

# How The World Plowing Match Can

In the following historical reference to the inception of a National Agricultural Show in England, Alfred Hall, Roseneath, Seaton, Cumberland, England, secretary of The World Championship Plowing Organization, tells of the growth of the World Plan development in agricultural organization, and how the First World Contest has come to Cobourg, Ontario.

"J. D. Thomas," writes Mr. Hall, "of the Ontario Plowman's Association flew to Scotland on special mission to invite the Provisional Board of what was to be known as The World Championship Plowing Organization to hold the First World Match in Canada.

In the early 19th century, the Lord of the Manor of Workington, in Cumberland, England—a man called John Christian Curwen—founded the original Workington Agricultural Society. Curwen was a farmer and a member of the British Parliament for 40 years. He carried out many experiments with crops, cultivation, machinery inventions, the fattening of livestock, and other farm practices.

The name of Curwen was adopted on his marriage to the heiress to the estates of the Curwen family. He was of the same family as the famous Mr. Fletcher Christian, the Chief Officer of the "Bounty" who led the mutiny against the notorious Captain Bligh. Having set Bligh adrift Fletcher Christian and his mutineers settled on Pitcairn Island and there founded a community some members of which occasionally return to the land of their forefathers.

It was John Christian Curwen and a farmer colleague, the famous Mr. Bates, of Northumberland, who together first suggested to the Secretary of the then Board of Agriculture the idea of holding a National Agricultural Show. Thus was started the "Royal Show of England" as we know it today.

Curwen's Workington Agricultural Society had a branch in the Isle of Man and another at Wigton in Cumberland. For some reason, however, the Workington Show did not survive after Curwen's day. In 1845 George T. Weir suggested to Alfred Hall and to James Lancaster who was at that time Mayor of Workington, and a few other enthusiasts the idea of forming another Workington Agricultural Society. This was done. James Lancaster was made chairman, Alfred Hall, General Sec., and George Weir Treasurer, and a three-day Agricultural Show and Industry Exhibition was held on Curwen Park, Workington.

In 1946, Alfred Hall suggested the holding of a Ploughing Match, to which the Society agreed. He learned that a champion team of Ontario ploughmen were to pay a visit to the United Kingdom, the trip being their prize for having won the Ontario Championships. There were to be four of them and a team manager. Their sponsors were the Imperial Oil Company of Canada, Ltd., and the Salada Tea Company. An invitation was at once extended to them through the Ontario Plowmen's Association to compete in the Workington Ploughing Match. The invitation was accepted but when the time for the Match came there was severe frost and after two postponements the event had to be cancelled. "But a banquet was held; the visitors were taken on a tour of the Lake District and the invitation was extended to cover another team of Canadians for the next year.

After that each year's Ontario champions came annually to plough at Workington Ploughing Match. Later came competitors from Northern Ireland and from Sweden. And more and more competitors came from further and further afield in Britain, too.

In 1950 the Workington Agricultural Society's Ploughing Match was held at Penrith, in Cumberland, with the assistance of members of Skelton Ploughing Society and of Penrith Agricultural Society. The Workington Society now felt that the Match was growing too big to remain a local affair.

The Ontario Plowmen's Association had invited the Workington Society to send a team to compete in Canada; a further invitation came from the Slate River Valley Plowmen's Association in Canada, and promises of hospitality were forthcoming through the good offices of

Canadian Vice-president of the Workington Agricultural Society, L. A. Greene, of Port Arthur, Ontario, who began life in Workington. In the winter of 1951 Ontario's team of champion ploughmen planted Canadian Maple trees round the War Memorial in the Vulcan Park, Workington, as a token of thanks and friendship for the Cumberland hospitality enjoyed at successive parties of Canadian ploughmen.

By now John A. Carroll, who was then Secretary of the Ontario Plowmen's Association (now Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Ontario and President of WCPO) were closely liasing on the idea of getting as many countries as possible represented at an international ploughing contest. By various means and in particular, through the good offices of Ford Motor Co. Ltd., Alfred Hall established liaison with interested parties in several European countries.

Lack of finance made it impossible to accept the Canadian invitations, but it was felt that, in time, it might be possible for British plowmen to be sent to European countries in exchange for ploughmen from those countries having visited Britain. The idea of this was discussed by Alfred Hall and Gunnar Hubinette, of Sweden, at Workington in November of 1950. They decided to work together in the job of interesting other European countries and securing their cooperation.

One of the first steps towards this end was the calling of a meeting by the Workington Agricultural Society in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Ploughing Association in Belfast at the time of the Northern Ireland Ploughing Match in February 1951. It was felt that if international matches were to be successful there was a need to draft rules and agree styles of ploughing, common to all for competition purposes. This meeting was attended by a representative gathering from the British Isles and from a number of European countries. There was a frank exchange of views and opinions and the outcome was the undoubted desire for the formation of a fully representative international authority for the conduct of international ploughing matches.

Since there was no national

authority in Great Britain, although Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Eire) each had their own national organizations to which local societies were and, of course, still are affiliated, the Workington Society decided to invite all the local ploughing societies in Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to attend a meeting to consider the formation of a British Ploughing Association. Because there was no collected record of ploughing societies this entailed considerable research and this job of finding the addresses of secretaries was carried out in the main by George Merryweather of the Goodyear Tyre Company of Great Britain, Ltd. Mr. Merryweather and Mr. Frank Ellis, of Essa, were two of the earliest associates of the Workington Agricultural Society in connection with the developments in competition ploughing.

The meeting thus convened by the Workington Society was held in Leeds, Yorkshire, on the 17th of May, 1951, when about 150 delegates attended and were entertained to a buffet lunch by the Esso Petroleum Company, Ltd., before commencing business. By an unanimous vote the British Ploughing Association was formed and arrangements were made for the first British National Ploughing Match to be held at Newton Kyme, near Tadcaster, Yorkshire, England.

With a national authority set up as the BPA, Great Britain was in a position to co-operate on a representative national basis with similar organizations in other countries for the purpose of establishing a world ploughing organization and so provide a world-wide incentive to encourage better ploughing for better crops for more food everywhere.

In Britain most local ploughing match societies, some of which have been in existence for well over 100 years, are affiliated to the British Ploughing Association. The British National Match is now held annually at a different place in either England, Scotland or Wales and the second Wednesday of November each year.

In February, 1952, the British Ploughing Association convened an International Conference at which, at the kind invitation of the then Mayor of Workington, Councillor M. J. ...

attended and representing organizations from Sweden was agreed. The rules were considered respectively. Bogin, Seaton, the N.P.A. new organization known as

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attended by the BPA Council and representatives of ploughing organizations in Canada, Sweden and Holland when it was agreed to form a Provisional Governing Board for the organization of a World Ploughing Match and when international rules were drafted for further consideration by each delegate's respective organization. J. J. Bogin, Sec. of N.P.A. of Ireland sent the encouraging news that the N.P.A. would donate to the new organization a trophy to be known as the "Irish Shield".

In October and September of that year Alfred Hall, who was now Secretary of the British Ploughing Association and also of the Provisional board and owing to the weight of the new duties had relinquished the Secretaryship of the Workington Society, attended specially convened meetings held in Sweden and in Norway to further discuss the promotion of a World Ploughing Contest and to consider the standardizing of international rules and ploughing styles which would be fair to all participants in such a contest. These conferences were also attended by delegates from Finland, Denmark and Germany as well as from Norway and Sweden. To all these Alfred Hall extended, on behalf of the British Ploughing Association, an invitation to send either competitors or observers to the second British National Match which was to be held at Stirling, Scotland, in November. It was agreed that the semi-digger class would be held according to the draft international rules as an experiment and that afterwards their practical application would be considered in the light of experience thus gained.

The BPA Match at Stirling was, as a result, attended by competitors and official observers from Canada, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany and the Republic of Ireland.

Not only was a final code of rules and a style of ploughing decided upon for the first World Championship Ploughing Contest but, thanks to the generosity of Canada, it became possible to arrange for the first World Contest to be held at Cobourg, Ontario, in October, 1953.

J. D. Thomas, of the Ontario Plowmen's Association flew to Scotland on special mission to invite the Provincial Board of

Organization to hold the first World Match in Canada. Mr. Thomas said that Canada would be happy to be host and would cover all the expenses of a party of two national champions and a team manager from each country whilst they were in Canada, and as many countries as could enter were welcome.

This kind offer was gratefully accepted and delegates returned to their respective countries intent on organizing first local or area ploughing matches and then a national match from

which to select competitors to go to Canada. They were also intent upon trying to find enough money to pay the fares to Canada, too.

In March of this year Secretary Alfred Hall received an urgent call to fly to Canada at once to make arrangements for the World Contest which is to be held in conjunction with the Ontario Plowmen's Association. Whilst there he had a busy week of meetings and conferences and was able to accept on behalf of the WCPO the "Esso World Plan". Some time earlier representatives of the world-wide Esso oil organization had met in Germany and one of the items they discussed was the sponsorship of competitors to

the World Ploughing Contest. Esso affiliates in certain countries were prepared to offer as a national championship prize the free trip to Canada. This sponsorship would cover two competitors and a manager. Also, all the affiliates would subscribe towards a premier trophy to be known as the "Esso" Golden Plough, to be symbolic of world supremacy in championship ploughing and to be competed for annually.

Thus a big problem of finance was solved and now twelve countries will be represented in the World Contest at Cobourg.

Since the BPA Match held in Scotland great developments have taken place in several countries.