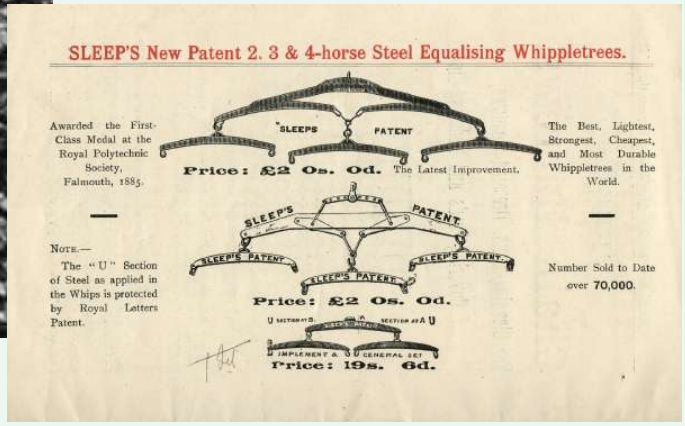
Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

WHIPPLETREE H216





A whippletree is a device that is used to enable a horse (or horses - or any draught animal) to pull a load, such as a plough, a harrow, or even a canal boat. The photograph on the left shows two horses pulling an old fashioned plough. Each horse is attached to its own whippletree, which are in turn linked to a single whippletree fastened to the plough. This system could be extended to allow three (or more) horses to pull the plough. The illustration below is from a nineteenth century agricultural catalogue and shows how three horses could be harnessed side-by-side.


SLEEP'S New Patent 2. 3 & 4-horse Steel Equalising Whippletrees.

Awarded the First-Class Medal at the Royal Polytechnic Society, Falmouth, 1885.

SLEEP'S PATENT

Price: £2 0s. 0d. The Latest Improvement.

The Best, Lightest, Strongest, Cheapest, and Most Durable Whippletrees in the World.

NOTE.—The "U" Section of Steel as applied in the Whips is protected by Royal Letters Patent.

SLEEP'S PATENT

Price: £2 0s. 0d.

Price: 19s. 6d.

Number Sold to Date over 70,000.

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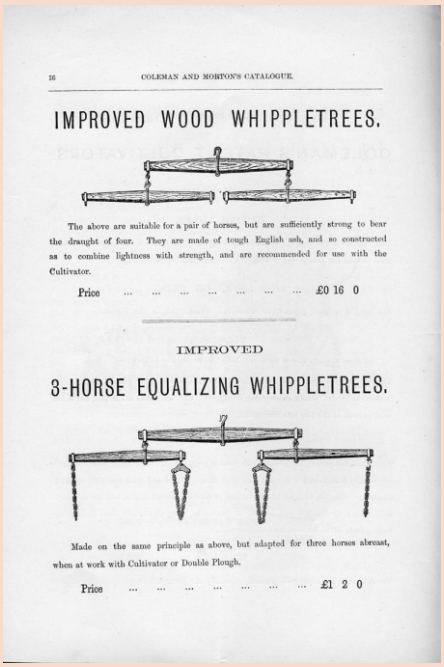
Whippletrees help to balance the load evenly between the animals doing the pulling. They have wide arms in order to keep the traces clear of the animal's sides. Without whippletrees, a load such as a plough would pull the traces against the sides of the animal, the load would pull from either side of the animal at each step and one animal could allow another to take most of the load.



16 COLEMAN AND MORTON'S CATALOGUE.

IMPROVED WOOD WHIPPLETREES.

The above are suitable for a pair of horses, but are sufficiently strong to bear the draught of four. They are made of tough English ash, and so constructed as to combine lightness with strength, and are recommended for use with the Cultivator.

Price £0 16 0

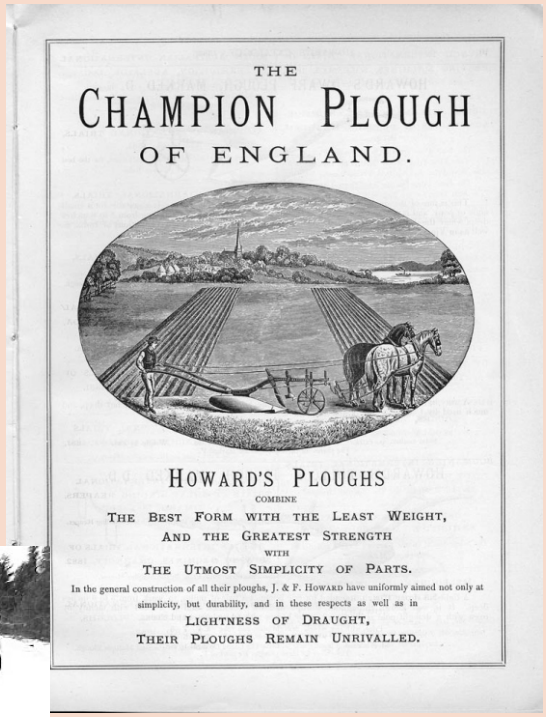
IMPROVED

3-HORSE EQUALIZING WHIPPLETREES.

Made on the same principle as above, but adapted for three horses abreast, when at work with Cultivator or Double Plough.

Price £1 2 0

Traditionally, whippletrees were made of wood (left). In the nineteenth century manufacturers began to use tubular iron which, they claimed, was both stronger and lighter than a wooden whippletree. This example probably dates from the nineteenth century. Whippletrees are sometimes called swingletrees or whiffletrees.



THE CHAMPION PLOUGH OF ENGLAND.

HOWARD'S PLOUGHS COMBINE THE BEST FORM WITH THE LEAST WEIGHT, AND THE GREATEST STRENGTH WITH THE UTMOST SIMPLICITY OF PARTS.

In the general construction of all their ploughs, J. & F. HOWARD have uniformly aimed not only at simplicity, but durability, and in these respects as well as in LIGHTNESS OF DRAUGHT, THEIR PLOUGHS REMAIN UNRIVALLED.

Below: A whippletree being used to help a single horse pull felled timber. Right: The cover of a nineteenth century agricultural tool catalogue, showing a two-horse plough team pulling a plough with the aid of a whippletree.

