

Where will it all end?

As we race towards that date which has been in our diaries for years, but for which most of us have yet to make arrangements, it's perhaps pertinent to look back at just how far we've come since the day's when horse power was provided by real horses.

Progress has been startling and new technology now enables tasks to be performed that were once beyond anyone's comprehension. Or at least allows existing jobs to be done much more easily.

It is natural to look back and wonder how people coped in the past. Times must have been hard before the existence of machines which could aerate to 12 inches below the surface, before the days of air conditioned cabs or before mess rooms had hot and cold running water.

It is easy to feel sorry for our predecessors, shorn of such modern day luxury, but there is no need because everyone feels better off than the lot who came before them... and remember there will always be those coming up behind us with even more technology at their fingertips, casting pitiful looks back at those forced to work around the time of the turn of the millennium.

Our grandchildren will no doubt laugh at us having to manage before the introduction of self raking sand.

The point was brought home to me during the summer holidays when my wife and I ventured to Orlando for two week's escapism.

In the middle of some magnificent new attractions, including virtual reality, 3-D and high speed roller coasters, was the Carousel of Progress which was one of Walt Disney's own ideas and positively ancient by modern day standards

You sit in a revolving theatre and stop at different scenes from different decades of the 20th Century. On each occasion a mechanical man in his 40s, dressed in the appropriate garb, enthuses about the latest innovations and how they have made such a difference to their lives.

He raves about how the arrival of electricity has changed their lives; about how the wireless has become the ultimate entertainment; that he's heard that some guys are trying to fly across the Atlantic; that rumour has it that talking pictures are reputed to be right around the corner and how the new washing machine has saved his wife hours.

Each time he's delighted to be living in such a modern age while, sitting in the moving theatre, we know that just around the corner is space travel, key hole surgery, air conditioning and Sony Playstations.

It is true to say that you never know what delights await us but it's also true to say that we are always further forward in technological terms than we ever have been before.

I'm sure the guy who first harnessed a piece of equipment to the back of a horse was seen as some sort of visionary by his colleagues and they were soon looking back at their old days and wondering how they coped.

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