

AIAT-Meeting in Wrocław 2019, the visit to the Carriage Museum at Galowice

When entering the cobbled court through a beautifully restored baroque gate, built in 1721, the visitor walks straight up to a large historic building of well-balanced dimensions. It is a half-timbered structure with small windows and a double-hipped roof. At first sight the visitor realizes that it has not been used to live in, though it was well designed. The narrow-gauge rails leading from the road through the gate into the building hint of an earlier warehouse belonging to a large noble estate in Galowice; the remains of the stately home still recognizable nearby. A commemorative slab put up by *Emil von Lieres und Wilkau* in 1888 is evidence of the family who formerly owned the estate.

Realizing the beauty and quality of the building Tadeusz Kolacz, an entrepreneur from Wrocław, bought the building and diligently had it refurbished. The building was exactly what he was looking for, a spacious home for his carriage collection, *Muzeum Powozow Galowice* near Wrocław.

This collection specializes in carriages and items of local importance connected with travelling and horses. Most of the exhibits were produced in Silesia or found in Silesian towns and villages. It is Mr Kolacz's vision to allow visitors, especially children, to experience horse-drawn traffic and the objects connected to it. It is a museum of touchable exhibits. Children are permitted to climb into carriages, touch travelling necessaries, open historic suitcases and try out the wheelwrights' tools. People may take photographs of their children looking out of the windows of carriages and wearing original travelling clothes. He wants them to understand using all their senses what living and working with horses was like in the old days.

The local theme of Mr Kolacz's collection immediately becomes visible when the visitor first sees one of the most typical exhibits, which Mr Kopacz calls a *ślaskiej coupé*, formerly known as a *Schlesische Barmherzigkeit*, a nickname used for this typically Silesian vehicle. It resembles an American Rockaway inasmuch as it provides protection from the rain for the coachman by means of a roof extended at the front. Normally the box seats of carriages were exposed to the weather. That is why people spoke of *Barmherzigkeit* i.e. compassion for the coachman.



The local nature of the exhibits also becomes evident, when we look at the number of rural carriages and wagons from places all over Silesia. Typical lightweight farm wagons consisting of a wooden framework, cane work and a few iron parts. They were used by farmers for the transportation of goods as well as a conveyance for people.

Typical for the area, but popular all over Germany, was the type of carriage called a *Jagdwagen*. This type of carriage was to be found on almost all the larger estates as they were practical, multi-purpose vehicles of enormous durability and easy to care for. As the name suggests (Jagd = Hunt) these carriages were very practical and extensively used for hunting. The collection's example of this type was made by the firm Schustala, Nesselsdorf, now in the Czech Republic, which had a branch in Ratibor, Silesia, too.



The trade vehicles in this collection are mostly built by local companies, too. The vehicle that was probably used by a butcher for the transportation of sheep, pigs or other smaller animals was built by Winkler of Hirschberg, today Jelenia Gora, in Lower Silesia.



Whereas rural vehicles were mostly locally made, the vehicles of a higher social standing were produced by carriage builders in the centres of money and power, and in particular in the capital of the German Reich, Berlin. This area however, was rural with few members of the nobility or gentry living there, therefore there was not a great demand for town carriages such as Berlins, Landaus or Mylords. The small number of such vehicles that were to be found in this area came, for example, from Berlin such as the Clarence in this museum made by Josef

Neuss, one of the best carriage makers in Germany. The elegance, design and sheer quality of the carriages constructed by this firm was legendary. This company not only supplied vehicles for the noble houses of Central Europe - who considered it the right thing to have carriages made by that firm in their coach houses- but even built for the various Royal Mews in Northern Europe that still house many of their carriages today. The museum at Galowice were lucky enough to find a Clarence by Neuss locally.



Probably the most interesting exhibit in the collection, however, forms an exception to this rule. It is a Landau and not made by one of these reputable Berlin carriage makers such as: Neuss, Zimmermann, or Kühlstein, but by a quite unknown maker in Saxonia, Seltmann, from Unterscheibe. Although it was difficult for the smaller companies to attain the level of refinement required for such carriages of style and comfort, Seltmann produced a well-balanced Landau of quality finished to a high standard. Some features indicate a late date of production such as: the Warner hubs, wheels made in the American fashion of the day, the unadorned interior, and the modern steel undercarriage. It was made after 1910, possibly after the First World War. It is in poor condition, and would be well worth restoring to a high quality again.



But even younger than that Landau is the German Post Coach made by August Nowack AG, Bautzen in Saxonia in 1938. This company specialized in railway carriages and bodies for lorries. They made a number of modernized replicas of the historic type Coupé Berline for the *Reichspost*. The *Reichspost* reintroduced a horse-drawn vehicle service for tourists in some picturesque areas of Germany for the organization *Kraft durch Freude*. This political organization offered recreation programmes for loyal workers including sea cruises, sports holidays in the Alps, and these coach trips. The company were experts in the construction of railway carriages but did not know how to build horse-drawn vehicles. They used sheet metal instead of wooden panels, axles more normally used for lorry trailers, enormous springs and drum brakes for lorries; the whole construction resulting in a vehicle weighing 1769 kg empty. Torture for horses and not a promising model of business.



Besides the carriages, an impressive collection of saddles, bits and harness - especially a variety of military models – proves that a life with horses demanded an unexpected variety of tools, equipment, harness, vehicles and – last but not least – clothing.

When the visitor, dizzy with all the impressions received within a visit of some two hours, leaves the museum, he can relax in a very comfortable dining room to the right of the entrance. There the members of the AIAT who had the honour of being invited for a tour of the museum had been welcomed by Mr Kolacz and his family with warm words and a warm meal before the visit. Everybody felt very relaxed and the tour formed a nice and interesting focal point for the 2019 AIAT Annual Meeting in Wrocław.

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Photographs: Muzeum Powozow Galowice