

Support for Irish vintage record bid

A number of events have taken place over the last seven years which have completely revolutionised the global approach to collecting, restoring and displaying vintage tractors. Traditionally tractors were displayed at open days and rallies where they became static exhibits with the odd parade.

However, the South Africans, concerned that this did not bring out the best in their machines, arranged an event at Sandstone Estates, a large commercial farm in the Eastern Free State of South Africa, in 1999 and called it the Great 100 Working.

The object was to get more than 100 tractors working together in one field at one time, and in the process to break the World Record for the maximum number of vintage tractors working together. This was easily achieved with a quantity of 106 tractors. The World Record was established and recognised by the Guinness Book of Records.

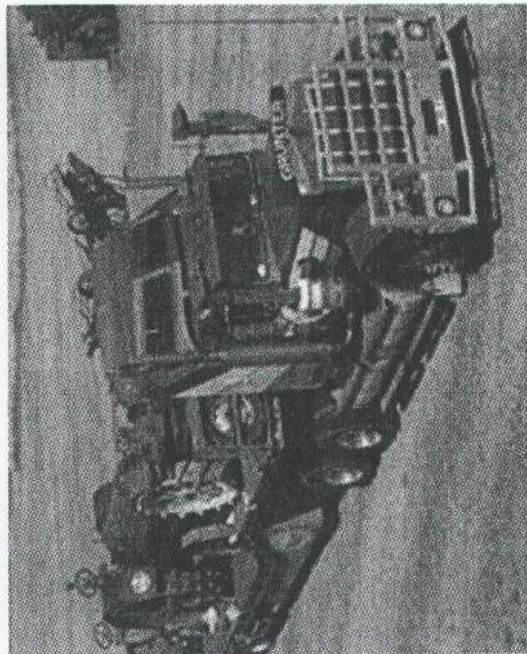
In 2001 the Australians responded in their normal competitive way and put together an event which broke the World Record with a total of 298 machines. Somewhat taken aback by this quick response, the South Africans decided to assemble 400 tractors in one field at one time in 2002 and called the event the Great 400 Working.

In fact, such was the enthusiastic response from South African tractor collectors and farmers, that a total of 730 was officially recognised. The actual number of tractors was much greater but the organisers insisted that the tractors be pre-1960 to qualify.

Nearly 20,000 people turned up to watch this incredible display and as a result worldwide interest was ignited.

The rest as they say is history. The Irish responded the same year by breaking the record with 1832 tractors. Not to be outdone the Australians lifted the bar in Cootamundra in 2004 and broke the record with 1901 tractors, although the age restriction was not rigidly enforced and the event became simply a tractor event as opposed to a vintage and classic tractor event. This formula was followed in 2006 when Britain broke the record with 2141.

The Irish, rather like the South Africans, decided that it had



■ **READY FOR COOLEY:** Tractors which are en route from South Africa to Cooley, loaded up and ready for their journey. (FW30-039NN)

started as an event for old tractors and should remain an event for old tractors. They have therefore decided to address the challenge on 5th August at Cooley.

South African and Irish vintage tractor collectors have always been close, and no longer had the ink dried on the invitations than the South Africans announced that five tractors were in a container and on their way to Ireland.

Tractors must be pre-1977 and the South Africans have taken this extremely seriously. Their line-up includes an Emerson Brantingham Big 4-20 (1912), a John Deere Hi-Crop 60 (1954), a General Ordnance (GO) (1917), and a Field Marshall Series III (1952).

Each of these tractors is an icon in its own way and certainly the Emerson Brantingham and the GO tractor are of extreme rarity, while the Waterloo Boy is the charismatic machine that launched the mighty John Deere range.

The Field Marshall is as British as it gets and had a huge following around the world. A spokesman for the Sandstone Heritage Trust who put this programme together stated, "We are so delighted to support Ireland in the World Record attempt. We respect the Irish because they respect the rules and we wish them every success in their World Record attempt."

"We hope that the people of Ireland will drag their old tractors out of barns and get them ready and be there to support John Hanlon and his enthusiastic team of organisers."

It is very reassuring to know that the worldwide vintage fraternity are pledging their support for this event. Five tractors have already been entered from the United States with one of them being offered to the organisers to be raffled or auctioned for charity at the event.

New Zealanders have also pledged their support with a couple of machines which were at the last Cooley record event making the return trip this year.

It is hoped that other countries will also signal their support for this important event in the calendar of all vintage tractor collectors worldwide.

To date thousands of entry forms have been issued to interested parties throughout the United Kingdom. A steady stream of completed entry forms have been received by the organisers but there are still many outstanding.

In order to avoid long queues at the registration points on the morning of the event and to aid in the organisation of the event, it is vitally important that entry forms are returned as soon as possible, well in advance of the 5th August.

For any queries regarding the event feel free to contact the organisers on the following numbers: 07733 279296 (N Ireland); 087 0650973 or 00353 4293 73136 (R of Ireland); E-mail: cooley07@eircom.net

Alternatively check out all the details on the event website: www.cooleyvintagefestival.ie

ALL-IRELAND WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT