

Keep them wagons rolling.....

The things you find when you start clearing out! During a recent refurbishment of the old log store and Barn area (2008), tucked away in the darkness at the rear of the store we discovered an old hay wagon. Covered in cut wood and old fencing it had been left to the elements and had suffered from years of neglect. Destined for the bonfire and certain destruction, it was thought to be beyond viable restoration.

However undeterred we contacted Dr Oliver Douglas (Assistant Curator) at the Museum of English Rural Life a part of Reading University, who advised that we should alter the way we view the historical importance of our Mount Edgcumbe hay wagon.

After correspondence with Mr David Viner (author and expert in rural wagons and carts) and Mr Fred Van de Geer (Conservator for the Museum of English Rural Life) both renown experts on wagons and carts in England. They both stressed not only the importance of the hay wagon to the horticultural history of Mount Edgcumbe but it is also a rare example of a Cornish Cart. The wagon was probably built in SE Cornwall not far from Mount Edgcumbe, he goes on to say that all wagons are unique to the specific areas or counties, indeed at Cotehele (National Trust near Calstock) in Cornwall, there is an example called the "Hambly Wagon", which David Viner has catalogued for the National Trust. Although similar, it has marked differences which go to show the uniqueness of each wagon.

The wagon at Mount Edgcumbe is believed to date between 1880 and 1920, and could constitute a valuable historical asset to Mount Edgcumbe. The main rear wheels have been sent away for restoration using the original hubs and spokes, by Greg Rowland wheelwrights in Colyton Devon near Lyme Regis. We hope to display the hay wagon after its partial restoration in the parks outbuildings and we will keep you informed of its progress.



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