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Eight model ploughs, made for the Festival of Britain

A typographic fact sheet. No photographs.

In 1951 a set of scale-model ploughs stood in the Country Pavilion on the South Bank Exhibition site in London, under the Festival themes of “Land” and “People,” “alongside examples of modern tractor technology.”

What visitors could see

The set included a seventeenth-century Hertfordshire plough (MERL 52/68), a caschrom, a breast plough, a medieval plough, an eighteenth-century Hertfordshire plough, a Rotherham plough, a Kent plough and a Ley plough. The caschrom, or foot plough, takes its name from the Gaelic for “crooked foot,” and was used mainly in the Scottish Highlands on rocky ground a drawn plough could not reach. The breast plough was pushed from a T-shaped bar against the worker’s chest or thighs, and was still in common use into the early twentieth century.

What happened afterwards

After the Festival the newly formed Museum of English Rural Life acquired the models. The Kent plough and the Ley plough were later withdrawn from the collection. The whereabouts of the eighteenth-century plough “are not currently known.” Madeleine Ding, in the Museum’s 51 Voices essay “Ploughs and Progress,” writes that “the other five models still survive intact.”

Sources, checked 17 November 2026: Madeleine Ding, “Ploughs and Progress,” 51 Voices, Object 35, The MERL; The MERL, “Ploughs and Progress” object page. This is not a MERL publication. ploughs.farmyard.im is part of the ReallyByte network, run by REALLYBYTE, based in the Isle of Man. ReallyByte — Fun. Educational. Useless.