com

WEBSITE:

www.atlanticcarriageworks.com

U.S.A. DIRECTOR:

Gary Stephenson
45 West High Street
Ballston Spa, New York 12020
(518) 588-4397
gstephenson@nycap.rr.com



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The Traveller

c/o Diana Matsuda
33 Farrell Drive, Parksville, BC V9P 2V4
Tel: (250) 228-3971
Email: dianamatsuda@shaw.ca

To book advertising in **The Traveller**, or for WCWA correspondence, contact:

WCWA

c/o Bonnie McCauley
Box 64
Madden, Alberta T0M 1L0
(403) 946-2398
Wheelwright.Assoc.Treas@gmail.com

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

By Diana Matsuda, Editor

Plans are shaping up for an exciting WCWA Annual Meeting this year in Wyoming. Gary and Marilyn Stephenson have been busy organizing every detail, and the location sounds spectacular. Not only is the Museum of the Mountain Man an ideal venue for a group of wheelwrights, but the surrounding area offers so many opportunities for tourist and adventure travel. Pinedale is a small town in Wyoming that offers a variety of outdoor activities and scenic views and is known as a gateway to the Wind River Mountains. If you haven't already done so, check out the Museum website: [Museum of the Mountain Man](#), and start packing your bags!

In past issues of **The Traveller**, Gary has written about his volunteer work for the Museum on the sheep wagon, a project that has taken countless hours and involved many challenges. And now, attendees at the AGM will not only be able to see this legendary vehicle, but also have a hand in "tweaking" it to its final restored form. How exciting to be a part of the fruition of this restoration while sharing knowledge and ideas with your fellow wheelwrights in the process. As I've come to learn, when you get a group of wheelwrights together, there will always be many opinions but at the end of the day, a consensus will be reached, a group effort will be launched, and a satisfactory conclusion will be the outcome.

The camaraderie of the craft of wheelwrighting is certainly key to its longevity and, although I am not a wheelwright myself, I do enjoy the emails and phone calls from WCWA members. It is a particular treat to have a face-to-face meeting with someone with whom I have been corresponding for years. So, it was a real pleasure to meet up with Glenn and Pam Halvorson recently on their trip through Parksville, back from visiting their son in Tofino.

While this was my first time meeting Pam, Glenn and I recollected that we had previously met at the 2012 AGM in Fort Steele. It was great to sit across the table from one another, discussing the WCWA, **The Traveller** and, of course, branching off into topics of family, hobbies, travel and our lives in retirement. If any of our members ever find their way to the Island, do drop me a line.

In this issue, you will find reports and stories from our usual contributors, but I would also like to highlight one article on page 22 of the newsletter. It is written by Tony Walsh, blacksmith and artificer from Lanark, Ontario. Tony's submission in this issue and his Letter to the Editor in the last one got me to thinking about the importance of adding new voices to our roster of contributors to **The Traveller**.

From issue to issue, most of the material is provided by whom we might call the "usual suspects", and very rarely do we hear from other members of the WCWA who undoubtedly have interesting stories and opinions to share.

So, I would like to encourage all WCWA members to follow Tony's lead and consider submitting an article or two to **The Traveller**. Wheelwrighting certainly requires innovative thinking, and I'm sure you have all come up with creative solutions to problems you experience on an everyday basis in the shop.

So why not share them with your fellow wheelwrights. After all, that is what the WCWA is all about, and **The Traveller** is your vehicle to put your thoughts and ideas out to your wheelwrighting colleagues. So, let's get a few more contributors to our newsletter and add some diversity to our publication.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Carl Swartz, WCWA President

On June 1, we were pleased to attend an appreciation BBQ and tour at Pioneer Acres in Irricana. There were about 25 volunteers present, including WCWA members, Draft Horse Town members, and members of the Western Agriculture Heritage Committee.

There was a real spirit of cooperation amongst the various groups in attendance and it was obvious that the Pioneer Acres Board values the presence of the WCWA on its grounds.

Aggie Days was back in Calgary this year from April 10-14, drawing big crowds over the five days. There were approximately 2300 very excited kids from grades 3-5 over the first three days; then came enormous crowds of families on Saturday and Sunday.

[Continued page 4]

[President's Report continued from page 3]

Below, Bonnie McCauley is demonstrating the nailing of horseshoes. It was very noisy and quite popular with all the children.



My demonstration was the brace and bit. Here we have parent/children teams enthusiastically drilling holes with this fascinating low tech tool.



The students were lining up to take their turn with the brace and bit. One little girl drilled a total of nine holes – she just didn't want to stop!



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[President's Report continued from page 4]

Photo below shows John Lavoie assisting students at the spoke shaver bench.



The kids loved this 'hands-on' opportunity. The sense of accomplishment put a smile on each face and their youthful enthusiasm put smiles on ours.

Kids Days at Pioneer Acres was held June 4-6 at Pioneer Acres – a repeat performance, with John and Jean Lavoie assisting the kids on the spoke shaver bench, Bonnie McCauley demonstrating horseshoe nailing, and me with the brace and bit demonstration.

This year we have a new lower table and the little ones love making holes through the wood. I have a larger dull brace bit for the older kids to try, and a smaller, sharper brace bit for the small, younger kids.

The reward is the look on their faces when they have completed a hole. The smaller kids will squat down to watch for the bit to come through the wood. Lots of smiles!

The Calgary Stampede is coming up quickly, July 5 - 14. Hope to see many of you there at the WCWA booth.

Our Annual General Meeting will be in Pinedale, Wyoming from August 16 - 18. Thanks to Marilyn and Gary Stephenson for all the wonderful preparations for this amazing location. You don't want to miss it!

In the last issue of the newsletter, I began recounting life lessons on the spokes of a metaphorical wheel. However, I find myself wishing that the wheel I started had only 6 spokes instead of 12 (**Editor's Note:** I must confess that I pressured Carl to expand his wheel to 12 spokes). But now that the wheel has been started, let's have some fun with it! I invite our WCWA members to share their own life lessons and add a "spoke". Please send your ideas to **The Traveller** Editor, and we will continue to build that wheel.



ALBERTA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Glenn Halvorson, Alberta Director

It's springtime again - reports from Alberta say how dry it is, but here in the Central Region we have had about as perfect weather as one can get. The lawns and ditches are greener than they have been for the last couple of spring seasons. As I write this, it is hailing; nothing damaging but more moisture.

I have completed the wheel for the wagon that I have written about in the last couple of issues of **The Traveller**. You will find the third article later in this issue on page 19. It is now installed on the firewagon that sits outside the library in downtown Red Deer.

In the last issue of **The Traveller**, I inquired as to whether anything special was required on the spokes of a Pennsylvania bolted hub to help with the dish as they are notorious for turning out fairly flat. Dwayne Danley (Dr. Hub) called me and explained that he bevels the back side of the spoke to assist with the dish. I think on the next one I build, I will create a bevel on the front of the spoke as well to see if that helps. Thank you, Dr. Hub!

The WCWA Annual General Meeting is in Wyoming this summer; look for further information later in this publication. See you there!



SASKATCHEWAN DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Jean Lavoie, Saskatchewan Director

I'm so happy to report that this spring we have had some wonderful moisture, making this semi-desert badlands area where we live so beautiful and green. Here's hoping we continue to have rain throughout the summer as the past few years have been dry to the point of a crisis situation.

John and I have kept ourselves very busy this spring. We have put together a few wheels, some for use on wagons, some for decorative use, and one for use at this year's Stampede. The following photo shows a new wheel which will be used to set a tire each day at the Stampede.



Next is a repaired wheel for a friend with a stagecoach.



And finally, a new wheel with very old parts.



For Mother's Day this year, our daughter Kallie gave me a drum-making course which she attended with me.

The course was taught by an Indigenous lady and was considered a healing experience.

It started with a sweet grass smudge ceremony. We were told that a part of our spirit is in the drum, and we should respect it and treat it as we would an elder. Never leave it upside down as evil spirits could get in.

The following photo shows the top view of the drum.



To be gifted a drum is a very special experience and is an honour.

See the next page for the bottom view. The lacing is all one piece and is about 30 feet long.

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MANITOBA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Brian Reynolds, Manitoba Director

I had planned to set aside some quiet time to write my contribution to **The Traveller** this morning, 25th May. Instead, I have to go outside and shovel snow. Only in Canada!

It has been a busy time in the shop. Previously I have mentioned that I had some heavy canon wheels to rebuild which is not unusual, but these wheels definitely came with some challenges which were not apparent when I first looked at them. I really should take the time to fully understand the wheel repair issues before simply agreeing to rebuild them.

The requirement was to replace the hubs. At some point in the distant past, the wheels had been rebuilt but the wood used to make the hubs was relatively soft and had deteriorated, leaving the spokes loose and the wheels in danger of collapse.

As this was a museum display, the requirement was only to replace any parts that were damaged and to re-use as much as possible of the original wheels. I agreed to do this, which evolved into the first challenge.

To rebuild any wheel using the original spokes and felloes means that everything has to be to

the exact original size, especially in this case as the wheels were a very heavy build.

There were six sections of felloe for each wheel with two spokes in each. The felloe section was 6" square so no room for error. In this case, everything is dependent on the size of the hub. If the diameter of the hub is not correct, the felloe diameter will also change, the tire won't fit, and so on.



The first order of business was to dismantle the wheel. The tire bolts were removed along with the tire which was loose anyway. Then the hub bands were removed, and this is what happened to the first hub.



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[Manitoba Report continued from page 7]

Quite a challenge to get accurate sizes from the remains of this hub! I decided to keep the second wheel complete to obtain the required sizes.

On the second wheel, I left the hub bands in place to achieve this, but on removal of the spokes, another challenge arose.



The spoke mortices were tapered. I had mentioned this in a previous submission to **The Traveller**, but no information was forthcoming as to why this was done.

I had already decided that I would make the mortices slightly smaller which would allow me to recut the tenons on the spokes to obtain a good fit.

I had accepted that no information was available as to why these were tapered, just that it was the way these particular hubs were made.

Weeks later, I happened to be reading the book on wheelmaking by the Carriage Museum of America, looking for other information (yes, actually reading a book to find information. Apparently, contrary to popular belief, the internet does not actually have all the answers!) when I happened across this article.

NO.	THICKNESS AT HUB.		THICKNESS AT POINT.	WIDTH AT HUB.
	FACE.	BACK.		
1	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
3	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
4	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
5	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2

When these spokes were all made by hand, the Jersey mechanic, with an eye to saving work, split the rough material so closely in the dimensions required, that when the spoke was shaved there was a decided difference between the face and back in width; to accommodate this order of things the hubs had to be mortised wider at the front than at the back, as shown in Fig. 14. This custom is still in vogue, although the spokes are all made by machinery at present. In speaking with an intelligent wheel-maker on this kind of work, and asking if there was any other reason for this seemingly troublesome operation, he remarked that the hub being larger at the point where the face line of the spokes came, the mortise followed the gradual lessening of the diameter, making the removal of the wood by inserting equal the whole length of the cut. We can think of no other reason for this operation, and whether reasonable or not they are all made thus.

The rims for these wheels are always wider on the tread than in depth, and the best timber is very popular, as the circle can be made much better and stronger with this; and it may be well to add that the swamp white oak and chestnut oak answer equally as well, on these dry, sandy roads, as the white oak. One of the many advantages pos-

FIG. 14.

These are known as “wheels having Jersey spokes”, originating in New Jersey and made predominantly for transporting heavy loads over loose or sandy soils. There was some reference as to why this would be stronger than the conventional mortices, but I really could not see why this would be. Perhaps someone could enlighten me?

Further, I could not see why this design appeared on a German canon from the First World War. Regardless, it all adds to the rich tapestry that is the trade of wheelwrighting!

I have previously detailed the building of these new hubs, so I won't repeat myself, except to say that I think that I have had enough of building 19" diameter 150 lb hubs. I am getting too old for this.



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[Manitoba Report continued from page 8]

As the original spoke tenons had become misshapen, I made the mortices in the conventional way and reduced the tenons on the original spokes to fit which worked well.



There were a few spokes that were not useable which had to be matched exactly. The fellow tenons were stepped to add to the complexity, so it was back to my trusty lathe to produce the exact replicas.



Final shaping to size by hand using a spokeshave for what it was intended!



So, after many, many careful measurements, the wheels were assembled as original.



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[Manitoba Report continued from page 9]

Yet another challenge arose at this point. The tires on these wheels were tapered, 5/8" thick x 6" wide, which meant they had to be re-sized to shrink onto the wheels.

At the same time, the original 1/2" tire bolt holes were in the felloes, so it was necessary to align the bolt holes in the tires with the felloes. Not an easy task to align 12 bolt holes exactly when positioning over 200 lbs of very hot steel.

The solution was to heat the tires hotter than I normally would which would increase the diameter and so give me slightly more time to position the tires on the wheel.

This worked well. It gave me time to align the holes, but the downside was that the tire was still very hot so required deluging with water to cool it quickly before it burned the felloes.



Large tires also require a lot more heat to achieve the expansion required.

On a personal note, shrinking tires is still a highly rated activity here; all the grandchildren are enthusiastic as they always have been. Now that they are teenagers, their strength and experience definitely is a huge advantage when dealing with these large wheels.

The general **PROBLEM WITH 100-YEAR OLD** vehicles is, **they are 100 years old!**

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[Manitoba Report continued from page 10]

At least I think they like doing this, or could it be the hot dogs and burgers cooked in the fire embers after the job is done?



The smile says it all, so pleased to finally get these wheels completed.



In addition to the heavy canon wheels, a pair of relatively heavy wagon wheels came in to be rebuilt. This was slightly unusual as they were Archibald wheels.

On the positive side, I did not have to make hubs, but the wheels also presented a different set of challenges.



It is important to get a close fit of the spokes to the hub.



I do not see many Archibald hubs in my shop, so had to make specific hoops to hold the spokes in place while the hubs were drilled. Once I had the spider assembled, the rest was relatively straightforward until it came to sizing the tires.



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[Manitoba Report continued from page 11]

The tires for these wheels are a full 1" thick x 4" wide; definitely not easy to cut, size and weld.



Again, the smiles say that this was a good day; even granddaughters never miss a tire shrinking.



I usually think that a successful tire shrinking is the highlight of what we do, but after all the challenges and hard work to rebuild these wheels, I now think the highlight was seeing the canon wheels going out of the door to a satisfied customer. Hopefully the next wheels will be some nice, light, buggy wheels!



EAST COAST DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Verne Cook, East Coast Director

In my last submission, I was and as of today, I am still working on my new shop. It is a very long slow process when I am every trade and work most of the time alone. Half of my timber work is complete, with more logs for the mill and many more mortises to hand cut. We have many irons in the fire and as the homestead is alive with new baby goats and lambs, there is never a "nothing to do" moment.

I did however manage to sneak in my annual spring trip to Ontario to work/visit with my brother and pick up the accumulated materials from his shop. This year I brought my daughter along to have a short visit with her Nana and Papa. We had a great drive to and from Ontario, with lots of laughs along the way. While there, we took a trip to the Pickering Museum Village on its opening day.

The backstory is that I had been contacted by one of the directors involved in building the new wheelwright's shop as they wanted an interactive buggy model made for guests to assemble. Unfortunately, the timing coincided with the packing up of my old shop and equipment before our move across Canada. After a few discussions about their ideas for a display and how long it would take to build and transport, we determined that I would have to pass on the build. On this trip, I was able to visit and see how they had set it up.



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They did find someone who got the job done and though the finished product was not exactly how I would have built it, it turned out alright. They had the wheels CNC cut from 1" plywood and most of the components are much the same style. It serves its purpose, and I am sure kids enjoy assembling the buggy.



The downfall to this is that they do not really have much that reflects the skills and abilities of the wheelwright. Small scale traditional wheels would have been something very impressive to see in this display. My assumption is that they could not find someone versed in how to build real carriage wheels, thus demonstrating the decline of shared or practised knowledge of the trade.

We were welcomed by staff in the main entrance and were offered a tour through the buildings by some of their interpretive staff. Our guides were very pleasant and offered a fair amount of information about the history of many of the buildings and artefacts they contained.

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[East Coast Report continued from page 13]

Unfortunately, In the blacksmith and wheelwright shops, some of that information seemed incorrect. Though our interpreters had the script down pat, I believe they have not been properly informed. It again appears that the vast knowledge of wheelwrights and their trade is diminishing, possibly faster than it can be shared!

After they quizzed my daughter and me on some history of blacksmithing and wheelwrighting, one of the interpreters asked if I did anything with blacksmithing or buggies as I seemed to know many of the answers to their questions. I let them in on my little secret, being the East Coast Director for the WCWA.

We had a great discussion about wheelwrighting and building and restoring carriages. They did ask if I was local or possibly available to perform demonstrations. I told them I would bring this up in my next article and see if any of our other members would be interested in this as a possibility in the future.

If anyone is in the area and wants a great way to

spend a few hours or more, it was a surprisingly cheap way to spend the better part of the afternoon. A family day pass is only \$12.



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[East Coast Report continued from page 14]

They also have a slew of different events and programs for kids and adults as well. All in all, we had a great visit to the Pickering Museum Village.

Until next time, I'm back at home and back to work on my mill and building the shop.



U.S.A. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Gary Stephenson, USA Director

Clearly, the topic top of mind is the upcoming AGM in Pinedale, Wyoming this year. Having made the trip to Canada for the AGM these past several years, I have no doubt about folks from Canada making the corresponding trip this year. But the question I have is how many of our USA members will take advantage of this golden opportunity?

There are many reasons to make the trip, not the least of which is that the AGM will probably not be this convenient to attend for quite some time. We've always enjoyed the AGM as a great learning experience where we've made contacts, met friends and had unique experiences along the way.

Wyoming is an absolutely great place to have those experiences, both around the AGM location and enroute. For instance, is Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Devils Tower National Monument, Cody or Thermopolis on your bucket list? If so, now is the time to combine any or all of those with your AGM experience.

Once in the vicinity of Pinedale, how about some local and day trips to learn at Fossil Bute National Monument, dig for your own fossils, visit South Pass Ghost Town, see Fort Bridger, retrace the California and Oregon trails, or learn about the fur trade and the Mountain Men who engaged in it? Clearly, if the outdoors is your thing, it doesn't get any better than Wyoming for hiking, rafting, fishing, wildlife viewing and just plain exploring.

So again, this year's AGM is **THE** opportunity to benefit and develop your interest in wheelwrighting while at the same time exploring and perhaps checking off some of those bucket list items.



MEET YOU IN WYOMING!

By Gary Stephenson, USA Director

The cover photo for this issue of **The Traveller** shows the wagon gear for the sheep wagon project that I have been working on for the past several years. The gear was a derelict, along with the sheep wagon body. The project is now nearly complete and will be part of the AGM where we will evaluate and hopefully execute any tweaks needed for its wheels.

With me just to my right is Ole Skinner, brother of the late Monte Skinner. Monte was the initiator of the sheep wagon project with the Museum of the Mountain Man, a project that I took over when Monte was no longer able. Ole has been an invaluable volunteer on the project, picking up after Monte's passing.

Next to Ole is Clint Gilchrist, Executive Director of the Museum of the Mountain Man. Clint is our host for the AGM and has made it all possible.

Although you can't see them in the photo, behind us is a view of the Wind River Mountains which are close by and contain the highest point in Wyoming ... exploring the natural wonders of this great state is yet one more reason to attend the annual AGM gathering!

**WCWA Annual General Meeting
Pinedale, Wyoming, USA
August 16-18, 2024**

Plans are falling into place for our upcoming AGM, and before you know it, a group of enthusiastic wheelwrights will be making their

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[Meet You In Wyoming continued from page 15]
way to the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming. Here is what you can expect over the 3 days:

AGENDA:

Friday August 16:

- 9 am onward: Help with setup if you can, or are requested.
- 3 pm: Meet at the Museum of the Mountain Man for a VIP tour.
- 5 pm: Carpool to Trappers Point for an area orientation.
- 6 pm: Proceed to group dinner at The Den, Daniel Junction (separate checks) <https://www.thedanieljunction.com/the-den-restaurant-and-bar.html>

Saturday August 17:

- Breakfast on your own
- 9 am: Meet at the Museum patio/tent area for work and demonstrations. Light refreshment provided throughout the day. At Noon, deli sandwiches can be ordered and will be brought onsite.
- 4 pm: AGM meeting at the Pinedale Library Board Room <https://sublettecountylibrary.org/space-rentals/board-room/>
- 6 pm: Adjourn for group dinner at Pitchfork Fondue <https://www.pitchforkfondue.com/>

Sunday August 18:

- Breakfast on your own
- 9 am: Work and demonstrations. Light refreshments.
- 1 pm: Cleanup and social time.

WORKSPACE

The photo shows the area we have at our disposal for demonstrations. The tent frame in the background will have the top put on for shade and a side at the back as a wind break. The rest of the sides will be open. I'll be working to refurbish a hand crank drill press that can be bolted to one of the uprights.



We'll set up a quasi workbench inside. We will need someone to bring a wheel horse as I only have a very improvised one there. I think I have most of the tools that we'll need, but folks should bring tools too if they can.

The outside patio area will be staged with the buggy we will be working on as well as other vehicles from the Museum collection and, of course, the sheep wagon I've been working on. On the left side, we'll set up the tiring platform and to the left of that, we will set up for a sheltered fire ring.

WORK PROJECT

On a visit to Pinedale in late April I toured the wagons and buggies in the Sublette County Historical Society collection with Museum Director and our host, Clint Gilcrest. Following some investigation and discussion, we zeroed in on one buggy in particular for wheel repair demonstrations during the meeting. This buggy has a great provenance having been used on an important early homestead in the area. See page 28 for information on the Noble Ranch.



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[Meet You In Wyoming continued from page 16]

In particular, three of the four wheels have poorly repairs done sometime in the past lifetime of the vehicle. At least one spoke is broken having been taped up for an expedient repair.

While the Museum wants to keep the buggy as original as possible, they recognize that these were poor repairs made well into its life. They see value in documenting what was actually done in the past and then bringing the wheels back to a more original and proper condition.



While the tires show significant wear, the goal would be to keep them, realizing that if the buggy were to be actually used, they would have to be replaced. These are Sarven hub wheels, measuring approximately 39" and 43" diameter minus the tire. The original fellies are 1 1/2" deep by 1 1/4" wide. Sarven spokes are 1 1/4".



I would suggest that we plan on having fellies on hand for all four wheels as well as most, if not a complete set of spokes.

Since the plan is to have other vehicles out on display as part of our event, we will also evaluate the need for repairs and tweaks on these

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vehicles. The plan here would be to document any needs without necessarily executing repairs and only then at the Museum's request.

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Shop Talk

WHEELBUILDING 101 - PART 3

By Glenn Halvorson, Alberta WCWA Director

In the winter issue of *The Traveller*, I discussed the completion of the hub that I built for my wagon project. I explained how the hub mortises were beveled at the front side of the hub. I sanded the spokes to have a 2.5-degree bevel on the back side so that when they are driven into the hub, they create the desired dish in the finished wheel.

After marking the spokes, I set a bandsaw at that same distance from the wheel and cut them to length. This particular wheel needed to be 51 inches as the wagon is bolted to the sidewalk in front of the Red Deer Library. The felloes that I got were only 50 inches in diameter, so I wet them down and put clamps between the ends to stretch them to the required 51 inches. I only hoped they would end up being round and not egg-shaped once they dried. I was hoping to use the same tire without having to cut it.



I used my floor mounted Delta drill press to point and mortise the ends of the spokes. The drill press is not tall enough for most wheels, this one included, so I have added a 15-inch riser under the base to accommodate the extra height.

When I am machining the tenons, I want them to be at exactly the correct angle, so I set the wheel on the drill press to achieve that angle. With buggy wheels, I install the wheel on an adjustable axle on the drill press; however, the depth of this hub would not allow for the axle assembly. In this case, I built a pocket in the drill press base for the opposite spoke to sit in, in order to create the correct position of the wheel for the 2.5-degree angle on the tenon. This allowed the felloe to slip onto the spokes properly.



My tenon cutter is an antique that I found at a sale (I suspect it is from England as it came with a brace for the hand-cutting of tenons. To install a bolt to allow it to be installed in the drill press chuck, I needed to find a bolt with English threads).

As a precaution, I loosened the tension on the drill press so the belt would slip if the cutter caught so it wouldn't break. I also built a jig to hold the spoke in the correct position in relation to the cutter.

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[Shop Talk continued from page 19]



Continued page 21

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[Shop Talk continued from page 20]

I drilled the holes in the felloes with a spade bit with 2 blocks on the drill press for accuracy.



I had built a felloe stretcher for pulling the felloes out when installing. I cannot see how this would be done without something like this, as they are 3 inches wide x 2 inches thick.



Once both felloes were installed, I moved the wheel to my tire table and tightened it all together with an adjustable clamp to test the fit and the dish. My wheel table has a 3/4-inch vertical rod to tighten the wheel. The centre circle that is cut out to allow for the depth of the hub can move up and down on the threaded rod, so by combining the round clamp with the adjustable hub support, I can set the desired dish exactly before installing the tire.



Continued page 22

[Shop Talk continued from page 21]

I did not get the wheel the exact size of the original steel tire as I had hoped, but had to remove ¼-inch for the correct fit.

I recruited my daughter, her husband and two fifteen-year-old grandsons for the tire install. We made a fire on the ground behind my shop, dragged the wheel table outside and proceeded to install the 1/4-inch-thick steel tire. It all went well and the wheel tightened up perfectly. My wife, Pam filmed the process and my grandsons have promised to edit the video for viewing at a later date.



After adding tire bolts and custom made felloe plates, I tested it for the proper fit before painting and final installation.

Next photo shows the wheel installed (I took it off again, painted and re-installed).



The WCWA Facebook page continues to grow, proving itself as an excellent source for knowledge and information sharing. Wayne Lenfesty has agreed to run the online auction again, but **IT IS ALL UP TO YOU!** See page 28 for details on how you must get involved if the auction is to proceed.



All in all, a fun project!



CREATING A RING ROLLER

By Tony Walsh, Blacksmith and Artificer, Lanark, Ontario

I had found that the making and fitting of nave hoops used on heavy cannon wheels took more time and effort than was involved in making the tyres for the same wheels. This is due in part to the slippage when working heavy material to a tight radius and having to use A36 in lieu of SAE 1020.

In order to form the hoops (bands, rings) accurately and in as few passes as possible, I decided to build a motorized roller with a more robust drive system.

The finished roller has three straight, knurled 3-inch drive rolls, turning at 17.5 RPM/13.73 FPM. These are keyed to 1 ¼-inch axles made from as supplied W1 drill rod.

The inner roll runs counter to the outer ones. It was necessary to case harden the rolls to prevent flattening of the crests.

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[Shop Talk continued from page 22]

The machine is powered by a one H.P. reversing motor. If I had had a smaller motor, I would have used it.

The motor is coupled to a 60:1 speed reducer (100:1 might work better). The power to the drive rolls is transmitted through change gears from an old lathe, combined with #40 chain and appropriate sprockets.

The inner drive roll is mounted on a swing arm which describes an arc with a 14-inch radius, centering it between the outer drive rolls. The arm is made from 1 x 3 ½-inch bar stock. One end has a journal for the ¾-inch diameter hinge pin. The other end is forged to accept the top tightening trunnion and is capped by the journal for the inner drive roll, as shown below.



The bottom half is made from 1 1/4 x 4-inch bar stock 18 inches long, with ears to capture the hinge pin. The complete swing arm assembly is fixed to the main body by four 7/16-inch bolts which pass through spacers. This arrangement allows for adjusting the alignment of the rolls.



The bending pressure is provided by a threaded rod that connects the swing arm trunnion to the main body trunnion. Rotation of the rod opens or closes the gap between the drive rolls. The main body is made from 1 x 4-inch bar stock for the sides and 3/4 x 8 x 18 inches for the base.

The completed roller is mounted on a moveable stand, built from assorted tubing and plate. The roller was made from material I had on hand, with the exception of the chain, sprockets, speed reducer and drum switch.

I have been accused of overkill in the past and that probably applies in this case. The motor is one example, and I wouldn't mind if the RPMs were reduced. However, I am pleased with how well it works.



Editor's Note: To see presentations of some of Tony's restorations, visit www.matross.ca and click on the Projects tab. And to learn more about Tony and his long career as a blacksmith and artificer, check out the following video: [A barrel of fun \(ctvnews.ca\)](http://Abarreloffun.ctvnews.ca)



THE "R" FILES

By Jeremy Masterson, Head of Restoration Services, Remington Carriage Museum

Editor's Note: In the Fall issue of *The Traveller*, Jeremy outlined the research and painstaking process of restoring a cariole sleigh made in the late 1800s by Quebec builder, Charles Desrochers. Unfortunately, by the time photos of the finished sleigh were available, the newsletter had already been published.

Continued page 24

[The "R" Files continued from page 23]

But knowing that WCWA members are looking forward to viewing the final product, Jeremy has provided a few pictures of this beautifully restored sleigh, along with some additional comments.

The pictures of the Desrochers Cariole in the previous issue of **The Traveller** did not reveal the detail in the sleigh's body.

The clear white pine body sides, back and dash panel are intricately carved with swirling decoration as seen in the close-up image here.



Incised about a third of the panel thickness, these curves and shapes are followed by the colour changes seen in the full-size pictures.



The following image is of a similar Desrochers sleigh in the Paul Bienvenue collection of the Musée de la Civilisation in Quebec City.

According to the curator there, this sleigh is wearing its original paint and striping. The close-up image shows the intricate pin striping on these Quebec sleighs.

These images were instrumental in styling our colour palette and striping details.



The end result of Restoration Assistant, Andrew McCallan's ministrations on our lovely cariole are difficult to fully appreciate in the photographs alone. In person, where you can clearly see the carvings and the intricate striping, the sleigh is a fantastic credit both to the original builders and our restoration efforts.



A correction and an additional plea for information:

In the previous **Traveller**, I incorrectly identified our next project as a NADP – Northern Alberta Dairy Products - milk delivery wagon. It is in fact a milk delivery wagon from the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool.

The Remington Museum is hoping to stage an exhibit around this restored vehicle and to that end, we are seeking photographic or anecdotal information anyone may have on their experiences with milk delivery by horse-drawn wagon in Alberta. A similar vehicle in our collection bears a business license from the city of Edmonton dated 1956, indicating there was still house to house horse-drawn milk delivery in the 1950s.

Please send your stories and photos to **The Traveller** Editor so they can be forwarded to me and also shared with the WCWA members.



CASE STUDY: BUYER BEWARE

By Chris "Doc" Jenson, Creston, BC

Thirty years ago, it was not uncommon to locate "Grandpa's units", carefully stored in old sheds and granaries. They may have been repaired several times over. Today, some are listed online or consigned to public auctions. But one never knows the history of old vehicles, so it is wise to keep in mind the old adage – buyer beware.

I was recently contacted by a couple from central Alberta. They knew that I used to run wheelwright clinics in Alberta and after locating me in Creston, they loaded up their four-wheel and drove several hundred kilometres to my shop in BC. They wanted their vehicle to be safe for use in parades and special occasions

Before arriving at my shop, they sent some pictures. The vehicle they had become proud owners of appeared to have been well maintained except for the skein of one of the front wheels which was separating from the hub and was free floating.

The other three wheels were solid. The owners were also concerned with all the end play, even when the wheel bolts were tight.

However, I was impressed with the overall condition of the wheels. Whoever had rebuilt them had even set the felloe nuts square, so I could extrapolate some of the history.

There was grease present inside the hubs; however, there were no leather washers. That explained some of the end play that was concerning them.

We discussed vehicle alignment. I suspected their vehicle had been in a mishap and that the axle close to the problem wheel may now have a slight bend. This generally results in excessive side draft which over time will loosen the skein inside the wood boxing.

In years past, when we finished double discing a field with draft horses, we used the adjustable levers to reset the disc alignment so they would roll straight forward. This helped to alleviate the

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What's Up Doc?



Chris "Doc" Jenson is a wheelwright with a wealth of experience as a practitioner, teacher and mentor. Chris offers clinics and acts as a resource for those interested in learning this historic trade:

Chris Jenson
Doc's Buggy Shop
cjenson@xplornet.com
403-788-2474 or
403-506-2474



[Case Study continued from page 25]

pressure created on the old wood boxings when turning the soil.

The same pressure is put on the wheel and hubs when a bent axle permits the wheel to run to the outside. The wheel then tends to be drawn away from the vehicle and the steel tyre throws up dirt. The axle nut holds the skein and eventually it comes loose in the hub.

To temporarily handle the issue, I rotated the skein to get the best available wood contact and forced it into place. I explained to the owners that leather washers need to be made with bull leather in narrow strips to fit in the grooves of the wheel nut.

To ensure proper vehicle alignment, take a tape measure and attempt to have the distance from equally dished wheels set up with spokes plumb to the ground from the outside of the hub to the tip of the wagon pole.

With the shaves, measure from the front of the wheel or outside of the hub to the tip of the opposite shave. The distance taken at the front of the wheel should be slightly less than the measurement taken at the back, creating a small draw.

In the 1892 publication, "Wheels, Wagons and More" it is suggested that the front measurement should be about an inch and a half less than the measurement taken at the axle level on the front and back of the wheels.

The draw maintains pressure from the tyre through the spokes into the hub, causing the skein to remain solid and putting slight inward pressure on the inside leather washer.

Reviewing some of reference materials available, I recommend "Practical Carriage Building" by M.T. Richardson, "Wheels, Wagons and More" by Melvin Dewitt and, of course, "Wheelwrighting: A Modern Introduction" by Bruce and Joyce Morrison.

If you have any questions, contact me at Docsbuggyshop@gmail.com

In a future issue of **The Traveller**, I will discuss back axle alignment.



WHEN IS A WHEEL NOT A WHEEL?

By Alan Paulus, UK Correspondent

Greetings from England. I sometimes wonder if I am using the correct term in describing myself as a wheelwright, or should I be adopting another term. I seem to make every type of wooden wheel apart from those that involve horses.

My everyday work is market carts, wheelbarrows, and the occasional cannon for good measure, but it seems every time I set up stall at a country fair, someone comes and talks to me about spinning wheel repairs. I usually discount those as they never follow through, so you can imagine my surprise when someone actually commissioned me to make a new one.

Now in England, I'm used to seeing spinning wheels powered by a foot treadle, with the actual wheel being about 60 cm. I'm also aware of what is referred to as a "great wheel" where

Continued page 27

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[When Is A Wheel ... continued from page 26]

the wheel is approximately 1 - 1.2 metres and spun by hand. What I was being asked to make fits somewhere between these two wheels and is called a "Guernsey Wheel".

Guernsey is one of the Channel Islands, just off the northwest coast of France, and perhaps because it is an island somehow ended up with its own traditional wheel. Prior to my wheel, there are only two known Guernsey wheels in existence in museums and my customer wanted one they could use for demonstrations.

The wheel itself is a 1 mt wheel with a steamed rim from a single piece of 6 mm beech. It is turned by a handle and is supported by what seems to be a complicated set of struts painted in a very traditional pattern.



Having never made a spinning wheel before, this was a work of adventure especially the flyer/bobbin mechanism which took a lot of head scratching.

Photo below shows the final product.



My latest project currently under construction is a "Rope Walk" but I will save that for the next edition. I will say that it involves the manufacture of a number of wooden gear wheels, so you can imagine my delight on a recent visit to a small village museum in France to discover a half-size windmill recently built with the most magnificent wooden gear wheels. Whilst it might not be a carriage wheel, you have to admire the craftsmanship.



As an aside and something for you to think about during a sleepless night, I have also attached some pictures of chairs made from old tools – they are real talking pieces and would look lovely outside one's shop.



Continued page 28

[When Is A Wheel ... continued from page 27]

People I have shown the pictures to have gotten quite excited and I'm getting the "could you make one for me" inquiry, from which I will run away.



ONLINE AUCTION ON AGAIN

By Wayne Lenfesty, Sundre, Alberta

As a fundraiser for the WCWA, we are going to try our online auction again this year. Our Facebook page will be launched on July 1 under the name **Western Canadian Wheelwright Auction 2024**.

In order for this fundraiser to proceed, we need all members to get on board, so please consider how you might participate as a seller, a buyer or both. **If we do not get at least 10 auction items at the outset, we will not go ahead with this fundraiser, so please get involved if you want it to succeed!**

Items for auction must be sent to me by July 10. If 10 items are not received by then, the auction will get canceled and I will delete the Facebook page.

The site will be open to anyone, and you don't have to be a member to join. So please invite your friends and family to participate. We need items to sell on the site. You are invited to donate items and/or solicit items of any kind from local businesses.

You can add auction items to the site yourself or send the information to me and I will add them. Please do not text the information as we do not have cellular service where we live.

Information needed for each item:

1. A picture or pictures of the item.
2. A written description of the item.
3. The value of the item as well as a starting bid price (reserve bid).
4. The name of the person/business donating the item.
5. Delivery arrangements for the successful bidder. Is it the responsibility of the seller or buyer to cover any shipping costs?

Firearms, weapons, animals, and food items will not be accepted.

The auction will end just prior to the AGM in August.

Anyone can bid by putting their bid price in the comments section of each item. The winning bidder will be notified, and arrangements made for payment and delivery. Payment is to be made to the WCWA by cheque or e-transfer to Wheelwright.Assoc.Treas@gmail.com

If you have any questions, please call or email: lenfestywd@gmail.com or 403 638-9310.



MAKING HISTORY

Those attending the WCWA meeting and AGM in Pinedale, Wyoming will have the rare opportunity to work on a homestead buggy that was used on the historic Noble Ranch. So that members will have an idea of the significance of this buggy, the following excerpt has been taken from "2007 Centennial Ranches", compiled by Dee Ann Price.

The Noble Ranch, located near Cora, Wyoming, is owned and run by Richard R. Noble and daughter, Tina Nelson.

The ranchland was acquired through the Homestead Act of 1820 and additional acreage was added to the ranch as time progressed.

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[Making History continued from page 28]

James M. and Pauline Rahm Noble settled on the land in 1896 and brought up four children. They raised hay, cattle, sheep, and horses.

James and neighbor, Abner Luman, brought the first Black Angus bulls to the area. The ranch passed on to their son, Carroll R. and his wife Christina, parents to Richard Noble.

This ranch is home to the historic remains of the original site of the old town of Cora, Wyoming. At one time it was situated along the migration route of the Shoshoni Indians. Nipwater, Chief Washakie's grandson, would sometimes stop at the homestead and rest and feed his families and their horses.

The barn built by James Noble is still in use and the family continues to raise hay, cattle and horses.



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JOKE'S ON US

Gary Larson's *Far Side* never gets old ...



Dogs have been chasing wheels since the wheel was invented, so they're "wheelie" good at it!



WCWA WHEELWRIGHT ADVISORS

At one time or another, most of us have come up against a problem that really has us stumped. At such times, we can benefit from talking with someone who has lots of experience; a problem solver. Some of our most experienced WCWA members have agreed to share their expertise and their names and contact information are listed below. **If you have a problem, don't hesitate to share it with one of these experts!**

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The WCWA is always looking for Advisors willing to share their knowledge and skills with fellow members. Please let us know if you would like to join the list and support the advancement of the trade. Contact the Editor at dianamatsuda@shaw.ca to request that your name be added.



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