

cargo he could turn his team of six horses at the trot and swing in magnificent style on the width of the road, returning the way he had come, a feat which required all the skill of an experienced and confident whip.

John Knox drove the big blue Tokomairiro coach with six horses. This big coach had seating for twenty-seven passengers, but often there was no limit to the number being carried.

Will Crawley was a well-known and experienced driver. He had passed the East Taieri Hotel and was trotting smartly down an incline when he applied the brake. The foot iron broke off, and he fell heavily to the ground. A passenger on the near side had the presence of mind to apply the near break-lever and a driver who was accompanying Crawley slipped over the footboard and ran out on the pole, gathered the reins, steadied the horses and brought them to a standstill at the foot of the hill, thus avoiding a serious accident.

James Carmichael drove the afternoon coach from Dunedin to Milton. He was a fearless, daring driver, and was in his element when whip to a half-broken

team. The whole yard, expecting some excitement, would turn out to see his departure. I have seen the excited horses in a bad mix up and a pole broken before he would get away. He would turn the spirited animals up the street and give them their fill before proceeding to Manse Street to pick up his passengers.

On the Milton-Lawrence Road, Thomas Pope was the only driver. I had occasion to travel with him and I always found him good company. His run was a very exposed one, and on more than one occasion the coach was blown over while negotiating the high land over Round Hill. We made a special top for his coach in the factory. It was fastened with thumb screws, so that, when the occasion required, he could remove it, leave it by the roadside and pick it up again on his return.

These are only a few of the men who drove coaches in the Otago region. R H

Excerpts from: *'A Pakeha's Recollections'* by Murray Gladstone Thomson, apprentice coach builder 1867.

With thanks to Marilyn Wightman for supplying this article. R H

Whai or String Figures

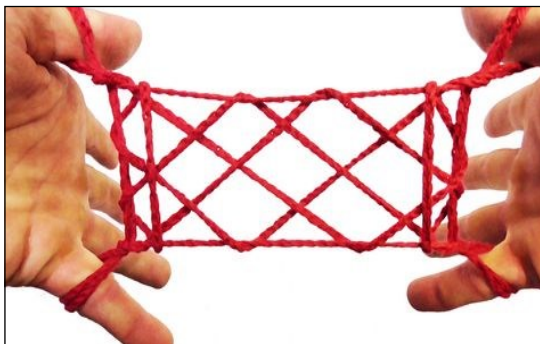
A six-foot long cord, with the ends spliced to form a circle, were traditionally plaited from flax fibre or harakeke. This was stretched between your hands and various figures were created.

These figures were given names and many of them represented an object or incident in mythology.

A number required the assistance of one or more helpers to hold the loops. Sometimes they even used their teeth.

Early tribes could name up to twenty-four different patterns that they could form. The games were often

taught to the children by their mothers. English names were 'Cup and Saucer', 'Parachute', 'Two of Diamonds', 'Open the Gate', and 'Shooting Star'. RH



A completed, intricate string game

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Feilding & Districts Community Archive

A collection of interesting items for friends and supporters of 'The Coach House'

Coach House Museum Blacksmith's Shop

This Blacksmith's Shop is a replica, depicting a shop that may have been in use in the late 1800s and early 1900s in New Zealand. It displays machines, tools and implements commonly used in smithing.

Communities depended heavily on the village blacksmiths as their source for tools, utensils, agricultural implements,

and vehicle parts. Many blacksmiths served as farriers manufacturing shoes for horses and oxen.

In larger communities, blacksmiths often worked in conjunction with wheelwrights and farriers to manufacture and repair vehicle wheels.

A blacksmith is a metal smith or smithy, who creates objects from iron and steel by forging the metal. They work by heating the steel until it is soft enough to



A scene in a typical Blacksmiths shop; one Smithy heating metal at the forge, and the other is shaping the hot steel on the anvil.

shape. The heating takes place on the forge which is fired with charcoal or coke. Sometimes a blacksmiths striker was employed, frequently an apprentice whose job it was to swing a large hammer to help shape the steel.

In a blacksmiths shop such as this one, the smithy's may have made ploughs, spades, shovels, pitchforks, and sickles; horse shoes, steel tires, hub rings and metal parts for carriages, sleds and wagons; nails, fire tongs, candle holders and eating utensils, pot hooks, cooking pots, kettles, ladles, knives, chisels and axes.

The blacksmiths shop was also a gathering place for citizens. They were often closely associated with livery stables and hotels or accommodation houses. Some Blacksmiths Shops in Feilding were: Rouse and Hurrell, Adams and Edelston, Youngers at the Denbigh Ho-

tel, Sam Daw, Frank Gaye, George Sewer, and the Empire, Manchester, Feilding Hotels.

Since his early involvement with the museum Brian Schnell has been keen to have a display that depicts the work of blacksmiths and engineers of this district, in the late 1800s.

For the last year Brian has industriously collected items such as you see in this display. He has been assisted by Ian Jensen, John Darragh, Rob Mitchell, Vern Jensen, Joe Beattie, Rob Oppatt, Lindsay Taylor, Keith Farrow, Elvery Hunt, Bruce Berahn, Vern Jensen, Graeme Hook, Patrick Nolan, Dennis Inkpen, Bryan Flynn, and many others. The Wheelwright display was restored and assembled for display by Greg and Ali Lang, of The Wheelwright Shop, Gladstone, Wairarapa. RH

Drivers of the Coaching Days

These stories were told by Murray Gladstone Thomson, an apprentice with Cobb and Co coaches, 1867-1877 in Dunedin, and his memories of the drivers.

The drivers of the coaching days were a respected body of men and were as much talked about as the captains of the ships that brought to our shores the

crowds of immigrants from overseas. During the ten years that I was in the employ of Cobb and Co, I came in contact with many of them and in my first years with the firm as 'the boy', I enjoyed many a ride alongside the driver, comfortably buttoned up under the waterproof apron. Not many of the drivers appeared at the stables, but I heard them freely discussed. Others that I drove with I knew well.



The days of the Cobb & Co Coaches were dramatic times transporting amazing loads of people and their gear, keen to get to the gold fields at the lowest shared cost.

Ned Devine was perhaps the coach driver whose name I saw mentioned most in print. His prowess in handling a team became legendary. But somehow, I recall Harry Nettlefold; both men began their careers as coach drivers with Cobb and Co in Victoria, and here in Otago they were for many years the heroes of the Dunedin-Clyde run. In 1862 Devine had the honour of driving as a competitor, showing his skill in handling a twenty-horse team. Harry Nettlefold had the reputation of being kind and courteous to all his passengers, and the ladies couldn't find fault with his manners and behaviour. He was most attentive and entertaining. If I was fortunate to be up alongside him on the box seat when everything was going smoothly, the team of horses going steady and the road fairly good, one could enjoy his entertainment. He would chat away, pointing out places of interest, or spin yarns of his many experiences on the road.

He had a pleasant, musical voice, and on occasions would delight his passengers with selections on the cornet. He would tell of the fabulous amount of gold he had brought down from the goldfields, every ounce of which, with its armed escort, he would hand over at the Pigroot to Ned Devine who would, next day take it on to Dunedin. He was also a man of resource and courage. On one occasion he brought in his coach on three wheels, the rail of a fence being used to support the end of a broken axle. On another occasion he had strained his front axle, and one of the wheels would not revolve. He unhitched the team, took out the fore carriage, turned it upside down, took off the axle, heated it in a fire and straightened as best he could with an axe. Things were righted to the best of his ability, he hitched up and made good on his journey.

On escort days, when delivering his gold