

The horse cab

Most of the landaus in the Royal Danish Deer Park, just north of Copenhagen, still have seats that slope forwards. The coachmen say that they stitch wedge-shaped bolsters on themselves, because they get pains in their backs from sitting on flat seats.

When the coachman is driving fast, he has to sit in a position of perfect balance. If the hips and lumbar region are locked in an extreme position, he has problems in keeping his balance and can fall off at corners. A coachman cannot use his hands for support, since he uses them to hold the reins.

In other jobs too, a seat that slopes forward is still used, when it is important to keep a position of balance while bending forward. Potters, organists and weavers often sit on seats that either slope forward or are very narrow, so that the thighs can slope downwards.

Organists always use a narrow seat that slopes forward - they would never use a modern adjustable office chair with its 'correct' back support, since they would not be able to move around easily enough.

From: A.C. Mandal, The Seated Man (p 35)