

Earlspark proves a perfect venue for ploughing event

■ Pauline Scott

The people of south Roscommon turned out in large numbers on Sunday last for the annual County Roscommon Ploughing Championships held in Earlspark, Ballydangan.

While there had been predictions of very harsh cold weather on Sunday, the promised freeze did not transpire and organisers were relatively lucky the prevailing weather on Easter Sunday. However, the numbers in attendance at what is the largest outdoor agricultural event in County Roscommon, were probably effected by the large parades being held in both Roscommon and Strokestown on the same day.

Greene's farm in Earlspark proved an exceptional venue, with lots of parking in the vicinity and a great location on the old Ballinasloe to Athlone Road. At the launch of the event in the Birchgrove a week earlier, Pdraig Greene had expressed the hope that the plough men and women wouldn't come across too many big stones and the lea turned in Earlspark on Sunday was certainly rich, with ploughing competitors turning up few if any of the aforementioned stones.

Speaking to Roscommon People after the event, Pdraig was delighted with Sunday's event. "We are absolutely thrilled and delighted with the way the whole event went. The weather held off just long enough and we were happy with the crowd, the Roses and the tug-o-war. We are hugely grateful to all our friends, and neighbours and members of the local

committee involved in fundraising for the event."

Supermac's was main sponsor of the event, fitting given that the business was started by Pat McDonagh in Ballinasloe, and the Supermac's mobile unit proved a very popular meeting place throughout the day on Sunday. Another popular spot was the crafts tent, where visitors could see a range of crafts from yesteryear in operation, from a blacksmith, to a wood carver and much more. Darragh McCulloch of 'Ear to the Ground' fame was present with the Model Pet Farm and a cheesemaker and chocolatier added to the variety of goods on display.

Rose of the Plough featured eleven Roses and the eventual winner was Deirdre Devine from Ardkeen-an, Drum. Organisers will be very pleased with the number of competitors that took part and the ease of getting to the site and its central nature probably helped entice competitors from all corners of the country. South Roscommon Vintage Club put on a very impressive display on the day and the number of trade stands at the event was also well up on previous years.

In this post-Celtic Tiger era, helicopters are becoming an increasingly rare sight, even over the hallowed turf of Ballybrit in August, but Earlspark proved sufficient attraction for one mystery visitor on Sunday, who viewed proceedings from the skies and no doubt was well impressed by the spectacle spread out beneath them in Earlspark!



Joe Conneally, Offaly pictured at the 16th Annual Co. Roscommon Ploughing Championships and Field Day in Ballydangan

Ploughing results

2 Furrow Junior - Confined: 1st Michael Geraghty, Farnakelly, Fuerty, Co. Roscommon; 2nd Tim Fox, Mount Cashel, Roscommon.

2 Furrow Junior - Open: 1st Christy Carton Garryduff, Kilbeggan; 2nd Gerry Sheridean, Kilmaine, Mayo; 3rd Hugh Burke Corrandulla, Galway.

Horse - Open: 1st Philip Larkin, Clonfert, Ballinasloe.

Horse - Confined: 1st James Coffey, Lecarrow.

Under 21 - Open: 1st Sean Monaghan, Cranley, Edgeworthstown; 2nd Declan Hanley, Corrandulla, Galway; 3rd Liam Murphy, Ballinagarry, Roscrea.

Under 21 - Confined: 1st Ronan McGowan, Cloonshannagh, Rooskey.

Under 28 - Open: 1st David Dolan, Ballinagar, Tullamore, Co. Offaly; 2nd Aidan Kelly, Glen, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford.

Under 28 - Confined: 1st Alan Small, Cloverhill, Roscommon.

Farmerette - Open: 1st Cynthia Geelan, Newtownforbes.

3 Furrow Standard - Open: 1st Michael Reilly, Ballyduff, Moyne, Co. Longford; 2nd Nigel Ward, Cappataggle, Ballinasloe.

3 Furrow Standard - Confined: 1st John Morris, Mountplunkett, Lecarrow.

Vintage Single Furrow - Open: 1st Brono McCormack, Athboy, Co. Meath; 2nd Raymond Hogan, Borris O'Kane; 3rd John King, Clonrollagh, Longford.

2 Furrow Senior - Open: 1st Anthony Reynolds, Edgeworthstown; 2nd Pat O'Donnell, Coalisland, Tyrone; 3rd Sean Gilligan, Colmanstown, Ballinasloe.

3 Furrow Senior - Open: 1st Nigel Healion, Spollanstown, Tullamore; 2nd Bernie Jordan, Tirlicken, Ballymahon.

3 Furrow Senior - Confined: 1st Paddy Beirne, Ballymacurley

Vintage 2 Furrow Mounted (Diesel) - Open: 1st Paddy Doyle, Barndirrig, Wicklow; 2nd Eamon Murray, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford; 3rd Derek Stewart, Killashee, Co. Longford.

Vintage 2 Furrow Mounted (TVO) - Open: 1st John McBride, Claren, Birr; 2nd Aidan Hogan, Ballinderry, Borrisokane; 3rd Fred Dunne, Brookborough, Fermanagh.

Vintage 2 Furrow Trailer - Open: 1st Neil Scott, Newtownards, Co. Down; 2nd James Evans, Ballynacargy, Mullingar; 3rd Cecil Wray, Killylea, Armagh.

Vintage 2 Furrow Mounted - Confined: 1st Sean Ward, Creagh, Ballinasloe.

Loy Junior - Open: 1st Tom Cunningham, Mountbellew.

Loy Junior - Confined: 1st Gerry Browne, Antogher Rd., Roscommon.

Loy Senior - Open: 1st Packie O'Brien, Rathcabin, Roscrea; 2nd Packie Bohan, Collinstown, Co. Westmeath; 3rd Joe Kilbride, New Ross, Wexford.

Loy Under 21 - Open: 1st Brian Casey, Ohill, Drumlish, Co. Longford; 2nd Daniel Smith, Rathcabin, Roscrea; 3rd Michael Kennedy, Rathcabin, Roscrea.



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