

Acton Scott Museum - 1943 Fordson Standard Tractor

A group of volunteers have restored a World War II Standard Fordson Tractor, which is owned by the Acton Scott Historic Farm Museum. This tractor is quite special because its first owner was Mr Jones of the Acton Scott Farm, the father of the current farmer, which is adjacent to the museum.

As can be seen in this picture, the tractor looked a little sad when it came to the museum, in need of sympathetic restoration.

A group of enthusiasts, who did not wish to see it deteriorate further, offered to help restore it to working condition.



The Fordson Standard was manufactured in the latter part of 1943 as part of the war effort, in order to help increase agricultural production. Originally it had steel wheels, as rubber was in short supply. Only tractors supplied to the services such as the RAF were permitted to use rubber tyres.

The tractor was not registered for use on the public road until 14th January 1947, when rubber tyred wheels would have been available, to prevent the road surface being harmed.

The cost of road tax was five shillings (25p) a year, and the tractor was given the registration number **DNT 429**.

The tractor remained at Acton Scott Farm until 1954, when it was sold and had some changes of ownership within quite a small patch of South Shropshire before being bought by the museum,



Mr E Jones has kindly supplied this photograph of the 1943 Standard Fordson pulling a binder for cutting corn, in his field just across the road from the museum. The tractor is being driven by Mr Jones' brother, and his father is sitting on the binder.

The photograph shows steel wheels fitted to the rear of the tractor, to give it more grip.

The Fordson has a 4.38 litre side valve engine which ran on Tractor Vapourising Oil (TVO). This is a cheaper distillate than petrol – a bit like paraffin. However, the engine has to be hot to use it, so the engine is started with petrol and then changed over to TVO. (TVO is no longer available, so central heating oil with a bit of added petrol is used instead!)

The engine has to be started with a handle, it has a hand throttle and only one foot pedal. Press down to release the clutch, (you have to stop to change gear), there are 3 forward gears and reverse. Press the pedal further and it applies the transmission brake. Put a hook over the pedal and it becomes the parking brake! There is no oil pressure pump; engine lubrication is achieved by what is known as 'splash'!

The final drive is via a worm gear, which prevents the tractor being towed to start the engine – which could prove difficult at times. Moving it without the engine running means taking the spark plugs out and winding the engine over by hand with it in gear. The engine has no carburettor and there is a knack to getting it to fire (as the restorers have found out!)



Here is the completed restoration, which was only possible thanks to help from the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled things like the body panels, tyres and radiator to be replaced.

Since restoration the main problem has been getting it into gear, with horrible noises emanating from the gearbox! The clutch plates have been replaced and it was hoped that the 'dish' on the new plates would assist release. However it has still been troublesome and it has been deduced that there is insufficient 'drag' in the gearbox to cause the clutch plates to part. One problem is that the original specification of oil is not readily available. Eventually a VG140 gear oil was sourced, but is evidently not heavy enough.

During final stages of restoration and testing, the tractor was viewed with interest by a technical manager from [Corgin](#). In conversation with the restoration team, the subject of gear oil was discussed, and a kind offer was made by Corgin to donate 20 litres of a VG220 gear oil, as used in heavy equipment drive gearboxes, to help overcome the issues with gear change.

This 1943 Fordson Standard tractor can be viewed at Acton Scott Historic Farm – for details please see www.actonscottmuseum.com