

The following Article is taken from The Journal of Ardagh and Clonmacnois Antiquarian Society 1945 Journal (Volume 11 No. 10) It is presumed that the article was compiled by the late Canon M.J. Masterson.

Mohill Show

THE FIRST AGRICULTURAL SHOW

The First Agricultural Show in South Leitrim was held at Mohill on the 29th October 1844 - one hundred years ago.

The Society had been constituted earlier in the year (19th January) and while the landlords formed the majority of members the clergy and farmers were well represented. The patron was the Earl of Leitrim: his uncle Viscount Clements was the first President. On the Committee of Management we find Rev. James Hyde (grandfather of President Douglas Hyde) and four priests: Rev. J. Eivers, Rev. G. Gearty, Rev. M. Fanning, and Rev. James O'Farrell. While most of the names then dominating public affairs have disappeared - such as La Touche, Gore, Lawder, Irwin, Norris, we find many names still familiar such as O'Brien, Smyth, Shanley Little, Duke, Quinn, Reynolds, Cox, etc. The society based their rules on those of the Ballinasloe and Limerick societies: so those 1* "The S. Leitrim Society is established for the purpose of improving the general condition of the farming and labouring classes, by the introduction of an improved system of husbandry upon the small farms, by giving encouragement to rural manufactures suited to the circumstances of the country; and by awakening a spirit of emulation that may lead to the increased and more profitable employment of the population of the district".

The first meetings were practical. A sum of £147 was at once contributed, to advance loans to farmers and labourers for the purchase of seeds and farm implements and to finance the Show and ploughing matches. The tenants of the members had free entry to the competitions, other tenants had to pay only 1/-, 2/- or 3/- according to the size of the farms. It was co-operative in practice; only

the Clerk in charge of the Loan Fund received an honoarium.

The first Show (29th Oct. 1844, at Mohill) attracted 207 entries. Considering that it was the first venture and that there were no classes for farm and garden produce, for cookery, home industries and other sections now so popular, for cookery, home industries and other sections now so popular at all Irish Shows, the Show had a respectable start. The gentry supported it, of course, but they resigned five-sixths of the exhibits to the people. For educational purposes a display of machinery was staged, one item being "an iron tramp". All who saw the prize schedule, even Judge Wylie, are puzzled by the tramp. The best guess may be that the tramp is our dear friend the loy which is really a tramp or portable plough, so useful in uprooting bushes or rushes, so essential for bursting the adamant surface of Leitrim uplands, and which only a native of S. Leitrim or N. Longford can handle with ease and efficiency. Against this theory is the fact that the loy is mainly a wooden block. But the really effective portion is the heavy iron spade or coulter which fits into the wooden socket, and produces wonderful results.

A glance at the list of Exhibitors shows that Rev. Arthur Hyde exceeded all other by entering 16 exhibits. His name appears in almost every class. His name is perpetuated in Mohill, for we have Hyde St. - leading to the Dromod Road. This tribute was a spontaneous acknowledgement of high civic virtues. Lately Mohill paid a similar tribute to his grandson, President Hyde by naming a new group of houses "Hyde Terrace".

**WE DO NOT FORGET.
M.J.M.**