

## The Williamson Gig



Messrs Rouse and Hurrell built this gig for Stephen Williamson of Waituna West. It was presented to the Society by Stephen's descendant, J. J. Williamson in October 1965. Rouse and Hurrell, originally a Wellington business, operated a carriage-making factory in Feilding from 1897-1907.

According to the Williamson family, the brand new gig was returned to the maker for a special adaptation because Stephen's wife, Georgina, found it difficult to get into hampered by the fashionable hobble skirts she wore - she had another step added.

In New Zealand the gig was by far the most popular two wheeled passenger vehicle. It was a light carriage, drawn by one horse and able to carry two or three people and their parcels or luggage.

This vehicle is "well gig" which means the bottom of the deck is built to sit between and below the shafts which are 6' 4" (1.95m) long. The wheels are 4' 8" (1.42m) in diameter with 'butterfly' style mudguards. Dennett springing is used in the suspension. A feature of this vehicle is the sliding seat which allowed adjustment of the balance of horse and gig to give a most comfortable ride.