

Days of the Hay

NOEL McLOUGHLIN



The Tumbling Paddy

JF A first class machine for tedding, swath turning, side raking, and swath-scattering. Outstanding in hay and straw.

"HAYFLASH"

COMBINED HAYMAKER
type HSR FOR BETTER, FASTER AND CHEAPER HAY

PTO driven tines give:

- loose, light swaths – free of stones and no "topping".
- clean and gently treated grass without scratching the ground.
- adjustable speed of tine travel, enabling the machine to handle even the most brittle hay gently.

Close coupled 3 point linkage arrangement:

- gives a short compact unit with a small turning radius – excellent manoeuvrability especially on hillsides.
- no alteration between transport and field work.
- no unnecessary weight.

Time saving one man operation:

- quickly adjustable tine travel speed, without spinners.
- easily altered for the different types of work.

Simple but sturdy construction:

- giving reliability – and a really low price.
- Tines and guides of first class hardened spring steel.
- speedy scattering or tedding up to 6 m.p.h.
- Output about 2½ – 3 acres per hour.
- Working width 6 feet.
- Low weight 515 lbs. (235 kgs)
- Handlift for tractors without hydraulic linkage.
- A special drawbar for use behind a trailer can be supplied as an extra.

Low capital cost spread over more jobs increases profits.

It has to be said that hay is not the only thing missing from Irish meadows today. The cornrake is fighting for its very existence. I always thought the sound of the conrake's song was both plaintive and soothing. He could nearly sing you to sleep. I'm not sure about the butterfly, if they are as plentiful as they used to be? There is very little sun for them.

During our haymaking days which lasted, I suppose, up to around the early eighties, my own family built rucks of hay, as we called them, to dry it. I think when Debbie arrived in 1961 her hurricane strength winds lifted any rucks that were still in the meadows, some were swept away in Ballintrillick and landed in Cashelard. They say it's an ill wind.

Another way of drying hay was to make what were called hand shakings, named no doubt, because you could make them with your hand. They were much smaller than the ruck. Some people called the ruck, a tram cock. I'm not sure why or where the name came from.

I recall another way of drying hay was to make what we called laps. This was done by picking up a small bit of hay and making it into something like the shape of the

letter c but when you left it down, each end was on the ground with a hole in the middle. I remember this method was often a last resort when nearly everything was washed away. Shaking the hay with the pitchfork to dry it or turning the swathe with a rake was a slow enough process.

Long ago farmers used "A Tumbling Paddy" which was a horse drawn hay rake used for gathering in hay from rows. There was also the Hayflash, the Haybob and the hay baler, making life easier in the north west especially.

Silage has replaced hay mainly because the summers have become so bad and the land has become very wet. The last real dry meadow may have been Pat Murphy's, but then things were always sunny long ago. We brought in the rucks of hay in to the haggard, a distant memory now as this act is now also a thing of the past. My father built an object about the size of maybe four rucks and he called it a pike. Then he built two or three haystacks sometimes called a reek and we were set up for the season ahead, or more importantly, the cattle and the sheep were assured of some feed over the long winter months.