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Tractor

October 2009

MAGAZINE

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Barry on the reins; what a pair of beauties.



Wilf Mole gets in on the act!



Next was the 1917 General Ordnance tractor or G-O tractor, manufactured in the USA, purchased also from Oscar's Dreamland. This tractor was built by General Ordnance Co who were based in New York City and began producing tractors when they took over the Denning Tractor Co of Iowa. However the company's main industry was to be the manufacture of military vehicles. It is believed that around 70 of these G-O tractors were manufactured in total. And after the Great War in 1918, General Ordnance carried on manufacturing what they knew best, military vehicles.

The Marshall 18-30, built in 1933, is one of around 100 tractors manufactured, with only ten or so surviving. This particular tractor was sent over to South Africa in a container along with a Marshall Colonial steam engine that was being repatriated. This happened quite a few years ago, nothing has been done to this Marshall while in Wilf's possession, more recently it was brought over to the UK before going over to Ireland. ☺



David on the front, Barry on the reins and Wilf try to harness the horsepower.





Barry with the horses, with Phil Upshaw on the Marshall getting ready to plough.

Those were the days

Pertwood Organic Cereal Farm, situated in Wiltshire, holds many surprises – and the chance to see vintage machinery in action.

Pertwood Organic Cereal Farm is a large 1800-acre farm that has been farmed organically for more than 20 years. Three years ago the farm was purchased by Mr Wilfred Mole, who is well known in the preservation movement from The Sandstone Heritage Trust in South Africa. This change of hands came about when the previous owner decided to venture off to farm in New Zealand, he contacted Wilf who had looked over the set-up a few years previously and had expressed an interest. The deal was done, but then as it was finalised Wilf found out that it also included a business called Pertwood Organic Cereals.

Pertwood Cereals along with the organic farming side of the operation continue to this day. And now there are not only vintage tractors working the site but heavy horses too; on the day of Tractor's visit all were out to work and a have bit of play, including a Marshall Series II ploughing with an old Ransomes No 3 plough – driven by Wilf Mole himself.

The 20-acre field that was being worked during the visit had been ploughed previously; however it was being worked again to get rid of the couch grass that had reappeared. The Series II contractor's Marshall that was being used was one that came with the farm when Wilf took it over. This Marshall, when Wilf first saw it, was covered over by a tarpaulin and was parked next to a threshing rig and a reed comb. The previous owner had purchased the Marshall at auction in 1990, but what the tractor had been used for prior to that is unknown.

Challenge

In 2007 Wilf, who had been instrumental in the very first tractor challenge held at Sandstone in 1999, had been in contact with the late, very well-known tractor collector in Ireland, John Hanlon. John had previously indicated to Wilf that he was having a go at breaking the record again. Wilf being Wilf immediately chirped in saying: "Yes I will bring tractors, some of the same ones that have been to

other challenges in the world". The other tractors in question were back in South Africa, but were soon on their way in containers to the UK. In total seven tractors made this trip, with most going over to Ireland for the challenge; on their return to Pertwood, they were all placed into a barn. The reason that while in Ireland Wilf met up with some Canadians, who informed him that they were looking at taking on a challenge in Canada.

Dreamland

Since then other tractors have been purchased by Wilf. For this visit they had arranged to bring out and hitch up some implements that could be used. The first tractor was the very rare 1911, Emerson Brantingham 4-20 tractor, imported by Wilf from the USA. This Emerson Brantingham was purchased from Oscar's Dreamland in the state of Montana, over ten years ago, very little work has been done to this tractor and for today she was hitched up to a set of harrows awaiting her turn.



Marshall Series II ploughing with an old Ransomes No 9, driven by Wilf Mole.



Then in the line-up prior to doing a little work was the 1946 HSCS 35hp tractor that was found in South Africa. Although it is quite a late model, it was based on a design that originated in the 1930s, this also is quite rare. This tractor came back to the UK along with the other tractors destined for the Irish challenge.

While the vintage tractors were being made ready, Barry Coffen, a past master of handling working horses, was hitching up a set of harrows to two horses, one a Shire the other a Clydesdale, both aged about six. Barry was employed originally by Bass brewery in Burton-on-Trent as the chief horseman. When Bass closed down the delivery side of their business, using horses and wagons, Barry along with his son David lost their jobs. Barry's going-away present from the brewery was not a gold watch but the Clydesdale (Charlie)!

Wilf at the time was also looking for an experienced horseman, for he felt it a good idea to introduce working horses at the farm. Contact was then made through the heavy horse society, who recommended Barry for the position, he was given the job immediately and was told he could stable Charlie at Pertwood with immediate effect. Wilf

then started looking for heavy horses of his own, it did not take long for a suitable candidate to be found, but this horse was a little too boisterous and unfortunately this horse was moved on!!

The pair of horses working on the day were on their first trip out, in fact one of them, Speedy, had only been at Pertwood for a few weeks, with Alfie a little while longer. Alfie was already known to Barry, for he was one of the Bass horses that he had worked with in the brewery. David, Barry's son, had driven down from Stoke to help with the horses that day – to help calm them down if they were to get a little skittish. While Barry was on the reins, most of the time he was not needed, as you would have thought the pair had been working together for years. Both of these horses are very much in their prime and looked quite magnificent pulling around the set of harrows.

The field in which all this vintage gear was being used will be planted back into cereals in the autumn. Then the Clydesdales are hoped to be used with a vintage corn drill. Barry thinks it will take a couple of days to complete the drilling. Then at harvest time it will give them the opportunity to bring in more of the old machines to bring in the crop, watch this space. ■



Another rarity out for the day was the General Ordnance or G-O tractor.



The very rare 1933 Marshall 18-30.

