

Rain can't dampen community spirit at Peel-Dufferin Plowing celebration

Written By Riley Murphy

The Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association celebrated their 100 years as an association with its annual plowing match on Aug. 28.

Despite the on-and-off showers, Peel Dufferin Plowmen's Association president Glen Early shared that "even with the less than desirable weather, the community came out and supported us."

The event had nearly 300 visitors by the end of the day.

Attendees gathered around to celebrate the day, renew acquaintances and see the horse and mule teams as well as tractor competitors.

Some especially enjoyed seeing who was doing the plowing.

MPP Sylvia Jones for Dufferin-Caledon, MP Kyle Seebach for Dufferin-Caledon, and acting Caledon Mayor/Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen all tried their hand at plowing straight, neat, and uniform furrows.

Jones shared with the crowd that, "it is the most stressful thing that I do once a year, so good job keeping me honest."

She said when everyone comes together to celebrate their history, industries, and families, it makes them a community and strengthens them as a whole.

Councillor Sheen, who was crowned victorious in the competition against Seebach and Jones, says that after attending for three years and "learning so much," this was "the straightest furrow that he's ever plowed."

Aside from enjoying the various competitors, attendees also enjoyed the different types of plows.

A Rumely tractor was acting as a people mover that day, bringing attendees around the event.

Not only was a Rumley people mover present, but a Rumley competitor as well, the host farmer of the event Burt Speirs.

"Great to see the competitors, both on the horse team side, as well as the tractor side determined to come out and compete to the best of their ability in those conditions," said Early.

Early also touched upon how incredible it was to see the interest from the horse team competitors, as "you can imagine the effort it takes to bring a horse team from 20, 50, a 100, 150 miles away."

"It's the great history of the Peel-Dufferin match that attracts the competitors as well. They have a good, sound expectation that it's going to be a good match and it's going to be organized," he says.

Early said the event felt very intimate this year, and it was the smallest footprint he could imagine for many years.

"The foundation principles of this match is seeing people, [that you] maybe haven't seen in a year or more, come out and enjoy and celebrate," says Early.

Early shared the event was another in the series of successful plowing matches for Peel-Dufferin, "continuing on a tradition that started a hundred years ago."

The Albion Bolton Historical Society (ABHS) was in attendance at the event, showcasing research on the beginnings of the Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association.

They also brought advertisements for locally made plows in Bolton, some dating back to the pre-1900s, as well as one advertisement from 1925, which marks the first date of the Peel-Dufferin Plowmen's Association plowing match.

"We bring some inner knowledge to answer questions and point out things," shared Nathan Hiller, the current president of the Albion Bolton Historical Society.

A map was on display showcasing all the past locations of the plowing matches.

Hiller said the Peel Dufferin Plowmen's Association asked them to attend because "they understand the historical importance of not only the event, but of the legacy of the farming community here."

A long-standing tradition with the plowing matches across Ontario is the Queen of the Furrow competition.

Each local organization has the opportunity to send the winner of their competition to the Ontario Plowing Match, where approximately 30 teams compete.

Victoria Kolb was crowned the Peel-Dufferin Queen of the Furrow in 2024, and at the event, Nikki Intranuovo was introduced as the newly-crowned Queen.

Also available at the event was a chicken dinner, which Early said he heard a lot of positive feedback on.

"If you don't do anything else that day, you're going to make sure that the farmers in the area, they're going to be fed well, and if you check that box, that's a big win for us all."

Attendees were able to enjoy their chicken dinners either under the large gathering tent or while walking around, taking in the various plows and techniques, both from the past and the present.

"A big thank you to the sponsors, we're so lucky and appreciative to have that support for the match," said Early.