


The Power of the Plough





Preparing the land for sowing is a fundamental farming activity. Nowadays we tend to take this for granted; huge tractors make ploughing look effortless, and we are distanced from industrial farming by its complexity and hazards. However until recently it was less so; our cultures and traditions are steeped with references to the plough and it figures frequently in our literature and works of art.

As you would expect, rural museum collections contain significant numbers of ploughs. With increasing pressure on stores, and greater emphasis placed on communication and learning, the Rural Museums Network chose ploughs as a suitable subject for a Museums Association Effective Collections project.

Our project has several strands to it. The first is a review of ploughs in museums, as carried out by Catherine Wilson and her report 'Digging Deep' was published in 2011. This is one of a series of studies on agricultural artefacts in rural museums, working towards identifying a 'distributed national collection' of agricultural heritage material.

The second strand has been to consider and review how museums could interpret ploughs and ploughing. I'm very grateful to Sally Ackroyd and Judith Carruthers for creating this resource. I hope it gives you a few new ideas on how to make the most of your ploughs.

David Walker
RMN Chair

May 2012

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First Principles

The plough is the most widely used of all farm implements.



William Blackwood and Sons

▲ This single furrow plough was chosen as the cover image for Henry Stephens 1890 edition of the classic farming text book *Book of the Farm*. Die stamped in gold on a red cloth binding the iconic image is repeated on the cover of each volume.

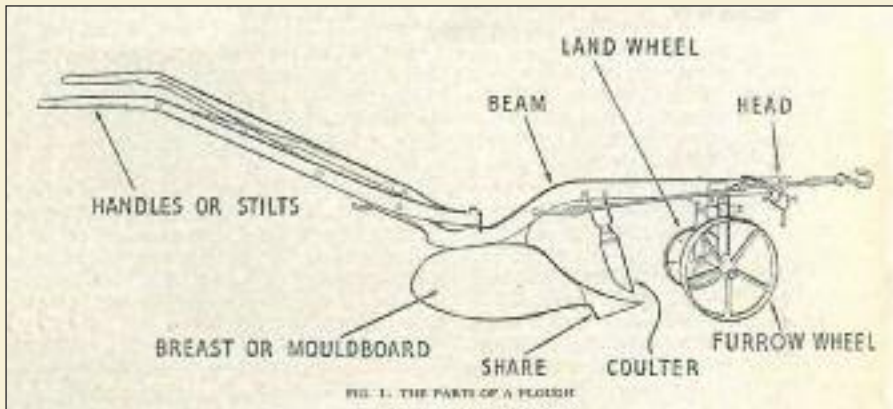
What does a plough do?

A plough allows a farmer to dig and turn the soil, so that seeds can be sown.

The act of ploughing 'enriches and aerates the soil, producing a fertile seed bed ideal for the germination and growth of a new crop' (Roy Bridgen, *Ploughs and Ploughing*, 1998).



How does it do it?



A traditional single furrow horse-drawn plough has a simple form:

Key Parts

The parts are all mounted on a backbone, or **beam**

The **coulter** – a knife which makes a vertical cut in the soil

The **share** – makes a horizontal cut

Mouldboard, or **breast** gently turns over the slice of soil cut by the coulter and share.

The depth of the furrow slice can be altered by adjusting the height of the **wheels**.

The plough is attached to the pulling animals at the **head**

At the end of the furrow the ploughman lifts the share clear of the soil using the **handles**, which he also uses to guide the plough in the correct line.

A modern, tractor-drawn plough works on the same principle, but usually there are several sets of coulter, share and mouldboard and an automatic arrangement for lifting the plough at the end of the row.

How to Display Them?

Here we put forward a few ideas on finding the right space to display your ploughs, or some alternatives if their sheer size or number mean you have to think laterally.

Outside Displays

Mill Green Museum, Welwyn Hatfield



▲ **As set-dressing** giving interest and flavour to outside areas of the museum.

▼ **In a relevant context**

Chiltern Open Air Museum



The ploughs on display in the grounds of our mill and museum provide an insight into our local rural heritage and how much the local area has changed over the centuries. They provide a useful starting point for discussions about the mechanisation of agriculture, local food production and how the area has changed from being essentially rural to a more urban environment.

Jenny Oxley,
Mill Green Museum
and Mill

As part of our plans to display our artefacts as they might have appeared in their working life, we are building a small thatched 'hovel' to house the ploughs. This should allow us more space to interpret them and in itself will be an appropriate period means of storing them. It will also reflect the poor state of agricultural buildings locally in the mid 19th century. The plough shelters will be a lower version of these we built for our lambing fold. [On the right of the above photo].

Conway Rowland, Chiltern Open Air Museum

We would really like to do more but are not sure how. The plough is not currently on display but it could be ...
Ruth Howard, Vale and Downland Museum

Inside Displays

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading



▲ **An aesthetic arrangement** allowing the form of the ploughs to be seen very distinctly.

Yorkshire Museum of Farming



▲ **Racked up the wall** – At the Yorkshire Museum of Farming the building itself provides some context, and a little interpretation material completes the display.

Ploughs are difficult to store or display in an accessible way but an arrangement like this allows for large amounts of material to be visible, albeit resulting in the need for a lighter touch approach to interpretation.
Oliver Douglas,
Museum of English Rural Life



Why did we choose to mount it vertically? It is an unusual choice, I know, but it seems to work, as it attracts more attention than if it were in the conventional position. Parts of the plough can be seen more readily by visitors, it saves floor space (an important consideration) and it relates well to the horse's head that was carved especially for this use by one of our technical team.

Robin Hill,
Museums Worcestershire

▲ Vertically

▶ 'Exploded'

This 'exploded' plough is a sales model of the Oliver 99. It gives an unusual view of how all the parts of the plough fit together.

Duncan Dornan,
National Museum of Rural Life,
East Kilbride



National Museum of Rural Life, East Kilbride

▼ Open storage

Manx National Heritage has over 20 ploughs in its collection, some on display, some in use, and 9 in the Large Object Store, which form part of the regular public tours of the building.

Courtesy of Manx National Heritage



Alternatives or Additions to the Real Thing



In the Agriculture Gallery at the Science Museum we have a series of tiny model ploughs on show, featuring both British and "Foreign" plough types dating from about 1926 ...

Jane Insley,
Science Museum

▲ Small-scale models





▲ **Other objects featuring ploughs** such as ceramics with Speed the Plough motifs or even a grave headstone. This 1753 example is from the Liberton Kirk yard in Edinburgh.

- **Films** There are numerous excellent films of people ploughing; as part of their daily work, at ploughing matches, and also some modern ploughing at heritage sites. Pathe News, and the Ministry of Agriculture produced some of the vintage films, but many more are available.
- **Sound recordings** of oral history, poems and songs, are all available to enhance a plough display.

A couple of useful sources are:

www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/seamus-heaney-follower/1395.html

Link to a film of the poet John Hegley looking at the Seamus Heaney poem about his father, a ploughman called *Follower*

<http://funwithfolk.com/en/songs/35-all-songs/80-faithfulplough.html>

Link to a recording of *The Faithful plough* put together by the English Folk Dance and Song Society

Stories Ploughs Can Tell

A thread, which we suggest runs through most of these themes, is the potential to include people and animals! It sounds simple, but is sometimes forgotten, and is an effective way to engage visitors and help them to relate to the ploughs you have on display.

The ploughmen and the men who made the ploughs:

Faces – from photographs, paintings or live interpretation

Voices – from oral history recordings, or from poems, or songs, or contemporary writings

The motive power of **horses** and **oxen** – live, or in photos or paintings

We have not made the point in every section, but just suggest that this social history method of working can help to engage your audiences.

Ploughs can play a key role in:

► History of Agriculture

As we know, ploughs are a pivotal tool in agriculture, often chosen as the iconic object to represent farming. How can you do a history of agriculture display without using a plough? This general agriculture display at the Museum of Lakeland Life is a mixture of objects and styles, but of course includes a plough.



Reproduced by courtesy of the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry, Kendal, Cumbria



◀ The Museum of English Rural Life gives another general take on the history of agriculture; a mural behind a horse-drawn plough and a tractor, from an original artwork by Andrew Davidson.



The mural shows a comparison between mid-nineteenth century and mid-twentieth century agriculture, contrasting horse-based technologies with mechanised technologies, as well as other 'spot the difference' style contrasts.

Oliver Douglas,
Museum of English Rural Life

► The Farming Year

A slight variation on the agricultural history theme is to think about the farming year, a useful vehicle for displaying different types of equipment; harrows, drills, mowers, reapers etc though you might need to use a plough in every season ...



Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

► Manufacturers

Much of the history of Ransomes, an Ipswich company is told in the displays at the Museum of East Anglian Life.



► Types of Plough

At the Rural Life Centre in Tilford, the ploughs are divided up into horse-drawn, wooden bodied, tractor and specialist ploughs.

Chris Shephard,
Rural Life Centre



Rural life centre



THE USE OF SEVERAL SORTS OF PLOUGHS IN ENGLAND: Engraving 1748

- a. The Lincolnshire Plough
- b. Plough invented by the Sussex men, known as the single-wheel plough
- c. Four-wheel drill plough
- d. Shows the right-hand side and upper side of the four-coultre plough

- e. Brass plough
- f. Spanish plough
- g. Dray plough
- h. Hertfordshire wheel plough
- i. Cambridgeshire plough
- k. Four-coultre or four-share plough
- l. Two-wheeled plough used in Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire

◀ There are even historical illustrations which complement typological displays, as in this engraving from *The Universal Magazine* of 1748.

Ploughs can be linked to other less obvious themes too:

Use a plough in these less obvious topics and you might intrigue your visitors and spark their imagination.

© The British Library Board, Cotton Tiberius B, v Part 1, folio 3r. Filename 071970



◀ **Pre-Industrial Britain** – Working the land was such a key part of daily life that it features in many images. Ploughing with wheeled plough and oxen is shown in the Bayeux tapestry and also in illuminated manuscripts such as this 11th century calendar.





▲ **Archaeology** – Many ancient sites are no longer visible in the landscape, having being ploughed out, particularly since the introduction of mechanised ploughing. Conversely, countless sites and finds have been discovered by chance through ploughing, the Mildenhall Roman hoard being just one example.



◀ **Art and Design** – Ploughs have featured in some stunning artworks. The Ralph Steadman images used here show a few recent examples.



▲ Untitled, by J. Locke, late 19th century

Many collections hold paintings featuring ploughing which could be loaned, or used as prints as part of an art themed exhibition. These examples are from Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Manx National Heritage.



▲ *Baldwin Valley – Light & Shadow* by William Hoggatt, (1920s-1930s)



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AND THE WOMAN WHO DRIVES IT™**



SERIES 409
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EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE**

◀ Designers produced several Second World War campaign posters featuring ploughs. They are very much of their time, this one with its 1930s sun-ray motif, and deserve their place in the history of graphic design.

▼ ***Ploughs as inspiration for an artist*** – Though this project took place in 1989, it demonstrates a direct link between ploughs and contemporary artists, and as such is still an inspiring example.

Warwickshire Museums Service



Warwickshire Museums Service

We were funded to commission four Warwickshire-based artists to explore our collections and produce work based on what inspired them. This included running workshops for the public, and for Chris Carter this meant setting up his wheel and all the other bits of equipment in the gallery!

Chris Carter was, and still is, a much admired studio potter. He was particularly taken by two objects – an axe head from the Archaeology collection, and a plough from Social History. His experimental pieces, of which he made many, incorporated elements of both objects. He has always said that this experience of working with us and our collections had a profound influence on his development as a potter, which was lovely. Maggie Wood, Warwickshire Museum Service

- **Landscape History** – Ploughs have irrevocably changed the landscape.

Victoria & Albert Museum



▲ John Constable's *Spring Ploughing*, 1821.

This Constable painting shows what was previously commonland, probably being ploughed for the first time, having just been enclosed, drastically changing its role and features.

© IWM (Art.IWM ART ID 4055)



◀ This Henry Trivick image of 1944 shows us someone from the Women's Land Army and a plough 'reclaiming' land in Buckinghamshire.



◀ *Inventing Landscape* exhibition, at Callendar House, Falkirk in 2011.

Essentially the exhibition was about getting people to look at the landscape differently and think about how we view landscape now and how it was created. So I displayed the tools the land was tended and altered with beside a painting of what we consider a 'beautiful' landscape. Because the exhibition space is in the middle of a designed landscape it encouraged people to look at the park to see how years of working done to the land made the artificial look natural and echo what was considered beautiful at the time it was being created. Old postcards showed the fashionable beauty spots and old photographs of the glass houses and park land showed the work and the production of the landscape. The final panel brought the idea up to modern times and asked the question of what is a 'natural landscape' and how does conservation deal with this. At this stage I added some contemporary art to show landscape from a totally different, non traditional, view.

Niamh Conlon, Callendar House, Falkirk



• The First World War

© IWM (Art.IWM ART 2618)



▲ This Imperial War Museum painting by Cecil Aldin shows a Land Girl ploughing in 1918. In 1916 the Prime Minister Lloyd George drew attention to the seriousness of the food shortages that were affecting the country as a result of the war. This resulted in the 'Plough Policy which was designed to markedly extend the area under tillage.' (Clarke, G. *The Women's Land Army*, 2008)

We are planning a major exhibition about the First World War in 2014, and I am hoping to display one of the ploughs which we have in storage as part of that to illustrate the impact of the war on agriculture.

Matthew Richardson, Manx Museum

• **The Second World War** – The wartime home food production drive meant that ploughs were used extensively, even on land that had not been ploughed in living memory.

► Laura Knight, *Land Army Girl*

The 1939 Cultivation of Lands Order ordered 'that additional land is brought under the plough with all speed. The aim is to obtain for next year's harvest an increase of about 1½ million acres in the tillage area in England and Wales compared with the acreage in June last.' So, the men who were not in the Forces, and the Womens Land Army workers were out ploughing either with horses, or with a tractor.



▼ Customs and Traditions –

Plough Jags, Plough Sunday, Plough Monday, Plough Alms are some of the customs associated with ploughs and of course all have regional variations.

North Lincolnshire Museums Service



One of the cases in the Folklore section at the North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe. It concentrates on the Plough Jag plays and Haxey Hood festival.

Plough Jag items on display include part of a Hobby Horse costume, play scripts, a 'Largus' lamp carried by the players when collecting alms and an accordion used by the Burton-upon-Stather Plough Jag team.

Jennifer Dunne,
North Lincolnshire Museum
Service

▼ Sustainability and World Agriculture –

Ploughing with animals creates a perfect cycle of production and a model of sustainability to be explored. Animals power the plough, to grow food and their own fodder, and create manure for the fields. The Acton Scott school session (see page 32) uses these ideas, which could also work well in displays.



famafica.org.uk

Across the world many people still use animals to draw their ploughs. The animals include water buffalo, oxen, ponies, donkeys, mules and horses.



Ideas for Events

Celebrating traditional Farming Year events

- **Plough Sunday blessings** – Plough Sunday celebrations usually involve bringing a plough or or ploughshare into a church with prayers for the blessing of the land. It is traditionally held on the Sunday after Epiphany, the Sunday between 7 and 13 January. Accordingly, work in the fields did not begin until the day after Plough Sunday: Plough Monday.



◀ At the Museum of East Anglian Life, volunteers dress up in Victorian clothes and walk from the museum to the nearest church, pushing a plough dressed up with ribbons, which is blessed by the priest outside the church.

- **Plough plays** are so named because they are traditionally performed on or near Plough Monday, the performers known by different names, according to their geographical area. Names include Plough-jags, Plough-bullocks or Plough witches. Traditionally the plough plays were part of the entertainment that accompanied soliciting for money from the residents of the big houses in the local area. The threat was that if they received nothing, they might plough up the ground around these houses. Traditional Morris Men still perform these plays, particularly in the East Midlands:

See a traditional Plough Play, performed by the Foresters Morris Men outside the Brewhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham on www.youtube.com/watch?v=n85leBsFTnU



▲ **The Somerset Rural Life Museum holds a Wassail evening every January**, on the nearest Saturday to the 17th January (Old Twelfth Night). Wassailing is a traditional way of passing on good wishes for health and prosperity by sharing a bowl or cup of spiced drink. In Somerset, as in other cider-producing counties, it is also aimed at ensuring a good apple harvest.

- In East Anglia, **Molly Dancers** were part of the Plough Monday activities, and were the entertainment part of the money collecting that was carried out on plough Monday. Molly Dancing is regarded by some as the East Anglian form of Morris. There was a revival of the dance tradition in the late 20th century, so you can still see live Molly Dancing. The dancers can look very threatening with their heavily blackened faces, but this was part of their traditional disguise to help avoid identification by the authorities.

It is an opportunity to remind visitors of several mid-winter customs, including Plough Monday. We usually put this plough (a small wooden ridging plough) at Reception and dress it with greenery and ribbons and interpret it with a small interpretation board and some images. It is usually there for about a week.

David Walker,
Somerset Rural Life
Museum



www.old-glory.org.uk/index.htm

The Ouse Washes formed in Norfolk in the 1980s have a more contemporary interpretation of Molly Dancing with both male and female dancers taking lead roles.

www.ousewashes.com/Ouse_Washes_Molly_Dancers/ousewasheshome.html

A search for Molly Dancers brings up other groups and examples.

- **Ploughing demonstrations** are a great way of involving visitors. Visitors attending 'Join in on the farm' weekends at Chiltern Open Air Museum are able to take part in ploughing activities.

We got visitors to go through the actions which form the basic functions of a plough using a spade, so that they could understand how it works. As part of the same activity we also gave visitors the chance to have a go at changing a plough share on a tractor mounted plough. All of this provided great interpretation, but was quite human resource heavy!

Conway Rowland, Chiltern Open Air Museum

◀ Molly Dancers in the barn at the Museum of East Anglian Life.

The Old Glory Molly Dancers borrow a single furrow plough from us each year for Plough Monday. They perform at the Rumburgh Buck, a village pub near Halesworth in Suffolk. They have been very supportive and each year give the Museum a donation from their collections taken from their winter programme of performances. I did attend it one Monday evening in the dark (they were quite scary!). They arrived by foot along the road with the plough, performed some dances then did a toast to the plough with the words "God speed the plough".

Stephen Mael,
Longshop Museum

▼ **Regular ploughing** – As part of the annual cycle of farming, some sites ensure that visitors are able to watch and use these occasions to demonstrate different styles of ploughs.

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



- **Ploughing as an activity in major events** – Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse hold *Horse Power!* days in September to celebrate the work of the Suffolk Punch heavy horses, which of course includes ploughing. Shugborough Park Farm hosts a *Steam Fair* at which visitors can watch horse-drawn ploughing.

- **Adult courses** – As part of their traditional rural craft and trade courses, Acton Scott Historic Working Farm run *Match Ploughing* courses and *Ploughing with Heavy Horses*. For more details:

www.actonscott.com/uploads/files/2012-traditional-rural-craft-and-trade-courses.pdf

As far as possible, ploughing of the Manx National Heritage land holdings around Cregneash is done with horses and forms part of the farming demonstrations at Cregneash Village Folk Museum.
Yvonne Cresswell,
Manx National Heritage

Working with community groups

Museum of East Anglian Life



◀ **Allowing local groups access** – At the Museum of East Anglian Life, local tractor clubs help to plough, roll and harrow their fields ready for crop planting.

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



◀ **Working with groups to provide assisted voluntary work** – At Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, a group of adults with learning disabilities visit weekly as part of their involvement with the Assist Trust. They take part in farm chores as part of their learning experiences and are currently involved in renovating some of the working plough collection.

- **Hosting club events** – The Rural Life Centre in Tilford, Surrey is working with the Central Southern Vintage Agricultural Club to host their *Days Gone By* event in 2012.

- **Ploughing matches** tend to be split into modern, vintage and horse-drawn categories. Local matches take place across the country and the *British National Ploughing Championships* occurs annually.

- **How museums have been involved**
Lending a plough – some museums have lent ploughs for matches as well as for the blessing of the plough before a major international ploughing match.

Part of this is hoped to be a ploughing demonstration on the adjoining farm and ... one or more of our ploughs may be involved. In addition to this though, the visitors will be able to study our ploughs in the gallery for comparison with those being used.
Chris Shephard,
Rural Life Centre,
Tilford

Beamish Museum



Manx National Heritage has also hosted matches at Cregneash Folk Museum as part of the Manx calendar of organised ploughing matches across the island.

◀ **Hosting matches** – Beamish, the Living Museum of the North, annually hosts a ploughing match in October which showcases horse-drawn ploughs in two classes: high cut and general purpose.



Competing – some museums which have working tractors or horses to drive their ploughs have competed in ploughing matches, and sometimes won!

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



◀ The Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse team of Caspar, Bowler and Richard came 3rd overall in this Suffolk Horse Society ploughing match in 2010.

• **Static ploughs interpretation** – Most of the events already mentioned rely on farmland being available for museums to demonstrate how ploughs work. For some museums, this is not an option and they look at other ways of interpreting ploughs for visitors.

▶ **Activity trails** – In their family activity pack, Denny Abbey and the Farmland Museum has a sheet which encourages visitors to compare different types of ploughs.





◀ **Simple interactives** – At the Museum of English Rural Life, the farming year is depicted in a large steel ring, situated near to its display of ploughs. Visitors can purchase brass rubbing papers and crayons and create rubbings of sections of the farming cycle.



◀ **Dressing ploughs**
– At Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse ploughs have been decorated with ribbons at the Easter Fair, with some interpretation nearby of some plough customs.

- **Human interpretation** – The Museum of English Rural Life is training volunteers, who dress up in historic costume, to lead family tours around their displays.



Ideas for schools

Most museums currently report limited use of ploughs with schools. They mainly featured in the following sessions:

- Interpreting Victorian life
- Demonstrating how farming has changed over time
- Showing the system of food production on farms
- Looking at evidence of sustainable farming and food production on historic farms

Most school groups were Key Stage One and Two (pupils aged 5 – 11 years) with a greater percentage being Key Stage One (5 – 7 Years old).

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



We use awe and wonder to get the children interested!

Maurice Hewins,
Rural Life Centre,
Farnham

▲ **Interpreting Victorian life** – At Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and at the Rural Life Centre in Farnham, Surrey, school groups take part in a carousel of activities looking at different features of Victorian life such as Victorian School, Laundry and Farming. At Farnham, in the *Farmer's Boy* session, the processes of farming are discussed with as much hands-on activity for the pupils as possible. Ploughs on display are explored through questioning the pupils, and if possible, one plough is available that can be harnessed to the pupils so they can see the power needed to pull it.



▲ **Demonstrating how farming has changed over time** – Acton Scott Historic Working Farm runs a session *A Farm through Time* which is the story of a farming community through the ages, from an Iron Age farmstead to a prosperous Victorian estate. In one activity, children discover how the land was cultivated in the medieval period by playing the part of ploughman and oxen, using a specially designed plough. Six children can be harnessed to this plough and can experience how this would feel.

In another session just introduced at Acton Scott based on Michael Morpurgo's book *Farm Boy*, schools groups compare the experiences of ploughing with horses and tractors, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages.

- **Showing the system of food production in a farm** – The Museum of East Anglian Life has a teacher-led 'Bread and Butter Trail' which takes the school group across their site, finding out about the stages through which bread and butter are made. Static displays of ploughs are investigated as pupils look at the processes of cultivating wheat.

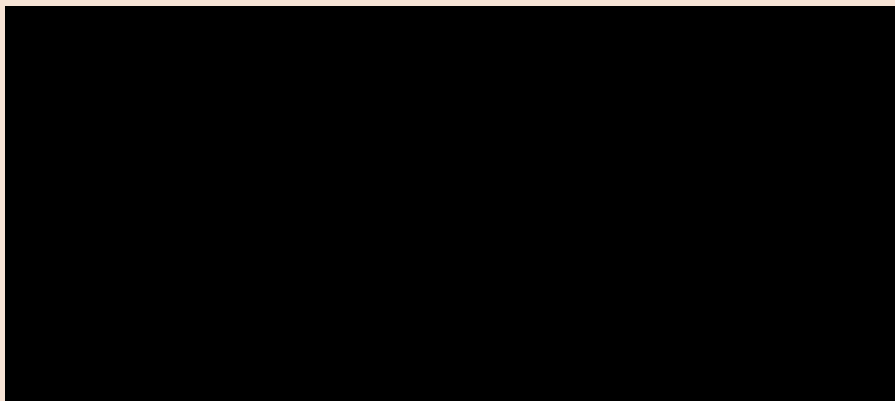


Sustainable farming and food production – Acton Scott runs a session in which children are set a series of challenges that help them look for evidence of sustainable farming and food production on the historic

working farm. Processes of ploughing are investigated as children learn how the farm relied on both horse and human energy to survive. By the end of the session, they should be able to start debating the question 'Was Acton Scott a sustainable farm?'

Useful techniques/tips

- **Use a story** as a structure for the activity or to stimulate interest and make your offer more crosscurricular e.g. *Farm Boy* by Michael Morpurgo is great for contrasting horse and tractor power as it includes a ploughing match between horse-drawn plough and tractor-drawn plough.



(c) Michael Foreman 1997 with permission from HarperCollins Children's Books

- Involve schools in **intergenerational projects** to discover the stories behind your collections. Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life is working with two secondary schools to interview and record older people about changes in farming locally. These oral histories will be related to the objects, including ploughs, in their collection. This will be used to generate a temporary exhibition which will then hopefully feed into their permanent displays.
- **Folklore** such as customs surrounding Plough Sunday could also be used to illuminate the farming year, especially relevant for school groups who are visiting your museum as a local study.
- Put the ploughing processes into a **current global context** – many countries are still using animal drawn ploughs.



▼ Identify a **small plough** such as a donkey plough that is light enough for staff to work with so children can get a closer look at how it operates. At the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, volunteer staff, many of whom are retired farmers, show children how a plough works by manoeuvring this type of plough.



Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

- Create a **model plough** as Acton Scott Historic Working Farm has done that allows children to be harnessed to it so they can comprehend more effectively the power involved in operating ploughs.
- Remember that resources and activities that are developed for school groups **can also be used for families**.



Curriculum links

Farming is not explicitly mentioned in the National Curriculum between Key Stage 1 – 3 but museums found that schools tended to be interested in:

Healthy eating: Looking at how food is sourced and the different ways of cultivating it

- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) and Citizenship curriculum: Developing a healthy safer lifestyle.
- Geography: Knowledge and understanding of places.
- Science: Life processes and living things.

Sustainable farming issues

- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) and Citizenship curriculum: Preparing to play an active role as citizens; Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle.
- Geography: Knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development.
- History: Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes.

Historical study: Either focussing on Victorians or the Second World War, or as a study in change over time

- History: Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes; Historical enquiry.

A new national curriculum is being published from 2013 onwards, but the above curriculum links should still give a pertinent focus for schools sessions.



Did You Know?

A few interesting snippets!

Ploughing ceremonies take place in other countries as well. In Thailand it marks the start of the season when paddy land is prepared for rice cultivation. The King presides over this ceremony which is a key feature on the agricultural year. In Sweden and other northern European countries, there is a pagan ceremony, *Charm the Plow*.

The phrase '**God speed the Plough**' is derived from a wish for success and prosperity in a new undertaking, and dates back to medieval times. It appeared in songs sung by plough-men during Plough Monday celebrations.

In 1985–6, a team of volunteers in Hook, Berkshire **restored a 1940s plough** that had been found in the village. The plough is displayed on the village green as "a reminder of Hook's agricultural past and a monument to the once green fields which have fallen victim over the years, one by one, to development." Hook Parish Council

A **Festival of the Plough** takes place annually in Epworth, north Lincolnshire which starts off with the blessing of the plough.

www.festivaloftheploUGH.co.uk

The Plough is a common pub name, having been in use since at least the 16th century. Its alternative spelling Plow, is also found. During the Plough Sunday celebrations, a collection would be raised in the parish and the 'plow money' was used to brew a special plough ale.

An acre, is a unit of land which can be ploughed by one ploughman and a team of horses with a single furrow plough in one day. (For the ploughman to achieve this he will have walked 11 miles!)

Delirium – means not being able to plough straight! It is derived from the Latin *lira* (the ridge left by the plough) hence the *ver de-lira're*, to make an irregular ridge or balk in ploughing. *Deli'rus* is one whose mind is not properly tilled or cultivated, a person of irregular intellect, and delirium is the state of a person whose mental faculties are like a field full of balks or irregularities. (E. Cobham Brewer 1810 – 1897 – *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* 1898.)

Resources

Farming and Country Education: a charity that aims to educate children and young people about food and farming in a sustainable countryside. In particular, this website has useful school resources.
www.face-online.org.uk/

Food – a fact of life: Website run by the British Nutrition Foundation to promote “a progressive approach to teaching about healthy eating, cooking, food and farming from 3 to 16 years.”
www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

Grain Chain programme: This website is a curriculum linked education resource for teachers and parents to inform school-aged children about the story of grain-based food – from the farm to mill to plate. It is a collaboration of the HGCA, Federation of Bakers (FoB) and Flour Advisory Bureau (FAB)
[www. grainchain.com/](http://www.grainchain.com/)

Practical Action: Good resources about farming globally including an image gallery.
<http://practicalaction.org/schools>

Society of Ploughmen: A registered charity run by volunteers from the farming community. It is responsible for the organisation of the British National Ploughing Championships and for managing the England World and European Ploughing Teams.
www.ploughmen.co.uk

A summary of Plough Monday traditions with some contemporary reports and a good geographical spread of traditions throughout the UK
www.squidoo.com/plough-monday-tales

UK Agriculture: This has some excellent materials, including a *History of Farming & the Landscape*.
www.ukagriculture.com/

Literary references

This is just a subjective list of a few books worth looking at:

Bramwell Martyn, *World Farming* (Usbourne Understanding Geography), Usbourne, 1995 (non-fiction, 8 years upwards)

Blythe, Ronald. *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village*, Penguin, 2005
Life in small rural Suffolk village told through reminiscences of its residents, originally published in 1969.

Collis, John Stewart. *The Worm Forgives the Plough*, Vintage Classics, 2009
Account of life as a farmhand in different farms across England in 1940s.

Ewart Evans, George. Famous oral historian who wrote several books, notably *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* and *The Horse in the Furrow*. Both published by Faber and Faber.

Gibbons, Gail. *Farming, Holiday House*, 1990 (non-fiction 5 – 7 years)

Heiney, Paul. *Home Farm – A Practical Guide to the Good Life* Dorling Kindersley (non-fiction, adults)

Morpurgo, Michael. *Farm Boy*, Harper Collins, 2011 (fiction, 8 years upwards)

Heaney, Seamus. *Following taken from Open Ground: Poems 1966 – 1969*, Faber and Faber, 2002

Zeuner, Diana. *The Working Horse Manual* (non-fiction, adults)



Thank You

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Aberdeenshire Museums Service
Acton Scott Historic Working Farm
Agricultural Museum, Brook
Atholl Country Life Museum
Avoncroft Museum
Beamish, The Living Museum of the North
Bedford Museum
Charnwood Museum
Chiltern Open Air Museum
Corinium Museum
Dales Countryside Museum
Falkirk Community Trust
The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
Highland Folk Museum
Long Shop Museum
Manx National Heritage
Museum of East Anglian Life
Museum of English Rural Life
North Lincolnshire Museum Service
Priests House Museum
Rural Life Centre – Old Kiln Museum Trust
Rutland County Museum
St Fagans National History Museum
Science Museum
Somerset Rural Life Museum
Staffordshire County Council Museums
Stockwood Discovery Centre
Vale & Downland Museum
Thornbury Museum
Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life
Warwickshire Museums Service
Weald & Downland Open Air Museum
Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service
Worcestershire County Museum
Yorkshire Museum of Farming

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