



The Maldens and Coombe Heritage Society

(Founded 2012)

SPOT THE HORSE!

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Sometimes we take things for granted; sometimes when we look closely we find that things we took for granted aren't there and, of course, sometimes we think things aren't there only because we cannot see them.

I have looked at the image below a number of times and have always taken for granted that it depicts a driver of a horse-drawn carriage alongside 'The Pavement' opposite King's Avenue which, by the way, was originally known as King Edward's Avenue.

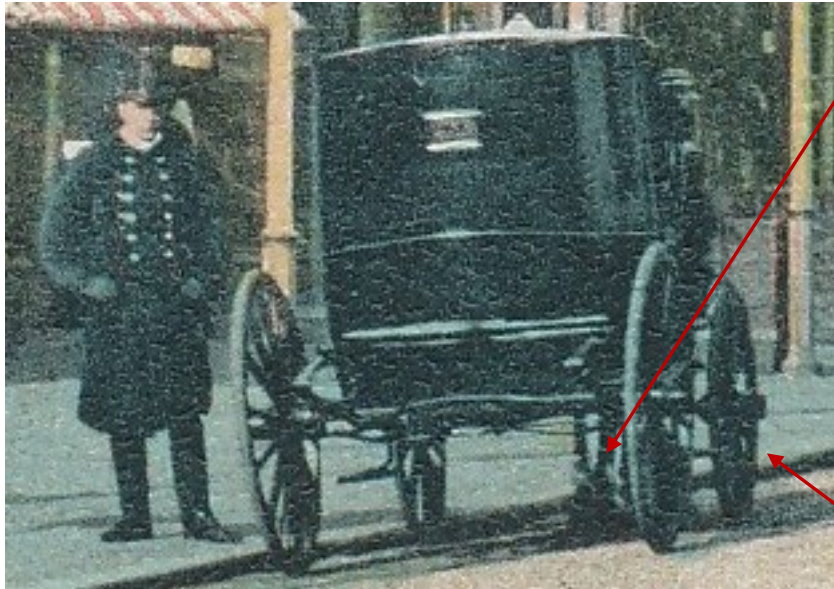
I have always thought of the man in livery as awaiting his mistress who is in one of the shops, most likely the Drapers/ Milliners with the pink-striped awning. (She could, of course, be in The Malden Press, where a youth is peaking out at the photographer from the doorway. The driver and carriage are clearly the subjects of the photograph.



However, on closer inspection, I am not so sure that this is what is being photographed and what has caused me to re-examine the picture and, in effect, leave it open for your closer inspection and opinion (as opposed to my having a decisive answer) is the whereabouts of 'the horse'!

"It's at the front!" you all shout, in a complete seasonal reversal of what you *should* shout in pantomime season. You may well be correct but the problem, for me, is whether or not there is evidence of a horse or whether the picture tells another story. The solution I believe can be determined by closer inspection. (Magnifying glasses to the ready please!)

Look again at the front of the 'carriage' and see whether (or not) you can discern the legs, hooves, or anything resembling a horse standing at the front of the carriage. Admittedly there is *something* visible in front of the carriage (as is discernible 'between' the two front wheels) but is what *is* visible actually a horse?



Do you think that this is actually a pair of horse's hind legs?

If you do then where are the other two legs as they are not at all visible at the front of the carriage?

I am not convinced and so I have then looked at the shadows that are formed on the road in order to see if there is anything of note to help me find the shadow of a horse there.

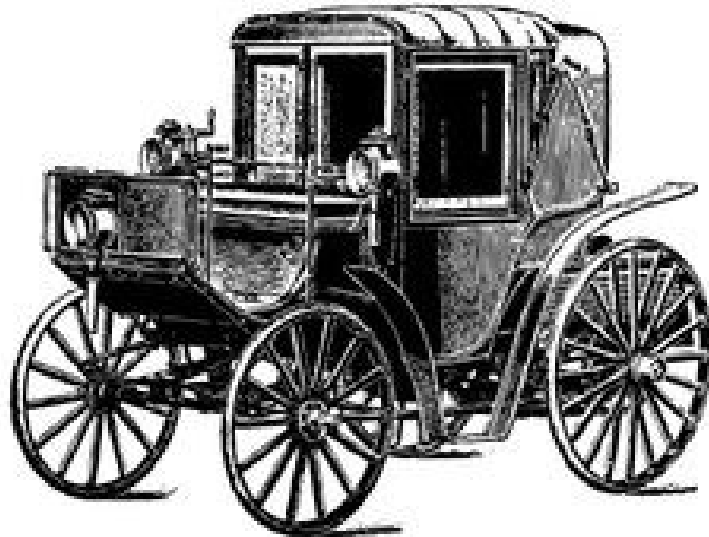


Looking at the angle of the shadow of the man in livery and the carriage I can see the outline of the wheels and the top of the carriage but where, in front of the carriage, there would (if a horse was there) be the bulk of an equine shadow, there isn't! (or, I should perhaps qualify, at least there doesn't appear to me such a shadow to me.)

I have then asked myself what is so 'special' as to justify the photographer wanting to take this photo? If the carriage belonged to a 'person of note' then, surely, wouldn't the photographer have tried to capture the image of the person rather than the carriage and driver? So then the question becomes 'what is so special about the carriage?'

It then struck me that possibly; just *possibly*, this picture shows something else which would fit with the apparent lack of a horse.

Could, perhaps, this be a 'horseless' carriage parked in New Malden and is that why the photographer took the image of the liveried 'chauffeur'? Compare these images with the postcard and see what you think.



For me, it makes more sense for the photographer to place a 'horse-less' carriage and its driver as the centre piece and as the subject of the photo than simply a horse-drawn carriage and its driver, but I will leave it for you to decide.

I suppose it all comes down to whether you can spot the horse (if, it is there) or not!