



Waterman at Hackney Coach Stand

Hackney Coach

The hackney coach derives its name from the French word "haquenee" meaning 'horse for hire'. The Hackney Coach or hackney cab first came to London proper in 1625 when there were twenty of them available for hire at inns. The first hackney coaches were a one-horse chaise for hire consisting of a primitive springless box upon wheels pulled by a single horse ridden by the driver. Later Hackney coaches were often the discarded and outdated coaches of the nobility, often still bearing their faded coats of arms. The hackney coaches were shabby with dirty interiors. They operated out of inn yards and from coach stands located near main streets.

The watermen, who ply boats on the Thames, felt their trade threatened by the introduction of the hackney coach, followed by the sedan chair in 1634. The Waterman's Company succeeded in keeping hackney coaches out of London for many years (unless their journeys ended at least two miles from the river). However by the Reign of Charles II, hackney coaches had become firmly established in London. A compromise was reached that employed watermen, the thirst of the hackney coach horse was slacked by licensed watermen, whose job it was to carry buckets of water to the horses. The waterman dressed in a jaunty colored neckcloth, leather apron, rug coat, and sheepskin hat and gaiters. He wore the number of his coachstand license on a brass plaque around his neck. The waterman was portrayed by William Pyne in "The Costume of Great Britain."

Captain Bailey a retired mariner established a rank for six hackney coaches at the Maypole in the Strand London in 1643. This was the first coach stand in the street. Bailey established a fare schedule for trips to different parts of London, and dressed his drivers in livery so that they would be easily recognizable to customers. The hackney coachman wore a box coat or a caped great coat usually blue, but varying with his company, knee breeches, and a low

crowned hat. A hackney-coach driver is referred to as a Jarvey. The coachmen set their horses in motion with the call gee-o, and Ge-o' is a contraction of Geoffrey as is Jarvey. In the eighteenth century "set down" was a hackney coach term meaning to unload passengers at the completion of a trip. Gradually "set down" came to mean the trip itself. "For sixpence one may have a set down, as it is called, of a mile and a half..." from the 1739 edition of Joe Miller's Jests.

Hackney Coaches were subject to laws and regulations under the direction of the lords of his majesty's treasury. Each coach was licensed and designated with a numbered plate. In 1662 only 400 licenses were granted, in 1694 the number was increased to 700 and, in 1771 to 1000. By 1823 there were 1,200 plated and numbered hackney coaches in London.

Everything from fare rates to the coachman's behavior was strictly regulated. Regulations included a minimum size for the coach horse: "No horse shall be used with a hackney-coach, or chariot, which shall be under 14 hands high." Queen Anne found the chair men and hackney coachmen so foul in their language that she felt it necessary to mandate that "the drivers of coaches, and carriers of chairs, on demanding more than their fare, or giving abusive language, are to forfeit not more than 5 shillings and in default of the payment, they are to be sent to the house of correction seven days." George I added laws against extortion: "coachmen refusing to go on, or extorting more than their fare, are to forfeit not more than 3 Guineas not less than 10s. Not only commissioners, but also justices, may determine offences, and inflict punishments."

In 1823, a hackney 'cabriolet', built by David Davies (a coachbuilder of Albany Street, London) was licensed for public conveyance in England. The term Cab comes from cabriolet, a word borrowed into English from French in the 18th century, designating a "two-wheeled coach drawn by a single horse with the driver perched on a seat at the rear." These cabs stood for hire in Portland Street. They were painted yellow, and numbered twelve in all.

Charles Dickens describes a hackney coach in his Sketches By Boz: "There is a hackney-coach stand under the very window at which we are writing; there is only one coach on it now, but it is a fair specimen of the class of vehicles to which we have alluded - a great, lumbering, square concern of a dingy yellow colour (like a bilious brunette), with very small glasses, but very large frames; the panels are ornamented with a faded coat of arms, in shape something like a dissected bat, the axletree is red, and the majority of the wheels are green. The box is partially covered by an old great-coat, with a multiplicity of capes, and some extraordinary-looking clothes; and the straw, with which the canvas cushion is stuffed, is sticking up in several places, as if in rivalry of the hay, which is peeping through the chinks in the boot. The horses, with drooping heads, and each with a mane and tail as scanty and straggling as those of a worn-out rocking-horse, are standing patiently on some damp straw, occasionally wincing, and rattling the harness; and now and then, one of them lifts his mouth to the ear of his companion, as if he were saying, in a whisper, that he should like to assassinate the coachman. The coachman himself is in the watering-house; and the waterman, with his hands forced into his pockets as far as they can possibly go, is dancing the 'double shuffle,' in front of the pump, to keep his feet warm."

Dickens describes calling a hackney coach in his Sketches By Boz: "The servant-girl, with the pink ribbons, at No. 5, opposite, suddenly opens the street-door, and four small children forthwith rush out, and scream 'Coach!' with all their might and main. The waterman darts from the pump, seizes the horses by their respective bridles, and drags them, and the coach too, round to the house, shouting all the time for the coachman at the very top, or rather very bottom of his voice, for it is a deep bass growl. A response is heard from the tap-room; the coachman, in his wooden-soled shoes, makes the street echo again as he runs across it;..."

List of the Principle Coach Stands

Aldersgate Street
St. Ann's Church, Soho
Arundel Street, Strand
Battle Bridge

Islington, near the Angel
St. James's Palace
St. James's Street
Kennington Cross

Bedford Street, Covent Garden	Kensington, High Street
Bishopsgate Street Within	Knightsbridge.
Bishopsgate Street, Devonshire St.	Lambeth Turnpike, Marsh Gate.
Bishopsgate Street, Artillery Lane	Leicester Square.
Blackfriars, Bridge Street	St. Luke's Hospital.
Blackman Street, over London Bridge	St. Margaret's Hill.
Ditto, over Westminster Bridge	St. Margaret's Church.
Ditto, over Blackfriars Bridge.	Marlborough Street.
Bloomsbury, Charlotte Street.	Mary-le-bone, High Street.
Bloomsbury, Lyon Street.	Mile-End Turnpike.
Bricklayer's Arms.	Minorities, near Tower Hill.
Buckingham Gate.	Moorfields.
Charing Cross.	Newgate-street, Old Bailey.
Charles Street, Covent Garden.	Newington Butts.
Cheapside, King Street.	Oxford Street, Charles Street.
Cheapside, Foster Lane.	Oxford Street, Pantheon.
Chelsea College.	Oxford Street, Bond Street.
Cockspur Street.	Oxford Street, Orchard Street.
Compton Street, Tavistock Row.	New Palace Yard, Westminster.
Conduit Street, Bond Street.	St. Paul's Church Yard.
Cornhill, Freeman's Court.	Piccadilly, Haymarket.
Cornhill, Leadenhall Street.	Piccadilly, Bond Street.
Elephant & Castle, Prospect Place	Ratcliff Cross.
Fenchurch, Street.	Shoreditch Church.
Foundling Hospital.	Smithfield, near St. John Street
Fleet Street, Obelisk.	Southampton Row.
Fleet Street, Fetter Lane.	Strand, Somerset House
St. Giles's.	Strand, Adelphi.
Gracechurch Street, Spread Eagle	Strand, St. Clement's Church
King Street, Cheapside.	Temple Bar
Hackney, Church Street.	Tottenham Court Road, Goodge St.
Holborn, King Street.	Tottenham Court Road, New Road
Holborn, Red Lion Square	Tower Gate
Holborn, Leather Lane	Union Street, Borough, over London Bridge
Holborn, Southampton Buildings	Ditto, over Westminster Bridge
Horse Guards	Ditto, over Blackfriars Bridge
Hyde Park Corner	Whitechapel Bars.

Source: www.georgianindex.net