

THE READING CARRIAGE SALE REPORT – 24th APRIL 2024

The talk of the sale was undoubtedly the number of Gypsy/Living Wagons forward – 13 in total if you counted the record breaking Pot Wagon which was part of the line up against the back wall of the market. With a combination of bidding from the crowd at the sale and those who had registered online, the hammer fell at a remarkable £50,000 (71) after auctioneer Richard Dance had coaxed the bidders along. Presented for sale in immaculate condition, this Jowett built open wagon was highly decorated and carved, and clearly rare and sought after.

Next to it was the rare Square Bow Top Wagon by Bill Wright which didn't quite make its reserve during the live auction but was sold afterwards. Formerly in the Jimmy Lawes collection, which T & S dispersed last summer, it was another rare and sought after wagon which had generated plenty of pre-sale interest. A Burton Showman's Wagon sold for £7,500 (65), an Open Lot made £4,400 (66), a Square Bow Top made £3,200 (69) and to end the auction, another Burton Showman's Wagon made £15,500 (75).

However, the most elegant carriage of the day was undoubtedly the Spider Phaeton by Mills of Paddington circa 1900 which attracted some heated bidding in the room and online and was sold for a cracking £8,400 (28). Although in need of full restoration, it was so beautifully made that the quality shone through. It was decidedly American in style, with buggy type wheels, a transverse front spring, and clip on shafts, enhanced by fine and beautifully finished woodwork. The purchaser felt that he was destined to have it as the lot number matched his grandfather's address! We like a bit of superstition at the carriage sales.

A Trolley got the section off to a decent start with the price tag of £2,800 (2) and set the tone for what proved to be a good clearance of the carriages. Showing that trade vehicles have maintained their popularity, another Trolley by Ron Snelling of Wandsworth sold for £4,300 (10), a Pickering Float sold for £3,100 (17), a pony size Trolley made £2,500 (22) and from the same vendor, a Dairy Hand Cart sold for £950 (23). Further on in the sale, a London Trolley presented in show condition sold for £4,800 (33), and another which had been hand painted by Bill Stevens and signed 'General Dealer' sold for £4,200 (41).

A useful Wagonette by Cumbria Carriages sold for £1,750 (29), a Wagonette by Thorn of Norwich sold for £2,300 (46) and a French Cabriolet by Juvenay of Lens made £1,000 (47). A well finished Liverpool type Gig by J A Lawton sold for £2,000 (60), and from the same home, a Spider Phaeton by McNaught of Worcester made £2,600 (61). After the sale of the Wagons, an Ifor Williams two-horse trailer made £2,700 (76).

A selection of saddlery and riding equipment saw Western saddles sell for £230 (321) and £240 (322), a side saddle sold for £450 (394) and a brown GP saddle by Pessoa made £160 (447).

The 'Sundry' section started with the pictures, models and books, and notable prices were £420 for a miniature collar by Gloins of Liverpool circa 1930 (529), £300 for John Barker & Peter Ingram's book 'Romany Relics', and £150 for an enamelled Queen Victoria plate (547).

The sets of harness followed on, with an early high price of £950 for a set of show harness (554), £700 for a set of show harness with a full collar to suit a Hackney type by Huskissons of Walsall (555), £500 each for sets of heavy horse harness (557 & 558) and £650 for a set of black/brass show harness with collar by Bridleways of Guildford (571). The consistency of the prices was maintained when another Huskissons set, with a 21" collar, made £500 (587), followed by a full set of decorative Shire harness which sold for £1,500 (588) and at the other end of the heavy horse spectrum, a set of Scottish type working harness sold for £400 (589). It was a good day for Alan Rich, whose family have been consigning harness to the carriage sales for many years, and he was delighted with the prices his lots were achieving.

Moving onto the sundries and collectables, which is where most carriage sale attendees congregate, the demand for dealers' whips has not diminished for several years. One by Lardner & Lardner of Smithfield made £800 (622), while the next lot, by G Holland of Hackney, sold for £850 (623), and another by Crawley of Peterborough made £900 (629); later in the section, one by Vulcan sold for £500 (704), another by G Holland made £950 and another by Crawley sold for £950 (782 & 783). A coaching horn by Kohler sold for £300 (736), a pair of Dog Cart lamps achieved £580 (785) and another pair made £400 (808), a pair of black 23" collars with hames made £300 (833), a silk top hat by Scott of Bond Street made £250 (920), a dog leg holly whip for a tandem made £420 (982), a trade vehicle whip made by Dennis Walmsley in 2012 sold for £780 (1100), a black top hat in a box sold for £450 (1230) and a set of four quick release traces sold for £460 (1236). At the end of the day, another dealer's whip – this one by Crawley of Peterborough – made £1,850 (1233). It's safe to say that the autumn sale is likely to be awash with them again!

Everyone (just about) went home happy, and the auctioneers were pleased with how the day went. It was the first auction with Rebecca Seear at the helm but helping her along the way were Chris Boreham and Clayre Gillet to ensure that the continuity of these popular sales is upheld. But perhaps the person who enjoyed himself most was Richard Dance who was on fire atop the rostrum. A talented auctioneer who has resigned himself to most of the business being done online these days, his energy and magician like command of the saleroom was a joy to behold!

The above prices are the hammer prices and DO NOT include the Buyers' Premium of 7.5 % on carriages (9% inc. VAT) and 12.5% (15% inc. VAT) on the remainder of the sale. For further details about Thimbleby & Shorland and their auctions, or if you wish to enter items into the next Reading Carriage Sale which will be held on Wednesday 23rd October 2024, please go to www.tsaction.co.uk or email info@tsaction.co.uk.