

### **How to dress for the Concours de Tradition?**

Since the beginning AFA has decided that the vehicles and the harness date from the 19th century. The dress should be 21st century, i.e. not in period costume but elegant and subtle with both driver and passenger in modern fashion but adapted for and in keeping with the vehicle whether sporting or town style. The coachmen and grooms in traditional style.

The regulations are the same for ponies, sporting horses, heavy horses or donkeys. An exception being regional turnouts that are dressed according to the tradition of the area, for example Alsace or Brittany.

### **Gentleman and lady drivers**

They should adopt the dress appropriate and in harmony with colour of the vehicle. Ladies drivers should avoid skirts that are neither too tight or too long which are not very practical for mounting and dismounting from carriages/ neither should they have high heel shoes, in most cases it is a matter of common sense.

On a town carriage, phaeton, break or dogcart, it is conventional for the gentleman to dress in a dark or grey suit and a collar and discrete tie. Ladies should wear in a fitted suit with skirt or trousers.

On a country carriage, rally cart, Meadowbrook, market cart etc then a country tweed, sports jacket and a variety of trousers but with a collar and a tie is appropriate for gentleman with ladies in soft subtle country outfit.

Certain accessories are however obligatory for both gentleman and ladies including hats, gloves, knee covering, rug apron, and a whip etc..

### **Hats**

A soft hat or bowler (black for town, brown for country) are appropriate as are straw hats of the Panama type or even the boater during good weather.

The top hat, black or grey, is for the grander vehicles such as coaches, roof seat breaks, mail coaches etc. The top hat is not recommended when driving ponies, single turnouts or if the horse or pony is being driven in a breast collar.

The bowler serves well in all carriages while a hunt cap is appropriate with hunting clothes when driving a dog carts or hunting phaetons.

Both men and lady drivers should wear gloves of natural colour leather.

It is appropriate for a driver to have an apron or knee rug that is worn with a strap and comes down to within 20cms of the shoes and is of material that is appropriate to the carriage. Passengers should be provided with a rug. On country turnouts they can be of tartan or check in the colours suitable for the vehicle. In summer a knee covering which just covers the knees will suffice.

The whip one uses will be same style for one or two horses or ponies but must be of a length to reach the shoulder of the horse.

Today a lot of the whips have a metal base covered in leather which was not the case in the past. A traditional holly whip is made with a goose quill top with white leather thong and small cord lash.

A Hungarian whip has a lash joined to the stick with a leather a double eye and is carried only on Hungarian carriages.

The English holly whip is the most elegant and is used for single, pair or team.

And when used with a four-in-hand needs considerable skill to be effective. In tradition competitions the telescopic whip is not permitted.

### **Passengers and Grooms**

The groom is an integral part of the turnout. The term groom causes some debate due to social connotations. It is a historic expression and has long origins such as coachman or even driver. In some of our competitions it is often that a friend or relation fills the roll of the groom. It is not always easy to dress a groom in the traditional style unless they are regular participants.

In many concours competitions a passenger may act as a groom so may be dressed accordingly. If this is the case then ladies should not wear high heels and tight shirts as they may need to quickly exit a carriage to hold a horse etc, safety is paramount.

Whatever the case they should wear leather gloves, hat and knee rug.

In the event of a country vehicle the groom can be dressed in riding clothes  
On grand vehicles such as breaks, hunting phaetons, and coaches traditional livery is the rule. The same with a carriage from a family estate.

### **Groom and Coachman**

Today it is often the owner of the horses who is the driver and since the 19th century the French have followed the English school, driving in the English style with full collars.

The classic turnout for the carriages such as landau, brougham, Victoria and so on.

Formal livery is a black coat or in the family colour, five, four, two or even no buttons on the cuffs, and four (for the head coachman who may take the reins) or six buttons (for grooms) at the back.

With a team of four when the carriage is stationery the head coachman stands with the wheeler. The groom at the heads of the leaders

Coachman and grooms wear buckskin breeches in yellow or white. The breeches do not have the reinforcements as for riding;

Both wear black boots with tan tops and a Newmarket tie or stock with tan or natural leather gloves.

A black top hat should be worn with only staff of commission officers, diplomatic corps and nobility entitled to wear cockades.

### **Passengers**

It is usual for passengers to be dressed in harmony with the carriage and horses, quietly under stated.

### **Uniforms**

Uniforms are only worn by military or para military personnel and stud staff.

### **Salutes**

Amateur drivers remove their hats with their right hand holding their whips in the left hand keeping the hat up right.

Ladies hold the reins and whip in the left hand and lower their right arm palm upwards or nod their head.

Professional coachmen salute by holding the whip vertically in front of them.

The grooms do not salute.

At official ceremonies and during national anthems the turnouts halt and rest immobile. All gentleman remove their headgear expect the grooms attending the horses, their full attention must be focused on the horses.