

# *Speed the Plough*

A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA



F H Noble and R Morgan

This profusely illustrated book traces the history of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, and shows the enormous effect that the Society and its predecessors have had on the development of Victoria, especially on the primary industries.

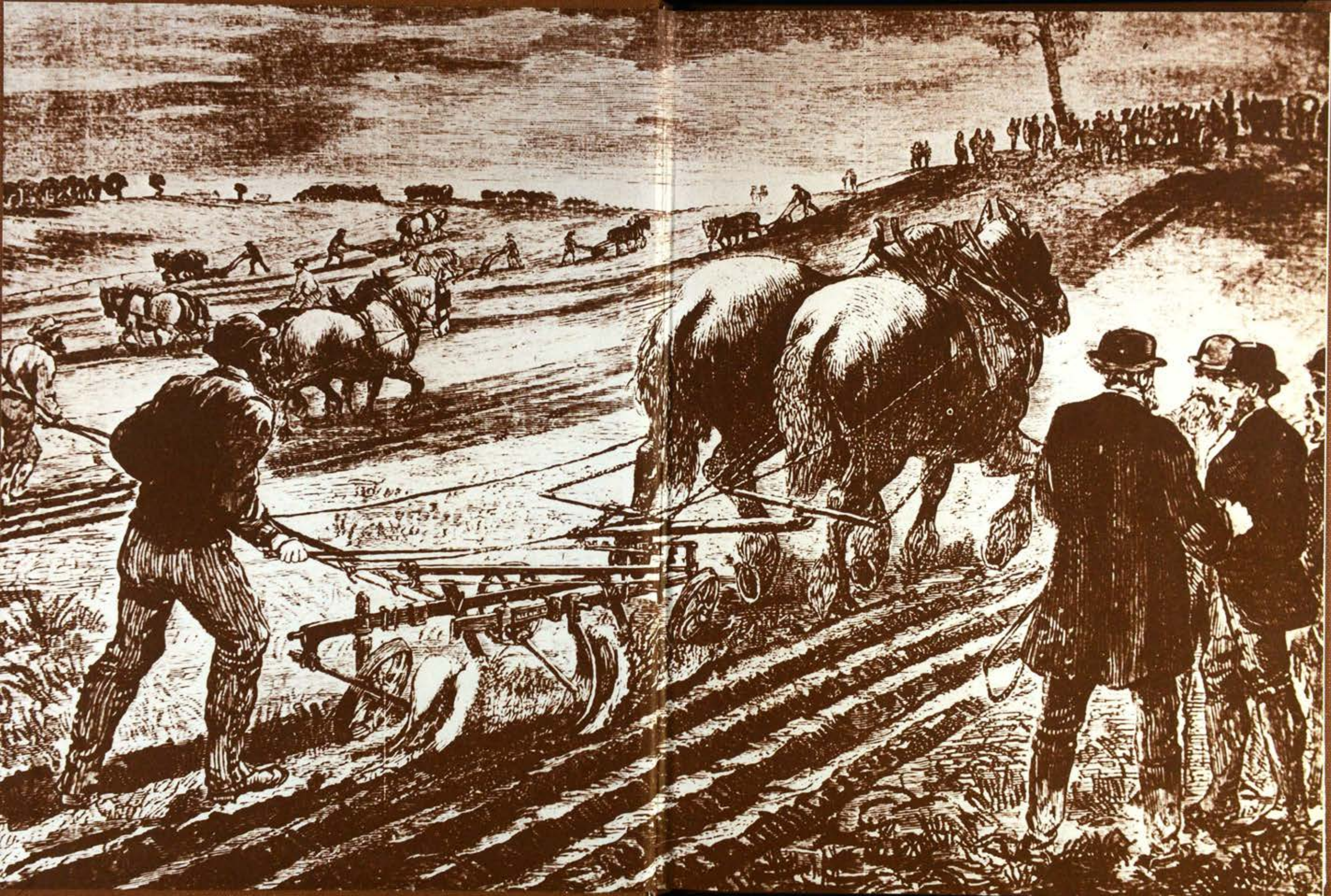
The RASV has mirrored the progress and development of Victoria from the early days of settlement to the present time. In times of adversity: droughts, floods, depressions and wars, the RASV has drawn extra strength and support for its activities from all sections of the community, and especially from the rural industries.

Throughout the years many competitions of skill have been associated with the Royal Melbourne Show: equestrian events, shearing, rough riding, sheaf-tossing and wood-chopping. Sheaf-tossing declined with the advent of the hay baler, but wood-chopping still continues as a main Show attraction. Stock judging is, of course, the basis of a successful agricultural show. The amusements and sideshows are part of this history; the 'showmen' are a vital part of the Show and have been ever since the first ploughing match in 1848. Their role, like that of the Society, has changed considerably over the years. The advent of television in 1956 undoubtedly was the main reason for the decline in 'tent shows', and the last appearance of these was in 1971 when the Jimmy Sharman boxing troupe closed up after the Show of that year. From that time on the 'showies' have concentrated on rides and games.

The controlling body of the RASV, the Council, gives the impression that it is self-generating but, whether by luck or design, has always been able to recruit the right type of person to further the aims of the Society. In the early days of its existence the Council had no fewer than six Members of Parliament guiding its interests. In this period the Society experienced the advantages that such a pressure group can have for an organisation. Regardless of the quality of the controlling body, the people who interpret its directions must be capable, and the Society has been fortunate with its selection of administrators and staff. These people have been dedicated and have guided the Society through good times and bad.

This history was commenced by the late Fred Noble, who died before the work was completed. The task of completing the book fell to Bob Morgan, who had worked closely with Fred Noble in research and compilation of notes for this history. The final work is a welcome contribution to the history of Victoria.







*Speed the Plough*



FIRST & GRAND CHAMPION PRIZE



LONGWOOL EWES

AGED BULL



PAIRED TEAM



SOW WITH HER OWN LITTER

FIRST PRIZE  
PONY STALLION



ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THE SNOW



A FAJADITE



# *Speed the Plough*

A HISTORY OF  
THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA  
*And its role in Developing Agriculture in Victoria*

*Compiled and written by*

Frederick Harwood Noble and Robert Morgan





**SPEED THE PLOUGH:** The motto of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria is as old as English literature and dates back to the Paxton Letters of the fourteenth century.

Let the wealthy and great  
Roll in splendour and state  
I envy them not, I declare it.

I eat my own lamb  
My own chickens and ham  
I shear my own fleece, and I wear it.

I have lawns, I have bowers,  
I have fruits, I have flowers,  
The larks are the morning's alarmer—

So jolly boys now,  
Here's God Speed The Plough,  
Long life and success to the farmer.

*(Unknown)*



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Designed by Peter Buckmaster



## FOREWORD

It is with pride that I introduce this history of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, the result of many years of research and preparation.

We are indeed fortunate that two men who have such a deep feeling for the Society combined to produce this book.

The late Mr Fred Noble had a long association with the Society as a journalist for the *Melbourne Age*. He was that paper's foremost Show reporter from 1923 to 1968, and even after retirement continued writing the cover story for the Show supplement. With such a long association with the Show he was the natural person for Mr Colin Woodfull, then the Director of the Society, to ask in 1968 to prepare a history. It is sad that deteriorating health and eyesight did not enable him to complete the work.

However, we were fortunate that Mr Robert Morgan, who had been the Society's popular Public Relations Manager, agreed to complete the work on his retirement in 1977. The personal friendship of these two men, and the fact that they had worked together for so long covering the activities of the Society, make them most fitting as joint authors.

Mr Noble died on 14 November 1978, so regrettably he will not see the finished history. As a tribute to him I could not do better than to quote his widow Mrs Nancy Noble, when she wrote:

I am convinced that the happiest days of Freddie's life were spent at the Show, and that the History of the Society, when it is published, will be the best possible memorial he could have.

I commend *Speed the Plough* to you. It is a very comprehensive history of Victoria's Royal Agricultural Society, and clearly demonstrates the Society's significant contribution to the improvement of farming in this State.



R. T. Balderstone, *President*  
*Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria*

*Melbourne*  
1981



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Completing this history has been an absorbing and satisfying experience, and has given me a much greater appreciation not only of the great Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, but also of activities in the early days of this State. I express my deep gratitude to all those people who have helped me, and who have shown an interest in this work.

The members of the Council of the RASV and the Director have all been sympathetic and encouraging in their appreciation of the problems associated with the completion of this project, and any members of the staff who were approached were more than willing to assist. All records in the archives of the Society have been made freely available to me, and for this I am grateful. To Mrs Nancy Noble, I express a special thanks for her help over a number of years, but more so in recent times. Mr and Mrs Peter Ronald also helped me considerably and I thank them for their guidance and interest. Miss Reynolds, and later Miss Kelly, and their staff at the La Trobe Library in Melbourne were most helpful, as was the staff of the State Library of Victoria. Miss McGovern at the Victorian Parliamentary Library was also most co-operative, as was Mr Spreadborough of the Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey. I sincerely appreciated the help given by the South Melbourne City Council, especially Mr Long, who finally tracked down and plotted the original site of the St Kilda Road Showgrounds, and the staff of the Titles Office also greatly assisted with their knowledge of the early transfers of land to the Society.

To my family who have encouraged and supported me over this period, I express my thanks, and I trust that they and all who have helped will receive the same pleasure in reading this work as I have experienced in completing it.

It is difficult for me to write the acknowledgements, as the two people responsible for initiating this work are now dead. It is my opinion that this history would not have been written but for the foresight of the late Colin Woodfull, who as Director of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, encouraged Fred Noble to start compiling this work. And I am also convinced, having worked closely with Freddie Noble, that Mr Woodfull could not have selected a more suitable person for the task, for Freddie was a doyen of journalists associated with the Royal Melbourne Show and the activities of the Royal



Agricultural Society. For more than forty of his fifty years in journalism, he covered the Royal Show for his paper, the *Age*.

Initially Fred Noble's aim was to do this work for the Society's use only, and to present the completed work to the Society in time for the centenary of the formation of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria in 1970. He had almost completed two of the several parts when his eyesight deteriorated too much for him to complete the manuscript.

He graciously handed over to the RASV a solid base on which this history is built, and I can only hope that the completed work may have met with his approval.

Bob Morgan

Melbourne  
1981

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## INTRODUCTION

In tracing the history of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, one is conscious of the enormous effect that this body and its predecessors have had on the development of Victoria, especially on the primary industries. It has mirrored the progress and development of this State from the early days of settlement to the present time, and it looks as if this will continue.

As the reader passes through this history he will notice that in times of adversity, such as droughts, floods, depressions and wars, this organization has drawn extra strength and support for its activities from all sections of the community, and especially from the rural industries.

Scant mention has been made of the amusements or sideshow people in this history, but the 'showmen' are a vital part of the Show and have been ever since the first ploughing match in 1848. Their role, like that of the Society, has changed considerably over the years. The advent of television in 1956 undoubtedly was the main reason for the decline in 'tent shows', and the last appearance of these was in 1971 when the Jimmy Sharman boxing troupe closed up after the Show of that year. From that time on the 'showies' have concentrated on rides and games.

Throughout the years many competitions of skill have been associated with the Royal Melbourne Show, such as sheaf-tossing and wood-chopping, and again it has not been possible to concentrate on these very important activities. Sheaf-tossing declined with the advent of the hay baler, but wood-chopping still continues as a main Show attraction.

Mention must also be made of the controlling body of the RASV, the Council. This body gives the impression that it is self-generating and, whether by luck or design, has always been able to recruit the right type of person to further the aims of the Society.

In the early days of its existence the Council had no fewer than six Members of Parliament guiding its interests at one time. In this period the Society experienced the advantages that such a pressure group can have for an organization.

Regardless of the quality of the controlling body, the people who interpret its directions must be capable, and the Society has been fortunate with its selection of administrators and staff. These people have been dedicated and have guided the Society through good times and bad.

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# I

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## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

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THE INFANT SETTLEMENT around Port Phillip Bay, established by John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner in 1835, created a great deal of excitement and interest in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, with the result that colonisation of the area was swift.

### THE PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA FELIX

The population grew from 177 in May 1836 to 10,291 in 1840. There was a corresponding increase in the numbers of livestock, and over the same period sheep numbers alone rose from 26,500 to an estimated 782,000.

On his return to Sydney in 1836, following his exploration of 'Australia Felix', Sir Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General of New South Wales, soon spread the news of the fertile southern land. Consequently in May 1836, Governor Richard Bourke ordered George Stewart, a police magistrate at Goulburn in New South Wales, to proceed to 'the settlement' to 'inquire into, and make a report upon, the affairs there'. Thus 'the settlement' or Port Phillip District, legally became part of the Colony of New South Wales.

Among the settlers from Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, and those who arrived as assisted immigrants, were a number of more prominent farmers who had been associated with agricultural societies in Great Britain. They were aware of the advantages gained from these societies by the exchange of information and the benefits of social contact, so it was only natural that their desire to re-establish such a forum with its accompanying social activities should become a priority in their new land.

The events leading up to the formation of the first society, The Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix, in 1840 are very well described in Garryowen's *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne*.

The original inhabitants were very enterprising on paper. It took a few of the more energetic spirits little time to launch a Society or a Company for any conceivable purpose; but several of the projects never passed beyond the initiation.

One of the most pretentious of such undertakings was started with a loud flourish of trumpets, and beating of drums, though, after a very big dinner and one little show, it

In finishing this work I am aware that there are many aspects not touched upon, and for this I can only say that a line must be drawn.

If in any way I have breached any rights it has not been intentional, and I have endeavoured to acknowledge all sources to the best of my ability.

R.M.



collapsed. At a public meeting on 2 January 1840 the following aspiring prospectus was issued:

Pastoral and Agricultural Society

*President* – William Mackenzie Esq. of Kinlochewe

*Vice-President* – Farquhar McCrae Esq. M.D., J.P.

*Directors* – Rev. J. Clow, Captains D. McLachlan, G. B. Smythe and B. Baxter; Messrs S. J. Brown, Alexander Thomson, Thomas Arnold, Joseph Hawdon, R. H. Browne, James Simpson, J. D. Hunter, F. A. Powlett, W. Ryrie, J. D. Baillie, C. Williams, W. F. A. Rucker, D. S. Campbell, P. W. Welsh, A. Aitken, G. D. Mercer and P. Snodgrass.

*Treasurers* – The Port Phillip Bank

*Secretaries* – Messrs Andrew M. McCrae and William Kerr.

The Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix on the principles and with the objects of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland was founded in January 1840.

The Society's Annual Show of livestock, samples of wool, implements of husbandry, agricultural and horticultural produce etc. which it is intended to hold on alternate years at Melbourne and Geelong, will be held in Melbourne on the first Wednesday in March of this present year; and the annual meeting for the election of President, Vice-Presidents, etc. will be held immediately after the Show.

The account goes on to describe the preparations and dinner.

In those times it was a cardinal tenet of popular belief that no enterprise could prosper unless set going by a good dinner, a blended baptism of post-prandial grog and oratory, and so to work the 'undertakers' went to get up a convivial celebration.

The recently-erected store of Mr Rucker's in Market Street, between Collins and Little Flinders Streets was finally selected as the feeding-ground.

This was the first Public Dinner in the colony, and it came off on 15 January.

Mr Mackenzie, the President of the Society, arrayed in the 'breeless' costume of a Highlandman, performed the duties of Chairman in a manner highly satisfactory. The Rev. James Clow, one of the Directors, invoked a blessing. Amongst the best speakers of the jolly evening was another clergyman, the Rev. James Forbes, the first Presbyterian minister.

I believe this to be the only festivity of the kind in the colony where the American plan of wedding sentiments or prayers to the toasts was adopted, and judging from the following samples, the selections were not inappropriate, viz.:

The Queen – Bless Her. May she ever be proud of Australia Felix, one of the brightest gems in her diadem.

His Excellency Sir George Gipps, Governor-General of Australasia, and may the inhabitants of Australia Felix ever find in him a just advocate and protector of their rights.

Old England, and may the Sons of Australia ever be proud of their noble Mother Country.

Erin-Go-Bragh, and good luck to her.

The Land o' Cakes, and may she long continue to give her hardy and intelligent sons to Australia Felix.

Hoofs, Horns, Wool and Corn, and may God Speed the Plough.

There were some minor toasts, without any accompaniments, and the most notable being 'Breeding in all its Branches', and 'The Press'. Possibly they considered these two well able to care for themselves without any precatory well-wishing.

The dinner was productive of another American ingredient not calculated upon – 'bunkum' – for after all their 'tall-talk', very little grew out of it. The Association was born several years too soon, and it was not surprising that the premature bantling should be an abortion.

Annual exhibitions were promised at Melbourne and Geelong, but the materials did not exist in the Province to produce such unconsidered results.

At the first general meeting of the Society, held on 7 March 1840, it was decided not to hold a show in the first year, but office bearers were elected and were:

Patron – Mr C. J. La Trobe

President – James Simpson, P.M.

Vice-Presidents – D. Farquhar McCrea (of La Rose) and John Hunter

Directors – Twenty-three in number

Treasurer – George Duncan Mercer

Secretary – William Kerr

The first and only show took place on 3 March 1842 and it was a failure. It was held in the Melbourne Cattle Market (intersection of Elizabeth and Victoria Streets). The exhibits were a vast disappointment, and in the sections where success might reasonably be expected, the deficiency was most marked, for, according to Garryowen, 'the display of horned cattle was a most meagre turn-out numerically and otherwise'.

Prizes were awarded for horses to Messrs Watson and Hunter, J. Carmichael, H. Jamieson, J. Purves, and to Captain Smythe; for cattle to Messrs Watson and Hunter, J. Thompson, Cooper, Carmichael and Bolden; for wheat to a Mr Coulstock; water melons, Mr Bolton; and vegetables to Captain Smythe.

The evening following the show the members consoled themselves over dinner, a much less enthusiastic, gushing and prayerful than the inauguration one.

#### THE MOONEE PONDS FARMERS' SOCIETY

By 1848 resources had increased, and enthusiasm and support had revived sufficiently in the Port Phillip District for settlers to once again start thinking of organising agricultural competitions. In fact it would appear from early press advertisements and notices that an organisation calling itself the Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society did conduct ploughing matches in the area around Flemington in 1848.

The *Argus* of 1848 carried five notices concerning ploughing matches in the month of August, but none of these notices carried the name of a sponsoring body. After 28 August 1848, no report can be found until that of 10 October of the same year, when the following letter appeared in the *Argus* under 'Original Correspondence':

The (late) Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society

To the Editor of The Argus

Sir,

At a meeting of the Committee of Management of the above Society, which took place pursuant to advertisement at the store of Thomson and Duncan, Great Bourke Street, Melbourne, on 18 August last, the enclosed Rules and Regulations, for the ensuing match were approved of unanimously by the Committee.

The most important alteration from the original Code, as you will observe, was changing the name 'Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society' to 'Port Phillip Farmers' Society'.

The Committee sanguinely hope that by thus changing the name of the Society, the sphere of its operations and usefulness will be extended, and that outlandish folks will have no plausible excuse for not furthering the good cause.

The Committee also confidently expect that the Editor of The Argus (from his having from the outset taken such a warm interest in the proceedings of the Society) will give an insertion to their Rules in his far-famed journal.

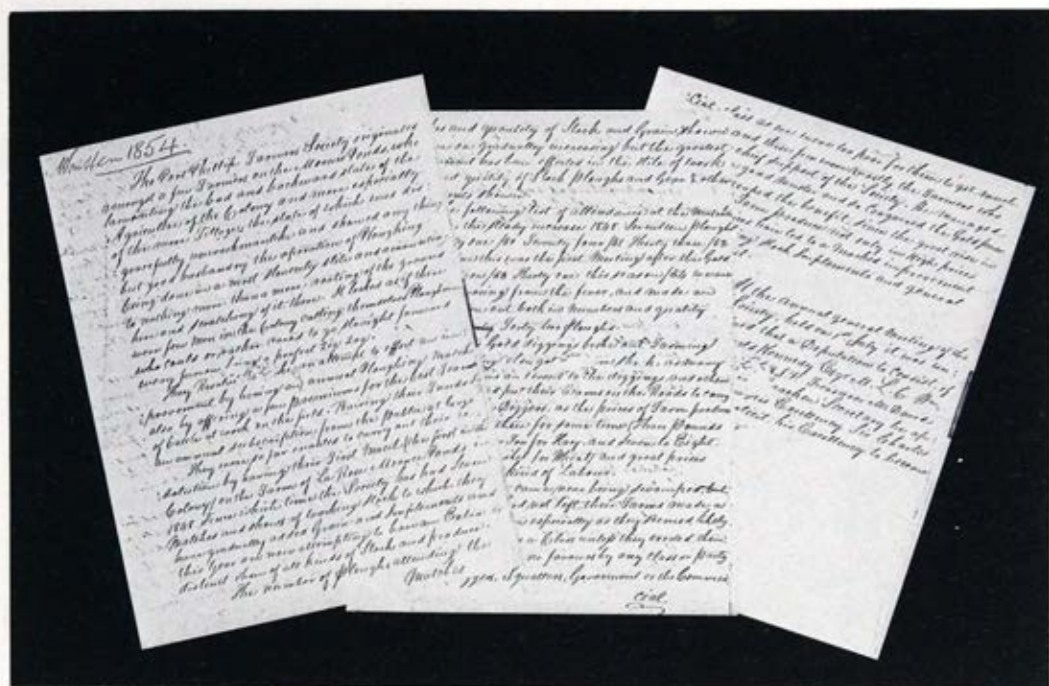
Hoping yet to have the pleasure to meet you 'amang the rigs o' barley'.

I remain, Sir Your most obedient servant

Robert McDougall, Secretary.

Glen Roy, 9 October, 1848 (Sic)





The McCracken Letter of 1854.

there. It looked as if there were few men in the colony calling themselves ploughmen who could or rather cared to go straight forward, every furrow being a perfect zig-zag.

They resolved to make an attempt to effect an improvement by having an annual ploughing match, also by offering a few premiums for the best teams of cattle at work on the field. Raising their funds by an annual subscription from the public at large.

They were so far enabled to carry out their resolution by having their First Match (the first in the colony) on the farm of La Rose, Moonee Ponds (now the property of Wm. McCulloch) in 1848, since which time the Society has had Seven Matches and shows of working stock to which they have gradually added grain and implements and this year are now attempting to have an extra or distinct Show of all kinds of Stock and Produce.

The number of ploughs attending the matches and quality of stock and grain shown has gone on gradually increasing but the greatest improvement has been effected in the style of work done and the quality of stock, ploughs and gear, and other implements shown.

The following list of attendances at the matches will show the steady increase: 1848, 17 ploughs; 1849, 21 ploughs; 1850, 24 ploughs; 1851, 33 ploughs; 1852, 29 ploughs (this was the first meeting after Gold fever came on); 1853, 31 ploughs; 1854, we are fairly recovering from the fever, and made an excellent turn out both in number and quality, namely 42 ploughs.

When the gold diggings broke out farming like everything else, got a severe shock, as many left their farms and went to the diggings, and others left tilling and put their teams on the roads to carry stores to the diggers, as the prices of farm produce were very low then for some time (Three pounds Ten shillings per Ton for Hay, and seven to eight shillings per Bushel for Wheat) and great prices going for every kind of labour.

The foregoing letter appeared on page two, and on page three the following notice was printed:

We the undersigned, being aware that ploughing matches have always a tendency to improve agriculture, have resolved upon holding one annually in this District. On purpose to promote this object we have agreed to form ourselves, and such other persons as may feel disposed to join us, into a body to be called The Port Phillip Farmers' Society.

To prevent misunderstanding and for better regulating the affairs of the Society in general, we have agreed to the following rules:

1. That an annual subscription of one pound to the funds of the Society will qualify a member – provided such subscription shall be paid to the Treasurer, ten days before the match takes place.
2. That every member so qualified will have a vote in electing managers to carry out the views of the Society.
3. That managers for the ensuing year will be invariably chosen by the members, while present themselves at the annual match.
4. That managers so chosen shall have full power to appoint the judges, who will award the prizes to ploughmen competing at the match, according to their respective performances, and otherwise to carry out the views of the Society as shall to them seem most fit.
5. That six prizes shall be awarded at the next match to the best six ploughmen; three prizes to the best three ploughmen with bullock teams, and three ditto to the best ditto with horse teams.
6. That also an extra prize (should the state of the funds admit) will be given for the best Team of Bullocks that may be engaged in the match, and a similar one for the best pairs of horses. Bullocks and horses however competing for this prize must be the bona fide property of members of the Society.
7. That a Dinner and Ball will be given in the evening on such a scale as the managers, from the state of their funds may deem proper.
8. That the managers shall have full power and authority to exclude from the match, from the dinner and from the ball, any person or persons whose presence or actions might be discreditable to the proceedings of the 'Port Phillip Farmers' Society'.
9. The approved Rules are framed to facilitate the operations of the Society for the ensuing match only; and that afterwards the tenor of them or clauses of them, may be effaced, altered or improved as occasion may require.

Committee of Management for 1849:

William Thomson  
Coiler Robertson  
Archibald McDougall  
M. McNamara

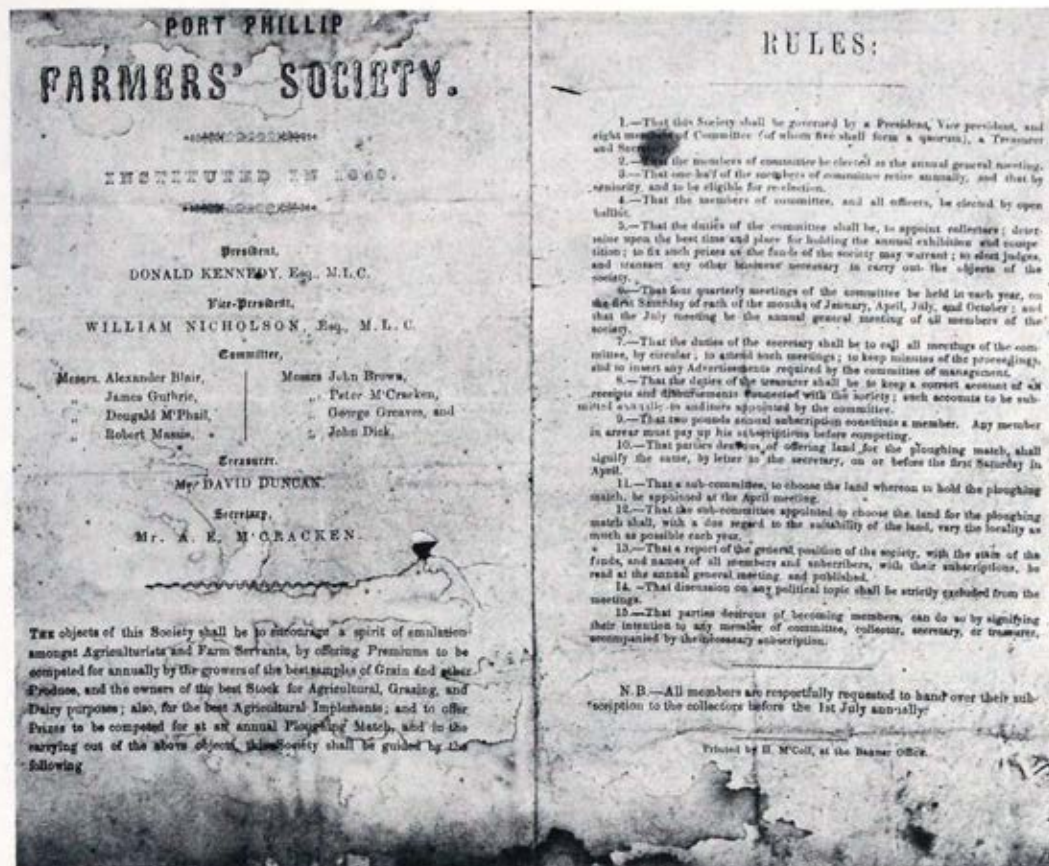
Joseph King  
M. Loeman  
John Crowe  
David Duncan, Treasurer  
(Sic)

#### THE PORT PHILLIP FARMERS' SOCIETY

From the foregoing it appears obvious that the Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society was the forerunner of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, a belief further supported by the following letter from the RASV archives and attributed to A. E. McCracken, secretary of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, and written in 1854:

The Port Phillip Farmers' Society originated amongst a few farmers on the Moonee Ponds, who lamenting the bad and backward state of the agriculture of the colony and more especially of the mere tillage, the state of which was disgracefully unworkmanlike and showed anything but good husbandry, the operation of ploughing being done in a most slovenly style and amounting to nothing more than a mere rooting of the ground here and scratching of it





### Port Phillip Farmers' Society Aims and Objects.

grazing and dairy purposes; also for the best agricultural implements; and to offer prizes to be competed for at an annual ploughing match.

All the evidence points to the fact that the ploughing match referred to in the 'McCracken' letter was under the auspices of the old Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society. This belief is supported by the *Argus* of 1 August 1848 and the City of Keilor centenary booklet, *Life and Living in Keilor*.

However, out of the Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society the Port Phillip Farmers' Society was formed on 10 August 1848, with the office bearers, aims and objects as outlined in the 'McCracken' letter.



*Moonee Ponds (La Rose) Ploughing Match 1848.*

So our Society came near being swamped, but a good few who had not left their farms made a great exertion (more especially as they seemed likely to be extinguished as a class unless they exerted themselves being shown no favours by any class or party whether diggers, squatters, Government or the commercial class, as we were too poor for them to get much out of), and these few were mostly the farmers who were the chief support of the Society. They managed to make a good muster and so conquered the Gold fever and have reaped the benefit since the great rise in the price of farm produce, not only in high prices but those prices have led to a marked improvement in our working stock, implements, and general management.

At the annual general meeting of the members of the Society held on 1st July [1854] it was unanimously resolved that a Deputation to consist of the *President* – Donald Kennedy Esq. MLC; *Vice-President* – Wm. Nicholson Esq. MLC; Mr David Duncan – *Immediate Past Treasurer*; Mr A. E. McCracken – *Secretary*, be appointed to wait upon His Excellency Sir Charles Hotham K.C.B. to solicit his excellency to become Patron of the Society.

The first office bearers, elected in 1848, were listed as: *President*, Donald Kennedy MLC; *Vice-President*, William Nicholson MLC; *Committee*, Alexander Blair, James Guthrie, Dugald McPhail, Robert Massie, John Brown, Peter McCracken, George Greaves and John Dick; *Treasurer*, David Duncan and *Secretary*, A. E. McCracken. The objects of the Society were outlined as follows:

The objects of this Society shall be to encourage a spirit of emulation amongst Agriculturalists and Farm Servants, by offering premiums to be competed for annually by the growers of the best samples of grain and other produce, and the owners of the best stock for agricultural,



On 13 June 1851 the Ploughing Match and Exhibition was held on the farm of Mr A. E. McCracken, and the three judges were Messrs John Nicholson, John Dick, both of Salt Water River, and John Lawson of the Moonee Ponds. Medallions were presented for the first time to the award winners for ploughing, stock, and produce. The gold medal was valued at £5, silver at £3, and bronze at £2. This was also the first occasion when the Society's Exhibition was combined with the Farming Industrial Exhibition; and the Society took full advantage of this to enhance its prestige by restricting prizes for exhibits from 'subscribers to the funds of the Association'. This action limited the entries of stock and produce, but according to the *Argus* report, 'The result was not the less encouraging'.

The successful exhibitors and competitors were:

*Ploughing, Horses:* Dugald McPhail, with Ploughman George Marshall, gold medal; John Robinson, with David Anderson as Ploughman, silver medal; and John Wippel, with Ploughman Thomas Brownlow, taking third prize.

*Ploughing, Bullocks:* George Green of Campbellfield, doing his own ploughing, gold medal; Mr Myers of Merri Creek, with Ploughman John McFarland, silver medal; Dugald McPhail, with Ploughman Neil McCarthy, took out third prize.

*Produce, Wheat:* The best sample, gold medal to Messrs Forrester and Monteith, of the River Plenty. *Barley:* The best sample, gold medal to Messrs Forrester and Monteith. *Oats:* The best sample and gold medal to Dugald McPhail, of Spring Hill, Salt Water River.

*Stock:* Best team of horses, gold medal to Messrs Forrester and Monteith, with a silver medal to George Green of Merri Creek. The prize for best two year old filly was won by Mr Armstrong, of Moonee Ponds, and the gold medal for the best mare was won by John Brown of the River Plenty. Mr John Myers of Merri Creek, was awarded the prize for the best team of bullocks.

At this event the attendance was reported to have been almost exclusively confined to those interested in agricultural pursuits, and in the words of the *Argus*, 'the day's proceedings evidenced the vast advance made by the Province'.

As was the accepted practice, the day ended with a spread at the Flemington Hotel under the supervision of Mr John Yewers, a noted Melbourne caterer.

The 1853 Ploughing Match and Show was held on the farm of Alex Cruikshanks at Campbellfield on 8 April, and was the first show to include classes for 'Implements for Agricultural Purposes'. The first prize of £10 went to John Nicholson for a reaping machine, and Gordon Cameron won the second prize of £5 for a horse rake. There were thirty-one ploughs in the competitions, twenty-five of which were horse ploughs and six pulled by bullocks. In the horse ploughing, the first prize went to Andrew Somers, ploughman to John Nicholson; the second prize was won by James Duff, ploughman to Alex Cruikshanks; and third by James Kerr, ploughman to Mr W. McClosky. Ploughing with bullocks resulted in a win to Job Andrew, ploughman to John Dick; second prize was won by Peter Ford, ploughman to John Myers; and James Sayers, ploughing for Gibb and Robertson was third. Robert Massie of Johnshill Deep Creek, won first prize for his sample of White Kent wheat, and second prize for a sample of Cameron's Prolific wheat. In the stock classes James McIntosh was the most successful exhibitor, with first and second in the best team or pair of horses. The best team of bullocks prize was won by Gibb and Robertson.



## EARLY PLOUGHING MATCHES

The second ploughing match was also held on the La Rose Farm in 1849 but thereafter a number of other farms were used for this purpose. In view of later developments in the unique Australian show scene, it is necessary to record that the 1848 Ploughing Match, although organised as a ploughing contest, also attracted merchants from 'The Town' who set up stands, and entertainers provided a diversion for those not completely involved with the ploughing.

The Anniversary Ploughing Match and Exhibition was held on the Queen's Birthday of 1850 on the farm of John Grant at Campbellfield, and is described by Garryowen in his *Chronicles of Early Melbourne*:

The issue was pronounced to be both gratifying and successful. The day was fine, the ground in good order, the competitors in high spirits, and the cattle in good condition.

Mr Peter McCracken of the Moonee Ponds obtained first class prizes for the best samples of wheat and barley, and Mr A. Guthrie of the Salt Water River, for the second.

Best Pair of Plough Horses: Messrs Forrester and Monteith, of River Plenty. Best Brood Mare; Mr W. J. Cameron of the Deep Creek with Messrs Gibb and Robertson of Campbellfield in second place.

Best Team of Bullocks: Mr W. J. Cameron, Deep Creek.

Ploughing with horses: James Nuttle in the employ of Mr Brown of Heidelberg was first, and Messrs Gibb and Robertson, Campbellfield (James Anderson, Ploughman) for second best. The third prize was decreed to Mr Dugald McPhail, of Salt Water River (R. Murdoch, Ploughman).

Ploughing with bullocks: Mr John Grant of Campbellfield (George Greeves, Ploughman) was successful as the first man, whilst second place was assigned to John McPhail, (Neil McCarthy, Ploughman) and the third to Mr A. Guthrie, (John McBean, Ploughman).

The day wound up with a spread at Somerville's Hotel, Mr John Crowe, presiding.

*Port Phillip Farmers' Society Medallion, from the Bacchus Marsh Branch, 1859.*



Henry Brock at Salt Water River, was the host for the 1854 Annual Ploughing Match and Show, held on 12 May, and proved to be the most successful to date. The 'Match at the Plough' attracted thirty-six horse teams and six bullock teams, and according to the report in the *Argus* of 18 May, 'there was an all round standard of excellence'. One team on the field cost its owner over £700, exclusive of gear and plough, and it was moderately estimated that the horse teams would represent an average value of between £450 and £500 as they stood yoked. The ploughing with horses event was won by James Rogerson, ploughing for Robert Rogerson of Spring Hill. Second prize went to James Martin, for John Brown, Plenty River, and third to William Stewart, for Mr McCormick, Deep Creek. John Sharpe, ploughman for James Robertson, Sydney Road, was first in the ploughing with bullocks event, with Joseph Andrews, for Mr Blair, Flat Field, second, and William Stewart third. The prize for the best ploughed land on the field went to James Rogerson.

After the match, fifty gentlemen adjourned to Mr Harper's Essendon Hotel for an excellent dinner. Over the chair was a small model of a plough. The motto 'Speed the Plough' was surmounted by a wheat sheaf, and at the end of the table over the vice-chair were the words 'The Agricultural Society' and underneath 'Advance Australia'. Associated with the 1854 Exhibition was also an award for five loads of hay, to be shown in Melbourne Market on 5 May 1854. The first prize went to James Bell of Spring Bank, with second to James McIntosh of the Moonee Ponds.

#### FIRST GOVERNMENT GRANT AND SHOWGROUNDS

In the Legislative Council on 9 March 1855 William Nicholson MLC, who was Vice-President of the PPFS, moved pursuant to notice that a sum of £500 be placed on the estimates 'to be given in aid of the funds of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society'. On 23 March His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor approved of the request, and the Legislative Council was advised. This was the first official recognition by Government of the standing of the PPFS as the agricultural co-ordinator within the colony.

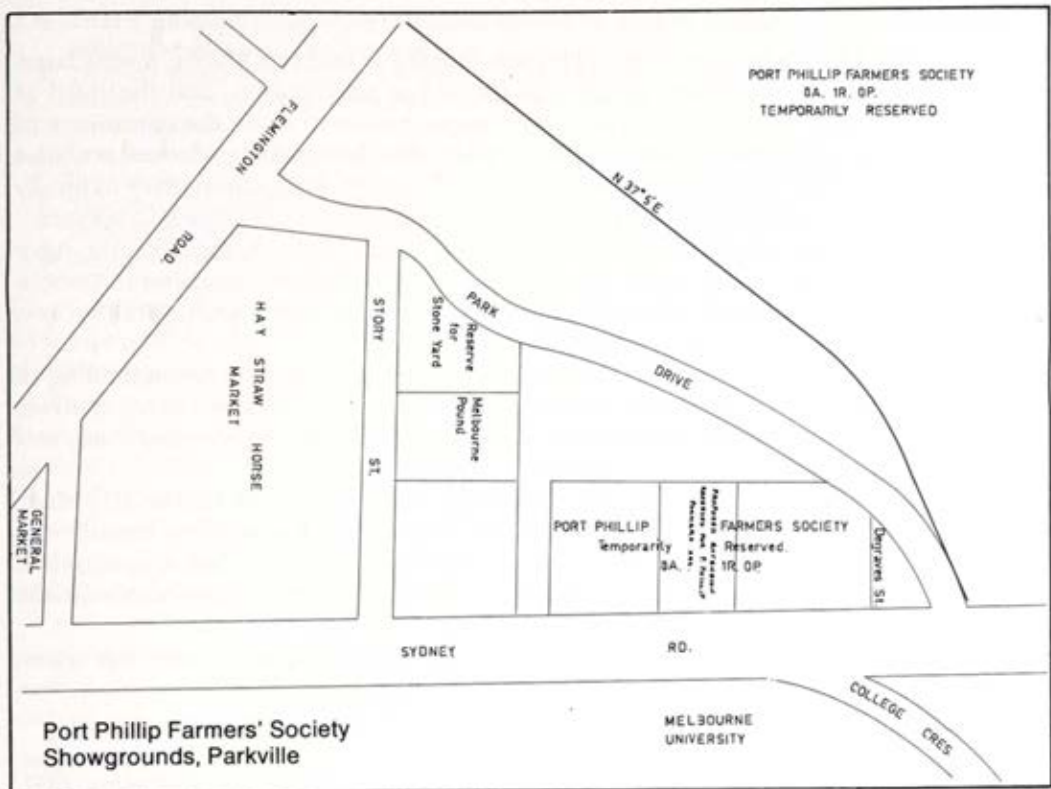
At the Society's Annual Meeting on 23 June 1855, a resolution was carried by the members urging the Government to make available to the Society an area of land for a 'show-yard'. This application was made on 18 July 1855 from the office of the Society, then situated in W. Law's shop at 82 Swanston Street.

The show date was set at the August meeting for the 29 October, and on 12 October advice was received from the Government that the Society had been granted an area of three acres of ground on the Sydney Road, north of Story Street and opposite the university, as showyards. This area was later enlarged by two more areas, of two acres and three acres and one rood respectively, making a total area of eight acres and one rood.

Despite the lack of time between the official notice regarding allocation of land and the date for the Show, the Society conducted its first exhibition at the new showyards on 29 October 1855.

When the matter of the Government grant was discussed at the monthly meeting held on 11 January 1856, the point was made that this grant was the only direct aid to agriculture in the colony, and in view of this the Society 'should play the leading role in developing agriculture in the colony'. Therefore the Society, in February 1856, decided





to hold a grain and seed show in the following month at the Eastern Market. The show was held on 20 March, and led to further action by the Society to urge the Government to establish a grain market. The samples of wheat exhibited at the March grain show were of such high standard that the Society decided to ship some of the exhibits to England and California. The Society also agreed that at future PPFS shows, the owners of winning animal exhibits be given the opportunity to have portraits of their winners in lieu of the listed prize money if they so desired.

Another initiative in 1856 was to establish farm and barley competitions. The first prize for the best field of barley was won by Dugald McPhail, for a crop grown on his farm at Bellfield, Emeu Creek. And a special prize for the best field of wheat – a gold medal presented by Major-General Macarthur – was won by Samuel Ketson, on his Green Hills farm near Melton.

In the 1856 estimates the Government again voted £500 to the Society to aid agriculture in the colony. The Annual Ploughing Match was held on 25 April, and an exhibition of new machinery was held on the new showgrounds on 24 May 1856. At the Society's Annual Meeting on 7 June, a paper was read to members covering the 'Importation of Strange Asiatic Animals', and also at this meeting it was agreed to appoint a permanent travelling agent and collector for the Society.

## FORMATION OF BRANCHES

On 10 October 1856, a branch of the PPFS was formed at Bacchus Marsh. A year later, on 13 October 1857, a second branch was formed at Mornington, and the third at Gisborne on 16 July 1858. Each elected two representatives to sit on the committee of the 'Central Society' as the parent body was called. The branches conducted activities similar to those of the parent body, and as they had strong local support, they naturally eroded the activities of the latter, which was left with a limited area in which to operate.

At this period other agricultural societies were being formed: the Victoria Agricultural Society at Heidelberg, 1850; Castlemaine and Muckleford Agricultural Association, 1854; the Geelong and Western District Agricultural and Horticultural Society, 1855.

However, at this stage the PPFS was far from finished, despite the strengthening of the branches and the other organisations. It merely changed its activities to concentrate more on exhibitions of stock, produce, and machinery, including machinery trials, and remained the main administrative authority.

In January 1857, the Vice-President of the Society, Captain Andrew Clarke, RE, MLA, who was also Surveyor-General of the colony, said that he wanted to consult the committee about the distribution of the proposed grant of £10,000 in aid of agriculture. At his request a letter containing a scheme for a Board of Agriculture was officially submitted to him.

The Annual Report of the PPFS 1857-58 outlines the action that followed this letter, beginning with a letter from the Chief Secretary, Hon. W. C. Haines, MLA.

Chief Secretary's Office  
Melbourne.  
23 December, 1857.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Legislature have sanctioned the following expenditure in the ensuing year for the encouragement of Agriculture.

In aid of Agricultural Societies	—	£500
Agricultural Museum and Laboratory	—	£1,078
Experimental and Training Farm	—	£3,720

It is the wish of the Government, that a body representing the Agricultural interests of all parts of the Colony should meet periodically in Melbourne, so as to form a ready means of communication upon all matters affecting those interests, and ensure as far as possible the disbursement of those votes to the greatest advantage for the whole Agricultural body.

I am to suggest that this might be accomplished by substituting for a number of independent bodies one great Agricultural Association, with local branches which may occupy the position of provincial societies.

These branches may send delegates to represent them in a central committee whose duty it will be to communicate directly with the Government and offer such suggestions for the expenditure of the votes for the promotion of agriculture as their experience may dictate.

The Chief Secretary will be fully obliged if you will favour him with the views of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society on the subject.

This matter was discussed at a meeting of the PPFS on 9 February when the Hon. Donald Kennedy, President of the Society, chaired the meeting from which the following motions resulted:

1. The meeting approved the Chief Secretary's suggestion that the PPFS be the body representing the agricultural interests of all parts of the colony.



2. That a meeting of all representatives should be held in Melbourne for the purpose of conferring with the Chief Secretary.
3. That the number of representatives to be sent by societies entitled to more than one vote should be arranged in proportion to the amount of their yearly revenue derived from private sources.
4. In accordance with the conditions of the previous resolutions the meeting shall proceed to the election of four members to represent the Society at the conference.
5. That the representatives attending the conference shall have the power of adding to their number by ballot, members of the Legislature or other gentlemen desirous of promoting the agricultural interests of the colony.

The meeting then produced the following formula for representation: societies subscribing £100, to have one representative; £300, two; £600, three; £1,000, four and an additional representative for each £100 over £1,000.

When the decision about the means of representation from agricultural societies had been made, a deputation was appointed to wait on the Chief Secretary, in order to ascertain the views of the Government with reference to the duties and powers of the Council or Board of Agriculture. The deputation was led by Mr Wilkie, MLA, who advised the Chief Secretary of the resolutions passed at the special meeting. At the close of the meeting a letter was read from Mr A. E. McCracken, stating that he would be leaving the colony and resigning from the Society.

On 9 April the Chief Secretary wrote to the Society acknowledging the resolutions passed at the special meeting, and requesting a statement of the subscriptions paid to the Society from 1 January up to that date, together with the expected amount for the current year. On 17 April the following letter was received from the Chief Secretary:

Sir,

Referring to the proposition of forming a central Agricultural Association, or Council of Agriculture, I have the honour to inform you that the Chief Secretary, concurring in the object, is desirous, with the view to its being carried into effect without delay, that the several societies should send representatives, to assemble in Melbourne on Friday 7 May.

Should any society find it inconvenient to send a representative direct, I am to suggest that the Chief Secretary would receive any member of the Legislature, or any person resident in Melbourne, whom the society might appoint to express their views, or act as a member of the Council of Agriculture.

Mr O'Shanassy hopes that under the proposed arrangements there will not be much difficulty in impartially distributing to the various societies the sum of £5,000 now under the control of the Government; and I am to invite your Society to nominate a member to be present at the meeting, to be held at the office of the Chief Secretary on Friday 7 May at twelve noon.

The letter was signed by J. Moore and addressed to the secretary of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society. Limiting the Society to one representative brought swift reaction, as indicated in the PPFS report:

It will be observed, on referring to the foregoing, that there was but one representative allowed for the Society, whereupon your Committee, considering its position and importance, as compared with the other agricultural societies which had been invited to the conference, applied for permission to send an additional representative for the Bacchus Marsh and Mornington branches, a request which was at once acceded to.

John C. Cochrane and the secretary, Thomas Skilling, represented the Society, and James Cook represented the Bacchus Marsh branch.

The first Board meeting extended over three days from 20–22 July and the following resolutions were taken:

Firstly, that, all the societies entitled to the grant in aid of agriculture for the year 1859 shall receive it in proportion to their respective amounts of revenue, until this revenue amounts to £500 in each case. Such societies, however, as possess a revenue exceeding this sum, namely £500, shall receive for the surplus, half the rate of grant proportionate to the revenue, or in other words, each pound of revenue above £500 in each case shall rate as ten shillings.

Secondly, that out of the sum of £6,000, the amount of the grant for 1859, the sum of £500 shall be placed to the credit of the Council, to be disposed of as circumstances may arise, in furtherance of the objects of the Board.

As some difficulty has been found in arriving at the amount and sources of revenue of the societies represented at the Board, it was ordered that in future each society should furnish a statement every year showing the amounts derived from members' subscriptions, show and ploughing match admission charges, entry fees and donations.

The second meeting of the Board was held on 4 October 1859, and there were twenty-four members present. At this meeting the Council produced a report and a draft of the bylaws, adding eighteen extra rules to the original two. It also produced the allocation of the £6,000 in aid of agriculture grant, which was made as follows:

Society Name	Revenue			Grant		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Albury and Murray River	188	18	0	227	8	7
Bacchus Marsh	106	0	0	127	12	6
Ballaarat	256	16	0	309	3	5
Baringhup	97	11	6	117	9	7
Burrumbeet, Lake						
Learmonth	76	6	0	91	17	2
Carisbrook	150	0	0	180	11	11
Geelong & Western District	886	11	11	834	13	11
Gisborne	122	12	0	147	12	1
Hamilton	301	10	0	362	19	10
Kilmore	204	9	6	246	3	6
Kyneton	370	1	5	445	11	0
Melton	108	10	0	130	12	7
Mornington	80	0	0	96	6	5
Newstead	211	18	5	255	3	3
Ovens & Murray	204	0	0	245	12	2
Port Phillip	1176	0	10	1008	18	10
Seymour	121	7	6	146	2	7
South Gipps Land	67	2	0	80	15	8
Victoria	361	18	0	435	14	2
Villiers, Heytesbury	215	4	6	259	2	3
Western District	208	0	0	250	8	7
	£ 5514	17	11	£ 6000	0	0

The estimates for 1860 covered an amount of £13,510 which was distributed as follows: In aid of agricultural societies, £7,730; expenses of the Board, Council, etc., £530; experimental farm, £3,000; and collecting and compiling agricultural statistics (to be handed over to the Registrar-General), £2,250.

It was very gratifying to the PPFS to know that all the original proposals had been agreed to by the Government, and adopted.



Of the £5,000 for distribution, £2,050 was allocated to the Society. As this proved to be the only business covered by the conference, with no initiative forthcoming from the Government concerning the proposed Council or Board of Agriculture, the PPFS decided that it should take the initiative:

After the lapse of a considerable time, the importance of the proposed body is becoming fully appreciated by the agricultural community, more particularly the various agricultural societies of the colony. So your Society decided on taking the initiative, and calling together the representatives of those societies to a conference, for the purpose of arranging a definite scheme, by which the spread of agricultural knowledge might be effectively promoted throughout the colony, and the distribution of the annual grants towards that object placed on a satisfactory basis.

From the fact that both the previous, as well as the present Government, have on various occasions evinced a disposition to attend to the wishes of the agricultural community on these questions, your Committee were induced to believe that the period had arrived for giving them effect, and issued the subjoined circular to the various Farming Societies throughout the colony, inviting them to a meeting to be held in the Mechanics' Institute, on Tuesday 6 July.

The following letter over the signature of Thomas Skilling, PPFS secretary, was forwarded to all societies on 24 May 1858:

Sir,

I am instructed by the Committee of the above Society to intimate their desire to co-operate with all other agricultural societies in the Colony with the view of securing the formation of a Board or Council of Agriculture.

The importance of having an organised body established for the purpose of advancing the interests of agriculture generally is too obvious to require comment. And as the Committee are of the opinion that the present is a very favourable opportunity for impressing those views on the attention of the Executive Government, they therefore propose that a meeting of representatives should be held in the Mechanics Institute Melbourne, on Tuesday 6 July proximo for the purpose of ascertaining the opinions of the various societies on the subject, in considering the most judicious means of accomplishing the objects contemplated.

I am further instructed to invite attendance of a representative from your Society on this occasion.

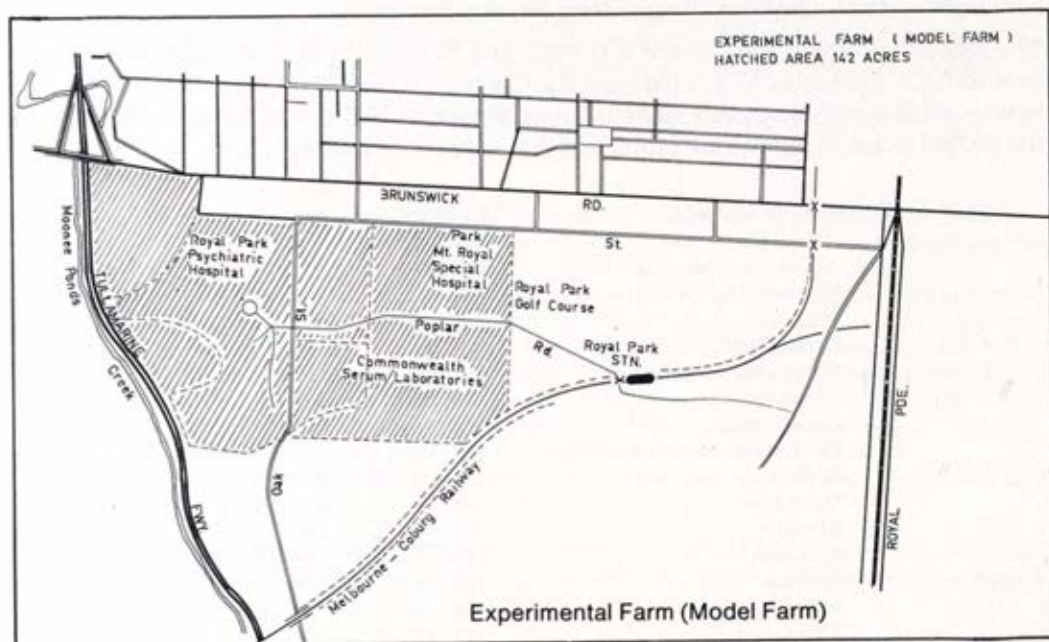
This invitation met with a ready response on the part of the other societies, and the meeting resolved that the PPFS press the Government for the establishment of a Board or Council of Agriculture.

#### THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

The first meeting of the Board of Agriculture, which was established by Act 22 Vic. No 83, was held on 20 July 1859, in the boardroom at the Public Lands Office, Melbourne. Of the twenty-seven representatives present the following represented the PPFS: William Wade, Peter McCracken, James McIntosh, John Cochrane, Alexander Patterson, John Carr Riddell and John Thomas. The Hon. W. H. F. Mitchell was appointed Chairman of the Board for the year, and the following were elected to the Council of the Board by secret ballot: James McIntosh, Alexander Patterson, A. R. C. Selwyn, Dr John Macadam, Dr Ferdinand Von Mueller, Peter McCracken, William Wade, John Thomas, James Mackintosh, A. McKenzie, Archibald McMartin, Samuel Windridge. The Hon. R. C. Hope was elected Chairman of the Council for the year. The PPFS had secured five representatives on the Board's Council of thirteen.

## THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

One of the original proposals submitted by the PPFS in January 1857, was that the Government make provision for a farm to be used as an experimental area to test fertilisers, to study disease, to advise on tilling practices, to test imported plants and study animals and to collect agricultural statistics. The Chief Secretary notified the Society in December 1857 that £6,000 had been made available 'for the encouragement of agriculture', and provision was made in this vote for an experimental farm, which was established by legislation in 1858. Known as the Model Farm, it was 142 acres on the north-west portion of Royal Park, bounded by Park Street west on the northern side, the Melbourne-Coburg railway line in the south and east, and the Moonee Ponds Creek in the west.



The first director of the farm was Thomas Skilling, secretary of the PPFS. Reference is made to the appointment in the PPFS report of 1858:

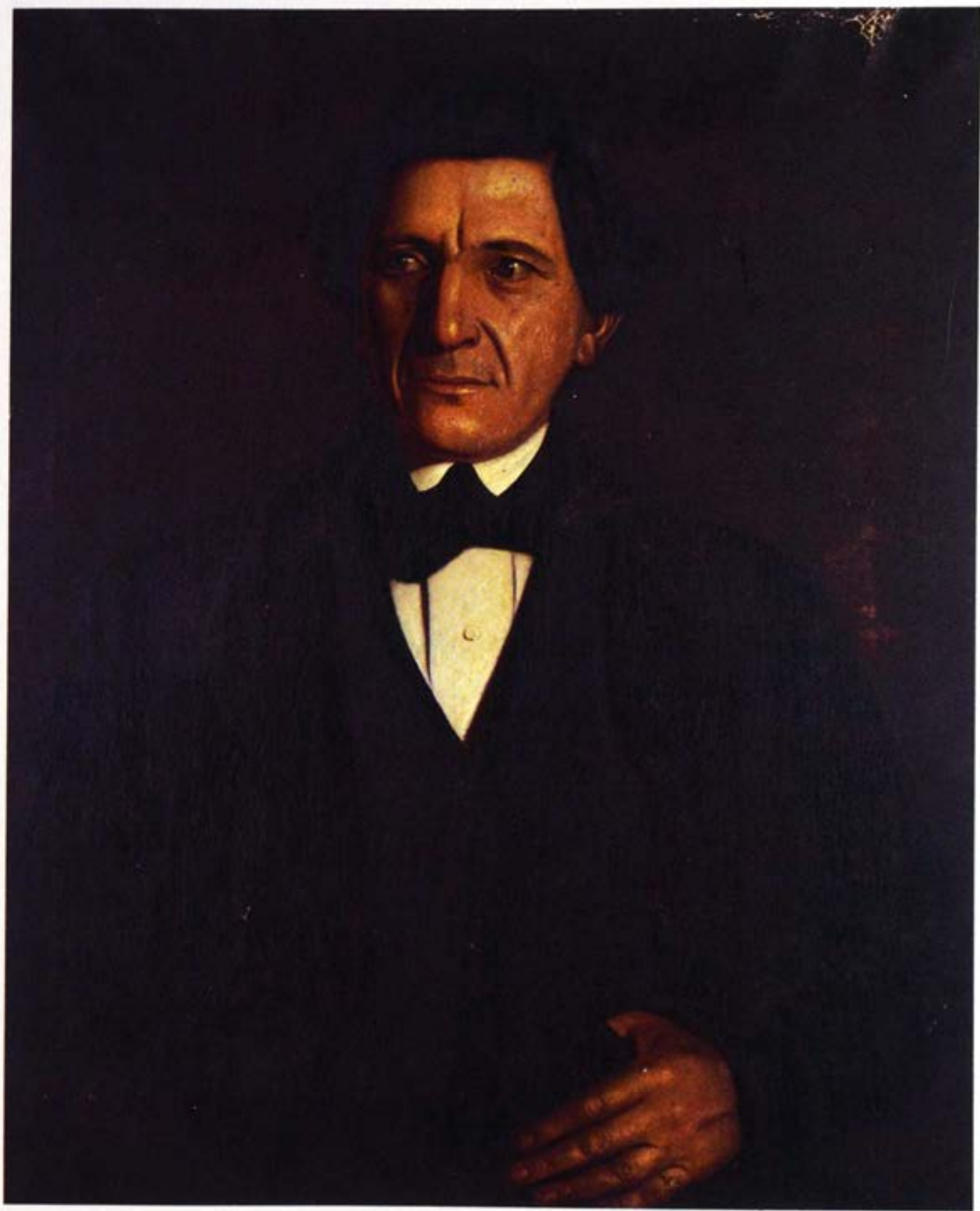
In January, the directorship of the Experimental Farm was conferred on the Secretary of the Society, and at the Committee Meeting ensuing, the nature of this appointment and the terms on which it had been conferred and accepted, were submitted by him, for the purpose of obtaining their opinions concerning it.

The intelligence was favourably received by the members present, and an intimation given that so long as he continued to conduct the business of the Society to their satisfaction, he was at liberty to occupy his time in any other duties he might think proper.

In consequence of the secretary's salary for the current year remaining unsettled, a special meeting of the committee was summoned for 1 April, for the purpose of determining the amount, at which nine members were present.

It was resolved that the salary, including all travelling expenses, should be £350 sterling per annum.





*David Duncan, first Treasurer, Port Phillip Farmers' Society, 1848. Portrait in oil, 76cm x 63cm. Painting donated to the RASV by Miss Cynthia Butcher, Horsham, Victoria, 1973. RASV Collection.*

Later, Thomas Skilling resigned his appointment as PPFS secretary and became full-time manager of the farm.

After the formation of the Board of Agriculture, the farm became the responsibility of that body, and the director submitted his reports to the Council of the Board.

The direction of the farm activities was carried out by a Farm Committee elected by the Council of the Board. The first committee was Dr J. Macadam, A. R. C. Selwyn, W. Wade, P. McCracken, and J. Mackintosh, who were appointed for one year. This committee was to change annually and, without continuity in direction, the whole project suffered. In the first full year of operation the farm had a loss of £1,473 12s 9d, which was increased to £1,757 6s 6d in the second year. In 1859, the second year of operation, the farm had one hundred and nine acres, three roods and twenty-nine perches under cultivation. Of this area seventy-one acres were sown to cereals, and the balance to green crops and root crops. Although yards and fencing for livestock were provided on the farm, no sheep or cattle were run in the first two years.

The Farm Committees appeared to be much more interested in tilling and cropping experiments than in stock-raising. It further suffered from the annual changes in Farm Committee personnel and the changing policy of the controlling Council, and it did not live up to the high hopes held by the PPFS.

Meanwhile the press of 1859 records that entries for the Show that year arrived from the country by bullock dray, watched by groups of curious, scantily-clad Aborigines, whose former corroboree grounds were being used by the white people for a spectacular corroboree of their own. Show crowds in those days made the scene colourful with the fine suits, cravats and silk hats of the merchants of Melbourne, contrasting vividly with the moleskin trousers, red sashes and neckerchiefs, and battered headgear of the gold diggers and farm servants.

Shows and competitions were held regularly on the Parkville Showgrounds until 1867, when the last Show was conducted there by the Society. Ironically this last PPFS Show was opened officially amid a scene of enthusiasm by the then Duke of Edinburgh, the second son of Queen Victoria.

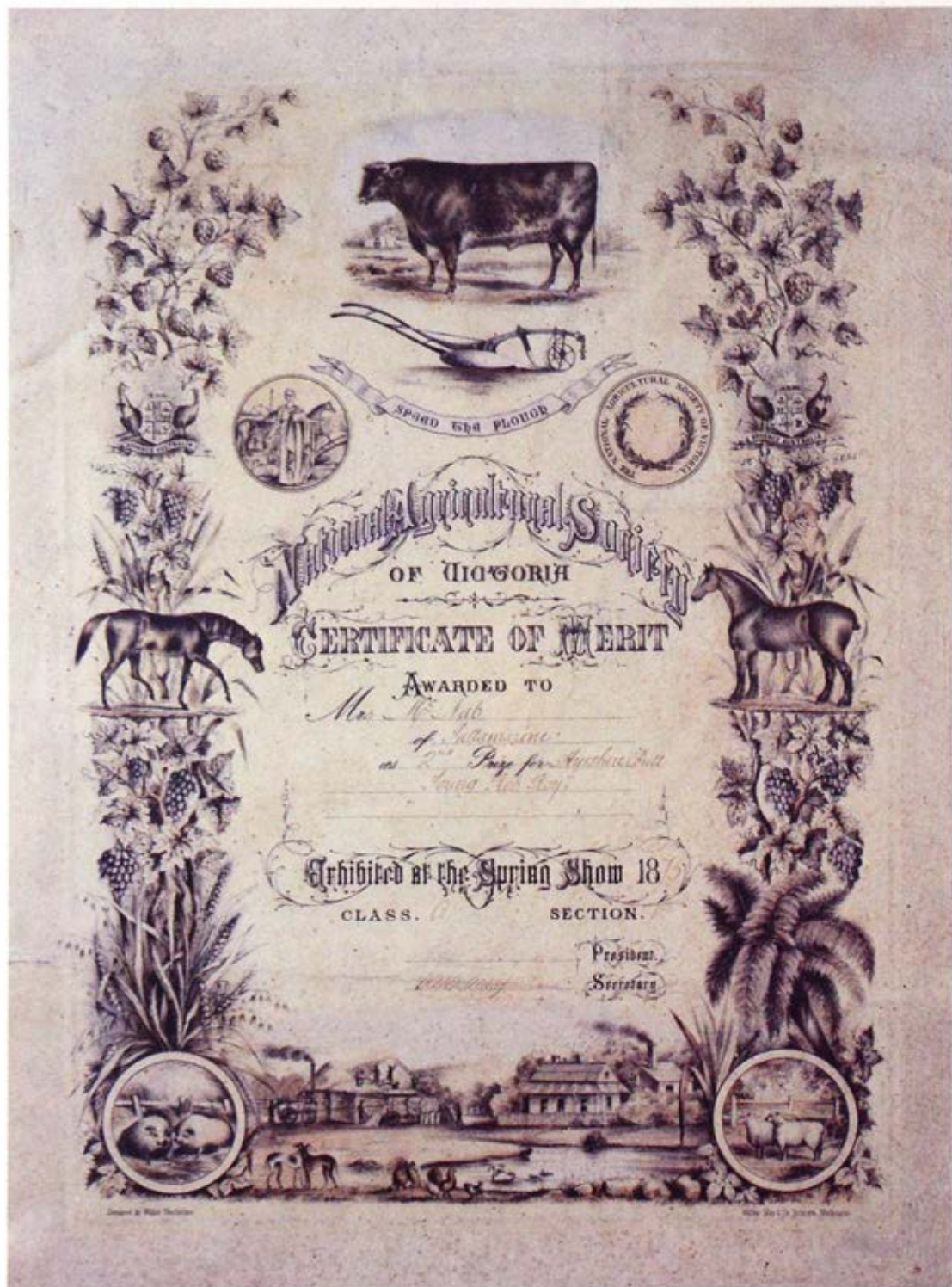
#### DECLINE OF THE PPFS AND BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

Almost simultaneously with the decline of the PPFS came problems with the Board of Agriculture. Delegates frequently failed to attend meetings and several times were not sufficient to make up a quorum. The experimental farm was not making any progress, the Government was dissatisfied with the Board's failure to produce results and in 1868 it decided to withhold the grant.

The Premier, James McCulloch, rejected proposals put forward by the Board for its own reorganisation, stating that the Legislative Assembly had shown a strong objection to entrusting Boards with expenditure of money, and that if a new Board was created it would be merely advisory.

The Council of the Board, in its final report of 1869, replied that it did not wish to have the distribution of the vote, which might be paid direct to agricultural societies by the Government. However, it did consider that some responsible department or body, which included the representatives of agricultural societies should exist to collect and





The National Agricultural Society of Victoria Certificate of Merit, awarded to Mrs McNab of Tullamarine: 2nd Prize for Ayrshire Bull 'Young Rob Roy'. Exhibited at the Spring Show 1876. RASV Collection.

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

1870-90

IN JUNE 1870 the PPFS vested its assets in trustees with power to transfer them to an approved new agricultural society, founded on a national basis 'similar to the Royal of England, or the Highland Society of Scotland'.

## THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

With this in mind, a public meeting was held in Hockin's Hotel Melbourne, under the chairmanship of Robert McDougall, in November 1870, and in the following month, a set of rules was agreed to; the title of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria was bestowed upon the new body.

The first Council of the NASV was elected by ballot in February 1871, with the Hon. William Degraives, MLC, millowner and station holder, as the first President. The duties of secretary at these early meetings were performed by Mr Savage, then the agricultural editor of a weekly newspaper in Melbourne, but in March 1871 Donald Munro was appointed permanently to the position at a salary of £300 per annum.

The birth of the NASV is best described in the first annual report of the Society:

During the month of November 1870, a public meeting was called and held in Hockin's Hotel, Melbourne, with the view of forming a new agricultural society, when, after some discussion, the following resolution was adopted unanimously. 'That in the absence of any association for promotion of agriculture, etc. it is desirable to form a new agricultural society on a wide basis, and therefore calculated to develop and mark the progress made each year in improving our stock, produce, implements, and machinery, and that the gentlemen here present form a provisional committee for the purpose of carrying out the above objects, with the power to add to their number.

At an adjourned meeting, rules and resolutions were submitted and adopted, and it was then resolved that the new society should be called 'The National Agricultural Society of Victoria'.

The following office bearers were elected in 1871 by secret ballot: *President*, Hon. William Degraives MLC (Melbourne); *Vice-Presidents*, Hon. Philip Russell (Carnham), Hon. Robert Simson (Langi Kal Kal), Hon. Neil Black (Mount Moorhead), Hon. John Cumming (Terinallum), John Benn (Melbourne) and George Carmichael (Geelong); and the Trustees were Sir James McCulloch (Melbourne), T. J. Sumner (Merri Creek) and Robert McDougall (Essendon). The twenty-five member council consisted of Hon. Francis Robertson (Goulburn), D. R. McGregor (Queen Street), John Hood (Elizabeth Street), Matthew McCaw (Bourne



disseminate information and to regulate the ever increasing number of shows. The report continued that:

The party in the Legislative Assembly which has the lead in putting an end to the financial votes for the present Board, wishes to revive the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, or rather to erect on its ashes a body to be known as a Royal Agricultural Society, which should have the entire control of all money voted by Parliament in aid of agriculture, and be composed of members paying an annual or life subscription.

The other scheme which appears to have favour with many country societies is to call into existence an Agricultural Department.

Both the National Agricultural Society of Victoria and the Victorian Department of Agriculture were to be formed in 1870 and 1872 respectively. The Society at no time had control of the vote in aid of agriculture, and the Department did not include representatives of agricultural societies.

However, the ghost of the old Board would not go away, and more than twenty years later further efforts were made by the NASV to re-establish a body representative of all the agricultural societies, similar to the original Board of Agriculture. This new organisation eventually became the Victorian Chamber of Agriculture and operated from 1900-65, when it was replaced by the present Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association.

In 1870 the Board of Agriculture was disbanded by the Board of Agriculture Abolition Bill, and the experimental farm was leased. Eleven years later, when the NASV was searching for a larger site, it approached the Government for the area of twenty acres on Flemington Road, shown in the earlier map of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society showyards, as the Hay, Straw and Horse Market. But the Government declined to make this area available, and instead suggested to the Society that part of the Model Farm could be taken over by the Society as a showgrounds. The Society declined this offer 'because of the remoteness of the land from the city'.

During its early life the PPFS was responsible for the welfare of agricultural development in the colony, but as the branches and other societies developed, the Society, strangled by its limited area, began to subside. Its last show was held in November 1867 when the Duke of Edinburgh was the guest of honour. There was no show in 1868 and at a special meeting held at the Society's office at 48 Bourke Street West, on 30 September 1869, only eight persons were present, so it was agreed to adjourn the meeting 'hoping for better times'.

A further meeting was called as an annual meeting on 16 May 1870. At this meeting, chaired by Sir James McCulloch, the decision was taken to disband the Society and 'bequeath its funds and assets - £666, and the Parkville Showgrounds - to whomsoever should prove himself to be its lawful heir, or in other words, to any association which might thereafter be established on the same basis as the great Agricultural Societies of the United Kingdom, with the approval of the Trustees of such funds'.

With the formation of the NASV the trustees of the PPFS were convinced that the new body would fill all the necessary qualifications, and accordingly handed over the assets of the old Society to the new one.

The Council, subsequently considering the land granted on the Sydney Road, unsuitable and insufficient (particularly in view of future requirements), waited upon the Hon. the President of Lands, in reference to some other suitable site, in exchange for the one previously granted and after pointing out several, that gentleman finally offered the land now occupied by the Society, near the Military Barracks, on the St Kilda Road.

The Spring Exhibition, though advertised for October (owing to difficulties experienced in effecting the change of site), was unavoidably postponed to the two last days of November and the two first days of December, which delay only militated very much against the success of the Exhibition, but caused the Society much additional expense.

The Council, in view of the ultimate benefit to the Society, consider that the introduction of the public to the new ground was worth the loss sustained, and allowing for the short time for preparation and the lateness of the season, they have to congratulate the Society upon the success generally of their first Exhibition, although resulting in a pecuniary loss of £522 0s 2d.

The actual outlay on the Showgrounds to the end of the past year has been £2,301 17s 11d for fences, buildings etc. suitable for stock and implement shows only, but the Council hope to be placed in a position during the present year, to erect a commodious building for holding Autumn Exhibitions of farm and dairy produce, and all kinds of colonial industries, as well as Intercolonial Exhibitions at suitable periods, alternately with the sister colony of New South Wales.

The Council were fortunate in securing, at moderate rent, suitable and central offices, easily accessible to country members and strangers.

The Council have made every exertion to bring the Society before the public, and establish a good body of subscribers; first by dividing Melbourne and suburbs into districts, and appointing Members of Council to act in each as collectors; and latterly, by appointing collectors on commission, to act in various districts throughout the colony, and have succeeded in placing on the register 135 Governors and 274 Members, or in all 409. Out of this number thirty-nine Governors were presented with free tickets for the past year, by a formal resolution, in consequence of their having been Life Governors of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society.

The Parliament of Victoria voted, last session, a sum of £2,000 to this Society, towards the erection of permanent buildings and improvements – the Society being prevented by its own rules from accepting any subsidy from Government, beyond a grant of land and money to aid at the outset in erecting necessary buildings – but one half of the amount voted is still unpaid, pending (as Council is informed) the framing of regulations to be proposed by the Government for the occupation of the grounds, consequently the Council (in order to keep faith with contractors prizetakers), have in the meantime been obliged to become responsible to the Society's bankers for a considerable overdraft.

The Council would venture to express a hope that this Society, having been fairly introduced will meet with support which it merits, and for the people of Victoria second to no other institution of a similar character in the Australasian Colonies.

## ST KILDA ROAD SHOWGROUNDS

The following notice appeared in the Government Gazette No. 10 on Friday 16 February 1872:

### Lands Temporarily Reserved From Sale

Pursuant to Order of 18 September 1871

Emerald Hill: Site for use of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria, for Show-yards and other purposes – Seventeen acres, three roods, seven perches, county of Bourke, parish of South Melbourne, borough of Emerald Hill: Commencing at the junction of the northern side of the new line of Dorcas street with the western side of Saint Kilda road, being a point bearing N 10° 34' W one chain fifty-two links from the north-east angle of allotment 5 section 59; bounded thence by Dorcas street bearing S 69° 45' W sixteen chains; thence by lines bearing respectively N 20° 15' W twelve chains eighty-two links and N 84° 23' E eighteen chains three



Street), William McCulloch (Queen Street), John Whiteman MLA (Emerald Hill), Josiah Mitchell (Model Farm), R. K. Hammond (Bourke Street), William Sumner (Swanston Street), Fred Search (Flemington), Andrew Murray (Boroondara), James Donaldson (Alphington), John Bell (Kangaroo Ground), Thomas Henty (Pakenham), Thomas Shaw (Camperdown), Archibald Fiskien (Buninyong), Joel Horwood (Sandhurst), J. C. Addis (Castlemaine), P. H. Fanning (Heidelberg), Alexander Patterson (Cranbourne), James Buchanan (Berwick), Dr Andrew Plummer (Sandridge), John Buncle (Hotham), J. M. Peck (Flemington) and Robert C. Morton (Mt Derrimut).

Meetings were held afterwards, for the appointment of a permanent secretary, for drafting and revising rules by-laws, and getting the same printed in pamphlet form for general distribution. Standing Committees were also appointed, including a Finance and Show Committee, and the latter, after holding several meetings, produced, in May 1871, a carefully prepared prize list, offering prizes to the extent of £1,200 in addition to Champion Medals for the first Exhibition in the spring of 1871.

A meeting was held about this time of the Trustees of the late Port Phillip Farmers' Society, at which it was agreed to hand over the funds in their hands to this Society – on certain conditions – and a requisition was signed at the same meeting, requesting the Hon. the President of Lands to transfer the land occupied by the old society, to be vested in the Trustees of this Society, which was afterwards done and duly gazetted.

*N.A.S.V. Award Card at first show 1871. To Mr John McNab, Tullamarine for Ayrshire Bull 'Rob Roy'.*



links to the Saint Kilda road; and thence by that road bearing S°10°34'E eight chains thirty-nine links to the point of commencement: as shown on the plan deposited at the Crown Lands Office Melbourne (71D16367).

The first Show held on the new grounds had been three months earlier than the gazetted notice – in November-December 1871.

On 7 December 1871 the *Emerald Hill Record* carried this article on the show:

The National Agricultural Association has since our last publication held its first spring meeting in the new grounds, next to the Barracks, on the St Kilda Road. The show at this meeting was confined to live stock and machinery; the autumn meeting being for grain fruits and wines.

The only local exhibits were the fine teams of Mr Morley, of Sandridge, a large collection of engineering brass fittings and patent sheepwashing jets by Messrs Danks and Co., and some well finished smithy work by Mr Whiteman.

We were somewhat surprised at the paucity of the exhibits of poultry, for a number of sections there being no entries at all; we should have thought that with the number of 'fanciers' on the Hill we should have had to chronicle some prizes in this direction.

We must not omit to mention the samples of brooms, colonial manufacture, from millet straw, exhibited by Messrs Reilly and Banner, (late of Sandridge), which certainly compared very favourably with the imported article.

Mr H. Junor Brown, of the distillery on the Sandridge Road, showed some samples of colonial distillation – good enough we dare say. And Mr Gordon Fyfe, had on show a very perfect little punching and cutting machine.

The total entries for the first show numbered 696, and the total receipts amounted to no more than £642. The Society found itself with a debit balance of £350 at the close of the first year.

The Hon. Robert Simson MLC was elected President in 1872, and the secretary of the Society, Donald Munro, resigned; he was succeeded by Walter Macfarlane, who was appointed from twenty-eight applicants.

Graham Mitchell, the first honorary veterinary surgeon was elected in 1872, and a start made with the Society's library. To meet the convenience of country visitors, it was decided to hold the 1872 Show earlier than the previous ones, but in spite of the fact that there was vast improvement in nearly every department, the Show again sustained a loss of £369.

In 1873 Mr (later Sir) Samuel Wilson, was elected President of the Society, and it was determined to hold an Autumn Show – the first of the kind – in the old Exhibition Building, but once again receipts fell short of the expenditure by just on £440. Two new features were introduced into the activities of the Society this year; a field trial of farming implements in a paddock at Newmarket, and a horse parade, which naturally proved to be an attractive spectacle.

The Society's succession of losses compelled it to look more closely at its expenditure, and it was resolved to abolish all prize money and issue medallions instead. This proved a wise move for the next Autumn Show produced a profit of about £200.

#### THE SHOW BECOMES ESTABLISHED

The Council re-elected Hon. Robert Simson as the Society President in 1874. The Spring Show, held in November, was under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture,





which supplied prize money to the value of £500. The overall result of the exhibition was a credit balance of £326 6s6d to the Society's funds.

The Show was notable in almost every respect. It was the most successful ever held in Melbourne, and the exhibits of stock came from New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. Gross entries were as follows: horses, 146; cattle, 236; sheep, 162 pens; pigs, 50 pens; poultry, 70 pens; and dogs, 213. The departments of machinery and implements were well filled, and sixteen portable engines and threshers were at work during the three days.

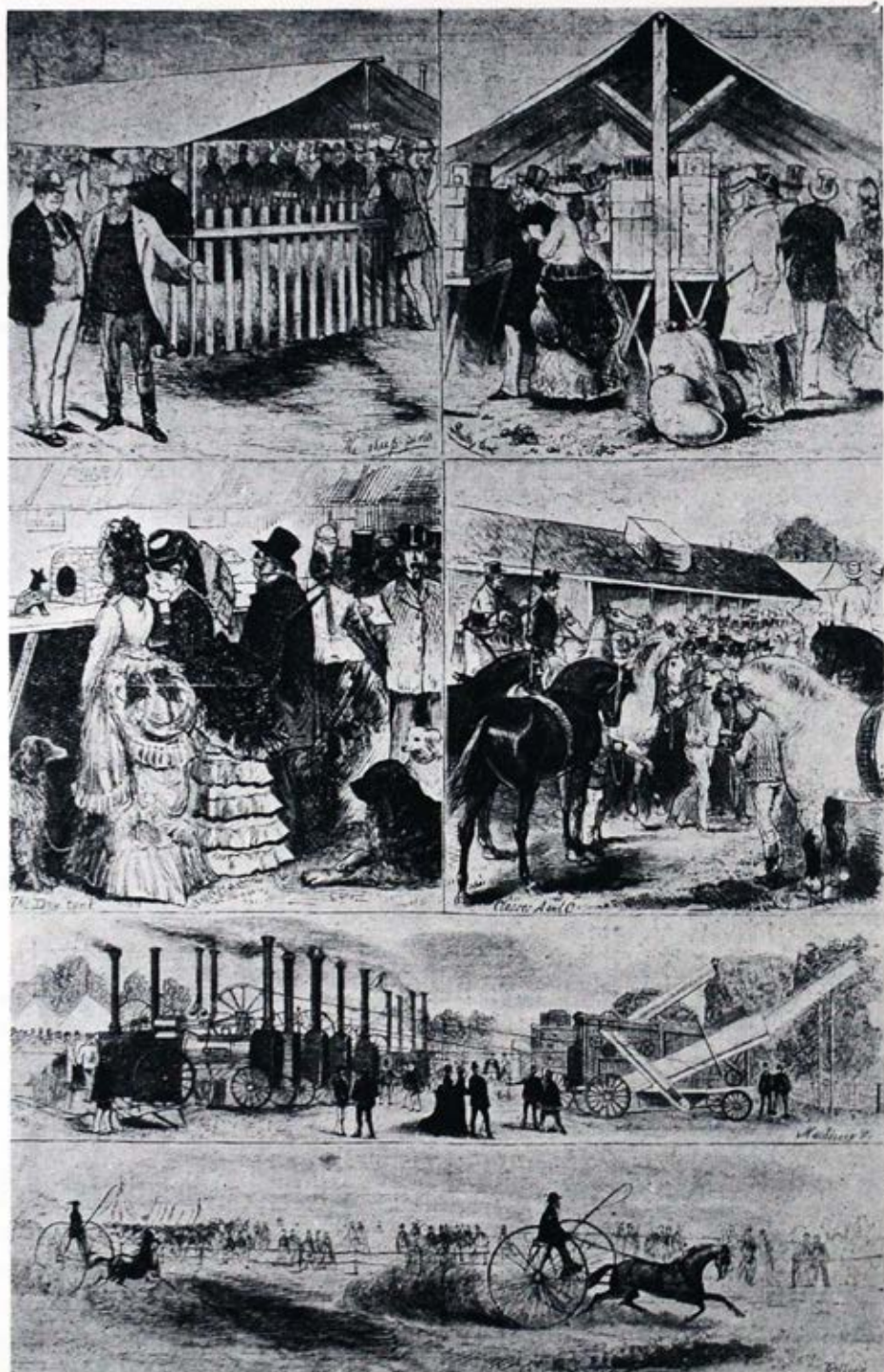
On exhibition, also, were twenty-six reaping and nine mowing machines, the prizes for which were reserved for trial in the field; other non-competitive entries were thirty. Implements, consisting of single and double furrow ploughs, numbered twenty-four entries. These prizes were also reserved for field trial; and other non-competitive implements numbered forty-three entries. Buggies and harness had fourteen entries, and dairy produce was: 5-cwt cheese, fourteen entries; bacon and hams, sixteen entries; butter, thirty-three entries. Also on the grounds were thirty stands, 'containing everything in machinery and implements, from a knife-polisher to a steam engine'. There were nineteen entries in extras, and these included artificial manures, washing machines, Ballarat Woollen Company's flannels, preserved meat etc.



*The first sheep shearing competition at the N.A.S.V. Show, 1874.*

One great attraction was the novel feature of a sheep shearing match, introduced by Hurtle Fisher's son, C. B. Fisher, in which forty shearers entered. The whole cost of the extensive yards, sheds and prizes were borne by Mr Fisher. All reaping and mowing machines displayed at the Show were subject to a field trial, which was held on the





*The N.A.S.V. at St. Kilda Road, 1872.*

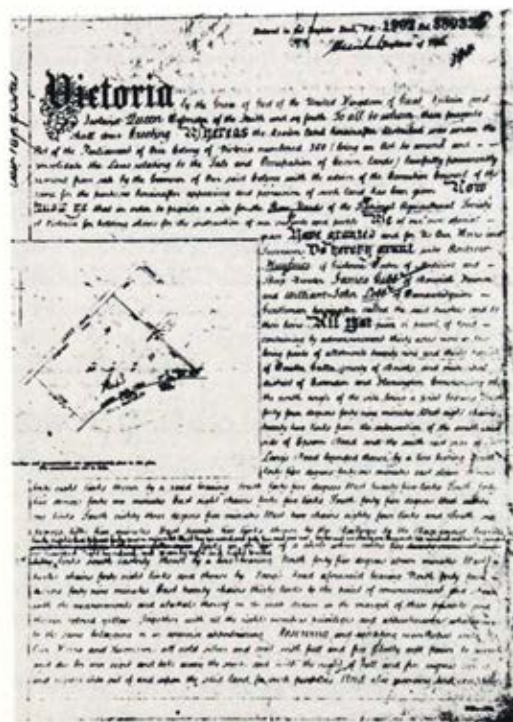
March 1881 Goldsborough and Company offered four gold cups valued at forty guineas each, to be competed for by growers of grain, and in addition, placed their spacious stores at the disposal of the exhibitors, the result being the largest collection of grain ever exhibited in Victoria.

In 1882 the Council was informed by the Minister of Lands that the Society should be prepared to leave the St Kilda Road site at an early date, as the land was to be put up for sale; further, that the Society should give up all hope of obtaining the site it expected to secure in Royal Park, as the Minister would take immediate steps to have it permanently reserved as park land. This information drew an immediate response from the Council, and at a meeting held on 14 March 1882, a large majority resolved to accept the site near the Flemington Racecourse. In compensation for the buildings and fencing on the old site, the Council received the sum of £3,000 to enable it to fence and improve the new grounds. At the same time the Government agreed to convey passengers by the railway to and from the Society's Shows on the new ground, for threepence (3d) each way. It was arranged that immediately after the Spring Show for 1882, possession of the old grounds would be given up.

#### THE CROWN GRANT, FINANCE, AND A NEW SITE

During the decade after the formation of the Society in 1870 there was a succession of nine Victorian ministries. Following this procession was the Bryan O'Loughlen Ministry,

*The Crown Grant of 30 acres at Ascot Vale, 1882.*





property of Hurtle Fisher, at the Moonee Ponds, on a crop of rye corn and Tartarian oats. Each machine was allotted approximately one and a quarter acres, and according to the records, 'this match surpassed everything of the kind attempted before'. The ploughs for trial were assessed at the annual ploughing match.

In conjunction with the Show, the Society held a sale of exhibits on the last day. The stock brought satisfactory prices, and the Council predicted that these sales would in future be recognised as the best market for the disposal of pure stock.

Mr Edward Henty, one of the earliest settlers in what was then Port Phillip District, was elected President of the Society in 1875, and a ram fair was held in connection with the Horse Show in August.

When the Society relinquished the grounds in Sydney Road the Government promised it a grant of £7,000, but up to this time only £2,000 had been received. Repeated efforts were made in 1876 to obtain the balance, but they were unsuccessful.

The 1876 display of 'machinery and implements adapted to agricultural and pastoral purposes' was reported as the 'best yet in the Southern Hemisphere'.

The 1877 Annual Report went further to state that there could have been a more varied display of industrial exhibits had the grounds possessed the exhibition building that would have been built, but for the lack of the 'proper tenure' of the ground. The overdraft at the Society's bank was also causing a great deal of uneasiness, and a special appeal was made to the members for assistance in reducing the debt. This appeal met with great success, which, taken in conjunction with the large receipts from the Show held on the Prince of Wales' birthday, enabled the Council to completely discharge the debt.

#### REQUESTS FOR A NEW VENUE

In 1877 the Council of the NASV made repeated applications to the Minister of Lands for a twenty-acre site in Royal Park, on the Flemington Road. This proposal was agreed to by the Royal Park trustees, and the Minister also gave verbal assent.

However, owing to the strenuous opposition offered by residents in the neighbourhood, the Minister withdrew his offer, and instead offered the Society an area of ground known as the Old Pound and Store Reserve at the top of Elizabeth Street north. The Society declined the offer in view of the proviso that vested the area in the name of the Society and the corporation of the City of Melbourne.

A second site was a portion of the old Model Farm, near the Jika-Jika Reformatory adjoining Royal Park. Again the Society declined on account of its remoteness from the city, and 'its otherwise general unfitness and ineligibility as a site for such buildings as the Society desire to erect for their exhibitions'.

The NASV Show in November 1880 was considered the most interesting feature of the Melbourne International Exhibition of that year.

In the course of the same year, the Society was offered an area of thirty acres abutting on to the Flemington Racecourse, and although the Society acknowledged the grant, the majority of the Council members considered the site 'too far from the city', and the matter was left in abeyance.

The President for 1881 was Mr W. J. Lobb, and the Society participated for the first time since its change of name in the Government Grant to Agricultural Societies. In

# National Agricultural Society: Victoria

## A GRAND INTERCOLONIAL CHAMPION PLOUGHING MATCH

(Under the management of a Committee of the above Society, acting with the co-operation of the Agricultural Societies of the Colonies.)

1882, 7th JULY

WITHIN ABOUT 25 MILES OF MELBOURNE, AND NEAR A RAILWAY STATION,  
On WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY, 26th & 27th JULY, 1882.

LIST OF PRIZES offered for competition:-

### CLASS A.

Section 1.—Ploughing with Single-Furrow Ploughs, 1st prize £150 (the gift of the Hon. W. J. Clarke), 2nd do. £50, 3rd do. £25, 4th do. £15, 5th do. £5.

Section 2.—Single-Furrow Plough of lightest draught (tested by dynamometer), prize £20.

### CLASS B.

Section 1.—Ploughing with Double-Furrow Ploughs, 1st prize £100, 2nd do. £50, 3rd do. £25, 4th do. £15, 5th do. £10. Best finish in this section, prize £5.

Section 2.—Double-Furrow Plough of lightest draught (tested by dynamometer), prize £10.

### CLASS C.

Section 1.—Ploughing with Triple-Furrow Ploughs, 1st prize £45, 2nd do. £25, 3rd do. £15, 4th do. £10, 5th do. £5.

Section 2.—Triple-Furrow Plough of lightest draught (tested by dynamometer), prize £10.

### EXTRA.

Best Pair of Farm Horses at work on the ground, prize £10; second best do., prize £5.  
Best Groomed Pair of Horses and Best Kept Set of Harness (judged together), prize £5.

### GENERAL REGULATIONS.

1. There shall be one day's ploughing, and the prizes to be won in the course of that day shall be awarded to the plougher, or ploughmen, as the case may be, at the end of the day.
2. Ploughing shall be done in the order of the classes, and the prizes shall be awarded to the plougher, or ploughmen, as the case may be, at the end of the day.
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10. Ploughing shall be done in the order of the classes, and the prizes shall be awarded to the plougher, or ploughmen, as the case may be, at the end of the day.

### Railway Regulations.

1. The ploughing to be done in the morning, and the ploughmen shall be allowed to leave their ploughs at the railway station at 10 o'clock, and to return at 4 o'clock.
2. The ploughing to be done in the afternoon, and the ploughmen shall be allowed to leave their ploughs at the railway station at 2 o'clock, and to return at 6 o'clock.
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ENTRIES CLOSE SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1882.

Walter, Ball & Co., Printers, 5 Bridge Street, Melbourne.

UNION FIVE, President.  
THOMAS PATTERSON, Secretary.

*The Intercolonial Ploughing Match, 1882.*

## The NASV Annual Report comments:

Much sympathy was expressed with most of the ploughmen from the other colonies, whose ploughs, more than themselves, were at fault – the excellence of the Victorian ploughs being shown by the fact that they were used by the whole of the prize takers.

The total expenditure on the match was £808 7s7d, and the receipts £602 2s6d, leaving a loss to this Society of £20 5s1d but it is expected that the Government subsidy on the prizes will more than cover this deficiency.

There were fifteen prizes for single, double and treble furrow ploughs; the first prize for the best ploughed land was a trophy valued at one hundred guineas, which was presented by Mr (later Sir) William John Clarke.

Earlier in the year, a petition was received from a large number of horse owners and breeders in the Kyneton district, requesting the Council to extend the horse parade from one to two or more days so that sales of exhibited stock might be held in the yards after the parade. This petition was supported by three firms of stock and station agents and four importers of Clydesdale horses. Council considered the matter and informed the petitioners that the old arrangements would not be changed, as there were no facilities for carrying out sales at the yards, but that it was hoped the new grounds would have provision for auction sales.

The petitioners exerted further pressure, and the decision was reconsidered at a special meeting which overturned the previous decision. The August horse parade



from July 1881 to August 1883. In its first year, this government gave the Society the Crown Grant of thirty acres by placing on the estimates the finance for the purchase of the land. In the Committee of Supply of the Legislative Assembly on 8 December 1881, a vote of £8,000 was allocated for grants: namely, £3,500 as a supply grant in aid of parks and gardens; and £4,500 for the purchase of a permanent site for a 'show-yard' for the NASV.

The vote was agreed to and the resolution was then reported to the House. Following this, in June 1882, a letter was received from the Secretary of Lands, stating that the permanent reservation of thirty acres of land for the use of the Society had been duly advertised in the Government Gazette of 19 May 1882. The three trustees named by the Society were Hon. J. G. Francis MLA, T. J. Sumner and Dr Andrew Plummer.

The 'remoteness' from the city of the new site was partly compensated for by the promise that Show patrons would be carried by rail for 'three-pence each way', quite a concession when compared with the fares charged in 1867. At that time when 'through' race specials ran to the Flemington Racecourse hourly from Spencer Street, the return fares were three shillings, first class, and two shillings, second class.

An interesting sidelight on the special fare concession is recorded in the minutes of the Council of the NASV of 13 October 1885, when the following motion was passed: 'That the Hon. T. Bent be elected an honorary member of the Society, as it was he who had secured the three-pence fares to the Society's Grounds.'

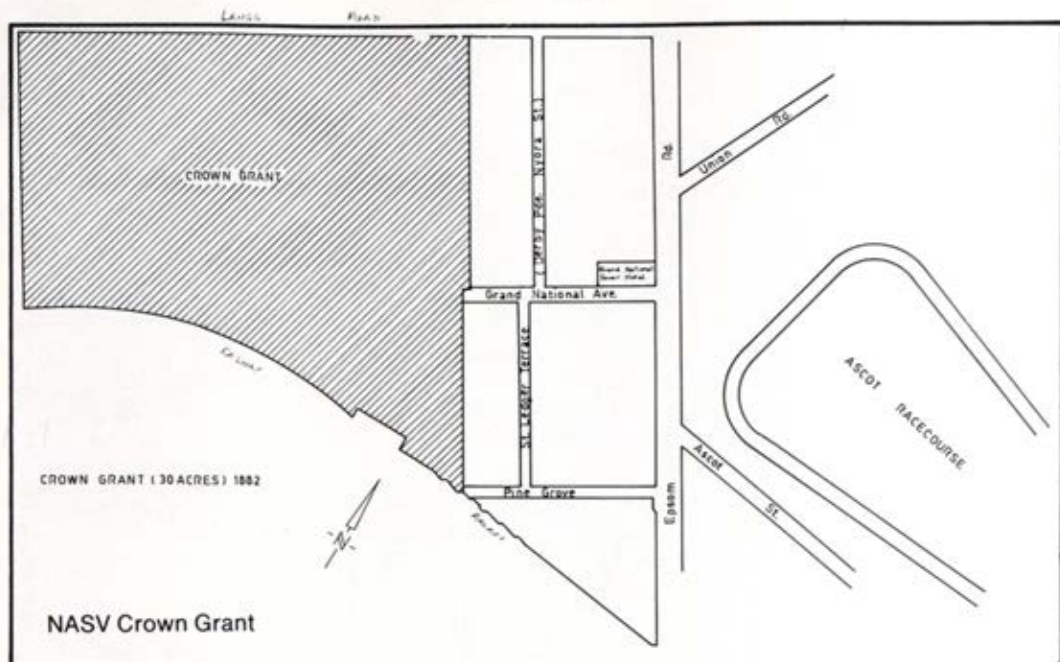
The new Showgrounds were conveniently served by the Newmarket to Racecourse branch line, and almost immediately after taking possession of the new site, the Society set up a Showgrounds railway station at the south-west 'railway corner' of the grant.

On receipt of the Crown Grant deed, it was found that the conditions imposed were too stringent. In fact, the deed was quite different from what the Council had been led to expect by the public and repeated statements of members of the Ministry. The restrictions about sales by auction and other matters were so severe that the grounds would have been of no use to the Society. A special meeting of Council considered the matter, and a statement was sent to the Minister of Lands. The result was that the Minister forwarded a copy of a permissive clause to be inserted in the deed to the effect that sales, by auction or otherwise, of all exhibits at shows would be allowed and that the grounds might be used for any other purpose, provided the Minister of Lands had given permission. A new Crown Grant deed embodying this clause was issued and deposited with the Bank of Victoria.

#### THE FIRST INTERCOLONIAL CHAMPION PLOUGHING MATCH

In July 1882 the NASV sponsored and conducted the first Intercolonial Champion Ploughing Match, which was held on the estate of Thomas and Andrew Chirnside at Werribee.

Entries were received from the colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, in addition to those from Victoria. There were fifty-five entries in the single-furrow plough section, twenty-nine in the double, and seven for triple-furrow ploughs. The Victorian ploughmen won all the prizes, with the exception of the second prize in the single-furrow ploughs, which was won by a Tasmanian.



extended to within ten days of the opening of the Show, whereas previously it had been twenty-one days.

The Council issued a liberal programme of prizes for the first Show on the new grounds, and this was supplemented with an additional £500, a gift from the Parliament of Victoria to supply Grand Champion of Australia prizes. Visitors were extravagant in their praise of the new site, and expressed great satisfaction at the progress the Council had made with the improvements. Unfortunately, on the afternoon of the last day heavy rain abruptly ended an otherwise most memorable and successful exhibition.

In June 1884 a proposal for the federation of agricultural societies in Victoria was formulated, an idea which was well received within the State. By the time of the second Show on the new site, in 1884, the Council had ironed out a number of earlier problems. Over the twelve months they had added forty boxes, sixty stalls, duplication of the fat cattle pens, additions to the dog shed, pig pens, a carriage shed, a secretary's office and council room.

During the first Show, the date of which coincided with the Melbourne Cup carnival, difficulty had been experienced with the Railways.

It was therefore decided to change the date to 27-30 August. The entry date was also altered to allow more time between the closing date and the Show, and for the first time an entry fee was charged. Exhibitors of machinery and implements were also charged for space, at the rate of one shilling per foot frontage for stands for non-competitive goods.

A prize list of more than £2,000 was offered for the 1884 exhibition, with the result that entries exceeded those of all previous years.



proved to be the most successful held to date, with a huge entry of no less than 245 horses for display.

In October 1882, a deputation from the Council waited on the Minister of Agriculture to request that the Department's annual vote of five hundred pounds for the Government's National Show should, in 1883, be granted to the NASV in order to lend more prestige to the opening exhibition on the new grounds.

The Spring Show, held in November, was the last to be held on the St Kilda Road showgrounds, and proved to be the most successful yet conducted by the NASV. The entries were the best the Show had ever had, with the exhibits throughout being of a high standard. In stock, the cattle were particularly good. The Shorthorns were of exceptional quality, and included South Australian exhibits. There was a large increase in the number of Ayrshires and Alderneys, indicating that these breeds were becoming more popular. The fact that attendance was the largest for any show so far, contributed greatly to the financial success of the exhibition.

When the Society was ready to move to the new site, it had a cash balance of £1,493 4s, apart from the subsidy from the Government owing on prizes awarded during the year, which amounted to £791 19s 4d, and was free of all liabilities.

James Gibb was elected President in 1883 and the Society offered premiums for the best plan and designs for the fencing and buildings required for the new grounds. The first prize of £50 was won by Billing and Son, who were later appointed architects, and tenders were accepted for the contract amounting to £8,744.

#### A NEW HOME WITH PROBLEMS

The Crown Grant land of thirty acres, had as its northern boundary Langs Road, then ran south to the Racecourse railway line. On the west the boundary was from the present No. 3 Gate, along the western wall of No. 1 Cattle Pavilion, thence south to the railway line. The eastern boundary dropped south through about the middle of No. 5 Pavilion to Plummer Avenue, where it broke back to the west sixteen feet six inches, and then continued south to join the railway boundary at the Showgrounds Station.

The first purchase of freehold land was this sixteen feet six inches, or 'fringe', which the Society purchased for £50 just prior to its first Ascot Vale Show in 1883.

The Council had many problems in preparing the new grounds for the first Show on 7-9 November 1883, one being the absence of water supply to the grounds. A deputation asked the Minister of Public Works to have the supply connected, but the request was not complied with. Permission was then obtained from the Victoria Racing Club to take a service from the racecourse main.

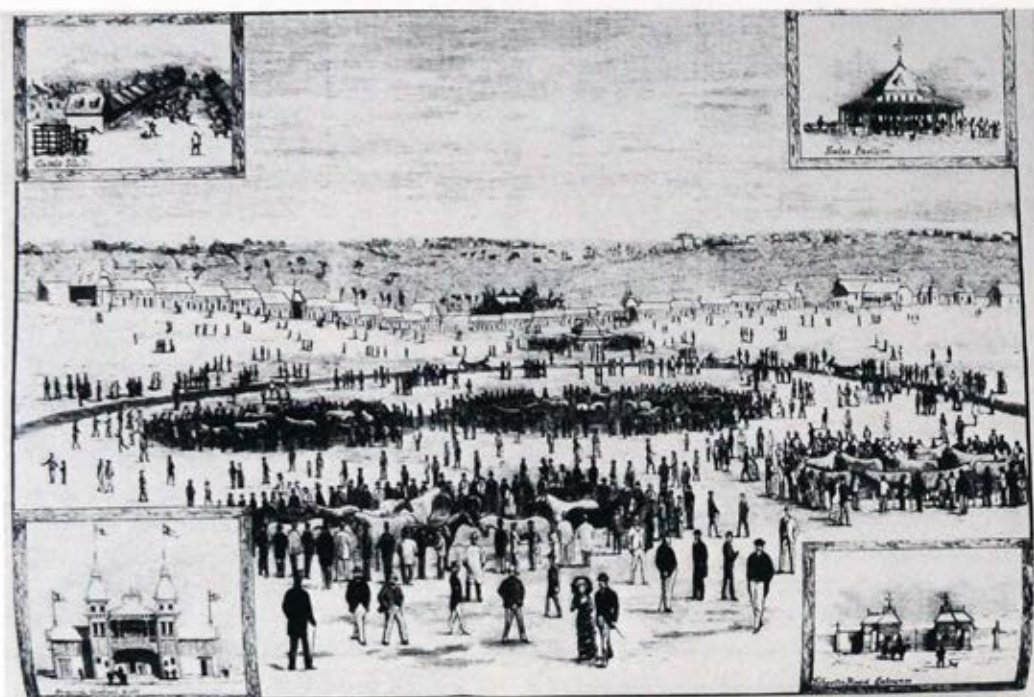
The Railways Department constructed a siding with a dock and crane at the corner of the grounds, so that visitors and exhibits could be carried to the grounds by rail. However, on the second day of the Show, the Railways Department would not permit trains to stop at the Showgrounds siding, because of the race meeting at the Flemington Racecourse.

There were many more entries for the Show than in any previous year and, even with the extra buildings on the new site, a great number of temporary stalls had to be fitted up to cope with the entries. To confuse matters still more, the entry closing date was



The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Certificate of Merit, awarded to Mr Andrew Buchanan of Glenelg, Flinders, 3rd Prize for Ayrshire Heifer 3 years old 'Daisy 2nd'. Exhibited at the Spring Show 1899. RASV Collection





*The National Agricultural Society's New Showgrounds, Flemington, 10 November, 1883.*

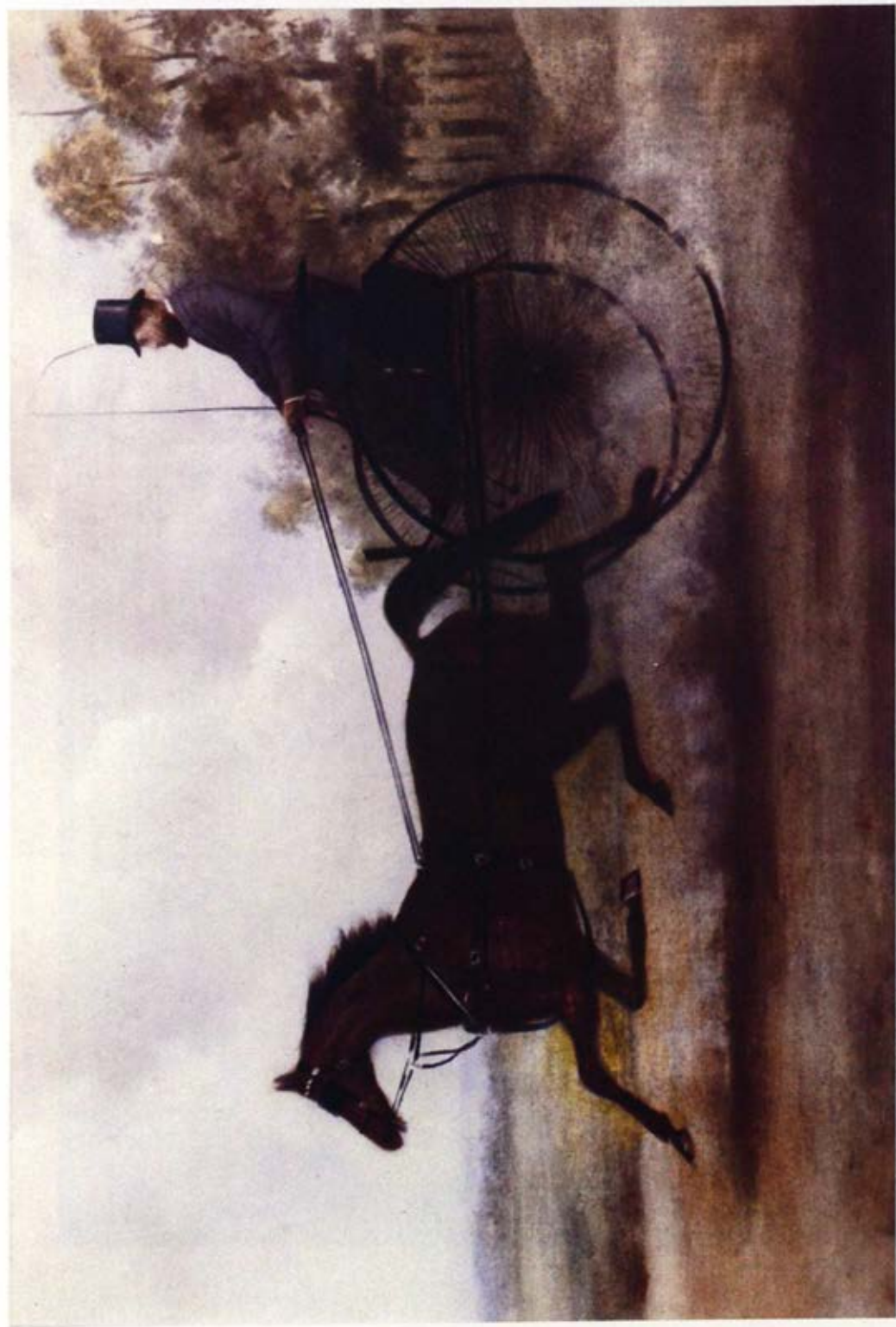
#### NO BARGAINING POWER

During 1884 further complications arose for the Council, when it was found that the Crown Grant of the Showgrounds was useless as a security. An effort was made to have the site put up for sale by auction, with a valuation for improvements, so that the Society might purchase it and thus procure the deed to lodge as security for the money spent on permanent improvements. However, the proposal could not be adopted because the land had been permanently and legally reserved from sale.

The next step was a deputation which requested the Minister of Lands to have the Government bring a short Bill into Parliament, conveying the fee simple of the land to the Society. This proposition was favourably received and over the next four years proposals and counter-proposals were put forward, until in 1888 the Crown Solicitor approved a new deed with clauses about borrowing money. These clauses, while they did not allow the Society to part with the fee simple of the land, gave the trustees power to borrow money up to £15,000 on the security of the land and its rent and profits.

Back to the Show of 1884. The Annual Report for the Show of 1884 reads in part:

The show of machinery and implements was a very extensive one, there being fifty-eight stands covering acres of ground, and comprising a collection of exhibits of almost all descriptions.



*'Wanderer'. Winner of the first trotting contest held by The Melbourne National Agricultural Society Show at St Kilda Road, Melbourne 1872. Owned and driven by the late P. G. Dixon, Esq. Watercolour 16cm x 24cm. RASV Collection.*



Nothing like it was ever seen at an agricultural exhibition in Victoria before. Fortunately the weather was fine as could be expected in August, and the attendance exceeded that of the previous year, so that those who said that the Society's exhibitions could not exist apart from the races are effectually silenced.

Following the 1884 Show the NASV made its first serious approach for donations towards the prize fund, and certain members of the Show committee undertook to solicit donations from leading business houses and private gentlemen of the city. They managed to raise £564 2s which enabled the Council to 'issue the best prize list yet published in the colonies', and the Government again promised to donate £445 in Grand Champion Of Australia prizes.

Another initiative of the NASV in 1884 was to import two bushels of Triumph oats, and distribute the seed among agriculturalists in the colony. The seed arrived rather late in the season, but the yield in the late districts of the colony was surprisingly high.

Also in this year the Society's secretary, Thomas Patterson, submitted a proposal to the Council of the NASV for establishing a journal. This proposal was to:

Establish the Journal of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria, with the object of keeping the operations of the Society prominently before the public, and of giving attention to all matters affecting the common interests of kindred institutions. It is also intended as a medium for the dissemination of practical and scientific information relating to agricultural, pastoral and associated pursuits.

In 1885 the NASV Council established the Journal of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria, and appointed Thomas Patterson editor. This medium of communication was to prove invaluable to the Society and its members for the next five years.

The year 1885 was to prove a very active one for the NASV. It saw the introduction of the Federation of Agricultural Societies, which first met on 4 August 1885 at the offices of the Society.

Representatives came from the eleven districts of the colony, and the foundation president was Dr Andrew Plummer, with Thomas Patterson as secretary. This body resolved to call itself the Central Board of the Victorian Board of Agriculture for the Federation of Agricultural Societies, and was to prove the forerunner to the Chamber of Agriculture, formed fifteen years later.

#### FIRST SHOW HOLIDAY

In early 1885 the Premier received a deputation 'supported by a numerous signed request from leading business houses in town', asking for a public holiday for the Show, which was duly granted.

The Society's Journal had this to say:

The half-holiday granted by the Government was a great boon to the Society, and the powers that be (if they be in power) will no doubt extend it to a whole day holiday next year, for they must be impressed with the excellent results of the concession already granted.

Nothing contributed more to the splendid attendance than the proclamation of a half-holiday on Thursday for the Show. It was the best possible advertisement the exhibition could have had, as all classes were bound to notice it - it brought the matter home to everybody.

It was very vexatious, after spending two or three hundred pounds in advertisements, to meet a business man and ask him if he had been to the Show, and have him reply, 'Which show?' But business men are apt to become so engrossed in their own particular lines that outside matters are entirely neglected.

However, a public holiday being proclaimed specially for the Show attracts everyone's attention to it, and is the very best means of properly advertising the event that could be devised.

The 1885 Show was an outstanding success. The admission takings jumped from £731 13s 6d in 1884 to £1,560 9s 9d in 1885, and when this is compared with the first show on the new grounds in 1883, when the takings were £666 13s, the increase is still more marked.

There is little doubt that in the eyes of the Society's Secretary, Thomas Patterson, the new grounds were still considered 'remote from the city', as the following extract from the Journal of September 1884 declares:

The wonder, however, is not that the people should have patronized the Show so freely this year, but the Shows of previous years did not draw better. Certainly they were not up to the present one, but with the return fare of sixpence – which cheap rate Mr Bent fixed for all time – and the charge of one or two shillings for admission as the case may be, the trip out, the splendid view of the grounds and the change of air and scene should be worth all the money to city residents, and they have the Show into the bargain.

Main attractions at the 1885 Show were the hunters' contests, in costume; and the trial of excavators for earthwork. Also the Society introduced some cattle Derby Sweepstakes, similar to those held in Scotland.

Mr James McKean, the Society's honorary solicitor, was elected the first Honorary Member of the NASV in 1885.

At the general meeting of the NASV Council on 12 January 1886, a committee was set up to investigate a recommendation to erect a grandstand. Consequently the architects, Messrs Billing and Son, were requested to prepare plans and specifications for a grandstand on the Showgrounds, which would provide sitting accommodation for 2,000 people, the cost not to exceed £2,000.

Also at this time a Stud Book committee was formed to undertake the publication of a Clydesdale or Draught Horse Stud Book.

The new grandstand costing £5,269 17s 7d was a feature of the Show in 1886, which was considered the best to have been held in the Southern Hemisphere. Up to the end of 1886 the Society had spent £18,085 13s 2d on permanent works on the new Showgrounds.

In 1887 the trustees surrendered their Crown Grant to the Government in exchange for one which enabled them to borrow up to £15,000, about half the value of the land, on security of the deed. The money was to be used for permanent improvements.

The entries for the 1887 Show were 3,000, the greatest so far recorded, and a number of innovations were introduced, namely, a rough riding contest, and milk and butter tests. Demonstrations of rough riding had been given at the 1886 Show and proved 'immensely popular', but the 1887 contests were such a success that it was agreed that they be continued.

Great interest was also shown in the competition for the £20 prize for the best Milch Cow, any breed, subject to a test in the Showgrounds as to the largest quantity of butter. There were eleven entries in this competition which was won by 'Daisy' the property of Mr John Bond, of Fairfield, Green Vale. Over the forty-six hours of the test she produced one hundred and eight pounds of milk, twelve pounds of cream, and seven pounds five and a half ounces of butter. 'Daisy' was a half-bred Ayrshire, sired by an Ayrshire bull



from a good crossbred dairy cow. The cow which won the prize of £10 10s for the largest quantity of milk was 'Dairymaid', a pure-bred imported Holstein, the property of Mr F. Peppin, of Hawkrigde, Epping. She produced one hundred and twenty-three pounds.

The attendance at the 1887 Show was lower than the year before. The following extract from the Annual Report of that year makes these comments:

the falling off in attendance being accounted for by the Government failing to proclaim the Official Opening Day of the Show a public holiday, which was a great disappointment to the Council.

The Government granted the Society £500 in lieu of the holiday, but this is not considered at all adequate compensation for the loss of the public holiday which gave such a prestige to the Society, and was such an excellent advertisement for it, independently of the opportunity it afforded the public of visiting the Show, and receiving the benefit it was calculated to impart from an educational point of view.

The Stud Book committee of the Council was receiving little help from the horse breeders in the colony in its effort to establish a stud book for Clydesdale or draught horses, so it advertised a meeting to be held in the Society's offices in Kirk's Bazaar, for 25 August 1887, which was attended by thirty breeders and interested persons. The meeting was chaired by Mr W. J. Lobb, and the chairman of the Stud Book committee, Mr Walter J. Clarke, informed the meeting that the NASV had called the meeting to consider the question of forming a Breeders' Association for the purpose of bringing out a Stud Book. He outlined the draft rules and regulations drawn up by his committee, and suggested that there should be no further delay in establishing such a Stud Book.

After much discussion, Mr Clarke moved that a Draught Horse Society be formed, to carry out the object expressed in the suggestions and rules he had submitted; this was seconded and carried. The meeting then proceeded to enrol members, and about a dozen persons handed in their names as subscribers.

The chairman, Mr W. J. Lobb, said that he considered it would be a matter involving a considerable expenditure of money. He suggested that the meeting adjourn, and that the proposals brought forward be submitted to the country agricultural societies for approval, before further action was taken. Mr Walter Clarke said he regretted that the chairman had made the suggestion which he did, as he believed that by referring the matter to the societies, it would be thrown back at least two years.

At the Society's Annual Meeting held on 16 February 1888, Dr Plummer was re-elected President, and in his address to Council made mention of four main areas in which the NASV should direct its attention. These were: the need for additional land to house the ever increasing number of stock exhibits; the increase in new breeds of stock; the need for a new poultry pavilion, and the establishment of a working, or travelling, dairy.

Dr Plummer said that the Society's Show had grown to such a degree that it would soon be impossible to cater for all stock entries – the Society had been forced to erect an additional one hundred and fifty extra stalls for cattle alone, prior to the previous Show – and entries were increasing each year. He said that while many great improvements were noticeable in the machinery section, the produce section, and in fact almost throughout the Show, perhaps the specimens of new breeds of cattle lately introduced, were as important a feature as was to be seen on the grounds.



*N.A.S.V. Showgrounds, 1888.*

the skilled labour necessary to effect the required education. He was also willing to exhibit the plant in full working order, under the supervision of the Government dairy expert, at the Society's forthcoming Show. The Department of Agriculture, with its special facilities, had arranged its plan of operations, and would therefore not be required to take further trouble in that direction. This decision stunned the committee, especially after the promises made by the Minister, and it was resolved that the correspondence be handed to the press, and an account of all the expenses incurred by the committee be forwarded to the Minister of Agriculture.

During 1889 the Society continued to improve the grounds, and by the end of that year the total outlay on permanent improvements to the Showgrounds was £24,774 10s 9d. The Show was again a great success, with entries totalling 3,278, and takings exceeding those of the previous year by £446 16s 3d.

Thomas Patterson, the secretary of the Society relinquished the position of editor of the Journal, and this was taken over by the publishers, Messrs H. W. Mills and Co. During the period in which he prepared and edited the Journal, Thomas Patterson was paid an extra £25 per annum, and the Council agreed to add this amount to his salary when he ceased editing the Journal.



The polled Angus cattle in particular, which for the first time were exhibited in any considerable number, were especially attractive, as were the Devons – a new breed entirely in the Melbourne Show – and the Holsteins, also comparatively new, made a good showing.

It was necessary for the NASV to seriously consider a 'new and more commodious building' for the exhibition of poultry. The Society had suffered in its display of poultry through not having better facilities, and had been placed in the background as compared with those centres which lacked the Society's advantage of being in the very heart of the principal breeding establishments of Victoria.

The President referred to the necessity for some properly organised scheme for the education of the dairying community in Victoria. He mentioned that at the last Show a test of dairy cows was carried out, and the nucleus of a working dairy was shown, in the form of a cream separator at work, and the making of butter produced by the competing cows. This idea could be extended, and the Council had determined to have a working dairy at the next Show, but it had been suggested that a travelling dairy should be established thereafter.

The general progress of the NASV appeared in summary in the 1887 Annual Report:

Year	Income			Prize Money			Profit on Show		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1880	1,831	4	0	439	13	0	72	15	3
1881	2,413	6	4	466	14	6	102	1	5
1882	3,650	3	11	650	6	0	170	16	8
1883	5,581	12	8	1,327	2	0	421	5	7
1884	3,615	1	7	1,754	5	0	891	5	9
1885	5,182	9	1	2,008	6	0	1,974	9	8
1886	7,266	10	10	1,991	3	0	3,682	13	7
1887	7,442	14	4	2,267	7	0	3,813	12	2

The 1888 Show was a most successful one. The entries again exceeded 3,000 and the attendance showed an increase on the previous year. During the year a meeting of breeders of Polled Angus cattle was held at the office of the NASV, in order to form a society and bring out a herd book for pure stock of that breed.

Following Dr Plummer's suggestion for a travelling dairy, a committee was set up and held its first meeting in April 1888. The committee consisted of Dr Plummer (chairman), Messrs T. Brunton, J. Hurst, Job Smith, D. Whitley, D. Wilson, and R. W. Wightman. This committee recommended that the operations of the working dairy be commenced at the NASV Show in August; that one plant capable of working the milk of eighty cows, and another of working the milk of twenty cows be obtained, and be worked first at the Melbourne Show by experts, and later at the country shows. The total cost of the proposal was £5,000. The scheme was submitted to and approved by the Minister of Agriculture, who later wrote to the NASV and conveyed his thanks to the committee for their co-operation with him in devising measures for the improvement of the dairying industry in the colony.

On 4 May 1888 a letter was received from the Secretary for Agriculture, stating that the Minister was pleased to find that the ideas of the committee coincided with his as to the desirability of making the travelling dairy system a leading feature in an educational scheme, and he had decided to at once procure a plant for this purpose, together with

President Andrew Plummer said: 'I certainly think the way you used the word "pinchbeck" was not right and proper. As the representatives of the Queen, I hold that they should be esteemed, and I hope, without my asking you to do so, that you will withdraw the word "pinchbeck".'

Young said, 'I am quite willing to do so, as the gentlemen here do not understand the meaning of the term.' 'We are only farmers, and incapable of understanding it,' said the President.

Frederick Peppin supported the motion, stating that he liked anything that savoured of royalty, and he hoped it would be a long time before members of the Society felt ashamed of being loyal. The present name of the Society was an anomaly, there being nothing national about it while the colony was under British rule and was not a nation. He took exception to Mr Young's remarks about the 'pinchbeck' representatives of royalty. They had no such representatives, but men representing the Queen in Victoria were quite equal to any man who chose to designate them as 'pinchbecks'. It was unbecoming of Mr Young to cast any slurs upon representatives of Her Majesty, who, with very few exceptions, were good and tried men. They were also true to the colony and to colonial interests, and were in fact men whom they might look up to with pride.

J. M. Peck said that he did not regard 'Royal' as any improvement upon 'National' as a name for the Society, and thought they should ask the Government to vary its name for their special show.

Finally it was agreed that the President interview the Secretary for Agriculture and suggest such an alteration. Further discussion took place at the Council meeting held on 10 December, when the President advised that the Secretary of Agriculture would not change the name of the Government Show.

However, discussion continued with Messrs W. J. Lobb and D. Whitley speaking strongly in favour of retaining the present name and urging that the Government be prevailed upon to change its title for country Grand National Shows. Speaking in favour of the proposed change, Thomas Brunton repeated that he considered there was nothing about the present Society of a national character, and that the subscribers should be asked to consent to a change of name. The Hon. Charles Young objected to altering the name, and especially to naming it the Royal Society, which he considered savoured of 'flunkeyism'. The meeting resolved that Dr Plummer consult with the Hon. the Minister of Lands in an endeavour to persuade him to have the Secretary of Agriculture change his mind.

As no progress had been made with repeated advances to members of the Government for that body to change the name for its National shows, the proposal to change the name of the Society came before the annual general meeting on 20 February 1890, in accordance with the notice of motion given by Thomas Brunton.

In formally moving the motion to rescind rule one, with the view to the Society's name being changed to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, Brunton said that the reason for his motion was well known to members of the Council, but for the benefit of others who were not acquainted with the present difficulties, he might mention that the Government of the colony was accustomed to grant special prizes for special exhibits at the Grand National Shows. These, he said, were called Grand National prizes, and were distributed to shows sometimes in one part of the country, and at other times in other parts, thus causing confusion to the exhibitors of the NASV. The resolution to change



## A NEW NAME

At the Council meeting on 12 October 1889, Thomas Brunton proposed the following notice of motion: 'That the name of the Society be altered from that of National to that of Royal Agricultural Society, and that rule one be rescinded.'

Further discussion took place at the November Council meeting. The secretary explained that application for permission to use the word 'Royal' must be made through the Governor to the Secretary of State for Colonies. Thomas Brunton remarked that his sole object for proposing a change of name was 'the very great confusion arising from the migratory meetings, held under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, being called and advertised as the "National" Show'.

In proposing the motion for the annual meeting on 20 February 1890, Thomas Brunton made these comments:

Last year the Grand National Show was held at Traralgon, and as it was advertised in the papers as taking place there it was confounded with that of the NASV.

Considerable confusion ensued, owing to there being little or not sufficient distinction drawn between the two societies, and it was to obviate this, that he proposed to change the name of the Society to the Royal Society. If this were done it would be impossible to cause any inconvenience like that which existed at present. He asked the meeting to give the Society a distinctive name. There might be some objection to the word 'Royal' as the title of the Society, but he did not see that they could get any title that would answer as well as the one he proposed. For the contemplated alteration they had the precedent in the Royal Agricultural Societies of England and Scotland. Considering the prominent position of the Victorian Society he considered that the title of Royal would be very appropriate. The Society could boast of the grandest exhibits of implements in the world, for no other country could surpass them.

He recognised that the greatest credit was due to the pioneers of the society, but it would seem that a blunder had been committed somewhere in it being possible to confound the two events. The Society having borne its name long before the Department of Agriculture's shows were instituted, he regretted that they had failed to obtain an answer from Mr J. L. Dow, the Minister of Agriculture.

He said the time had now come for definite action to be taken, and he had every confidence in the proposal meeting with the support of members of the Society.

John Hurst seconded the motion, and was supported by D. R. McGregor.

Speaking against the change, the Hon. Charles Young MLA remarked that the shows of the Society were always held in Melbourne, and other shows in the country districts. He did not think much of the acumen of the farmer who could not tell the difference between the separate shows – though the farmer was supposed to be somewhat low in the intellectual scale. How could anyone suppose that the National Society could hold its shows at Traralgon? To his mind it was a great absurdity to go to Mr Dow. He said there was no analogy between the National Society and the Royal Societies of England and Scotland.

In England there was a Queen, who was patroness of the Society, but here there was no Queen, and all they had was in effect a 'pinchbeck' representative of royalty.

Mr John Blyth, interrupting, said, 'I think Mr Young ought to withdraw the word "pinchbeck".'

Charles Young continued, 'I have not been ruled out of order, and I venture to say no president will rule me out of order. "Pinchbeck" means a representative of royalty who is not here.'

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## THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA 1890–1980

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AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society in 1890 a motion was carried to amend Rule One with the view to the Society's name being changed to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

### 'THE ROYAL' AND 'SPEED THE PLOUGH'

His Excellency the Governor, the Earl of Hopetoun, conveyed to the Society the following dispatch on 17 June 1890.

Downing Street  
6th May 1890.

My Lord,

I duly laid before the Queen your Lordship's despatch, No. 32, on the 6th March, in which you recommend the application of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria be allowed to use the title Royal, and I have the honour to acquaint you that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant the requisite permission for the Society to assume the title of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

(signed) Knutsford

The change in name of the Society necessitated a change in design of medals and certificates of merit, and as a motto was required for insertion in the certificate of merit, the Council, in December 1890, resolved to adopt *Speed the Plough* as the motto of the Society.

Also in 1890 the Society successfully appealed before the Court of Petty Sessions against the Essendon Council's rating of the Showgrounds; the rating was fixed at one shilling per annum. In 1892 the Borough Council took the case to the Supreme Court where it was dealt with by the Full Bench of six judges, the result being that the former decision was upheld; it was settled that the Society could only be rated at the nominal sum of one shilling. Regrettably due to 'progress' through the years, whereby the grounds are used by, and revenue obtained from other organisations, the settlement does not now apply.



the name to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria was carried by twenty-five votes to four.

In keeping with the proposed new title, the Council resolved to invite the Governors of all the colonies to become patrons of the Society. Acceptances were received from His Excellency, the Earl of Hopetoun, Governor for Victoria; His Excellency, Sir Henry Norman, Governor of Queensland; His Excellency, the Earl of Kintore, Governor of South Australia; and His Excellency, the Earl of Onslow, Governor of New Zealand. Advice was received from the private secretary of His Excellency, Sir Malcolm Fraser, Acting Governor of Western Australia, stating that in view of the short period he was likely to hold office it would be inadvisable for him to accept the honour which was offered to him by the Council. Sir Henry Loch, Ex-Governor of Victoria, also expressed a wish to continue to be a patron of the Society.

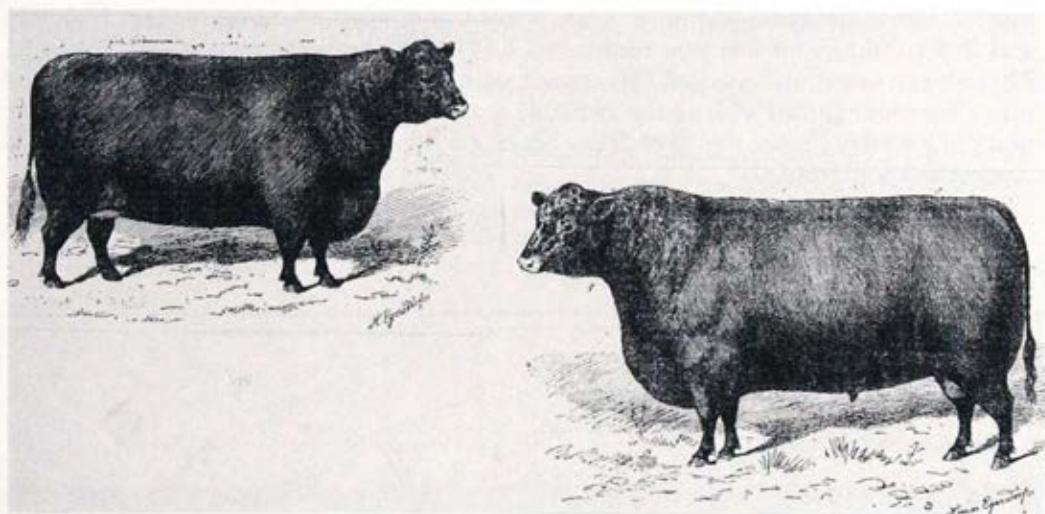
In the seven years of occupation of the new site, the Society had completely fenced all boundaries, made provision for holding all stock exhibits, erected a grandstand, carriage shed, secretary's office, council room, formed traffic ways, and erected entrance gates.

The financial statement submitted with the 1889 Annual Report showed that the Society's overdraft with the bank stood at £9,070 15s 5d.

accepted the Society's offer of patron – and they, and the Victorian and interstate press, praised the Society for its high standard of administration, and for what was considered the best exhibition in the Southern Hemisphere.

At the 1891 Annual Meeting, Dr Plummer did not seek re-election for president, and Mr D. R. McGregor was elected. A wine and spirit merchant and breeder of Shorthorn cattle, Mr McGregor had served eleven terms as Vice-President, and was re-elected President for a second term in 1892.

By 1893 the Society had expended £29,752 16s 11d on permanent improvements, in the form of buildings and works. In 1894 the total show entries had risen to 4,130, and there were 138 stands of machinery, implements and miscellaneous exhibits. With the view to giving the makers and importers of new and improved implements an opportunity of showing the merits of their inventions to the farmers of the colony, the Council of the RASV organised a field trial on the farm of John Kernan, Moonee Ponds, at which there were seventy-three entries.



*Old line drawings of champion male and female beef cattle, 1894.*

The exhibition in 1895 contained an outstanding display of wheats organised by the Department of Agriculture. There were 400 specimens of wheat on display, the largest number ever shown in the colony. Also, there were 144 stands of machinery (in motion), implements and miscellaneous exhibits. The Government granted a half-holiday for the official opening day and the Council, at the request of the Government, reduced the charge for admission on that day from two shillings and sixpence to one shilling.

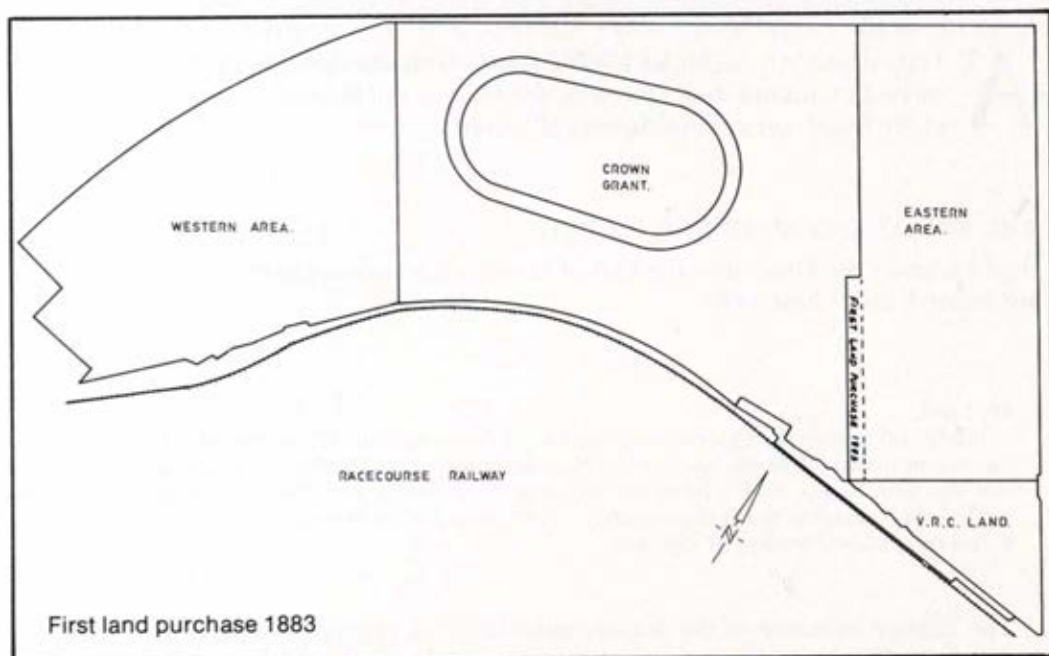
During the year (1895) a proposal was brought forward to hold an autumn show, but after discussion it was decided that such a show be not held in 1896. The proposal was again considered in 1896, and at a special meeting of Council was lost by a two to one majority.



In 1890 Dr Andrew Plummer was elected President for his eighth term, and it was a fitting tribute to his dedication to the Society that he should hold the office for the first year under the new title 'Royal'.

For many years the Society had been called on by country agricultural societies to nominate judges from members of the Council, but in 1890 the Agricultural Society of New South Wales requested the Council to nominate a full panel of judges to officiate at its 1890 Show. This was the first occasion on which such an exchange had taken place within the colonies.

A number of matters were discussed during the preparation of the programme and catalogue for the 1890 Royal Show. It was decided to discontinue the buck-jumping competition, because of adverse publicity in the press. The Hon. J. Buchanan, MLC, said that he thought by offering premiums for this event, the Society would encourage the breeding of bad-tempered horses. The Council decided to transfer the allotted prize money to a new event, for a gentleman's hack, capable of carrying fifteen stone.



In the Shorthorn cattle classes, Mr R. Clarke offered a prize of twenty guineas, for the best five females of one 'tribe' bred by the exhibitor. In the discussion that followed 'it was elicited that the male was not to be estimated in considering the tribe'.

The entries for the 1890 Show were a record, and the attendance also showed a big increase on the previous year. The President entertained the Governors from all the colonies – including Lord Carrington, Governor of New South Wales, who belatedly

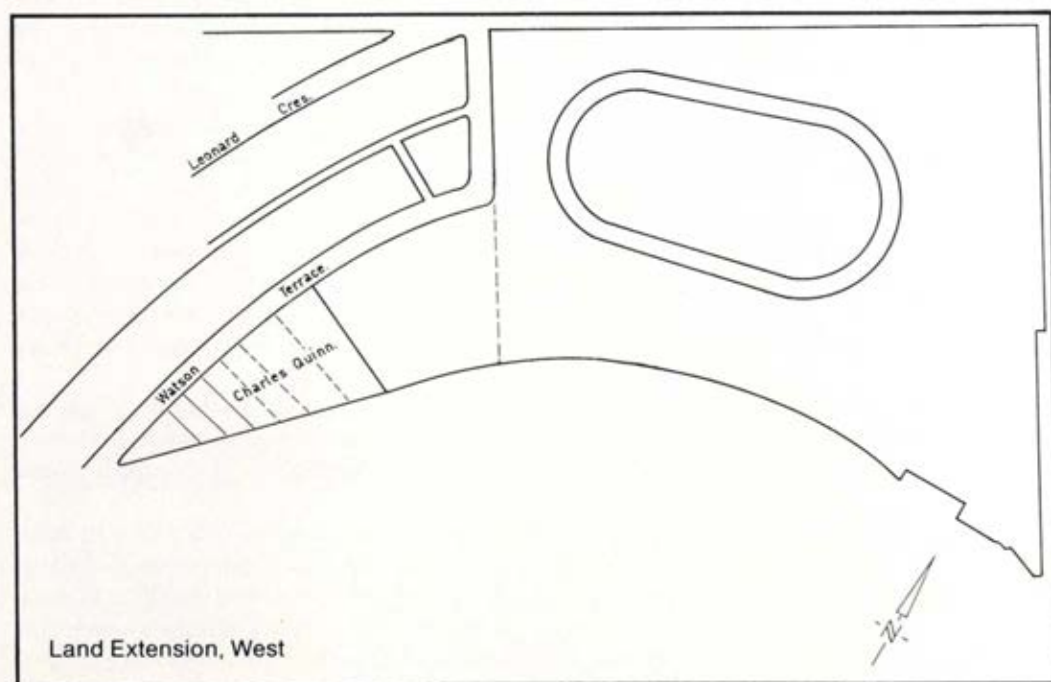
## FIRST FLOCK BOOK

In March 1898, the Society published the first Flock Book for British Breeds of Sheep in Victoria. This was the culmination of many years of effort on the part of the secretary, Thomas Patterson, who, from the time of his appointment in 1880, considered that the Society should be the custodian for all flock, herd, and stud books. Although he had been greatly disappointed with the lack of support in establishing a stud book for draught horses in the colony, the publishing of the flock book eased this disappointment somewhat.

The matter of an autumn show again came under discussion, and it was decided to hold a show from 16-18 March in 1899. The reason for such persistent pursuing of an autumn show was that members of Council considered that in view of the large amount of money expended on improvements on the Showgrounds, more use should be made of the area. However, the 1899 autumn show did not 'get off the ground', for after drawing up an attractive and varied programme of prizes, and fully advertising the Show, the response from the exhibitors was so poor that the Special Show Committee decided not to hold it. The intending exhibitors were informed and their entry fees refunded.

The cost incurred in connection with advertising, printing etc. was £149 15s 11d and according to the 1899 Annual Report:

the result of this departure goes to prove that the great bulk of exhibitors prefer to concentrate their energies on one big event in the year and to make it a conspicuous success, rather than divide their efforts between two Shows; and it also settles the hitherto annually recurring question of holding an Autumn Show on the Society's Showgrounds, at any rate until entirely new conditions arise.



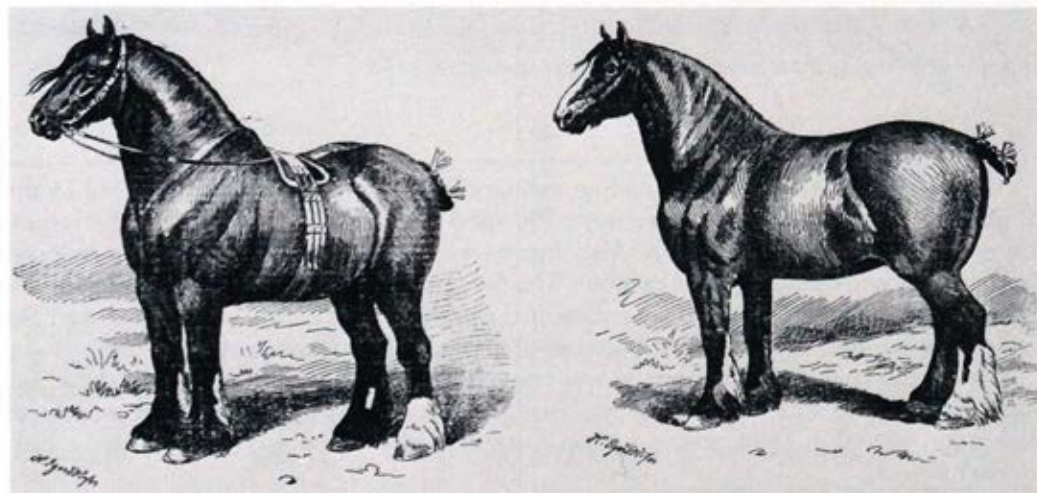


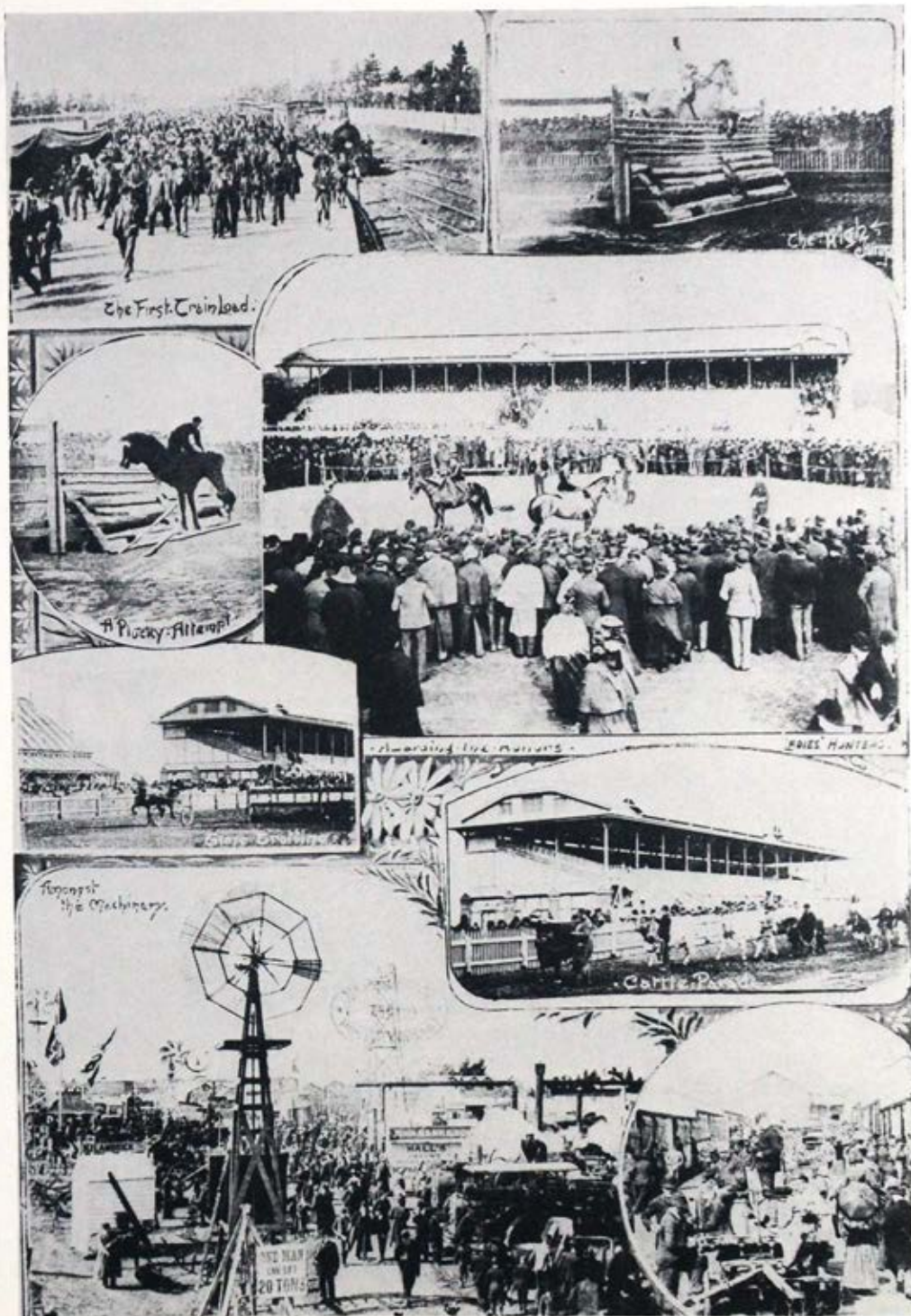
The 1896 Royal Show was held from 2–5 September, having been moved from the usual last week in August in order to avoid the Municipal elections. The entries reached an all time high of 4,234, and the Government again granted a holiday for the official opening, or Vice-Regal day. In August 1896 a letter was received from the Government proclaiming a half-holiday for the opening day. The President, Hon. Thomas Brunton MLC was not satisfied with this concession, 'and did not rest till he had induced the Premier to proclaim a whole holiday'. At a banquet on the grounds, the Premier alluded in laudatory terms to the persistence of the President in his endeavour to gain his point, and added that 'after this year the holiday for the Show would be an established institution, that he did not think any future Government could refuse to recognise'.

During the following year, although not President, Brunton followed up the Premier's promise and prevailed on the Government to place the Show Holiday on the Statute Book, thus establishing a holiday by Act of Parliament.

Mr Thomas Skene, the President in 1897, was a station owner, a director of the Colonial Bank, and later in 1901, MHR for the Grampians. By 1898, Thomas Skene's second year in the chair, the Society had spent £34,059 16s 8d on permanent buildings and works. Entries for this year numbered 4,443; and admission receipts, £2,314 5s 4d. There were one hundred and fifty stands of machinery in motion, implements and miscellaneous exhibits with all the available space fully occupied. After four consecutive years of four-day shows, the 1898 Show became a five-days show, and was held from 30 August to 3 September.

*Champion draught horses, 1896.*





*The Royal Show 1895.*



During 1899 the Society made its first purchase of size in land, when it acquired an area of two acres, two roods and twenty perches, west of the original Grant boundary, (running from the southern end of No. 1 Pavilion along Watson Terrace in the north-west, and joining the southern railway boundary about the site of the present Sheep Club), referred to in later descriptions as the 'bulge'. This purchase cost the Society £250.

The 1899 Royal show was held from 5-9 September, and entries exceeded the 5,000 mark for the first time; as well as the record entries, there were 169 stands of machinery (in motion), implements and miscellaneous exhibits, considered to be 'the largest collection ever brought together on the grounds'. The 1899 Annual Report had this to say: 'The weather, although unfavourable on Vice-Regal day, was the best that had been experienced by the Society for years, and the attendance very satisfactory, it having been publicly asserted that there were more country people in town in connection with the Show than there were at Cup time.'

### THE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE

From 1885 the Society had been trying to establish some type of organisation whereby country agricultural societies might be represented on a body which would be of mutual benefit to all societies.

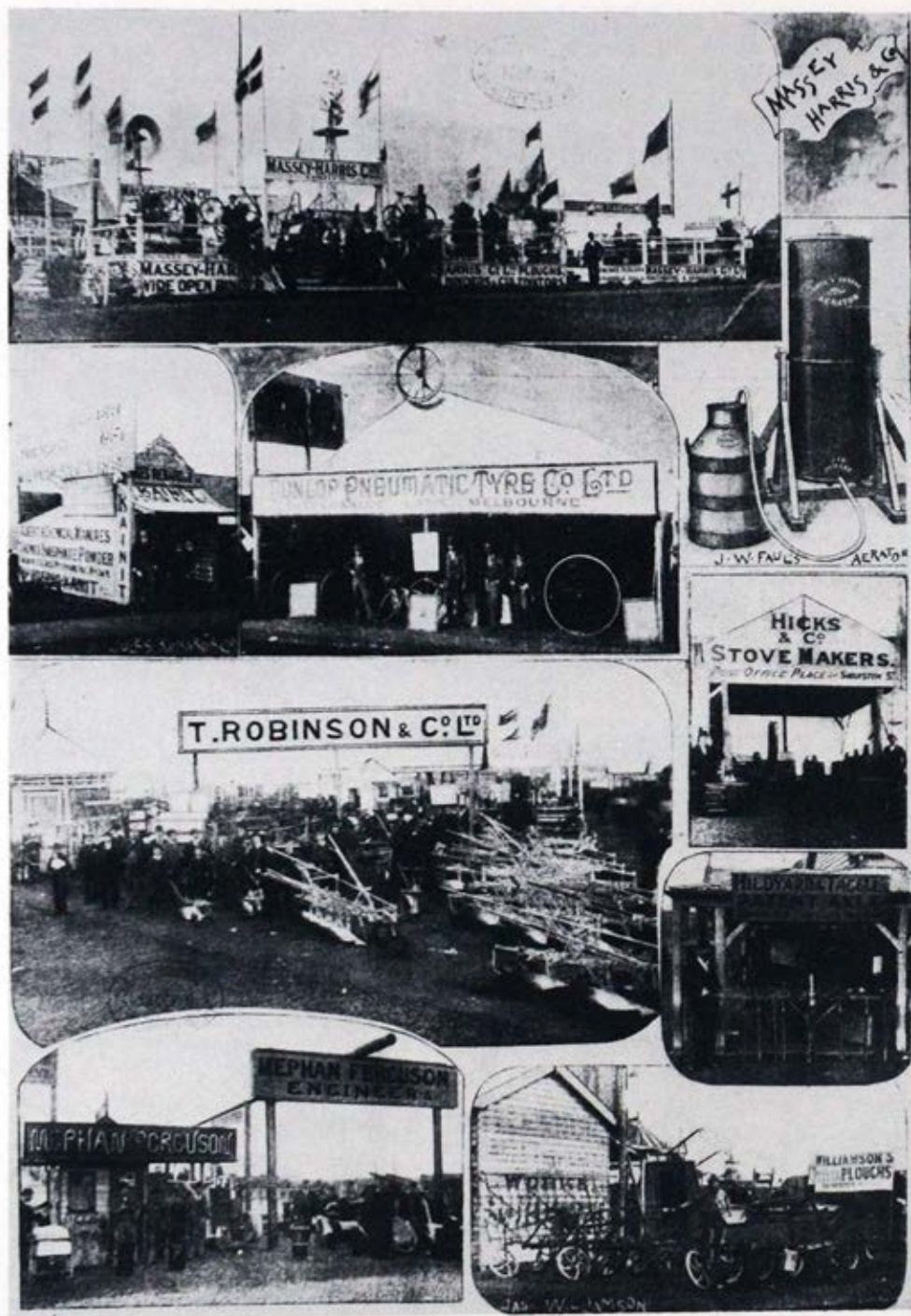
The Board of Agriculture had served this purpose to a degree, but government interference and the apathy of the societies' representatives had hastened the demise of that body.

In 1885 the NASV called a meeting of all societies and interested bodies, and formed the Federation of Agricultural Societies with the object of placing pressure on the Government to make more money available for the benefit of agriculture within the colony. But despite the many approaches made, no action was taken, and the Federation went into recess.

At the annual meeting of the Society in February 1899, Thomas Skene suggested the establishment of a Chamber of Agriculture 'to assist, protect, encourage, and promote the general welfare of the agricultural and producing interests of the colony'. A special committee, appointed to enrol societies and members, called a conference during Show Week 1899, and passed resolutions favouring the formation of a Chamber of Agriculture, which would 'promote agriculture by spreading information, and by use of every means in its power for the redress of grievances'. The resolutions were forwarded to one hundred and eighty-seven Victorian agricultural societies, and several co-operative dairy companies.

In March 1900 a meeting was held in the Melbourne Town Hall, at which delegates approved the proposals of the 1899 Show conference, and elected the first council which included William Thomson (RASV president) as the first President of the Chamber, and RASV secretary Thomas Patterson, as the first secretary.

The Chamber had a strong executive, and unlike its predecessor, the Board of Agriculture, was soon able to command support by its practical achievements, especially its success in obtaining an additional Member for the country districts in the first Federal Parliament. Many farmers began to realise the benefits of unity - a number had learnt the same lesson indirectly by observing the increasing strength of the industrial unions.



Machinery and equipment stands, Royal Show 1896.



The only opposition to the formation of the Chamber came from the Agricultural Societies Association of the Goulburn Valley. This group feared that the RASV would dominate the Chamber, for they regarded the RASV as 'a Society of city men and swells'.

The Goulburn Valley opposition was led by G. H. Willis of Numurkah, who as organiser and provisional secretary of the body called the Victorian Farmers' and Producers' Association, convened a meeting of all agricultural interests to be held in Shepparton on 1 July 1902.

A full coverage of later action, which resulted in an amalgamation of the two bodies, is covered in Thomas Patterson's report to the first annual convention of delegates held at Colac on 1 July 1903:

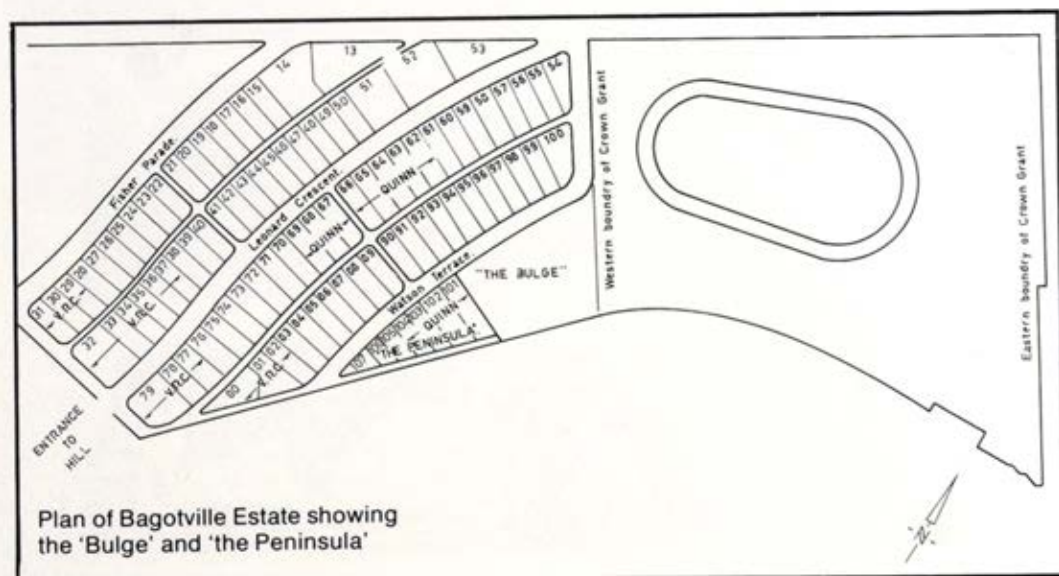
In the last annual report of the Chamber of Agriculture, in a special report of the executive committee, the action taken by its representatives at a conference at Shepparton called by a provisional committee of the proposed Victorian Farmers' and Producers' Association, on 1 July last, was fully set out.

At the annual meeting of the Chamber on 3 September last, the amendment of the constitution, recommended by the executive committee, as the outcome of the Shepparton conference was adopted, conditionally that it be approved by the conference of agricultural and kindred societies called by the chamber for the following evening.

At this conference which was held in the board room of the Municipal Association of Victoria on the 4 September the constitution was adopted, the institutions being combined under the name of the Victorian Chamber of Agriculture and Rural Producers' Association.

At the time of the union the Chamber of Agriculture had been established for three years, and comprised thirty-nine subscribing agricultural societies, with twelve other lesser institutions and thirteen individual members, and had a credit balance of £56.

The Victorian Farmers' and Producers' Association was established in July last year and embraced twelve agricultural societies and ten other smaller institutions, and had no funds.



The conference – on account of the lateness of the hour – broke up without electing a council as was intended, the old executives (those of both bodies) being appointed to carry out the elections.

After the conference the two presidents and secretaries had a general conversation, and it was left to the secretary of the Chamber (Thomas Patterson) to arrange the details, and conduct the election of the council.

This he proceeded to do by issuing a circular to all the agricultural and kindred societies of the State on 4 October, asking them to join the institution and to send nominations before 31 October. As nominations were not coming in well, the secretary called the joint committees together on 3 November, and just before this meeting the death occurred of Mr G. H. Willis who as secretary, had been principally concerned in promoting the Farmers' and Producers' Association.

The joint executives extended the time for nominations to 24 November.

The executive committee of the Chamber subsequently met and disposed of the balance of the funds in hand. The sum at credit at the annual meeting was £56 0s 6d and accounts amounting to £16 18s 4d were passed and paid, leaving a balance of £39 2s 2d which was handed to the secretary as a bonus in appreciation of his services. The committee resolved that the unfinished business of the Chamber should be passed on to the present body. At this meeting also, a vote of thanks was passed to the Royal Agricultural Society for the use of their offices during the previous three years.



*The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Madden, arrives at the Royal Show, 1897.*

The joint committee met again, and appointed the acting secretary, Thomas Patterson, returning officer to conduct the elections, fixing the return for the ballot for 5 January, and the first meeting of the new council for 13 January.

The council was accordingly elected on 5 January and were: Messrs William Thomson (Kyneton) chairman; J. J. Brewer (Boroondarra); B. B. Mogg (Ballan); C. Napper (Sale); G. H. Morton (Kerang); J. C. Ritchie (Port Fairy); B. Cunningham (Stawell); J. Baird (Ballarat); J. Lamrock (Dookie); F. De Castella (Dookie); P. J. Hoban (Donald); A. Kilpatrick (Alvie); T. Forge (Echuca); R. G. Fincham (Colac); G. Pagan (Tatura); J. H. Edwards (Maffra); H. P. Keogh





*The Royal Show 1897.*



*Lincoln Ewe Exhibits, Royal Show 1897.*

(Bairnsdale); H. Vernon (Buninyong); C. Nowotna (Murtoa); W. J. McCarthy (Kilmore); A. H. Smith (Wangaratta); L. A. Gugger (Nagambie); J. H. Tuckett (Nathalia); F. Peppin (Loch); A. McLennan (Colac); J. Cossar (Charlton); and J. Ross (Korumburra).

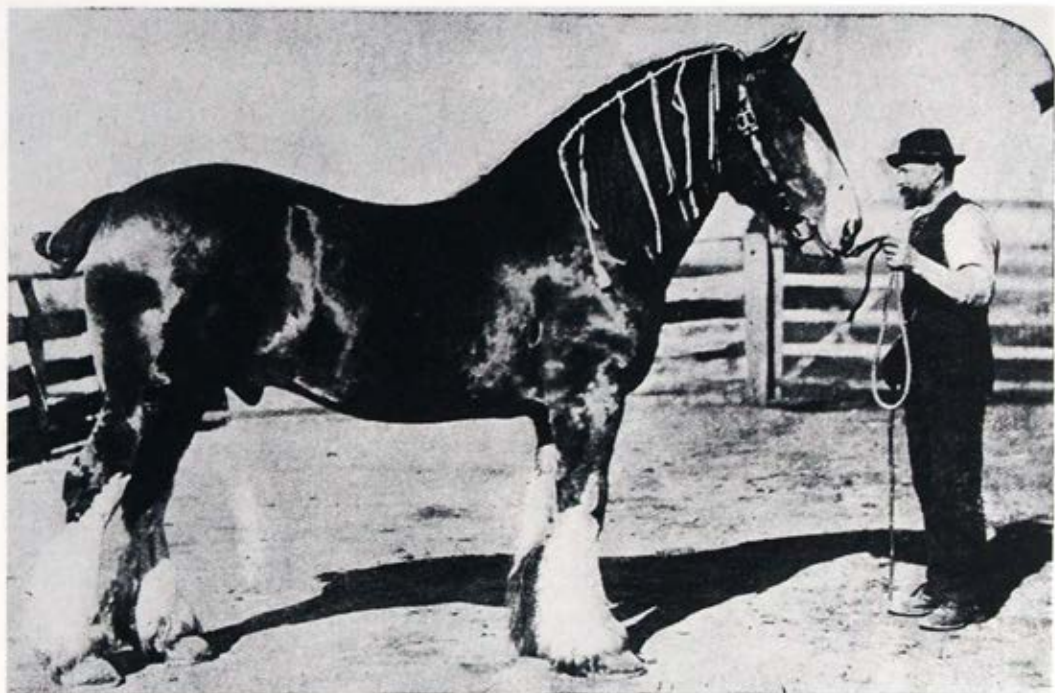
At the first meeting of the new Council, Mr W. Thomson (previously president of the Chamber) was appointed President, and Messrs R. G. Fincham and George Pagan Vice-Presidents.

Thomas Patterson (previously secretary of the Chamber) was appointed secretary and treasurer, and the salary of the office fixed at £50 per annum. The secretary was authorised to open an account in the name of the body in the Union Bank. Mr E. P. Hastings was appointed honorary auditor.

Forty-five agricultural societies and twenty-five other kindred organisations, with five individual members have joined for the year ending 30 June, their subscriptions amounting to £104 8s 6d. Accounts for £42 0s 6d have been paid, leaving a credit balance of £62 8s, a very satisfactory result.

On the second day of the Colac convention the rules were revised to provide for the representation of individual members on the Council, in the proportion of one in twenty-five, the total not to exceed five. At a later stage the question of individual members out-voting the representatives of rural interests at the next convention was raised by several delegates. M. McLennan (Alvie) assured delegates that their interests would be properly safeguarded, as individual members had to be approved of by the executive.





*Champion Clydesdale Stallion of 1897 Royal Show.*

With the successful establishment of a central body to assist agricultural societies in the State, the relationship of the RASV to country societies changed, for while the RASV remained the source of information on agricultural shows and associated affairs, it passed on all political matters raised by the country societies to the newly formed Chamber of Agriculture.

In the year 1900 troops were accommodated on the Showgrounds. This was the first occasion of the colony's involvement in the war in South Africa, and the area was made available free to the Mounted Rifles as a camp. Later, the Australian Imperial Regiment also moved into the grounds, having been flooded out of their camp at Langwarrin.

At the Royal Show in 1900 the entries rose to 5,053, which was a record. The Show was held from 4-8 September in good weather, and the attendance was also a record, showing an increase of £1,000 on the previous year. In the dairy produce section, there were forty-seven exhibits entered for the export butter competition, with the prize of £50 provided by the Government. There were one hundred and fifty-seven stands for machinery 'comprising a very extensive collection of the latest and best improvements in all classes required in connection with the development of the great producing interests of the Colony'.

The Council offered £50 as a premium for a design providing extra accommodation for the public at the arena, 'either by cutting down the hill or otherwise', and the winning



*J. Findlay's First Prize Lady's Hack 'Venture', Royal Show 1900.*

design by Gregory and Spence was adopted, with modifications, in 1901. The Royal Show in that year was held from 3-7 September. Entries rose to 5,106, the stands for machinery number one hundred and seventy-eight – an increase of twenty-one on the previous year. And although the weather was not so good as in the previous year, the attendance was only slightly down, 1900 having been a record year.

During this year the Council recorded the deaths of Dr Andrew Plummer, eight times President of the Society, and the honorary solicitor, and first Honorary Member of the Society, the Hon. James McKean, who had served the Society for nineteen years.

#### REMOVING THE HILL AND EXPANSION OF GROUNDS

Immediately following the 1901 Show, the work of removing the hill on the arena to provide better viewing for the general public was begun, and was completed in time for the 1902 Royal Show.



The crowding of exhibits on the limited area of ground led the Council of the RASV to contemplate a move towards land in the south and east of the original Crown Grant line. At this time trains running to the Show still carried the greater proportion of visitors, but other means of transport were bringing crowds to the Epsom Road area. One popular approach was by the Grand National Avenue, a carriageway between the Society's land and Epsom Road. In this area access track streets named in association with Grand National Avenue were St Leger Terrace (renamed McGregor Street), Nyora Street, which was originally Derby Parade (now Peck Street), and Pine Grove (now Merrett Avenue).

In the south was the forward portion – twenty-four perches – of a three-acre block of Victoria Racing Club land that became separated from other VRC land by a section of the railway line, and an approach was made to the VRC by the Society for permission to enclose this area within the Showgrounds. The parties to the granting of the permissive occupancy or consent to use, were, in addition to the VRC and RASV, the State Board of Land and Works, and the Essendon City Council.

The first land acquisition moves eastward are reported in the Society's Annual Report for 1902:

'In April your Council purchased a block of land adjoining the Show Yards on the eastern side, one acre and a half in extent, for £1,400, terms one-third, balance in two years at four percent. They also secured permissive occupancy of a small triangular piece of ground about twenty-four perches between the purchased property and the railway line.'

Before the 1902 Show this freehold land purchase, from east of the 'fringe' (purchased in 1883), to the eastern side of the easement open street of St Leger Terrace, and running south from Grand National Avenue to the Railway boundary was being prepared as quickly as possible for occupation.

(This new land, formerly part of Filgate's property, and the small triangle from the VRC, are shown on map on page 122.)

In 1902 Job Smith replaced James Gibb as president, and up to this time the Society had expended £50,603 5s 2d on permanent buildings, works and improvements. The Royal Show was held from 2-6 September, and recorded an all time high of 5,293 entries. The machinery stands numbered one hundred and eighty-four, and required so much space, that the newly acquired land was fully taken up. The weather, which had been fine for some time, broke on the first day of the Show with a 'terrific duststorm, and was afterwards gusty, showery and unpropitious, except on the closing day, thus marring the success of the exhibition in point of attendance'.

The following year (1903) the Society enclosed the 'bulge' land that had been purchased in 1899 and joined the western boundary of the Crown Grant. This enclosure required the removal of nearly all of the southern half of the fence on the Grant boundary that had extended between Langs Road and VRC boundaries along portion of the racecourse railway. A new entrance was provided from the railway platform; the sheep building was doubled in size; a new sale ring was erected, and stairways up the embankment to the arena were provided. The 1903 Royal Show was held from 1-5 September, with entries reaching 5,546, and one hundred and ninety-two stands for machinery and farm implements.

They got us away from St Kilda Road by promising to charge so much for rail fare to Flemington. The Governments have been against this society from beginning to end, simply because the society has not got as many votes as those in country districts.

Mr McGregor a prominent member of Council, pointed out that the protest against the Show holiday arose among the school teachers in the country, who wanted the co-operation of the Society to 'pool' their holidays during the year so that they would have the advantage of attending the Show. The Society refused to comply with the request of the teachers.

Besides the circular to all members of Parliament, a deputation waited on the Minister of Agriculture. The deputation was received by the Minister of Mines, who assured the members that he was against any Bill to do away with the Society's holiday. The Bill was defeated, and in his report to Council on the matter the Hon. Thomas Brunton MLC, said it was evident that Mr Shoppee MLA, who introduced the Bill, forgot the importance of the Royal Society's holiday.

The year 1904 saw the erection 'of a substantial and ornate brick building 160 feet long by 160 feet wide, costing £3,730' - (now known as the Arts and Crafts Pavilion); additional steps to the arena; one hundred and eighty new horse boxes; eighty-six cattle stalls; a further new entrance from the railway platform, and an Ayrshire cattle sale ring.

The Royal Show was conducted from 30 August to 3 September, the weather was again adverse but did not materially effect attendances. The entries reached an all time record of 5,689, and the various stands moved up to two hundred and eleven.

The Council agreed to publish a Draught Horse Stud Book for Victoria to include Clydesdales, English Shires and Suffolk Punches.

Entries for the 1905 Royal Show, held from 5-9 September reached 5,997, 'making it a record for this Society and any other in Australia'. The stands for machinery etc. held at two hundred and eleven, and although the Show period was continually wet, the attendance figures were exceptionally good. The Council set aside £200 for District Exhibits, and the State was divided into two divisions, Northern and Southern, with six districts in each division.

Thomas Skene MHR, was elected President in 1906, and during the early part of the year the Society extended its advance east with a further purchase of land linking Langs Road in the north and Grand National Avenue in the south. The area of two acres, three roods and six perches, extended the eastern boundary on the north side of Grand National Avenue to Derby Parade (later Nyora Street, and now Peck Street). The cost was £1,697 10s.

At the 1906 Royal Show (4-8 September) the entries passed the 6,000 mark for the first time (6,124); over £6,550 was spent on improvements such as fencing, metalling and ashphalting roadways and footpaths; the removal and extension to the poultry shed; drinking troughs, and a new ladies' retiring room. The weather was excellent; the result was an all time record gate of £5,822 8s.

The stands for machinery, implements and miscellaneous uncompetitive exhibits rose to two hundred and thirty-four, and in all aspects it was declared the best exhibition ever promoted.

Following the 1906 Show a further purchase of land was made. This was the whole of the allotment east of the Showgrounds, from St Leger Terrace to Epsom Road, and



## DISTRICT EXHIBITS MAKE DEBUT

Early in the year 1903 the RASV Council set up a committee to organise district exhibits from country agricultural societies. It was agreed that the Society provide prizes of £100 for first and £50 for second.

The exhibits were to consist of farm, dairy, horticultural, and pastoral produce – including wool – wine, vegetables, root crops, minerals and wood. The district exhibits, although disappointing in number, proved a most successful innovation, and they were supplemented by a large collection of district exhibits from Queensland, which served as a promotion for that state, but were not for competition.

Referring to the improvements to the arena, the Annual Report for 1903 states:

The amphitheatre formed on the grounds requires separate mention in relation to its bearing on the Show. It has met with unqualified approval both from prominent individual visitors from other States, and from the public generally. Moreover, the press has praised it. It answers its purpose admirably.

From the spectacular point of view there has never before been seen anything like the parades of stock at this Show on the arena in full view of the public throughout. And while the public, who pay their shillings are satisfied – and it is from them the great bulk of revenue is derived – and the grandstand has not suffered, the receipts from it being more than those of last year.

By the simple process of widening the ramp, accommodation for thousands of additional spectators can readily be provided, and the increasing popularity of the Show will doubtless make this work an immediate necessity.

Other matters of note in 1903 were (in view of his subsequent long association) the election of C. E. Merrett to the Council; alteration of rules to increase Council numbers from thirty-two to thirty-three; the Council's premium of £100 for a general design in laying out the Showgrounds (won by Billing, Son & Peck); and the granting of the use of the grounds to the military authorities to conduct courses of instruction to officers from Victoria and interstate.

## THAT HOLIDAY

At the Council meeting in March 1903, the Society's secretary, Thomas Patterson, reported that Mr Brunton MLC desired to bring to the notice of the Council that Mr Shoppee MLA, had introduced a Bill in Parliament that would have the effect of abolishing the Show holiday. Naturally this caused an uproar in the Council, and it was resolved that a circular be sent to each member of Parliament urging him to oppose the Bill so far as it related to the abolition of the holiday.

A draft copy of the circular pointed out that on the charges for admission to the Show being reduced to one shilling the Government of the day had granted a public holiday during the currency of the Show. The then Premier had remarked that in view of the popular prices charged for admission, no future Government could break faith with the Society by refusing to grant the holiday.

In the discussion, Mr John Blyth said:

Another important point was the Government refused to continue the grant to the Society, and it was transferred to country societies. The important reason was that the Royal Society received nothing from the Government by way of grants, and this was one of the reasons why the holiday had been granted, the reduced charges for admission came in afterwards.



*Judging Young Draughts, 1907.*

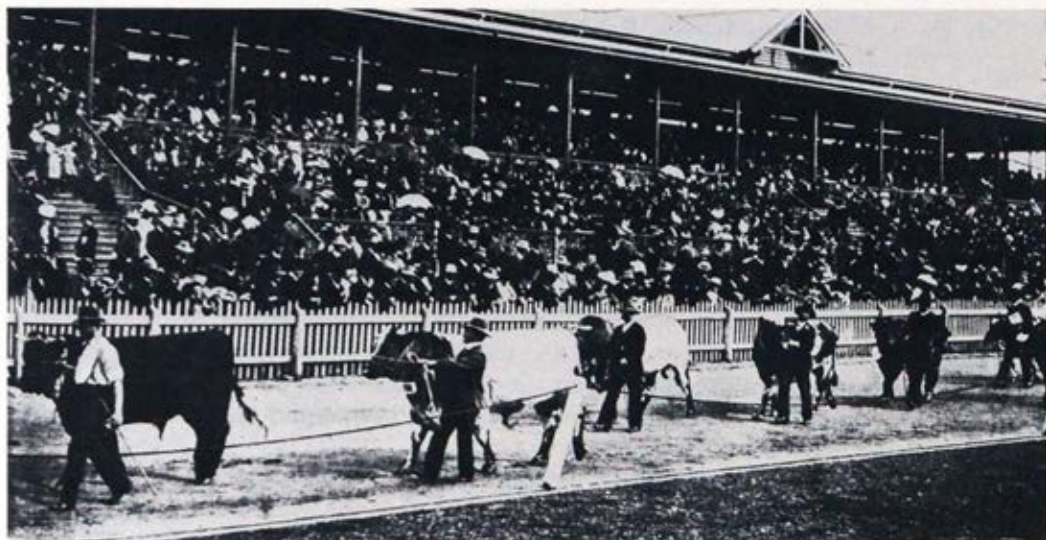
existence of the hotel as a dominant factor in the agreement that resulted in the Showgrounds 'absorption' of the two streets on the opposite side of Grand National Avenue had a specific reference to St Leger Terrace and Pine Grove. The circumstances with regard to Derby Parade after it became Nyora Street were different.

The trustees and executors of the Lang Estate agreed to the proposition put forward by the Society in the form of an agreement which was: 'that the trustees be agreeable to the surrender of the easement to St Leger Terrace and Pine Grove with the view to their being closed in favour of the Royal Agricultural Society, provided that the Society entered into an undertaking not to remove the entrance gates from Grand National Avenue. That the Society proposed to erect a fence from Pine Grove along Epsom Road and thence along the left side of Grand National Avenue, for at present a large portion of road traffic makes a short cut to the Showgrounds over the vacant land (away from the hotel), and when the land is enclosed this traffic will have to go along Epsom Road to Grand National Avenue and thus have to pass the door of the hotel, and this will greatly favour the hotel.'

The date of the 1908 Royal Show was at first fixed for 1-5 September, but on account of the visit of the American fleet, it was later altered to begin on 28 August and continue to 5 September. The entries continued to climb to 6,520, but in spite of the additional days, the presence of the American fleet at areas other than the Show, proved a counter attraction and the attendance was lower than for the previous year. Furthermore, the extra days were not appreciated by the exhibitors, especially those with stock.

In anticipation of additional attendance during the visit of the 'great white' fleet, a second public entrance was opened in 1908. This was a special track marked out across the fields, extending from the Racecourse railway platform, close to the Railway





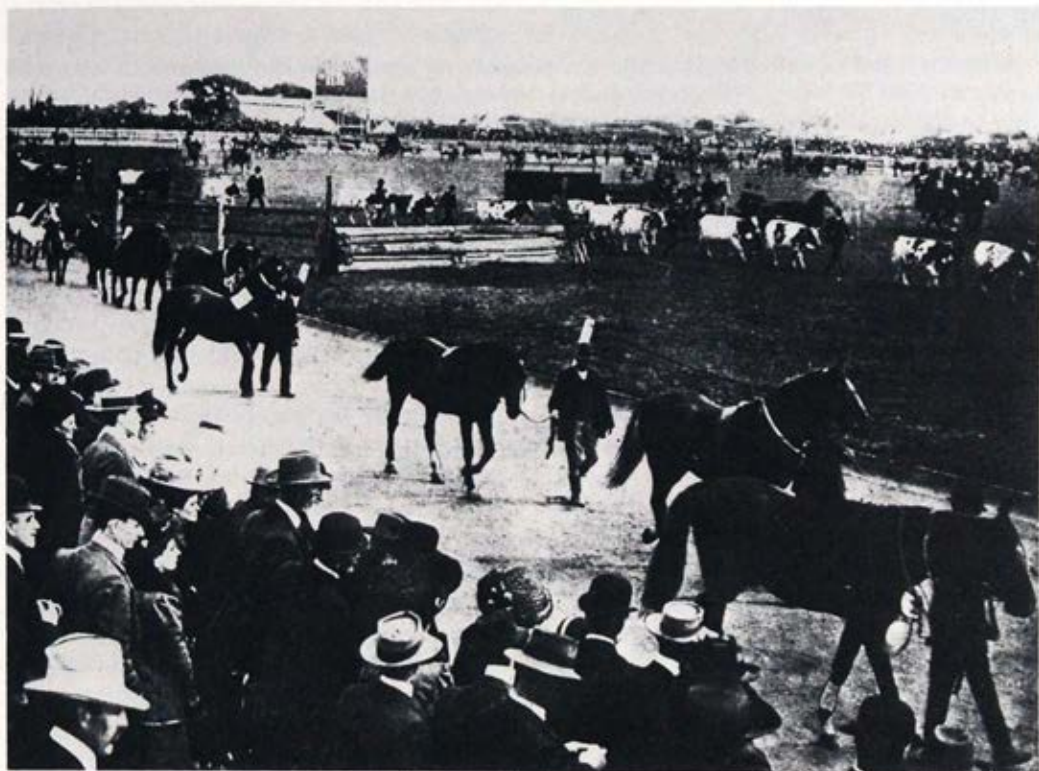
*A general view of the Cattle Parade at the Royal Agricultural Show, 1907.*

southward from Grand National Avenue to Pine Grove (now Merrett Avenue), an area of four acres, one rood and three perches, at a cost of £3,325.

The extensions and enclosures of 1902 and 1906 had each followed the respective land transactions within a few weeks of completion. But after these transactions the RASV had come up against delays and problems with easements and carriage rights. The purchase of the southern division in late 1906 had by-passed St Leger Terrace, but the surrender of the Terrace rights was needed before the Society-owned land on the Epsom Road side of St Leger Terrace could be enclosed as part of the Showgrounds.

Following the large expenditure in land, works and other improvements in the previous year, the Council cut the 1907 expenditure to a minimum and incurred less than £700 for this purpose. The 1907 Royal Show was held from 3–7 September, the programme of prizes was thoroughly revised, and attracted an entry of 6,504 exhibits, again establishing a record for the Society, and keeping the lead of all others in Australia. There were two hundred and fifty-four stands of machinery, implements and miscellaneous non-competitive exhibits, although the weather again adversely affected the attendance the Annual Report for 1907 records, 'As a solid agricultural Show this Exhibition must take rank ahead of any other hitherto held in Australia'.

Before the end of 1907 there were signs of agreement with the trustees and executors of the Estate of the late William Lang with regard to the surrender of easement carriage-way rights over Pine Grove and St Leger Terrace. The Lang Estate was also the holder of easement rights over land on the other side of Grand National Avenue, and was the owner of the property on that side which included the Grand National Tower Hotel which had a doorway at the junction of Epsom Road and Grand National Avenue. The



*Watching the Massed Parade of Stock, Royal Show 1910.*

whereas in the case of St Leger Terrace co-operation was forthcoming, with Nyora Street they strongly opposed the Society's interference.

Documents in the Society's archives dealing with the 1910 period indicate some third-party discussion and correspondence as to the possibility of the hotel being available for purchase by the Society, presumably as a means of clearing the way for Showgrounds expansion to the north side of Grand National Avenue.

A friend of one of the Lang Estate trustees had told a representative of Messrs Charles Forrester and Company, Commission Agents, that the Society wanted the Estate trustees to surrender the easement carriageway rights over Nyora Street. The price at which the hotel might be offered to the Society, was raised verbally. A sequel to the discussions was the exchange of correspondence between Forrester and Company (writing with cognizance of the Society) and Mr W. Hudson, one of the trustees and executors of the Lang Estate. Messrs Forrester and Company wrote:

We are afraid there is no prospect of the Society purchasing the hotel, at any rate at anything like the price named, viz. £10,000. They do not wish to purchase at all but might be induced to do so if a price could be arrived at.



boundary, at the then southern end of the rear boundary of the Crown Grant. This entrance was used only during peak traffic hours on two Show days when, owing to the fleet-visit celebrations at Flemington racecourse, Show trains cut out the Showgrounds platform stop. This entrance was not considered a 'rival' to the Grand National Avenue centreway for it catered only for train travellers.

Following the Show of 1908, Council resolved that the wines at the Society's Exhibition cellars, which had been accumulating for a number of years, should be sold. After sorting up, it was found that there were more than two hundred dozen, which were sold for £109 14s 3d.

A number of improvements and alterations were effected in 1909, including the position of the main entrance gate, which was moved east along Grand National Avenue (now Plummer Avenue) to Nyora Street (now Peck Street), where new ornamental gates and a ticket box were erected. The area of the Showgrounds was also increased by five acres, one rood and twenty-four perches, with the enclosure of the land purchased in 1906, and the surrender of the rights on St Leger Terrace and Pine Grove, an area of one acre and twenty-one perches. In addition to these roads, there was the acquisition of one hundred and seventy feet of Grand National Avenue. With the enclosure of the southern division, there was no option for traffic but to use Grand National Avenue as the main and only route to the Showgrounds public entrance.

While the closing of St Leger Terrace as an open street cleared the way for the Showgrounds extension to Epsom Road on the southern division, Nyora Street, on the north, remained an Ascot Vale street with future easement rights problems for the Society. Its public outlets led via Grand National Avenue to Epsom Road or directly north to Langs Road. During this period Nyora Street listed one residential premises fronting the street, but three property-owning interests held easement carriageway rights over the street. The Society held the title of land on part of which the former private street of Derby Parade was set out, but the holders of the carriageway rights had obtained those rights before Nyora Street became a public street.

The Royal Show for 1909 was held from 31 August to 4 September inclusive, and entries reached 6,608 with two hundred and forty-three machinery and other stands. The weather was again unkind but attendances were good, gate-takings being only slightly lower than for the extended Show the previous year.

Another matter of note in 1909 was that the Council of the RASV adopted a system of single judging, prior to this the system had been by panel. Council also resolved to increase the members' privileges to include two ladies as guests instead of one.

The Annual Report for 1909 records the death of the Hon. William McCulloch, who was the oldest Life Governor of the Society, and also a member of the first NASV Council in 1870. It was on his 'La Rose' farm at Moonee Ponds that the Port Phillip Farmers' Society held its first ploughing match in 1848.

#### THE FIRST GRAND PARADE: NYORA STREET PROBLEMS

In 1910 the Society was contemplating the purchase of land on Langs Road bordered by Nyora Street, Epsom Road and Grand National Avenue, where it faced a position in which the Grand National Tower Hotel and other property stood between the 'Avenue' and vacant freehold land. Once again the Lang Estate interests were involved but



The Gazette notice was accompanied by a diagram setting out degrees and hachures applying, and the area was identified as the VRC earlier contribution. Thus the 'Railway Reserve' triangle had at long last been raised from one of 'permissive occupancy' to a 'reserve' and at the same time had grown by sixteen perches. As the new VRC land had been in use as a public reserve, the Melbourne City Council objected to its enclosure by the Society without some kind of compensation. The Society considered this a type of blackmail by the Melbourne City Council for not only had the VRC agreed to the land going to the Society, but the Secretary for Lands had written to the Society on the 3 March 1911:

'I have the honour, by direction of the Honorable the Minister of Lands, to inform you that, subject to the release by the Victoria Race Club Trust, this Department is prepared to carry out the proposal to pass the area in question to the control of the Royal Agricultural Society.'

The RASV President, Alexander McCracken, and secretary Thomas Patterson met with the Town Clerk in August 1910 and offered to pay £350 for the purchase of another piece of land to be used as a public reserve in lieu of the VRC land. The offer was accepted by the Melbourne City Council: 'the City Council has approved of your Society's offer, and has authorised the purchase of a block of land at Kensington for use as a public reserve. Arrangements have been completed for the purchase of this land, the area of which is about three acres, and which is part of the Watson Estate in Footscray Road, Kensington.'

In 1911 the Society added many improvements to the Showgrounds. A large pavilion was erected near the railway for displaying dairy machinery and dairy produce, (this was later named the Dairy Industry Pavilion, and was used in that capacity until destroyed by fire in May 1979) an additional industrial court supplied a long-felt want for extra covered space; the luncheon room accommodation was increased with the erection of a building 100 ft x 40 ft; a shelter shed was erected for hunters; a bandstand was built near the wine kiosk; office accommodation was increased; and adjacent to both the road and railway entrances, an enquiry room, Council room, cloak room and other conveniences were provided. At the main gate a large building was erected to hold eight turnstiles. And to cater for mothers attending the Show, a creche was established.

The Council also decided to establish a herd book for Shorthorn cattle on the lines of the British Coates' Herd Book. The Society's rules were revised, and entry fees were fixed at five shillings per entry.

A conference was called to discuss the single and plural judging systems, and while the three-judge system was not popular, the system of two judges and a referee tried at the 1910 Show was preferred to the appointment of a single judge.

A section for Women's Industries was included for the first time, and one hundred and seventy-two entries were received in this section.

The Society's attention at this time was once again drawn to the area north of Grand National Avenue with its unsolved problems centred on Nyora Street, which from 1906 had remained the barrier to progress on that front, while the area to the south had reached Epsom Road three years earlier. Becoming frustrated with the Nyora Street battle, the Society in 1912 bought 'the whole of that portion of land between Nyora Street and extending from Langs Road to the Grand National Tower Hotel, being four acres and twenty-six perches'.



Mr Hudson replied on 2 December 1910:

I think it is just as well to leave matters remain as they are as we have no power to sell under the terms of Mr Lang's will. Myself and co-trustees could never consent to closing the street, as desired by the Royal Agricultural Society, as it would be detrimental to the interests of the tenants and ourselves.

Matters did remain substantially as they were for almost a decade as regards the Nyora Street 'deadlock'.

By 1910 the Society had spent an aggregate amount of £68,745 2s 4d on buildings, works and maintainence. The Royal Show was held from 30 August to 3 September in good weather, recording an attendance of an estimated 150,000. The entries reached 7,610 for the first time; and stands for machinery, equipment and non-competitive exhibits reached two hundred and sixty-seven.

In previous years the Society paraded horses and cattle separately, but in the Show of this year the horses and cattle were paraded together for the first time in a 'Massed (Grand) Parade'. This innovation proved very popular with exhibitors and the general public alike.

In 1910 the Society, and especially the Council, lost one of its most highly valued members with the death of the Hon. Thomas Skene, after eighteen years as a member of the RASV Council. He was responsible in 1896 for the establishment of the Flock Book for British Breeds of Sheep in Victoria, afterwards extended to Australia; he proposed the establishment of the Chamber of Agriculture in 1899, which was formed in 1900, and had grown into a most important and influential body. He had served five terms as President of the Society, from 1897 to 1908.

The Society suffered a further blow in 1910 with the resignation of its secretary for thirty years, Thomas Patterson. He had served the Society with exceptional dedication and loyalty, and had in fact been the primemover in many of the progressive moves made by the Society from 1880. The Council of the RASV granted him a retiring honorarium of £300.

At the 1910 Show the Society installed four turnstiles as an experiment, and these proved so satisfactory that it was decided to increase the number for the 1911 Show.

#### MORE LAND, NEW BUILDINGS, HERD BOOK AND WOMEN'S INDUSTRIES

Before the end of 1910 the Society had received good news concerning the prospects of obtaining for the Showgrounds nearly three acres of land from the Victoria Racing Club. This area of two acres, three roods and sixteen perches, when added to the smaller area of 1902, represented just on three acres. The new portion was created a Crown Grant (official Titles Office 26 June 1914) and although the minor area of 1902 was never given this status, it did rate a mention in the Government Gazette of 21 January 1959, following a decision of the Executive Council, sitting at Barwon Heads on 5 January:

The Lieutenant Governor of the State of Victoria, by and with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, had in pursuance of the provisions of the Land Act 1928, reserved temporarily, and also except from occupation for mining purposes under any miner's right, the lands hereinafter described. Doutta Galla (Flemington); site for Showgrounds and public recreation twenty-four perches, Parish of Doutta Galla County of Bourke.

The year 1912 saw still further improvements to the Showgrounds, bringing the aggregate cost of buildings, works etc. to £82,096 0s 5d. Further, a scheme was adopted whereby exhibitors were permitted to erect buildings of a uniform design around the arena ramp, on condition that accommodation was provided for the public on the roof. This experiment proved satisfactory alike to both the exhibitors and the Society. The former had the advantage of securing one of the best situations on the grounds for a period of twelve years at a nominal rental, while the Society had the benefit of having the ramp accommodation increased.

The Show, held from 2-7 September was again marred by bad weather, but this did not detract from an attendance of 167,390, and a huge entry of 8,548, both records. There was a spectacular increase in the Women's Industries section from one hundred and seventy-two in 1911, to three hundred and seventy-five in 1912.

The Ayrshire Cattle Herd Book Society of Australasia approached the Society, with the request that the secretary be permitted to carry out the secretarial duties; this request was granted.

Along with the British Breeds Flock Book, the Draught Horse Stud Book, the Shorthorn Herd Book and the Chamber of Agriculture, the Society was building up quite a clientele.

#### SHOW DATES CHANGE

For many years the advisability of the Society altering the dates of the annual exhibition had been keenly discussed. As the first week in September fell within the period of monsoonal disturbances, the weather was most unsuitable for exhibiting stock and attracting the general public to visit the Show. The Council therefore decided to alter the dates to the last full week in September, and the Victorian legislature passed an Act which changed the public holiday to the last Thursday in the last full week in September.

With the death of D. R. McGregor in 1912, the Council lost one of its last links with the old Port Phillip Farmers' Society. He was present at the initiation of the NASV in 1870, and continued as a member of the Council until the date of his death. He was elected President in the latter part of 1891, and again in 1892, was a Vice-President from 1883-96 inclusive, except during the years in which he occupied the position of President, and was one of the three Life Governors of the Society.

In 1913 the Show was held from 22-27 September, and attracted over 9,000 entries for the first time. The 1913 Annual Report covered the Show as follows:

The entry secured by your Society in 1912 was a record for Australasia, but that record of 8,548 entries was easily eclipsed this year, when 9,844 entries were received.

The entry in horses and cattle was so unexpectedly high, that accommodation could not be provided for all the exhibits on the Showgrounds, and your Council was compelled to utilize Messrs Adamson, Strettle & Co.'s commodious stables, which are situated at a convenient distance from the Showgrounds.

The weather conditions were the most favourable that the Society has experienced for a great number of years, and at the beginning of the week was all that could be desired. Unfortunately the Thursday of the Show, which was the public holiday, was boisterous and threatening, and another unfortunate feature was that the Saturday of the Show clashed with the final match of the Victorian Football League. The attendance at the Show suffered in consequence of these drawbacks.

Nevertheless, the attendance constituted a record with 184,637, as against 167,390 in the previous year.

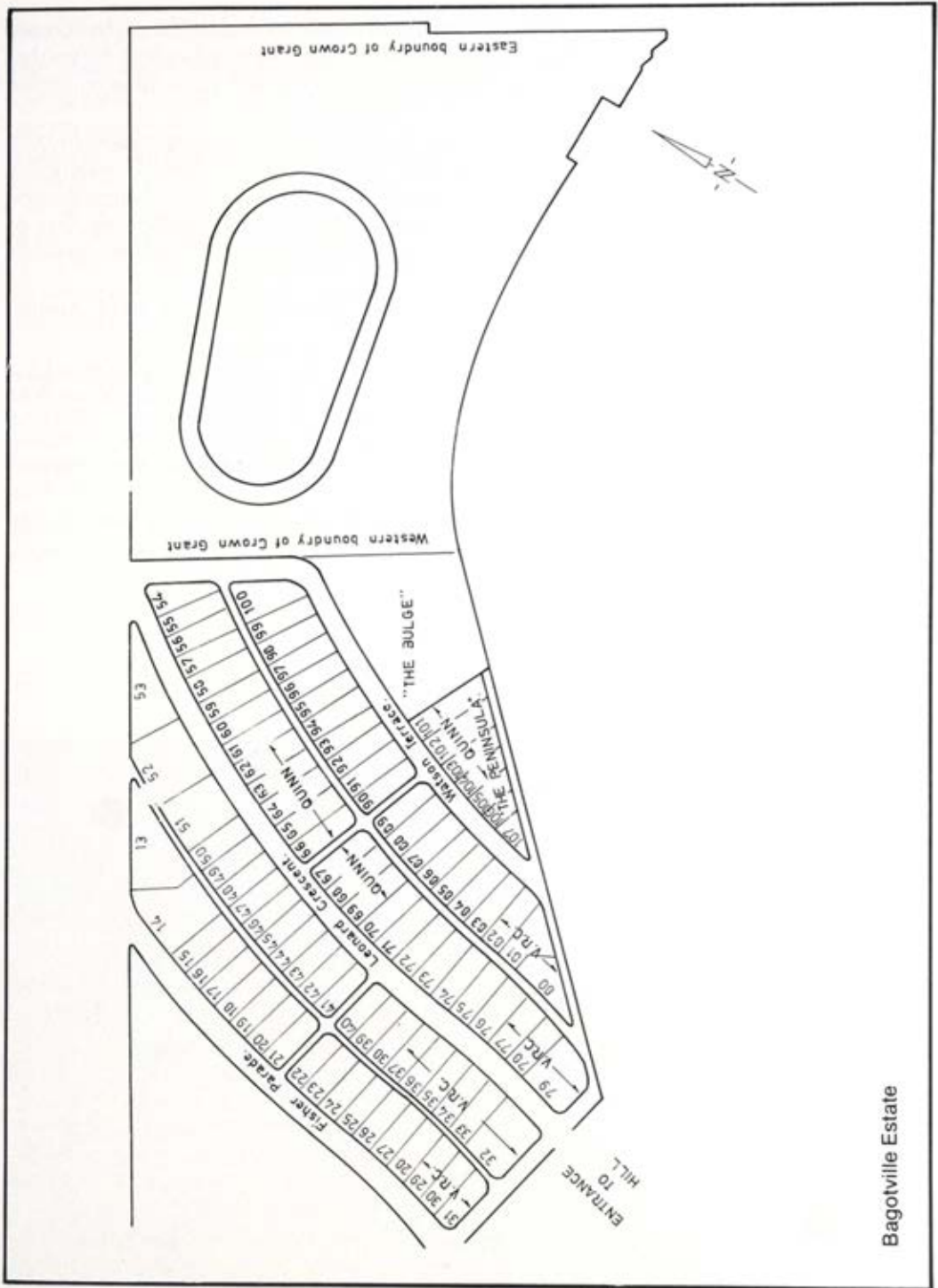


In the Annual Report of 1912 the Society announced that it intended to use the newly acquired land for the purpose of extending the Showgrounds; the Essendon City Council had granted permission for either a bridge over Nyora Street or a tunnel underneath, which would connect the new block to the Showgrounds proper. The Society held the title to the land over which Nyora Street stretched but three other land owners had acquired easement carriageway rights over the street before it became a public road. These included the Grand National Tower Hotel, the owner of the stables property, Mr Thomas Barmby, and the owner of a Nyora Street dwelling, Mrs Sarah Thomas. The hotel had a frontage of 100 feet to Epsom Road and 257 feet to Grand National Avenue, Barmby controlled an allotment having a frontage of 150 feet to Nyora Street, and Mrs Thomas had easement rights to a fifty-foot frontage to Nyora Street.

The suggestion to either tunnel under or bridge over Nyora Street was shelved. Instead, by 1914 the Society was discussing with the Essendon City Council the possibility of getting support for State Parliamentary assistance in getting the use of Nyora Street.

*Inquiry, Council and Cloak Rooms, 1912 Royal Show.*





Bagotville Estate



## REGISTERED STOCK AT SHOWS

In order to raise the general standard of stock at future Shows, and at the same time to attempt to limit the number of exhibits, the Council in 1913 decided to restrict the entries to registered stock in several sections, and to this end issued the following directive:

In and after the year 1914 no Ayrshires will be allowed to compete except those entered in a recognized Ayreshire Herd Book.

Commencing at the 1914 Show, entries in the Sheep Section must either be registered or eligible for registration in an established Flock Book, only excepting fat sheep and breeds for which there is at the time of entry no established Flock Book in Australia.

In and after the year 1914 entries in the Swine Section will be limited to only those pigs in the Herd Book, for animals over the age of six months, and the sires and dams of animals under that age must be registered, also in classes for sows suckling their litters, the sires and dams of litters must be registered.

## METHODS OF JUDGING

Up to this time the Council members were in a dilemma concerning the adjudication of stock exhibits at the Show. In 1908 it was decided to give the three systems of judging a trial in successive years, and at the termination of the trial, to hold a plebiscite of exhibitors in order to ascertain which system gave the greatest satisfaction.

In 1909 three judges were appointed to act in each section; in 1910 single judging was tried, and in 1911 two judges and a referee were called upon to make the decisions on awards.

Immediately after the 1911 Show a vote was taken and although the response was disappointing, a majority of exhibitors preferred dual judging, with the calling of a referee in the event of disagreement. The Council therefore resolved to give dual judging a further trial, in 1912 and 1913. However, the results were most unsatisfactory; too much time was taken in making the awards, and such a system hindered the establishment of a definite type in stock sections. The Council then resolved, by a large majority, to revert to the system of single judging.

## 1914 - BLACK YEAR - WAR, FIRE, BUT MORE LAND

In 1914 the Society looked set for a really big year. Over £10,800 had been spent on improvements; bringing the aggregate to £100,450 18s 5d. The Victorian Government had agreed to advance £50,000 to the Society on loan; the first instalment of £20,000 being made available during the year. And notwithstanding the drought the entries reached an all time high of 10,296.

However, prior to the opening of the Show on 21 September, war was declared and a gloom was cast over the whole country. On the second day of the Show, Tuesday 22 September, a fire broke out in the grandstand, and before it could be extinguished it demolished not only the grandstand, but the Industrial Hall and twelve buildings belonging to exhibitors.

These problems, along with a large number of counter attractions, marked a falling off in attendance from 184,637 in 1913 to 99,807 in 1914. In July of this year, the Society

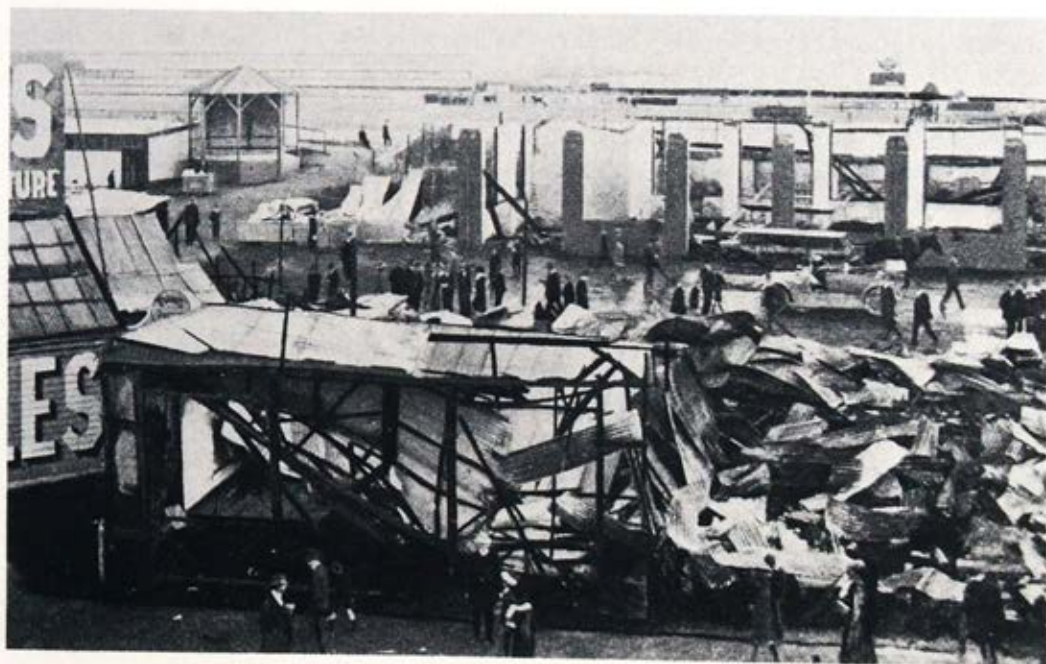
## 1915 - YEAR OF REBUILDING

The most extensive improvements in the Society's history to date, were carried out during 1915. The fire of 1914 necessitated the rebuilding of the grandstand, which was carried out in concrete, at a cost of £11,664. The Industrial (Commerce) Hall was also replaced with a large brick building 250ft x 62ft, at a cost of £3,279, and was almost immediately put into commission as a Military Hospital.

As a further improvement, a huge brick cattle pavilion (No. 1) was built to house 309 head. The Chirnside stand was roofed over, and big improvements made to the Swine Pavilion. The Minister of Agriculture had designs prepared for the erection of a suitable Government Pavilion, but unfortunately, the State's finances at this time became somewhat strained, and the construction of the proposed building was left in abeyance.

On 22 July 1915, the Minister for Defence requisitioned the Showgrounds for defence purposes, and it was decided to abandon the Royal Show for 1915. The compulsory acquisition of the grounds, and the later abandonment of the Show, robbed the Society of practically its only source of revenue, although the Defence Department invited the Society to lodge a claim for compensation. In order to overcome, to a certain extent, the inconvenience caused to breeders by the abandonment of the Show, the Council decided to hold sales of pure stock during the week in which the Show would have been held.

*The morning after the Royal Show fire in 1914.*





conducted a horse parade and sale, when three hundred horses were offered, but owing to the exceptionally dry season, the prices were 'not altogether satisfactory'. Nevertheless it was decided to continue these annual parades at about the same time in future years.

With no move in the Nyora Street deadlock, the Society turned its attention to land west of the Crown Grant. Their initiative in 1914 converted a three-sided rectangular 'bulge' on the Racecourse railway side of the Crown Grant into a long crescent-shaped peninsula of diminishing width. Bulge and peninsula represented together an area of five acres and fifteen perches, an addition of two acres, one rood and thirty-five perches to the purchase of 1899.

The somewhat complicated land transaction was announced in the 1914 Annual Report as follows:

During the year your Council purchased those allotments of land (VRC) on the southern side of Watson Terrace at a cost of £445 5s, and being anxious to unite these newly acquired blocks with the Showgrounds, found it necessary to purchase Mr Quinn's property comprising four allotments of land on the southern side and eleven on the northern side of Watson Terrace, at a cost of £3,350. Your Council, not having any use for the land on the north side, resold that portion for £2,300.

The reselling of this land was indeed premature, for less than four years later, during 1917-18 the Society was buying land on the north side of Watson Terrace, 'with the view to the future expansion of the Showgrounds'.

*Destruction of the Grandstand on Official Opening Day of Show, 1914.*



the Australasian Jersey Herd Society. The RASV's offer to carry out the secretarial work for the new body was accepted.

The State Government came under fire from the Council in 1917 when, in spite of a written assurance from the Chief Secretary that no race meetings would be permitted in the metropolitan area on Show Day public holiday, he had permitted a race meeting to be held on the Richmond racecourse.

The Annual Report for 1917 covers the matter quite fully and concluded:

It is hoped that arrangements will be made before the 1918 Show, which will secure to the Society the reservation of this holiday for the purpose for which it was granted.

#### THE NYORA STREET BATTLE AND EXTENSIONS IN THE WEST

On two days during 1917 the Society arranged for a special check on traffic through Nyora Street between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. with this result:

first day – pedestrians, 3; horsemen, 3; vehicles, 4;

second day – pedestrians, 3; horsemen, 2; vehicles, 5.

Of the two-day total of nine vehicles, one passed four times, three pedestrians used the street for only part of its length, then 'crossed the paddock diagonally' to Epsom Road.

In view of this Essendon Council thought that Nyora Street might well be closed in favour of the Society and the convenience of Showtime crowds, free from the necessity of a bridge or tunnel. And during the second reading of the Essendon Land Bill of 1919, Sir Donald MacKinnon MLA had this to say about the Nyora Street traffic: 'A sort of roosting place for motor cars and things of that sort when people go out to see the Show. I should imagine that it is only on Show Day that there is very much traffic in Nyora Street'.

In 1917-18 the Society purchased 'several allotments of land adjacent to the Watson Terrace area of the Society's property' at a cost of £1,878 13s 3d. These were separated from the back of the Crown Grant section of the grounds by Watson Terrace – then an open Ascot Vale vehicle track that branched off Langs Road and Leonard Crescent at a combined junction. The 1914 peninsula extended 600 feet from the broad bulge without interference to Watson Terrace, but on the north side of Watson Terrace the 1917-18 purchases were to be subject of enabling State legislation later.

The year 1918 saw many improvements to the Showgrounds. The new Government Pavilion was erected, costing £10,356 16s 10d; extensions were made to the Swine Pavilion; extensions to the Ladies' Room (the roof was converted into a Grandstand); and a special stock rail siding was made at the Flemington Racecourse siding.

The Royal Show was held from 23-28 September, and the weather was good for the whole period. Entries reached a new high of 10,395, and the attendance, 173,934, was the second highest ever recorded. The week prior to the 1918 Show, the Society conducted 'trials of motor tractors' at the Werribee Agricultural Research Station. The trials were non-competitive, but tabulated results of the tests were prepared and published, and these were keenly sought after by large numbers of farmers.

The Society now moved towards a compromise concerning Nyora Street. Its proposal was that the street should be closed in favour of the Society over a length of 466 feet from Langs Road and that an exchange street should be constructed parallel with, and



Horses were sold at Campbell & Sons' yards at North Melbourne; cattle at Adamson, Strettle & Co.'s yards at Newmarket; sheep at Younghusband, Rowe & Co.'s store at Kensington, and swine at the Swine Pavilion on the Showgrounds. The sales were entirely successful, and in a very large measure supplied the wants of breeders, by providing markets for stock that they had been preparing for the Show.

#### PRESIDENT DIES WHILST IN OFFICE

Mr Alexander McCracken, the President of the Society, died in office on 25 August 1915. He was elected to Council in 1891 and was first elected President in 1909. It was mainly his influence that induced the Government to make the loans to the Society for the extensive improvements to the Showgrounds. He was succeeded by Charles E. Merrett in October 1915, who was also made a trustee of the Society to fill the vacancy caused by Mr McCracken's death. At the same time the Government nominated a trustee to the Society – to sit on Council – he was Dr S. S. Cameron, Director of Agriculture.

In 1916 the Council resolved to curtail expenditure as far as possible, but during the military occupation of the grounds so many cases of sickness had occurred among the troops quartered in the old luncheon rooms, that it was considered necessary, in the interests of the health of the general public, to demolish the old building and erect a new one in its place. Fortunately, complete designs of a new group of luncheon rooms had been approved in an earlier period, and although it was only three months to the opening, the work was completed in time for the Show. These buildings are now known as the Royal Luncheon Rooms.

The Show was held from 26 September to 2 October 1916, the extension being made because of 'unprecedented inclemency of the weather, experienced on the first two days. In fact, taken as a whole, the weather conditions were probably the most unpleasant in the whole history of the Society's Shows'. The attendance was 107,688, and the entries 8,339.

For some time efforts had been made to secure a more general observance of the public holiday granted for the Show, but with little success. In 1916 the State Government agreed to refrain from granting authority for the holding of race meetings within the suburban area on the Show Day holiday.

Also in this year, the Society decided to offer scholarships to Dookie and Longerenong Agricultural Colleges, tenable for three years, to sons of members of the Society. In so doing, it was hoped that the lead taken by the Society would be followed by other organisations.

The sun smiled on the Society in 1917 with almost perfect weather from 25–29 September, and the attendance was 162,098, with no fewer than 68,464 attending on the Show Day public holiday. The entries were higher than those of the previous year, with the Women's Industries section reaching 661, and the machinery and industrial exhibits proved to be amongst the most interesting features of the Show.

#### JERSEY HERD SOCIETY (VICTORIAN BRANCH)

At a representative meeting of the Victorian breeders of Jersey cattle, held in the offices of the Society in March 1917, it was unanimously resolved to form a Victorian Branch of

this purpose the State was divided into districts, with the competition for 1919 being confined to the Wimmera District. One hundred points each were awarded for crops and stock, buildings, machinery and equipment, and a further 100 points 'for the wheat farm considered as a business, and as a home'.

The erection of No. 3 Cattle Pavilion in 1920 was the last work undertaken in connection with the scheme for which the Government had advanced to the Society a loan of £50,000. At this time it was the largest cattle pavilion erected in the Commonwealth, and cost £8,991. Another addition during 1920 was the building of the Alfresco Tea Room in Degraes Street (now McClures).

A large picnic area was laid out at the rear of the Government Pavilion with lawns and rockeries. There was a complete model of the Showgrounds, which proved very popular and was to remain so for many years.

The Royal Show of 1920 was not so fortunate as the previous two as regards weather, nevertheless during the six days from 20-25 September, the attendance was 186,186, the second highest on record, but entries were down a thousand on the previous year, to 9,071.

#### VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

One of the features of the Victorian programme for entertaining the Prince of Wales was a special exhibition of stock and produce held at the Society's grounds on Saturday 29 May 1920. Breeders of pure stock, and producers of all varieties of the fruits of the soil responded in a wholehearted manner to the invitation to co-operate in making this function the success that it achieved. A programme of typically Australian arena events was arranged, and as the fine weather prevailed, the contests and displays were warmly appreciated by the large crowd that had assembled.

*Special Exhibition, May 1920: H.R.H. Prince of Wales visit. One of the arches in Lennon Avenue.*





200 feet from Grand National Avenue (the site of the present Brisbane Avenue), giving access to Epsom Road.

Essendon Council questioned whether a municipal council was empowered under the Local Government Act to extinguish a street easement right of way in the case of a street that had been a private street – as Nyora Street had been when known as Derby Parade. Although the two prominent King's Councillors who were consulted both thought the street could be closed as a public highway, one held that the easement rights could not be extinguished by the council under the Local Government Act but only by some arrangement with the owners.

The Society then decided to seek Parliamentary aid in pressing its proposals to solve the Nyora Street problem. Solicitors for the Society drafted a private Bill which Government adopted as a public measure and which was accepted as such after some expression of opposition from among Labor Party members.

The Bill as submitted provided that in the event of a dispute regarding the amount of compensation, the measure proposed for loss of easement carriageway rights, the matter should be decided by arbitration under the Arbitration Act.

The Essendon Land Bill (1919) submitted to the Legislative Assembly was carried through to the third reading, when suggestions were made that the Bill be held over in order to give the interested parties a further chance of arriving at a satisfactory settlement. As a result of negotiations, the Society purchased the Grand National Tower Hotel property, the block of land at the corner of Grand National (Plummer) Avenue and Nyora Street, and also reached agreement with the owner of the only cottage in Nyora Street. When these settlements were reported to the Government, the Bill was speedily passed through the remaining stages in both Houses.

The hotel was delicensed in 1923 and demolished in 1924, thus completing a long, time-consuming and expensive battle for the Society. However, all the land from Epsom Road in the east, Langs Road in the north and bounded by the railway in the south, was now enclosed in the Showgrounds.

During 1919 the Society concentrated the major portion of work to the western end of the ground. The main building erected was the new brick Poultry Pavilion. The Swine Pavilion was further improved; seats were provided in the Chirnside stand; superintendents' offices were erected, and more lawns and rockeries were laid out throughout the grounds.

In 1919 breeders of Red Poll cattle decided to form an Australian Association, and the Society consented to carry out the secretarial work. At the same time, the Victorian breeders of Friesian cattle decided to form a committee of the Friesian Cattle Club of Australia; again the Society consented to carry out the necessary duties.

The Royal Show of 1919, held from 22–27 September, was blessed with excellent weather, and created an all-time attendance record of 205,539, with 10,166 entries, of which there was a record number of 529 dogs.

For a number of years the Society had wanted to put forward a scheme to improve the low-grade dairy herds of the State by the utilisation of pure sires of milk-producing strains, and to this end the Council resolved to encourage the formation of herd testing societies throughout the State.

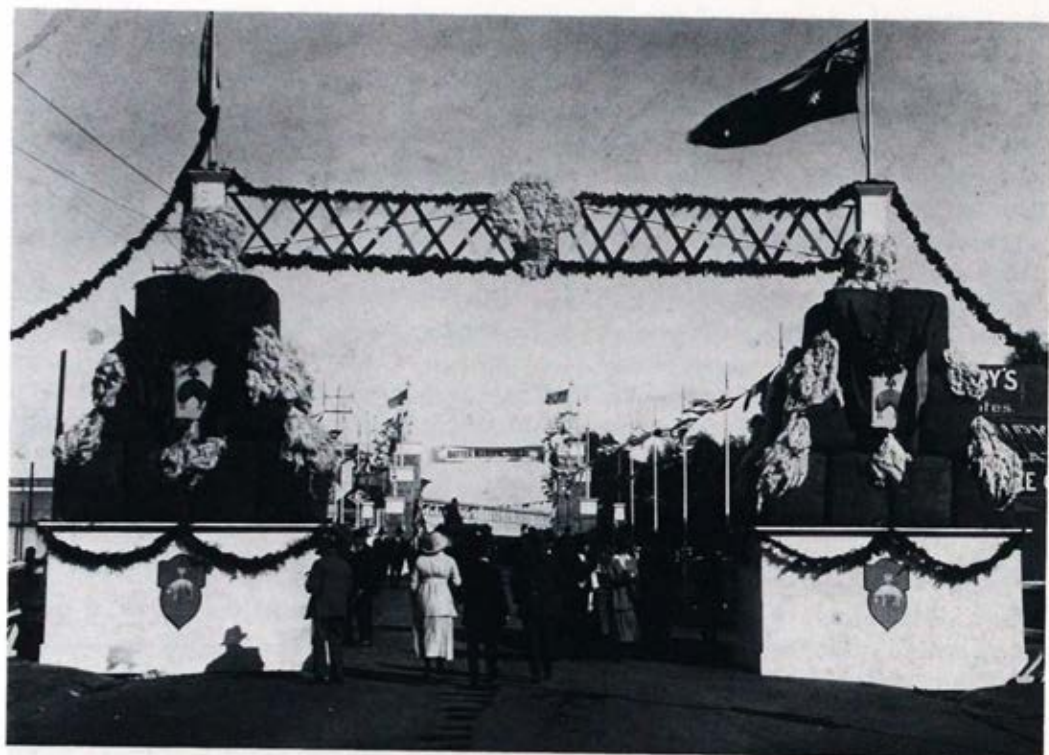
In order to encourage better farming methods in Victoria, it was agreed to allocate £100 per annum, for farm competitions conducted by country agricultural societies. For

After the success of the Farm Crop competition in the Wimmera District in 1919, it was decided to hold another competition in the same district in 1920. The judge appointed by the Department of Agriculture was H. A. Mullett, who was later to become Director of Agriculture and a trustee of the Society. It was in connection with this competition that an exhibitor was disqualified and debarred from ever joining the Society or competing in any future shows, on account of his having attempted to influence the judge's decision. The competitor, through the Chamber of Agriculture, had afterwards been precluded from competing in any agricultural show in the State.

*The visit of the Prince of Wales in 1920.*







*Special displays erected for the Prince of Wales' visit, 1920.*

## BIG IMPROVEMENTS, NEW COMPETITIONS, MORE LAND THE JUBILEE SHOW AND ELECTRIC TRAINS

The Society celebrated the jubilee of the formation of the NASV at its 1921 Show, which was held from 19-24 September. A record number of entries (10,754) was received, and the attendance record was created with 212,916.

The agricultural and dairy machinery exhibitors were represented in full strength and provided one of the most impressive features of the whole exhibition. The arena events were very well received, with harness racing being most popular. 'Electric traction' was used for the first time to carry patrons and visitors to and from the Showgrounds, and proved most popular with the travellers.

During 1921 two new breed societies were formed: the Friesian Cattle Club of Australia (Victorian Branch), and the Milking Shorthorn Cattle Breeders' Association of Victoria. The latter was established because the body controlling the Milking Shorthorn Stud Book, which was published in NSW, would not permit Victorian foundation stock to be registered under similar conditions to those applying to stock in other States. By the end of this year the fund, launched in 1920 for the building of the Jubilee Grandstand had reached the amount of £12,460, all of which was donated.

A further crop competition was conducted in the Wimmera District, and was won by W. E. Dahlenberg, of Salisbury. And for the first time, a similar competition was held in the Mallee District.

In the year 1922, the Show was held from 25-30 September, and recorded new entry figures of 11,454 and a new attendance record of 230,265. Dairy cattle entries were so large that the accommodation in the pavilions proved quite inadequate, and the Council was forced to devise means of further restrictions of entries. Cats were exhibited for the first time, with an entry of seventy-one. Two more firsts were the farrier competition, which drew an entry of seventy-nine; and a one-farm exhibit, open to all farms within the State. The latter competition was won by Mr and Mrs B. R. Gebert, 'Evergreen Farm', Jeparit East, with an exhibit comprising 475 distinct articles grown and manufactured by the exhibitors. Under the title 'Is the Mallee worth Saving?' this display contained samples of all cereals, hay, chaff, flour, preserves and jams, foods, meats, vegetables and even flowers.

## NEW GRANDSTAND - HALL & HORSE PAVILION

The year 1923 proved a big year for Showgrounds improvements; in all, the amount of just on £48,000 was spent on new buildings. These included the Jubilee Grandstand (Members' Stand), on which much of the work was carried out by the Society's own tradesmen, and paid for almost entirely by donations and subscriptions; the new brick Horse Pavilion; a vehicle shelter; the Hall of Manufactures; a cement-faced turnstile house, next to the new hall; and a number of paths were paved.

The Royal Show was held for nine days, (20-29 September), and entries again were a record (11,455); the attendance figure passed 300,000 (300,075) for the first time. This Show saw the introduction of the musical ride by the Victoria Mounted Police, which was particularly well received, and what could now be considered as the first dressage





*Machinery courts at the Royal Show, 1920.*



1922 Show, One Farm Exhibit, Gebert's.

demonstration was given by Mounted Constable Edgar. This was an exhibition referred to as 'horse educating'.

During the year, the Society agreed to do the secretarial work for yet another breed society – the Berkshire and Yorkshire Society of Australasia, consisting of the Federal Council and the Victorian Branch. In January 1923, the Council permitted the Boy Scouts organisation the use of the grounds for their Annual Corroboree, which attracted scouts from all parts of Australia: On the concluding day of the function, a fire broke out in the old draught horse boxes in Thomson Street, and gutted one hundred and sixty-

Award for most unusual exhibit: A 'One Farm' exhibit. This First Prize entry contained 475 different items of farm produce: Royal Show 1922.







*1921 Jubilee Show: aerial picture looking from west towards Epsom Road. Note: on far left Leonard Crescent; Watson Terrace (Showgrounds Western Boundary)—First year of electric trains.*

also provided brickbats to construct three-quarters of a mile of roads within the Showgrounds. In the area vacated by the hotel, motor car standholders erected display areas. New ornamental gates were erected at the foot of Grand National Avenue (Plummer Avenue) on Epsom Road, the work being carried out by the Society's own staff for a cost of £200.

The 1924 Royal Show was held from 18-27 September, and although the entries reached a record 11,842, the weather was bad for most of the period, and the attendance dropped to 284,984, which was just 15,000 short of the 1923 record year.

Owing to the extensions to the grounds, the Society was able to use the Drill Hall (the Hall of Industries, later to be demolished to make way for the Government Pavilion in 1977) for the display of the women's industries, which had built up to a huge entry of 977.

Although the dairy cattle entries again showed an increase the quality showed vast improvement on previous years. This improvement was attributed to the introduction of a compulsory sweepstakes which made the showing of low type cattle unprofitable, and at the same time provided handsome prizes for stock of superior quality.

In an effort to keep the farmer abreast with modern advances in agriculture, the Society arranged a series of lectures and demonstrations at the 1924 Show, and although the sessions were not as well attended as may have been desired, it was agreed that they should continue. As well, the Department of Agriculture had introduced the 'Better Farming Trains', which were specially equipped railway carriages and stock trucks, with specialist officers, who travelled the country lecturing on all aspects of agriculture and pastoral extension work.

The 1925 Royal Show was held from 17-26 September, with entries breaking all records at 11,942, and attendances reaching the all-time high of 318,457. Features of the Show included the introduction of a hand-milking contest, and an all-time record beef cattle entry. The official opening ceremony was moved from the arena to outside, in front of the Society's offices.

During the year the Society placed the grounds at the disposal of the Butter Managers and Secretaries Association, which arranged an outstanding dairy produce show in the Government Pavilion.

#### LAND EXPANSION IN THE WEST

Within three years after completion of the twenty-two years development of the Showgrounds east of the Crown Grant acres, the Society made extensive purchases that foreshadowed an 'about-turn' strategy in land acquisition. During the year 1926 the Society acquired land that eventually extended the Showgrounds over eighteen allotments in the Bagotville Estate, that extended west from the rear of the Crown Grant back to the Victoria Racing Club land near the Racecourse railway station and the 'hill'.

A note in the RASV Annual Report for 1926 stated:

Your Council acquired at a cost of £4,992 10s, three cottages and three additional allotments of land in Leonard Crescent at the Bagotville end of the grounds. In December a villa and racing stables occupying six allotments; a brick residence on one block and two vacant allotments, all with frontages to Watson Terrace, were purchased at a total cost of £6,750. It is hoped that in a few years the Society may be able to enclose the whole and thus meet the demands of our exhibitors, who for years have been clamouring for the additional space.



seven horse boxes and three covered walkways. The buildings were insured for £2,966, paid in full by the insurance company.

#### GROUND EXTENSIONS AND EPSOM ROAD SUBWAY

The Showgrounds had been extended by an additional six acres, with the enclosure of the additional land from Nyora Street to Langs Road. The old Grand National Tower Hotel, purchased by the Society in 1920, was delicensed in 1923, and arrangements were in hand for its demolition. The Council of the RASV purchased eleven allotments on the Victory Park Estate – the first purchase beyond Langs Road – ‘so that when the land around about the Showgrounds has all been built upon, this area will be permanently available for use as a motor park’.

Also, early in 1923, the Council convened a conference of all bodies interested in the construction of a subway to replace the level crossing in Epsom Road. It was agreed that the construction be carried out, and that the Victorian Railways and Metropolitan Tramways Board each contribute twenty-five per cent; the Melbourne and Essendon Councils each fifteen per cent, and the Victoria Racing Club and the Society ten per cent each. The project cost £20,000, of which the Society paid £2,000.

With the large building programme of 1923, only minor works were carried out in 1924. The former Grand National Tower Hotel was demolished, sold for removal, and

*Demolition of the Grand National Tower Hotel.*



Government replied that it 'cannot yet see its way to ratify the promise of the previous Government, and pass a short Enabling Bill to permit the grounds to be used as desired'.

By 1927 it was evident that the Society was hoping to expand the Showgrounds, over the Bagotville-Leonard Crescent-Watson Terrace section of the Estate as soon as was practicable. One problem to be solved was that of Watson Terrace, then an open Ascot Vale street, 'unmade' in municipal classification and 'private' in the sense that it had been laid as a track on freehold property which separated the Showgrounds mainland from the Society's Bagotville purchases close to the back of the Crown Grant acres. Street-closing legislation, similar to that which had solved the Nyora Street deadlock on the Epsom Road advance, was a probability. And early 1927 indications were that the Government was prepared to assist the Society with the necessary enabling legislation. But before the end of the year the Society was to suffer a disappointment.

The cause of the setback was the defeat of the State Ministry that, from 18 November 1924 to 20 May 1927 had been led by Mr John Allan, of the Country Party. The Society attributed to Mr Allan, when Premier, a promise of parliamentary aid for the legislation that would enable Watson Terrace to become part of the Showgrounds in the interests of expansion. The succeeding Ministry did not act on the matter. Neither did its immediate successors until – with the overlapping centenaries of Melbourne and Port Phillip Settlement due for State-wide commemoration in 1934 – Sir Stanley Argyle's Nationalist-Country Party coalition moved. In that Ministry, Sir Stanley Argyle was Premier, Mr (later Sir) Albert Dunstan was Minister of Lands and Mr John Allan, Minister of Agriculture. For an additional six years, after 1927, the Show had to do without any of the Society's Bagotville allotments.

The Society's Royal Show in 1927 was held from 15–24 September, but entries were 561 below those of the previous year, due mainly to no pigs being shown, because of the prevalence of swine fever. Although the weather conditions were good throughout the period of the Show, seasonal conditions were bad, therefore not so many country people visited the Show; the total attendance of 293,129 was approximately 25,000 fewer than the record year of 1925.

## ENTRIES

Up until the year 1927, it had been the practice of the Society to include competitive and non-competitive exhibits in the total of 'entries'. This practice was carried over from the early years of the NASV which classified all exhibits, including farm machinery and equipment, as 'entries', because they were all subjected to judging, whether on the stands or later in the fields.

During the whole of this period the non-competitive exhibits or entries numbered anything from 1,000 to 2,000 and above. Two examples are shown in the years 1923 and 1926, where in the former the overall entry was 11,455, of which 2,800 were non-competitive, and in 1926 from a total of 12,005, the non-competitive exhibits numbered 2,600. From and including 1927, only competitive exhibits were classified as entries, and the non-competitive segment became part of the displays or exhibitions of standholders.





*First stand to appear on site of old Grand National Tower Hotel, 1926 (reproduced by kind permission of Mr Bruce Langlands).*

The Society, nearly a decade previously, before the eastern advance to the Epsom Road frontage had been completed, had bought nine of the Bagotville lots on the opposite half of the Estate as a provision 'for the future'.

In the 1926 Royal Show, held from 16–25 September, total entries passed 12,000 for the first time, and although the weather conditions for the whole Show period were good, attendances of 298,225 were 20,000 lower than the 1925 record. An innovation at the 1926 Show was the introduction of Show guides, who directed the public to various areas of the Showgrounds. The milking competitions introduced in 1925 were going well, and wool classing competitions were added in 1926.

#### USE OF GROUNDS

For many years the Society only used the grounds between Shows for storage purposes, as the sole means of revenue, with the result that maintenance became an ever increasing cost problem. In view of the drain on finances occasioned by the high maintenance, the Council made representations to the Government urging an amendment to the Crown Grant that provided for the grounds be used for no other purpose than the holding of a Show. The Council was of the opinion that if the desired amendment was made, the grounds could be let for sporting fixtures. However, the State

## THE KENNEL CONTROL COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

For a great many years, progress in the area of canine fancy in Victoria had been retarded by the divergent controls under which it had been forced to function. The Canine Control Council, with the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Association, therefore agreed to form a new body, which would assume complete control of canine affairs in Victoria. A general election was held among fanciers, resulting in the formation of the Kennel Control Council of Victoria.

In the midst of the depression, the Society continued to increase its prize fund, and this action led to a further increase in entries. At the 1931 Royal Show, 17-26 September, the attendance of 233,579 was an increase of 14,000 on the 1930 Show, and the feelings of the Council are adequately summed up in the Annual Report of 1931:

After a careful survey your Council feels that, apart from the lamentable collapse of the Society's Manager (Mr H. Schwieger) on the eve of the opening, the last Show was one of the most enjoyable and successful exhibitions yet conducted, demonstrating as it did, the faith in both town and country people in the ability of the country to regain prosperity; and from a financial standpoint, in view of the exceptional circumstances prevailing, the result of the Show can only be regarded as most satisfactory.

## DEATH OF A SECRETARY

After his sudden collapse on 16 September at the Show, the manager, Henry Schwieger, died on 9 October 1931. He first joined the Society as a collector and assistant secretary to Thomas Patterson, in 1907. At its December meeting, the Council appointed Louis Monod to succeed the late Mr Schwieger as chief executive officer, and to carry out the duties of both secretary and manager.

Between the years 1929 and 1932, expenditure on the grounds was confined mainly to maintenance work of a necessary nature. However, in 1932 a new turnstile entrance was erected in Langs Road. The Showgrounds was not the only area in which the Council endeavoured to restrict expenditure. One of Louis Monod's first tasks was to discuss with members of the staff some method of avoiding retrenchment. The result was that the Society would not dismiss any member of the staff, provided that each member would make a donation of two and a half per cent of salary back to the Society. This was a curious charade, for the members of staff would receive their salary on pay day, and would then make out - on the special donations form - their repayment to the Society. The scheme continued for twelve months.

The 1932 Royal Show was held from 15-24 September, and was full of surprises. The entry passed the previous record of 10,834 in 1931, by more than 1,000. Almost every section showed increased entries, and the attendance of 264,474 was much increased on previous years. The Society purchased a dynamometer car, built at the Melbourne University Engineering School, and aided by this, conducted steady pull contests, for pair-horse draught teams. These contests proved to be one of the outstanding features of the 1932 Show. Also introduced was a procession of saddle, harness horses and ponies, which commenced at Princes Bridge, and passed through the city to the Showgrounds on the last Saturday of the Show. This procession was organised by the Horse Association of Victoria, which was founded in 1931.



## NEW BUILDINGS, INCREASED ENTRIES – BUT DEPRESSION HITS ‘GATE’

The year 1928 marked a number of improvements to the Grounds. The new two-storeyed Administration Block was built to replace the old wooden offices, at a cost of £20,200; there was a new creche; the cloakroom was extended, the trotting track improved; additional accommodation for farm produce and sheep was built and a large underground draining scheme implemented.

The 1928 Royal Show was held from 20–29 September, and the competitive entries passed 10,000 (10,261). The entry of pigs was still prohibited because of the prevailing swine fever epidemic. All available space was occupied, and the weather good. But in spite of these advantages, the effects of the deepening depression with its accompanying unemployment, and the bad season for the country people, brought the attendance down to 274,256, which was 44,200 below the record 1925 figure.

This year produced a very strong entry of sheep, filling all the pens, and the overflow had to be accommodated in the unused pig pavilion. For the first time the Dog Section was conducted under the rules of the Canine Control Council, and attracted a record 801 entries. This new body was formed in May 1928, and made rapid progress in gaining members; in the first year it registered just on 900 dogs and cats.

In the new administrative building, the Council set aside a special room for stock-breeders' societies to use as a meeting room, and another room was placed at the disposal of the exhibitors for use as a club. The worsening depression was reflected in the 1929 Show which was held from 19–28 September, and although the overall entries were only 231 short of the previous year, the attendance dropped to 254,664, which was 19,522 below that of 1928. The Illawarra Shorthorns were shown for the first time – there were forty-five entries. Although the economic climate was bad, this did not halt the Society's building programme, for 1929 saw the construction of a new two-level sheep pavilion and pens.

Over this period, the Society added three more organisations to its growing list of administration responsibilities. These included: The Australian Illawarra Shorthorn Society (Victorian Branch), The Victorian United Cow Testing Association, and the Victorian Poultry Control Council.

The first Show of the new decade, from 18–27 September 1930, again showed a big drop in attendances to 219,611, which was 35,053 below the 1929 figure. If there was any compensation for the drop in attendance, it came in the form of a still further increase in entries, to 10,372. The Annual Report for 1930 made these comments:

Never before in the Society's history had there been such a high class exhibition of sheep. Not only were the entries a record, but the high standard of quality had never previously been attained. Big increases were also recorded in pigs, farm produce and Women's Industries. The latter having reached an entry of 1,200 for the first time.

In an effort to boost the farm produce section, begun at the 1925 Show, the Society introduced a competition between agricultural societies, whereby exhibits gaining awards in the farm produce classes would win points for societies sponsoring such exhibits. This plan was well received by country societies, and resulted in a big increase in entries for the farm produce section.

It seems extraordinary to record that throughout the worst depression years entries for the Royal Show continued to rise, a fact further amplified in the Royal Show of 1933 (21-30 September), when entries reached 12,139. In this year the biggest section was the Women's Industries, with a total entry of 1,544. Along with the increased entries, the attendances also slowly built up, so that in 1933 the total was 272,176. The features of the arena for 1933 were demonstrations by members of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades, the Mounted Police, and the inclusion of military events, such as tent-pegging.

#### THE VICTORIAN YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS ASSOCIATION

The Council wished to contribute to the extension of the Young Farmers' Club movement in the State, but realized that before this could be done a central authority to bring about some uniformity in constitution and conduct of clubs throughout the entire State would be necessary. A conference of club delegates was called during the period of the 1933 Royal Show.

The Conference was chaired by the president of the RASV, Col. Sir Charles E. Merrett, and attended by Hon. John Allan (Minister of Agriculture), H. A. Mullett (Director of Agriculture), W. Tredinnick (representing the Railways Department), James McRae (Director of Education) and other members of his Department, in addition to some sixty representatives of Young Farmers' clubs.

It was unanimously resolved that a central organisation be formed, and a representative committee was appointed, with power to co-opt and act in drawing up a constitution and rules for the Association. Support was given by the *Argus* and *Australian* newspapers, which both provided shields for competitions. The Society agreed to carry out the secretarial work for the new organisation.

Besides the Young Farmers' Clubs Association, two more organisations were added to the increasing list of breed societies and allied bodies. These were the Australian Corriedale Sheepbreeders' Association (Federal Council), for which the secretarial work was assumed at the request of the Federal Council following the death of its secretary, and the Victorian and Southern Riverina Society of Export Lamb and Mutton Producers. The latter body was set up solely to benefit the producers, who were exporting lambs and mutton direct to the Smithfield market in England. With these new additions, the Society was doing the secretarial work for no less than twenty-one bodies in 1933.

#### MELBOURNE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 1934 - SECOND ESSENDON LAND ACT 1934

The Royal Show of 1934, officially one of the functions associated with the Melbourne Centenary celebrations, was held from 18-27 October, instead of in September. Even so, there was some urgency about the timely completion of the preparations. Representations were made to the Government for legislation authorising the Society to close Watson Terrace, which separated the Showgrounds proper from land purchased some years previously. But, as the Society owned the land to which the Showgrounds had extended, there was nothing out of order in its placing buildings on the land, in anticipation of the proposed enabling legislation.



Another innovation in 1932 was the installation of an up-to-date system of amplifiers in the centre of the arena for the benefit of the public. The Council also resolved that year:

in order to meet a general desire and at the same time show appreciation of the public support already accorded the Society, the Council resolved to reduce to one shilling, the charge for admission to the Showgrounds on the last day of the Show. This action met with wide approval, the crowd being double that of the corresponding day in 1931.

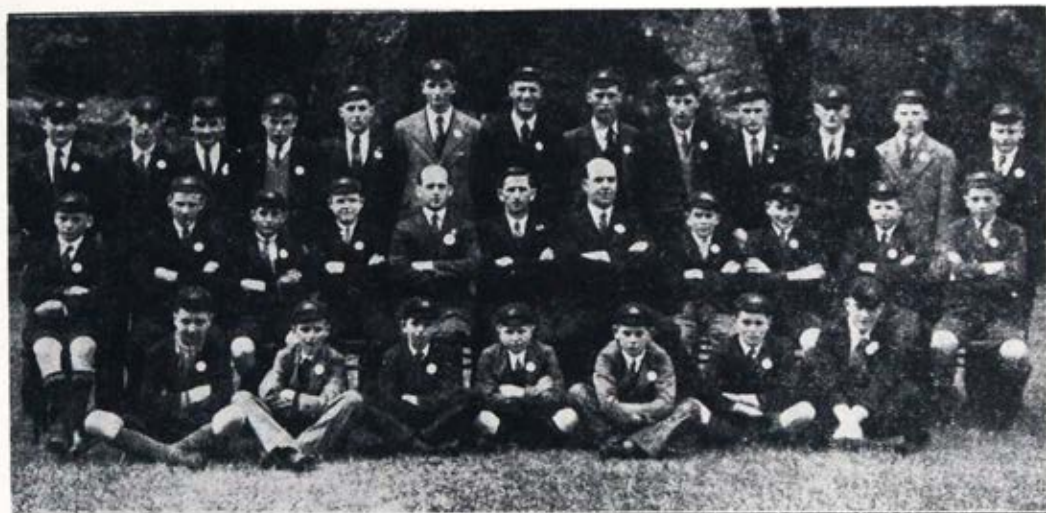
#### THE AUSTRALIAN PONY STUD BOOK SOCIETY

This Society was established in Sydney at Easter in 1931, and S. A. Greaves (an RASV Councillor), accepted nomination as the Victorian representative on the Committee of Control. Mr Greaves also consented to act as honorary inspector for Victoria. In an effort to assist the newly formed Society, the Council resolved to consider the advisability of restricting entries in the classes for stud ponies to registered animals, after breeders and owners were given a reasonable time in which to submit their stock for registration in the Stud Book.

A further organisation was added to the Society's growing tally of breed and associated societies. It was the Australian Dairy Cattle Research Association (Victorian Branch), which had been formed to promote sustained scientific investigation on diseases of dairy cattle, giving priority to contagious abortion and contagious mastitis.

*Tent Pegging is not new. Here the team from the 13th Light Horse is competing at the Royal Show of 1932.*





*First Young Farmers Camp on Showgrounds, 1934.*

hundred horses was provided adjacent to No. 1 Horse Pavilion, and extra stalls were erected in the Hunters' Shed. The Pig Pavilion was extended, the old Agricultural Hall, renamed the Hall of Commerce, was cleared and made available for non-competitive exhibits, the Carriage Pavilion was adapted for the exhibition of fat sheep, and alterations were made to the Dog Pavilion and judging rings. So after a number of years of merely carrying out essential maintenance, the Society was once again effecting permanent improvements.

At the Centenary Royal Show in 1934, all previous entry records were broken, as the total entries rose by almost 3,000 to 14,901. The official opening was performed by HRH Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and although the Society was expecting an exceptional attendance, it was disappointed. Counter attractions, and a strike by tramway men, cut the overall attendance by 50,000 to 224,479. Nevertheless, the Show itself was praised as the best ever conducted by the Society.

Following the emergency secretarial services given to the Australian Corriedale Sheepbreeders' Association Federal Council in 1933, the annual meeting of the Federal Council requested the RASV to continue the service, which it agreed to do. The Centenary Celebrations Council had been offered the use of the grounds during the celebrations. Lighting had been installed in all grandstands, and this was extended to the turnstiles and railways entrance. From a specially erected steel tower adjacent to the public grandstand, the arena was floodlit from searchlights installed by the Royal Australian Navy, for a naval pageant arranged as part of the Navy's contribution to the Victorian Centenary Celebrations. These facilities were also used by the Army in late October for a Military Tattoo. In addition to these evening entertainments, a military gymkhana, attended by the Duke of Gloucester, was held on the arena on 10 November.







*Mrs Violet Murrell on her Champion saddle horse 'Garryowen', taken in 1934 just prior to the tragic fire.*



*The famous 'Garryowen' Trophy.*

dropped from 14,901 to 12,045. However, there was an increase in attendance of more than 50,000 on the previous year, with an aggregate total of 276,581. A feature of the arena events at the 1935 Royal Show (19-28 September) was the demonstrations of camp drafting by a team of experts from northern New South Wales.

In keeping with its policy to restrict the exhibition of stock to pure bred animals, the Council directed that all Shetland ponies entered in the 1935 Royal Show must be registered in the pedigree section of the Australian Pony Stud Book, or in an approved Stud Book for Shetlands, published outside the Commonwealth.

In 1936 the Royal Show was held from 17-26 September, and the entries reached 12,588 - the best figure ever recorded, excluding the Centenary Show. The attendance of 311,289 was also an improvement on that of the previous year, reaching to within 7,000 of the all-time record of 1925. The arena attractions again drew big crowds, and special mention is made of the act provided by the Russian cossacks and the Victoria Mounted Police.





*H.R.H. Duke of Gloucester officially opening the 1934 Centenary Show.*

Almost immediately after this event, the Showgrounds was made available to the organisers of the Catholic Eucharistic Congress. An immense altar was erected in the arena, and the whole area filled with seats. The three services were very well attended, and at least on one occasion it was estimated that 100,000 people were in and around the arena. And although the Society received remuneration for the events conducted on the grounds in association with the Centenary celebrations, no charge was made for the Eucharistic Congress.

#### THE GARRYOWEN PERPETUAL TROPHY

On 24 March 1934 a tragedy occurred which shocked horse lovers all over Australia. In the early hours, a fire broke out in the stables of Mr and Mrs Murrell at Mentone, which resulted in the deaths of both Violet and Bill Murrell, and their horses, including the champion hack, Garryowen. Violet Murrell had been a most popular equestrienne, who had ridden in the Royal Melbourne Show since she was a child, and had grown up to become one of Victoria's foremost show and cross-country horsewomen.

As a tribute to her heroism, her many friends approached the RASV for permission to present a perpetual trophy for competition at the Royal Melbourne Show. Thus the Garryowen Trophy was introduced at the 1934 Melbourne Centenary Show. The conditions of the award covered three sections: horse-conformation and soundness, manners and paces; equipment, saddlery and costume; and riding ability. The Garryowen Perpetual Trophy was won in the first year by Miss Kitty Sutherland.

The huge effort put in by exhibitors for the Centenary Show, and the adverse seasonal conditions were reflected in the entries the following year, when the overall total

tional space for car parking. To finance this purchase, the Society sold part of its existing car park land in Elliott and Monash Streets, Ascot Vale.

The 1938 Royal Show, held from 22 September to 1 October, was the first to record attendances above 400,000 (420,430). The previous record of 318,457 had been established thirteen years earlier in 1925. The entries continued to increase, reaching a total of 13,857. This total surprised the Council, for it was a year of most adverse seasonal conditions for the farmer and breeder. The Annual Report for 1938 makes this reference:

Your Council was both surprised and gratified that in such a season the entries of stock and produce were a record overall, but for the Centenary year, and that the quality of the exhibits compared more than favourably with those of previous years. It seems a long time since adverse influence was not in operation at Show time, and this year was no exception, yet, despite the European crisis, the drought, and the fact that schools were open, attendances at the Show totalled 420,430.

Although deputations had waited on the Minister of Education, and later on the Premier, no relaxing of the decision to change the school holidays was evident, and the Council was most disturbed about the situation, as well it might be, from the following extract from the Annual Report:

Whilst it was impossible in 1937 owing to the prevailing epidemic, to gauge the effect of this decision on attendances, it has now been made abundantly clear, as attendances of children at the 1938 Show were approximately ten per cent of the total, whereas in former years they had reached as high as thirty-three per cent.

#### DEFENCE DEPARTMENT TAKES OVER GROUNDS

Although war appeared imminent, the Society went ahead with preparations for the 1939 Royal Show. A new concrete grandstand had been erected near the result board, and much maintenance had been carried out on the grounds. The fat cattle pens had been moved to the western end of the Nicholas Pavilion, thus providing an ideal site for a model dairy, erected and donated by the Australian Portland Cement Company. The provision of a separate building, adjacent to the Horticultural Hall, was provided for the Young Farmers' clubs.

The Royal Show for 1939 was held from 21-30 September, and was outstanding in many ways. The entries increased by more than 700 on the previous year, to 14,522. The arena programme was again most popular, and included new features such as a massed highland pipe display and polo matches at night, but in spite of good organisation and presentation, the attendance was down by more than 65,000 on the previous year, to 355,071.

Immediately after the Show, the grounds were taken over by the Defence Department, and it was understood that the grounds would again be made available by the end of June 1940. But shortly after the 1940 Annual Meeting, Ministerial advice was received to the effect that the Showgrounds were to be retained for the duration of the war. The grounds, which were first taken over by the military authorities, were shared in the first three months of 1940 between military and air force, and then fully occupied by the RAAF as its No. 1 Aeronautical Engineering School. The services spent a large sum of money in adapting the various buildings, and providing added facilities for the thousands of men and women being trained on the Showgrounds.



With the success of the evening events during the 1934 Centenary celebrations, the Council considered that the Society should plan ahead to open the Royal Show at night. There were two problems however. The first was to have an amending Bill passed through Parliament to enable the Society to run trotting events at night without losing the daytime events, and secondly, to have the Showgrounds suitably lighted. In October 1936 a new Act was passed in which the Society was granted permission to conduct not more than two trotting races after 7 p.m. on any evening during the Show period, in addition to the two races which it was already permitted to conduct in the daytime. In respect to the lighting, the Society, through the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales, invited Mr E. Halliwell, the chief electrical engineer at the RASNSW, to advise on the requirements, and his recommendations were later discussed by the Council and adopted.

During this year, the Council suffered the loss of four of its members: Donald Stewart, who joined the Council in 1909 and was Vice-President in 1914; Phil S. Tuckett, elected in 1913 and Vice-President in 1918; W. C. Greaves, who joined the Council in 1908 and was Vice-President in the years 1915, 1916 and 1931; and R. I. Argyle, who was elected to Council in 1912, and was Vice-President in 1914. Respective replacements on Council were: W. J. Trevor Clarke, Devon Park, Dunkeld; Professor Samuel Wadham, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Melbourne; W. C. Greaves, Caldermeade Estate, Caldermeade; and Alfred E. Dahlenburg, Dalholme, Winiam East, via Nhill.

#### FIRST NIGHT SHOW

The 1937 Royal Show held from 23 September to 2 October, promised to be the biggest and best ever conducted. It was agreed that it would be the first Show with night sessions, and accordingly the Council spared no expense with the lighting of the grounds. The floodlighting of the arena from five steel lattice towers, each 110 feet high, supplemented by special lighting over the trotting track, resulted in the Society having the best-lighted show arena in Australia. All pavilions, halls, entrances, luncheon rooms, conveniences and streets, were connected with amplified lighting.

The 13,308 entries were 750 up on the previous year; all was in readiness for a bumper Show, and to the confident Council, only a wash-out or calamity could rob the Society of record attendances. Unfortunately a calamity did occur, in the form of the infantile paralysis epidemic. This, along with the decision of the Education Department to close all schools in August, instead of at the time of the Royal Show, resulted in total attendance of 250,476, which was a drop of 50,800 on the previous year. The attendance analysis for the first Show with night sessions, revealed a daytime attendance of 179,172; night 71,304.

The Council had gone to great lengths to provide an outstanding Show in 1937. The arena programme by day was more varied, and by night, with trotting events, chariot races, and displays by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades and the Victoria Police so well received, that the Council agreed on this special blend of education, excitement and amusement.

The increased patronage of recent Shows, coupled with the growth of road transport, prompted the Council to purchase a property at the corner of Epsom and Langs Roads, which abutted their previous purchases in the Victory Park Estate, to be used as addi-

for the increasing demand for stands of farm machinery and implements, and by 1898 there were one hundred and fifty such stands catering for 'machinery in motion, implements, and miscellaneous exhibits'. At the same time the Society's outlay on improvements had risen to £34,059 16s 8d.

The main exhibition area on the grounds was the present arena area, but in the centre was a distinct hill, and although this was a vantage point from which to view the stock judging and other activities from within the arena, it was a disadvantage for those outside, so immediately following the 1901 Show work began on removing the hill. On the newly acquired land in the east – purchased in 1902 – machinery stands were in occupation, and the overall number for the 1902 Show was 184.

By 1903, the arena improvements had been completed, and this area was now an amphitheatre giving the general public a full view of all activities taking place there. Also in 1903 a new entrance was provided from the railway platform, the sheep building was doubled in size, a new sale ring was built, and stairways up the embankment to the arena were constructed.

The year 1904 was a memorable one for buildings and improvements, for in this year was erected 'a substantial and ornate brick building 160 feet long by sixty feet wide, costing £3,730'. This building is the present Arts and Crafts Pavilion. Besides the big new building, additional steps were provided to the arena, more work was done on the entrance from the rail, 180 new horse boxes, eighty-six cattle stalls were built, and road work was carried out. By 1904, £51,543 had been spent on improvements.

1905-15. The 'ornate brick building' erected in 1904 was in use in 1905 to display the District Exhibits which had been introduced in 1903. The new hall was called the Agricultural Hall. In 1906, the Society had additional land on the Langs Road side of Plummer Avenue, which made an approximately parallel advance with that purchased in 1902 east of the Crown Grant boundary. But as the Showgrounds' central gates still remained on the 1883 Grant line, the two new eastern sections extended beyond the central gates on which line stood the secretary's office and the Council Luncheon Rooms, which faced across the central roadway where the present Royal Luncheon Rooms and Administrative block now stand.

An old panoramic photograph from the RASV archives taken from the Grand National Tower Hotel shows the entrance gates at the end of a section of the Grand National Avenue, the former boundary fence on the Grant line with its fence-high inscription 'Royal Agricultural Society's Showgrounds', and the main Showgrounds area beyond. For the 1906 Show, the Society spent £6,550 on fencing, metalling and asphaltting roads and footpaths, the removal and extension to the poultry shed, drinking troughs, and a new ladies' retiring room. The stands for machinery, implements and miscellaneous non-competitive exhibits rose to 234.

In preparation for the 1908 Show the Society spent an amount of £2,836 on improvements, which included the cost of special entrance gates in the west, close to the VRC property, a new tearoom of timber construction to seat about 500 people, improvements to the sheep sheds, a new building for dairy produce and bacon exhibits, and extra seating accommodation on the arena ramp area.

During 1909, a number of alterations and improvements were effected, including the repositioning of the main entrance gate east along Grand National Avenue to Nyora Street, where new ornamental gates and a ticket box were constructed.





*RAAF occupation of the Showgrounds: 1940–46.*

#### BUILD UP ON THE ASCOT VALE LAND – FIRST SIXTY YEARS

This is an opportune time to look back over the first sixty years of occupation of the land at Ascot Vale, and to summarise the achievements of the Society in the use it made of the grounds over this period.

*The Early Days 1883–93.* The Society successfully negotiated with the Government in the exchange of grounds from St Kilda Road to Ascot Vale, to hand over all buildings and fencing on the old site for a grant of £3,000, required to fence the new Crown Grant and erect necessary buildings.

The last Show on the old grounds was held in November 1882, and as the first on the new grounds was to be 7–9 November 1883, this did not give much time to fence in the Crown Grant and make provision for holding the stock exhibits within the area. Nevertheless, the work was completed on time and the Show opened on the due date.

By the second Show most of the early problems had been ironed out, and the Society had added as permanent buildings, forty horse boxes, sixty additional stalls for fat cattle, an extension to the dog shed, new pig pens, a carriage shed, a new office for the secretary, and a council room.

By far the biggest outlay in the first ten years of occupation was for building the first grandstand in 1886, at a cost of £5,269 17s 7d. The total expenditure to 1893 was £29,752 16s 11d, all of which was expended within the area of the original Crown Grant of thirty acres.

*1894–1904.* Although stock and produce entries continued to increase over the next ten years, the Society's main activities on the grounds were the continual preparations

By 1910 the Society reported having expended a total amount of £68,745 2s 4d on the build-up of the grounds. In 1911 the Annual Report records the building of a large pavilion for dairy machinery and produce, and an industrial court. (The Dairy Pavilion was destroyed by fire in 1979.) The luncheon room was increased by a building one hundred and forty feet long; other additions were a band-stand, a shelter shed for hunters, increased office accommodation, an enquiry room, cloak room, a creche, and at the main gate a large building was erected to house eight turnstiles.

Two illustrations on page 96, indicate the build-up on the land to this time. One is a panoramic photograph reproduced from the Society's Annual Report for 1909, which places on record a view of crowds among a variety of stands, kiosks etc. watching a cattle parade passing the public grandstand that was built in 1886. Outside the area is a glimpse of a small section of Plummer Avenue showing the cigar kiosk, and in the distance on the west side of the grandstand is the roof of a tearoom that stood for years on part of the site occupied from 1967 by the Mitchell Stand. The second illustration is a map of the Showgrounds of 1911 that shows the allocation of space to standholders to that time.

In 1912 the Society erected, at a cost of £1,031, an uncovered grandstand on the eastern crescent of the arena ramp with its back parallel to the roof of the 1904 'ornate' pavilion. This stand was later named the Cumming Stand after Council member W. B. Cumming, and this opened up a new era for standholders, for the Society adopted a scheme by which exhibitors and others desiring Show accommodation would be permitted to erect buildings of a uniform design around the arena ramp on condition that the design provided a roof that could accommodate arena spectators. The tenants were obliged to enter into a tenancy agreement for twelve years, at a nominal rental. This was the genesis of the Chirnside, Cliff and Gibsonia arena grandstands, for which the Society charged an admission fee, as was then the custom with the main public grandstand.

The 1912 catalogue map showed a plan of a building with eight tenancy divisions, which was the one that later supported the Chirnside Stand, and a building of five divisions as the beginning of the Cliff Stand. The Postmaster General's Department was one of the first tenants. Other work at the ground in time for the 1912 Show included a new refreshment buffet, 'in the heart of the Machinery Court', on the Lennon Avenue area on which a marquee had stood in 1911; a large number of seats around the grounds; the channelling and forming of roads and asphaltting of paths; the extension of sewerage mains; provision of enclosures at stock entrance gates to the arena; two large sheds for horses assembled for arena events, and a covered space for sheep judging. A miscellaneous exhibit court, parallel with and close to the Nyora Street boundary, was cleared in order to form a street that would serve as an extension to McGregor Street across Plummer Avenue; this became McGregor Street North. By the end of 1912 the aggregate cost of improvements rose to £82,096 0s 5d.

In 1913, the dog exhibiting community welcomed a new Dog Pavilion for that year's Show. It was situated on the Epsom Road frontage in the eastern Grant block, added to the Showgrounds by courtesy of the VRC in 1911.

On the railway boundary of the same area 'an artistic and comfortable' residence was built, after the Society had decided that it was advisable to have its secretary-manager living on the Showgrounds. Its first occupant was Mr Henry Schwieger. Also in this year,





*A view of the Showgrounds in 1888 from Epsom Road with entrance gates at eastern boundary of 1882 Crown Grant line.*

A feature of the development that followed the grounds expansion of 1909 was the systematic identification of streets and avenues by names in commemoration of men who had given, or who were giving, notable service to the Society. This system was applied throughout the Showgrounds, but the foundation site for the new system was the new land added in 1909 and the VRC land added in 1911. The 'streets' extended from north to south parallel with Epsom Road, and the 'avenues' followed an east-west line.

*Watching a cattle parade at the 1909 Royal Show, showing 1886 Grandstand and buildings in Plummer Avenue.*





*Destruction of Grandstand—Hall and Commercial Stands—1914.*

1920 (No. 3) and 1923 (Horse Pavilion), the cattle pavilion became No. 2 Cattle Pavilion, and the horse pavilion, No. 1 Horse. The cattle pavilion spread over a site of a section of the old cattle stalls that extended about three-quarters of the length of the northern boundary. The horse pavilion – to which the heavy horses were allotted – was length-wise parallel with the northern boundary.

During the first half of 1915 the Society had been busy with a building programme that not only continued that of 1914, but embraced the replacements of the grandstand and pavilion lost in the 1914 fire. The new public grandstand, with a seating capacity of 2,600 cost £11,664, and the new Industrial Hall, later to become the Agricultural Hall and then the Hall of Commerce, cost £3,279; its first use was as a military hospital. A further new cattle pavilion (No. 1), which occupied the site of two former parallel cattle sheds, cost £5,227, and made provision for 309 head of cattle. Its inner wall flanked McNab Street for about 280 feet, and it was about eighty feet wide. (A pencilled note on a document in the Society's archives attributed to the Metropolitan Board of Works an opinion that No. 1 Cattle Pavilion had encroached ten feet on the western roadside of Watson Terrace. The suggestion, however, does not appear to have become an issue.)



further progress was reported with the ramp building plan, sheep accommodation was increased, both refreshment room groups were sewered, and alterations made for the convenience of the caterers.

By 1914 the Society had spent a total of £100,450 18s on improvements to the Showgrounds, and the grounds had never been in better condition for a Show; notwithstanding the long drought conditions, the entries hit a record. However, prior to the opening of the Show that year, war was declared in Europe.

*The Great Fire of Show Town.* Except for a gusty wind that stirred up some dust, the 1914 Show had been greeted by fine weather when, on the second day a serious outbreak of fire upset proceedings and caused serious damage. The main grandstand, built in 1886, the Industrial Hall in Lennon Avenue on the railway boundary, and twelve commercial stands were destroyed. And apart from those buildings totally destroyed, damage and stock losses were suffered at many more exhibiting places as sparks and embers were driven by a gusty wind from the north.

The fire was first noticed soon after 4.00 p.m., but during the luncheon period an apparently small outbreak had been noticed and dealt with in the ceiling of a section of the refreshment rooms below the grandstand, and at the 'smokers' section of the stand itself. The caterer, in one instance, and some arena spectators in the other, said a small outbreak in the ceiling and the wisp of smoke between the boards in the stand had been quickly dealt with by a fireman on routine watching duty at the time.

In the afternoon dense clouds of smoke rose from the grandstand – in which about 300 spectators were seated – for at least ten minutes before the flames burst through the smoke. But, it was said, a fireman crawling along between the diningroom ceiling and the stand floor, had discovered and reported the fire well alight. The smoke had helped to clear the crowds from Plummer Avenue, which was fortunate as the fire spread to other buildings in the vicinity. A force of about fifty firemen fought the blaze, and there was some later controversy regarding the water supply. In a preliminary report the RASV Secretary, stated that the time at which the small fire in the grandstand had been noticed and immediately subdued by the fireman on duty was 1.00 p.m. He fixed ten minutes past four as the time at which the smoke began to issue from between the ceiling of the refreshment room and the grandstand.

The grandstand clock, a big timepiece with a long pendulum encased in glass below it, remained on duty ticking off the minutes until the stand collapsed. A press paragraph next morning described how efforts to get it down amid fire and smoke had failed; how a group of spectators wagered whether it would still be 'going', chronologically speaking, when it 'went' into the debris below, and if it could hold out until 5.00 p.m.:

'On it ticked, registering the minutes faithfully. Men held watches comparing progress. Five o'clock came and there was a cheer from the onlookers. It seemed the clock must stop within a few seconds. But no, its big hands jumped from minute to minute until at nine minutes past the hour the whole stand collapsed carrying the clock with it.'

During 1914 the Society spent over £10,800 on new buildings, which included the first two brick pavilions for stock, horses and cattle. The cattle pavilion was erected in the north-west corner of the then Showgrounds on Langs Road, and the horse pavilion at the eastern end of the northern boundary. The cattle pavilion, 320 by 75 feet, cost £4,770, and the horse pavilion, 250 by 80 feet, £4,300. With the further construction of

Clarke Avenue, Degrares and Skene Streets, was accomplished within the last four months before the opening of the 1916 Show. It was a late decision, taking into consideration that the Defence Department, during the 1915 control of the grounds, had used the old buildings for hospital purposes. The cost of replacing the Royal Luncheon Rooms was £8,438. The Railways Department also increased the number of banks of gates at the Show platform from two to six, on the boundary between the southern ends of Degrares and McGregor Streets. The Chirnside Stand was roofed over before the 1916 Show, and up to this time the Society had expended the amount of £111,250 18s 5d on Showgrounds improvements.

*No. 1 Cattle Pavilion, erected 1915.*

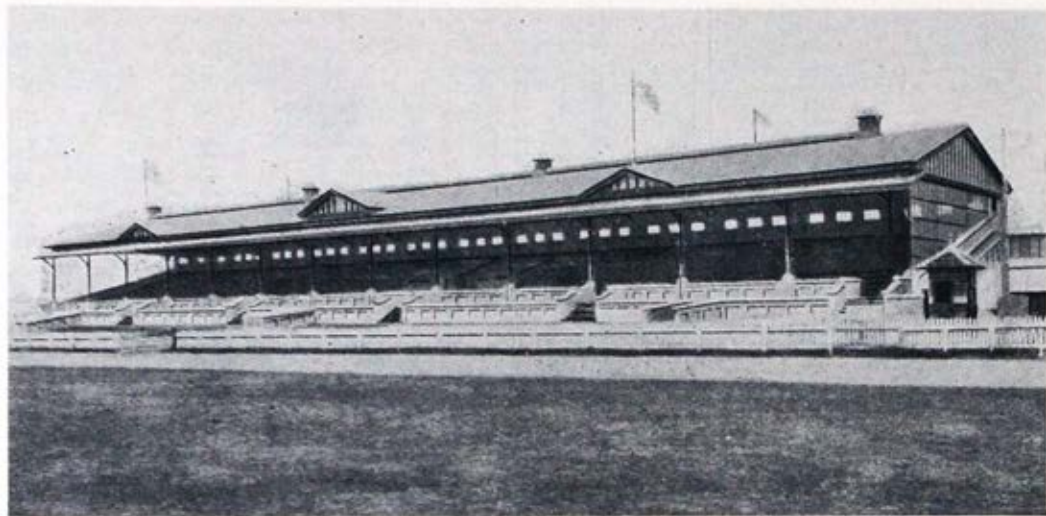


1916-26. A change in exhibiting arrangements came about with the new Agricultural Hall, into which was moved the district exhibits and farm and dairy produce from the 1904 hall. The trade exhibits which had been displayed in the burnt-out pavilion were moved to the 1904 hall, renamed the Industrial Hall. The Royal Luncheon Rooms were completed before the 1916 Show, and after the Show the old building near the eastern turn of the arena, where the Department of Agriculture displays had been housed for a number of years, was demolished.

The building feature of the year 1918 was the new Government Pavilion, erected on about two-thirds of an acre on the Epsom Road triangle between the Showgrounds' Merrett Avenue and the railway. This impressive building cost £10,356 16s 10d and was officially opened on the Thursday holiday of the 1918 Show by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Arthur Stanley.

While the south-eastern triangle gained the Government Pavilion, it lost the side shows, which had operated on the old VRC land since 1911. These were moved to the opposite boundary of the grounds along the railway fence parallel with the southern end



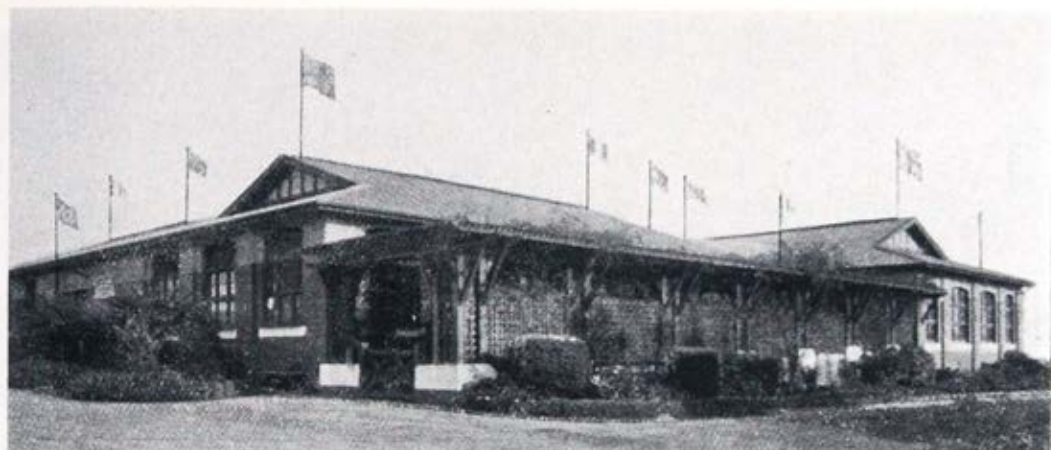


*Main Grandstand, erected 1915.*

The new section of the Pig Pavilion extended across the western limit of the 1903 'bulge' south of Watson Terrace, while doubling its length to about 280 feet. The building of the Royal Luncheon Rooms in the area bounded by Plummer Avenue,

*Agricultural Hall, erected 1915.*





*Royal Luncheon Rooms, erected 1916.*

Cattle Pavilion in 1920 represented the last work undertaken in the plan for which the Government lent £50,000. The pavilion, which cost £8,991, spread over 327 by 100 feet, covered the site of two parallel sheds along the northern (Langs Road) boundary on one side, and McCaw Avenue on the other, while absorbing the site of Wilson Avenue. With a capacity to house 200 head of cattle, the new pavilion was described as the largest of its kind so far erected in the Commonwealth.

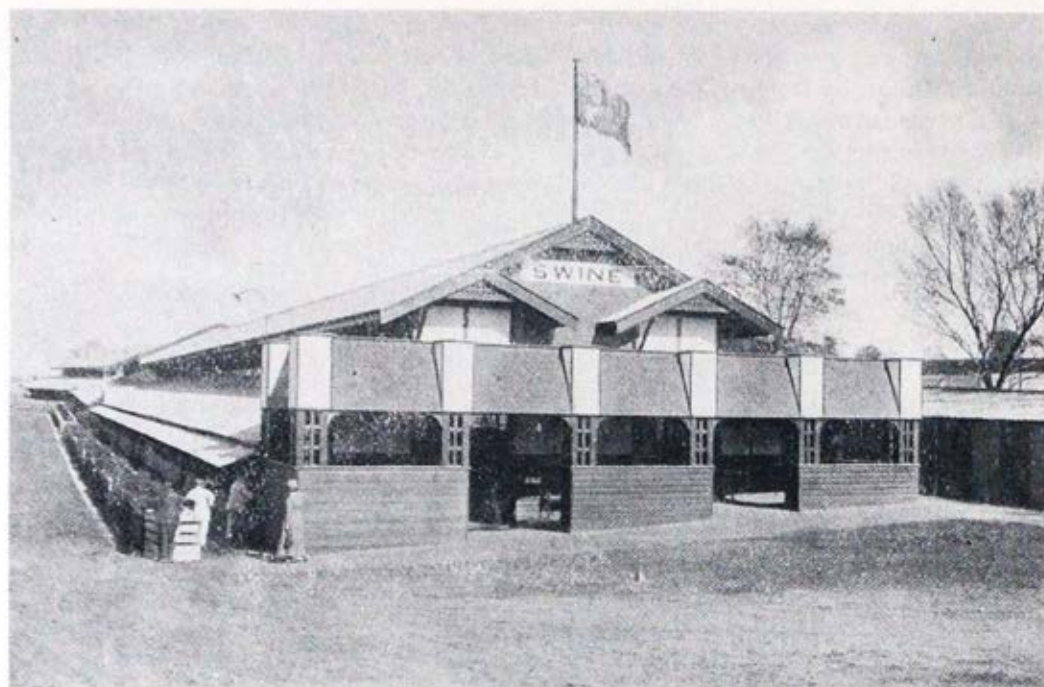
Other work included the construction of the Alfresco tearooms, of lattice design and situated in Degraives Street east of the present Arts and Crafts Pavilion. The Cliff Stand was roofed over, and a large picnic area was established near the Government Pavilion. The model of the Showgrounds made its debut near the intersection of Degraives Street and Plummer Avenue.

Sales of exhibits at the 1920 Show included an aeroplane. Its presence in the agricultural machinery section was a sequel to a dispute between the Society and machinery exhibitors over an increase in stand rental. When the exhibitors notified the Society that they would not show in 1920, the Society let the space to a number of car and electrical appliance people, and the Larkin-Sopwith organisation. The new tenants were permitted to place their signs over those of the permanent tenants but not to deface or remove those signs. However, in 1922 the breach had healed between the Society and the machinery exhibitors, and they returned to the Showgrounds in such numbers that the Society found difficulty in supplying the necessary space.

Outside the Show area in 1921, but owned by the Society, were about four acres fronting Epsom Road on the Langs Road side of the Grand National Avenue; this vacant land was used by the Society as the first RASV car park for patrons attending the Jubilee Show.

In time for the 1922 Show a new set of turnstiles in a brick shelter was opened on Epsom Road, giving access to Merrett Avenue near the Government and Dog Pavilions. Arena viewing facilities were improved by the addition of a fourth stand on the ramp.





*The Swine Pavilion from the Society's Pictorial Souvenir booklet of 1921.*

of Lennon Avenue, where the Society created a new Amusement Park. Other improvements for this year included a third section to the elongated Pig Pavilion, extensions to the Ladies' Room (the roof was converted into a grandstand) and a special stock railway siding at the Flemington Racecourse siding.

Major building activity in 1919 was the new Poultry Pavilion 240 feet by 100 feet, situated between the railway and Watson Terrace. It remained a poultry house until 1956, and in 1959 it became part of the huge Meaklim Sheep Pavilion. Preparations for this new pavilion, and a new lead into it from the railway siding, had commenced after the 1918 Show. The old second class platform of the Racecourse Station had been cut out of the hillside, and the RASV received permission from the Railways Department to widen the platform by forty-three feet, and so form a roadway into the western end of the Showgrounds to assist the entry of stock from the railway. About 7,800 cubic feet of solid earth removed from the hill was used in reclamation work within the Showgrounds in the vicinity of the sheep sheds. And while the new entrance immediately served the needs of the stock movements, it was not until 1960 that admission of the Show public to the VRC car park was accomplished.

The main outlay for the year 1919, was the new Poultry Pavilion which cost £5,634, built by day labour under the supervision of the Society's staff. The building of No. 3



*Government Pavilion, erected 1918.*

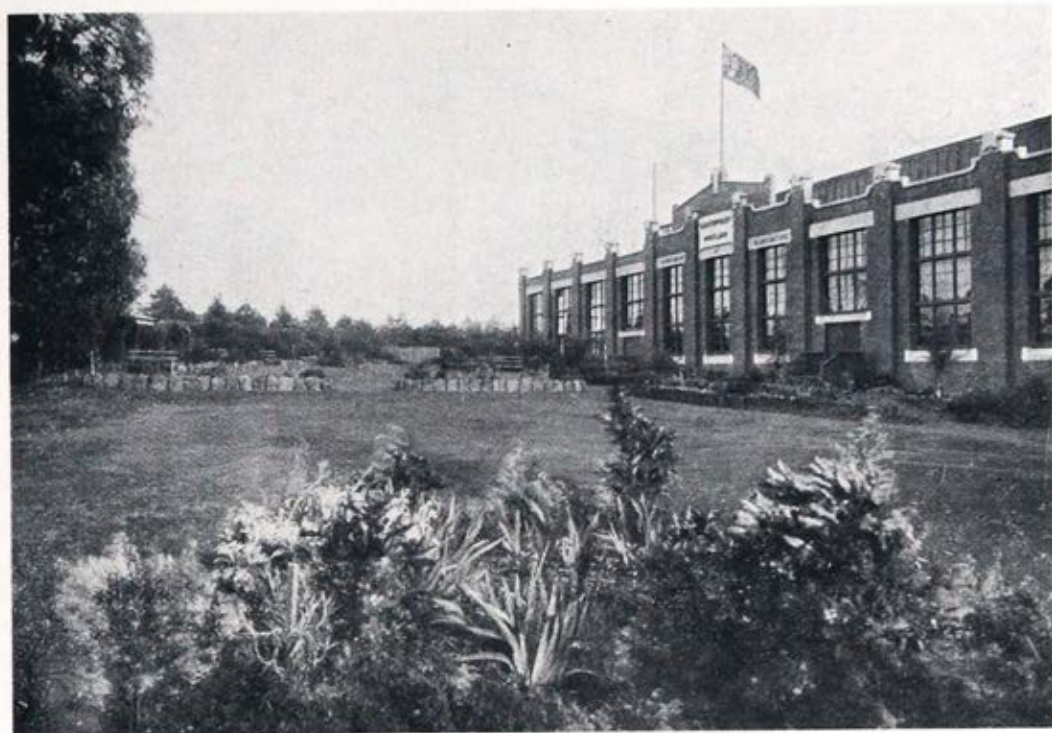
This building was the Gibsonia Stand built by Foy and Gibson, and erected on the site that had been occupied up to 1917 by the Department of Agriculture. The display windows of the new ramp building faced out on to the plateau formed by the eastern turn of the arena perimeter.

Before the 1923 Show the central gates and clock tower had been demolished, and also the turnstiles shelter, and with Nyora Street now incorporated in the Showgrounds, the Society erected a temporary fence along the 1923 line of contact between the inside and outside avenues.

Public turnstiles entrance from Epsom Road was via the 1922 gates near the railway boundary and the 1923 gates on the other side of the central avenues. The north-south thoroughfares of Peck Street and McGregor Street were the main access streets between the two Epsom Road wings of the enclosed area, about 350 feet from the Epsom Road frontage.

Impressive, substantial buildings heralded the 1923 expansion. And in this year, the Society expended just on £48,000. The 120-foot wide Horse Pavilion extending along the northern boundary of Langs Road for 345 feet, was referred to on its completion as the most suitable building for its purpose in the Commonwealth. The Hall of Manufactures, 310 feet by 70 feet, proved a great boon for one hundred exhibiting standholders. The



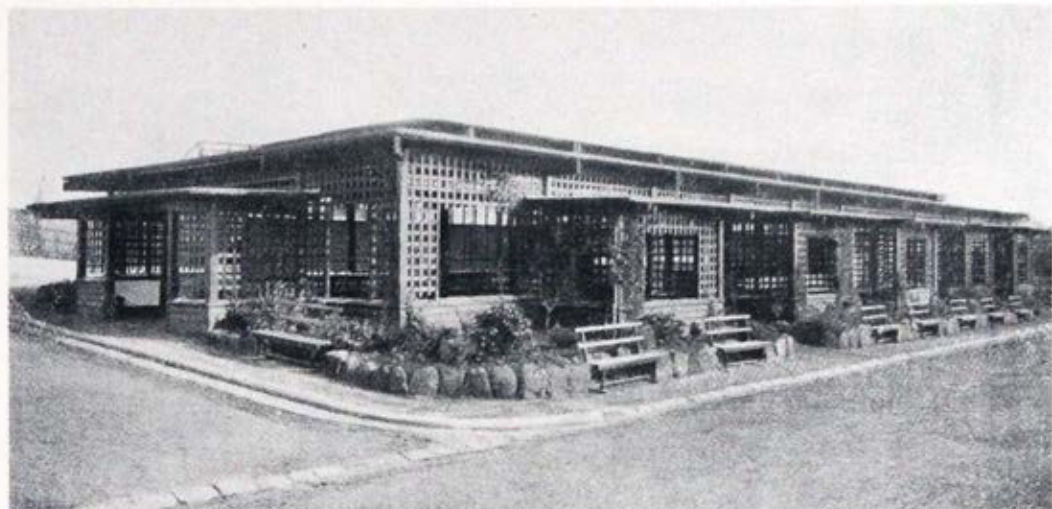


*Picnic Grounds at rear of Government Pavilion.*

pavilion and hall were situated parallel about 260 feet apart, both extending to Peck Street from about ten feet inside the Show's front fence. The Hall of Manufactures was provided with a street front door, the idea being that the hall might be let between Shows for entertainments such as movie picture shows. In brick with cement facings, the new turnstiles house with ticket and change boxes led from Epsom Road into the Showgrounds' Brisbane Avenue in close proximity to the new Hall of Manufactures.

Over on the arena perimeter, the Jubilee Members' Stand, erected by public subscription to commemorate the National Society's half-century in 1921, was open for members. And adjacent to the new Horse Pavilion was built a spacious shelter for horse vehicles.

In 1924, for the first time, the Showgrounds areas occupied an uninterrupted frontage to Epsom Road. With the demolition of the old Grand National Tower Hotel, purchased by the Society in 1920, the block of land on the north-west corner of Epsom Road and Grand National Avenue became part of the Showgrounds. This, with the extension of Plummer Avenue over the last section of the Grand National Avenue approach to Epsom Road, completely enclosed the whole eastern area within the Showgrounds. Across the new end of Plummer Avenue, ornamental central gates were erected at a cost of £175.



*Alfresco Tea Room, erected 1920.*

commercial stands were constructed along Peck Street, Pearson and Brisbane Avenues, in addition to those now occupying the new Hall of Manufactures.

Although the Society's building programme had, of necessity, slowed down after the big improvements of 1923, necessary maintenance work was carried out over the 1925–26 period. However, for the crowds familiar with the trip to the Show there were changes in 1925. It was possible for the first time to travel between the city and the grounds by electric tram, instead of having to change at Flemington bridge from the cable service via North Melbourne, and an electric service using Racecourse and Epsom Roads. This was part of a local enterprise that had been started in 1906, and taken over by the Tramways Board in 1923. In 1925 the service on the new through route had its city terminus at the corner of William and Collins Streets.

In Epsom Road the railway crossing had gone. Trains used a bridge over a dip in the roadway to complete a wide subway for road traffic. Further, Epsom Road had been widened under plans to which the RASV had contributed financially and by planning its buildings in the new 1923 area so that the Society's Epsom Road fence could be set back about ten feet.

1927–39. Construction activities in 1927 included enlarging the long-established tea-rooms near the intersection of McNab Street and Plummer Avenue; improvements to the luncheon rooms under the main public grandstand, and providing new kiosks around the grounds. A spectacular transformation of the administrative area and its immediate environs took place in 1928. The old and straggling weatherboard buildings and the small store-yard, which had changed little from the 1883 beginnings at Ascot Vale, were replaced with a white two-storey building of architectural design. Costing £20,200, the new building was bounded by Plummer and Macfarlane Avenues, and Degraes and Skene Streets. From the original block several comparatively modern





*Poultry Pavilion.*

In the area vacated by the hotel and stables, motor car and machinery firms constructed stands. On the northern side of the old hotel property, a new Pearson Avenue was created, which ran from Gibb Street to Peck Street. Further, the old drill hall now became available to the Society, and here the Women's Industries were displayed. Many

*No. 3 Cattle Pavilion, erected 1920.*





*Superintendents' and Veterinary Surgeon's offices, erected 1919.*

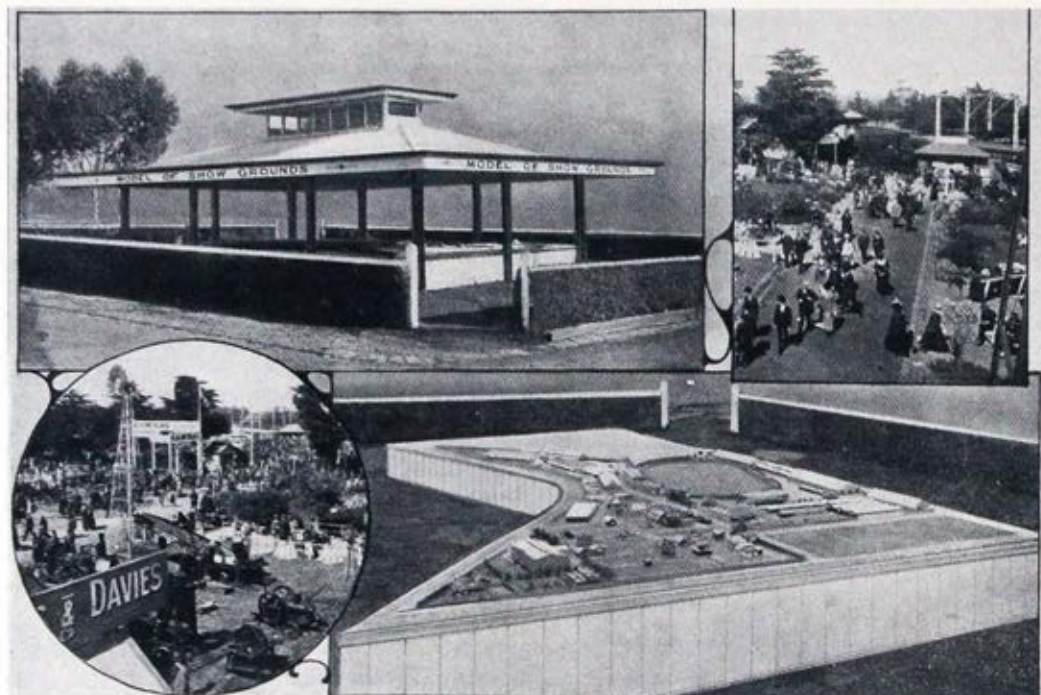
number of bicycle sprockets and chains, a leather clutch, and a worked-out cream separator. It remained on view until shortly after the Second World War, and was set up again in 1965, this time in Centenary Hall, but went out of commission again after the 1967 Show because of problems with the supply of the correct variety of plants for the floral face.

A change in the system of disposing of milk from the cattle sheds must have disappointed a section of the youngsters living close to the Showgrounds in 1931. Up to that time it had been the custom for the milk to be given away, and boys would collect the free milk in an informal kind of milk pail parade. But when departmental regulations were introduced preventing this practice, the Society arranged with a milk firm to purchase the milk on a butter fat basis, and to implement this the Society erected a small dairy building.

Other works completed in 1931 included a new turnstile entrance in Langs Road near the intersection of Leonard Crescent and Watson Terrace; an up-to-date system of amplifiers in the centre of the arena; the Cumming Stand was partially re-covered, and improvements were made to the members' car park and Dog Pavilion.

During 1933 the RASV had been in consultation with the Essendon City Council concerning a proposed expansion of the Showgrounds over freehold land owned by the Society west of the Crown Grant boundary. And at the April meeting of Council it was stated that the new works proposed would cost £18,000. In May it was announced that





*Model of the Show Grounds. (Scale: 1 inch = 8 feet.)*

buildings, such as the cloak room and ladies' room, were removed from Macfarlane Avenue to positions opposite on land between McGregor and Skene Streets, and a new creche was erected alongside the cloak room. These buildings are all still in use on this site.

The pressing need for more accommodation for the sheep entries – which had been relieved for two years by the use of the Pig Pavilion, vacated owing to an outbreak of swine fever – was met in time for the 1929 Royal Show. The new pavilion was a two-level design in red brick on a concrete base, and was equipped with pipe railings and metal mesh pens, at a cost of £10,088.

The arena had a new result board of steel on concrete foundations, replacing the board erected in 1909, which was wrecked during a storm at the 1928 Show. An underground water supply system was installed in the arena for the use of sprinklers.

In 1930, work included alterations to the Agricultural Hall and to the Dog Pavilion where a puppy creche was built. A novelty in association with the horticultural displays around the grounds in 1930, was the floral clock, that made its appearance near the busy intersection of Plummer Avenue and Degraes Street near the model of the grounds.

The assembly of the mechanism of the clock, which was approximately twenty feet in diameter, was the work of the RASV plumber at the time, Mr Jack Carlton. It consisted almost entirely of scraps of many kinds – a small electric motor, an old steel grader, a



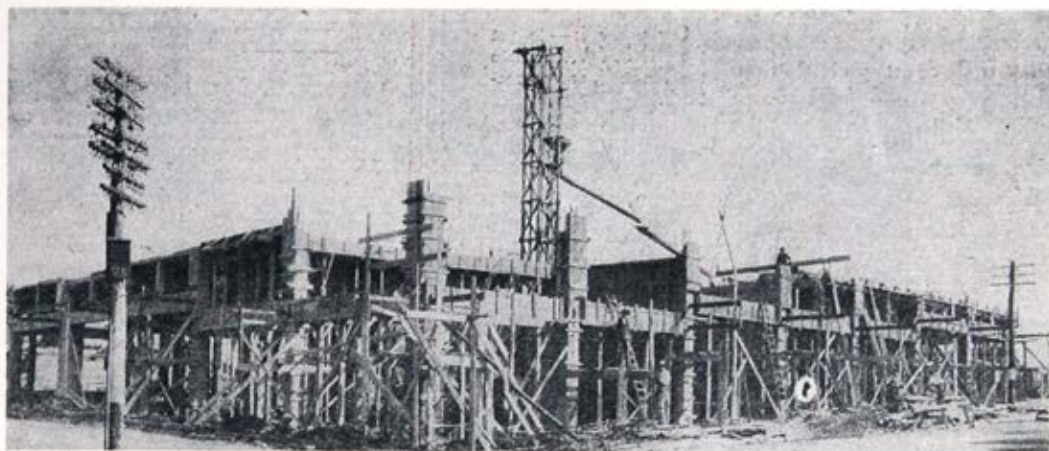
*The Department of Agriculture building pre 1917 Royal Show (from the Information Branch, Department of Agriculture).*

Mr A. M. Nicholas would donate the cost of the new Jersey Pavilion and facilities for judging that breed. This donation amounted to £8,000. In addition to the new Nicholas Jersey Pavilion, Council approved the building of Centenary Hall to accommodate the district exhibits and farm and dairy produce, which would be moved from the Agricultural Hall, thus making that hall available for commercial stands. The Centenary Hall was built at a cost of £6,600. In the same year, additional space for fat cattle was built at a cost of £2,000; two hundred new horse boxes were erected adjacent to No. 1 Horse Pavilion; there were further alterations to the old Carriage Pavilion to allow for the big increase in fat sheep, and the 'villa' was converted into a camp for Young Farmers from Victoria and interstate. This old homestead was to serve the Young Farmers as a camp up until the Second World War.

In 1935 construction began on Watson Terrace, and this new sixty-foot-wide thoroughfare was at last within the confines of the Showgrounds. A large section of the much used old Carriage Pavilion was converted into a rest room, and fitted up with comfortable seating in a garden setting.

There were no major construction works carried out during 1936, but additional floral displays improved the general appearance of the grounds. In this year the Nursery





*Administration Block under construction in 1928 (from a newspaper photograph).*

and Seedsmen's Association was delegated supervision of the horticultural displays now housed in the old 1904 brick pavilion.

On the site at the junction of Lennon and Brunton Avenues, where a refreshment room had been in operation since 1912, the Country Women's Association – moved

*The completed Administration Block, opened in 1928.*



the height of the floodlight towers, independent lighting was provided. The first night show was an outstanding success and just as Council began to appreciate the significance of the extension of the Show into night periods, the European crisis flared up and time was cut short.

The 1939 works programme was confined to general maintenance and the construction of a concrete stand with a spectator capacity of 2,000, near the result board and the competitors' entrance to the arena. The new stand had a dual purpose in that it relieved the congestion around the arena entrance, and provided room for horses awaiting their contests in the arena.

Inside the turnstiles at the junction of Langs Road and Leonard Crescent, on the right, was erected a model dairy donated by a cement company, which took the place of the old milk shed erected in 1931.

Shortly after the 1939 Royal Show the whole of the Showgrounds was taken over by the Defence Department, and as events turned out, the 1939 Show was to be the last for an interval of seven years.

1940-46. The RAAF, during its occupation of the grounds, expended large amounts of money in adapting different buildings to its requirements, and also by providing additional facilities for the thousands of men and women stationed on the Showgrounds over the Second World War period.

Two special areas of note were the housing areas, one in the east and one in the west. These were taken over by the housing authorities after the war and did not revert to the Society until the mid-1950s. The building up on the land following the Second World War has been, if anything, greater than that recorded herein, but rather than duplicate this matter, more detail has been given in the history from this point on.

The area of historical interest as regards the build up on the land at Ascot Vale was the first sixty years of occupation of the site. The frustrations of those periods covering the opening up of the land east of the Grant line to Epsom Road, and later in the western (Bagotville) area, must surely have tried the patience of the Council and administration of those days. Such conditions could not be repeated on the present Showgrounds site, for all the Society's property for exhibition purposes has been fully enclosed since 1962.

#### WARTIME SECTIONAL EFFORTS

Faced with the loss of the Showgrounds for the duration of the War, the Council had to determine how best to continue the national work of the Society. Without unlimited capital there was no possibility of holding a Royal Show, and sectional efforts would have to be relied on to maintain, as far as possible, the Society's connection with its supporters. The Society therefore organised a show of dogs, poultry and other sections at the Exhibition Building in 1940, and followed this up with a light horse show at Moonee Valley Racecourse early in December 1940. Clydesdales were shown in conjunction with Campbell & Sons' annual horse parade and sale, and bacon and pork carcass competitions were conducted at the city abattoirs. Many of the breed societies over this period fostered entries in country agricultural shows.

In 1941 much the same pattern was followed, with horse events at Moonee Valley Racecourse; bacon and pork carcass competitions at the abattoirs; championship dog show at Luna Park; poultry, pigeons and caged birds were shown in the Doric Hall, South



TROUBLE ON WATERFRONT GROWS MORE MENACING — Page 3


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## Free Milk From Prize Cows At The Show



THE BATTLE OF THE MILKING PAIL TOLD THE YOUNGSTERS TO FALL IN FOR THE TIN-CAN PARADE at the Showgrounds yesterday. Hundreds found it worth while, because the milkmen, one of whom with the regular markets, shed the cans free. Many households in Flemington and district enjoyed milk from prize cows in their tea. The Royal Agricultural Society's stage is set, and today the doors will open to admit an audience from far and near to what is likely to be a record show.

*The 'Milkman' is Mr Jack Buchanan, now a Life Councillor of the R.A.S.V.*

from Plummer Avenue — was granted tenancy of a rest room free of rent for as long as the Association cared to occupy it. This action, according to Secretary Monod, was a gesture of the Society in recognition of the fine work performed by the Country Women's Association.

The constructional feature of 1937 was the installation of facilities for flood-lighting the arena and illuminating the grounds for night shows. The arena was illuminated from five steel lattice towers, 110 feet high, and over the trotting track but well below

hundred persons, representing all the interests in trotting, had made a strong plea for the Society to establish night trotting.

Representations were made to the Government, but shortly afterwards it was voted out of office, so no action was taken until after the new Government was elected. In the meantime, trotting enthusiasts formed a new body known as the Metropolitan and Country Trotting Association of Victoria, which campaigned to have night trotting established at the Showgrounds.

Correspondence urging the Society to take control and clean up trotting in Victoria, was received from all trotting enthusiasts, including the North Western District Trotting Club; the trotting clubs of Ballarat, Colac, Geelong and Shepparton; the council of the Chamber of Agriculture; the Goulburn Valley and Wimmera Agricultural Societies' Associations, and numerous agricultural societies throughout the State. In all cases the correspondence revealed that the Chief Secretary had been notified of the respective endorsements.

### THE BIG SHOW AND MANY PROBLEMS

In accordance with the original arrangements, the RAAF progressively made portions of the grounds available until eventually, with the exception of two relatively small areas, the amusement area and the Young Farmers' Camp area, the whole reverted to the Society's control. Those areas retained had buildings on them, which the Minister of Housing reserved for use in relieving the housing shortage. Month by month the grounds were changed back to provide for the Royal Show.

The Council was tested in many ways during this period with shortages of labour and materials; coal shortages; strikes, and threats of strikes affecting the transport of patrons and stock; electricity restrictions; catering problems caused by food rationing, and most of all by a shortage of time. As if these troubles were not enough, there was also a threat to conduct a special race meeting in the metropolitan area on the Show Day holiday. But after a strong protest by the Society, State Cabinet came to the rescue, and refused permission for the race meeting to be held, and went further by agreeing to 'protect the Society against the possibility of such competition in future years'. The first post-war Royal Show was held from 19-27 September, and created an all-time attendance record of 652,666 - more than fifty per cent greater than the previous record, and one which was not bettered for many years. The entries were 13,752, which although 770 below the record of 1939, was still a remarkable achievement by the exhibitors, considering the long period of inactivity, and the shortages of services and commodities.

Goodwill towards the Society was shown from all sections of the community. The Government lifted all restrictions on electricity supplies, thus enabling the arena events to be conducted at night; excellent displays were mounted by Government and semi-Government departments; new and renovated stands were prepared by business firms, and the Australian Broadcasting Commission established a fully equipped studio on the Showgrounds. In every way the 1946 Royal Show was a memorable one, and fully justified the decision of the Council not to wait the extra year before resuming normal activities.



Melbourne, and a special stud ram show and sale at Newmarket saleyards. Besides the shows mentioned, the Society was also active in supporting the Fodder Conservation Competition and the long-running Wheat Crop Championships. Proceeds from all of the sectional shows and competitions were donated to various patriotic funds.

By 1942 the Society, although willing, was unable to carry out similar activities. The shortage of labour and restrictions on transport created too many difficulties and furthermore, the same restrictions virtually eliminated meetings of breed societies' committees. Some societies appointed small committees to carry on, which put a much greater strain on their executive officers. The different societies and organisations within the sphere of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, turned more and more to assisting the war effort. One example was the Young Farmers' organisation, which produced enormous quantities of fresh vegetables and sold the produce, with proceeds going to augment war funds. No fewer than sixty clubs conducted experiments to determine the suitability of their district for flax growing, and assistance was given to manpower authorities to locate senior girls and young women, who, having been Young Farmers, were well fitted to act as supervisors and group leaders for the Women's Land Army. This organisation also made investigations into ways and means of giving post-war assistance to returned soldier ex-Young Farmers.

The years 1943 and 1944 saw the activities of the Society focused on fodder conservation, and similar ways of increasing production in every field of primary industry. The Society's staff, although depleted by enlistments, continued to carry out the secretarial and administrative work for the various bodies, and still take on further responsibilities, as in 1944 when Council resolved to establish a RASV Light Horse Control Council. Over the same period the Kennel Control Council managed combined clubs' shows, and the proceeds from these, which amounted to many hundreds of pounds, were donated to the different patriotic funds.

Late in the year 1944, the Council made representations to the Minister for Air, asking for advice on a proposed date when the grounds could be returned to the Society, without detriment to the war effort. In August 1945 the Minister for Air notified the Council, that the Showgrounds would be returned to the Society by the end of February 1946; if possible, sections of the grounds would be returned prior to that date. In fact the first portion of the Showgrounds was returned on 1 December 1945.

With the Minister's assurance, the Council resolved to announce that a Royal Show would be held in 1946, the extent of which would depend upon the amount of rehabilitation work which could be carried out with the limited labour force and scarcity of materials.

## CONTROL OF TROTTING

A matter of considerable importance to the Society, in so far as revenue from the use of the Showgrounds between Shows was concerned, was the decision of Council, after a keen debate at the September meeting in 1945, to accept control of trotting in Victoria, if the Government made the necessary alterations to the then existing legislation, to enable the Society to implement that control, and also to conduct trotting races at the Showgrounds at night. A meeting which had been attended by approximately two



*The Royal Showgrounds 1946 Royal Show.*



In the RASV Annual Report for 1946 the President made these comments concerning development:

Mention should be made here of the fact that your Council will authorise no work of a permanent nature unless and until it is convinced that it accords with a comprehensive plan of development which is now receiving close consideration in readiness for the time when, materials being available, it will be possible to commence operations.

Also in this report, mention was made that all stud stock breeders' societies were considering the subject of artificial insemination, and in fact a number had already adopted regulations governing the registration of stock bred in this way.

The Society had twenty-three organisations under its administrative control in 1946. As a result of continued activities by trotting interests, mainly the Metropolitan and Country Trotting Association and A. G. Hunter, representing the Society, the Government introduced a Bill to Parliament establishing the Trotting Races Act 1946. At its meeting in January 1947, the Council in accordance with the Act nominated the senior Vice-President, A. G. Hunter, Judge Norman Mitchell and the Society's secretary, Louis Monod, to represent the Society on the new Trotting Control Board. The MCTA nominated R. C. Freeman, and the Government nominee was L. L. Chapman, Under-Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department. The inaugural meeting of the Board was held in the RASV Council Room on 5 March 1947, and was chaired by the Chief Secretary, Hon. W. Slater MLA. At this meeting A. G. Hunter was unanimously elected Chairman of the Trotting Control Board.

Before trotting could get under way, the Society had much work to do. The track was widened to forty-five feet, improvements were made to the existing lighting, two tubular steel stands were erected, and improvements were made to existing stands. The first night trotting meeting under the new Board was conducted on the Showgrounds on 15 November 1947, and the full proceeds were donated to the Lord Mayor's Food for Britain Appeal. In the first season the Board conducted six meetings on the Showgrounds, and although some were affected by weather and counter attractions, the sixth meeting held on 27 December attracted over 25,000 patrons.

#### PRESIDENT STEPS DOWN

At the 1947 Annual Meeting in March the President, Sir Charles Merrett, did not seek nomination, and so ended the longest period in office by a President of the Society. Sir Charles was elected to the office in 1915, and continued an unbroken term of thirty-two years. He had a close association with farm machinery and equipment manufacturing, and he was able to hold the interest of this industry with regard to displays and demonstrations at the Royal Melbourne Shows. He was succeeded as President by the senior Vice-President, C. N. McKay.

Practically every Show conducted by the Society had been outstanding in some respect, and the 1947 Royal Show which was held from 18-26 September, was no exception. The overall entries reached 18,071, almost 3,200 more than the previous record established in the Centenary Show of 1934. The big increase in the main stock sections presented the Council with its greatest challenge so far, and it was only by an appeal to the exhibitors to reduce their teams, that a chaotic situation was averted.

The 1949 Royal Show, held from 22 September to 1 October, proved very disappointing to the Council as regards attendance. With entries numbering 19,141, restrictions had again to be imposed on horses and cattle. The Programme and Arena Control Committee prepared one of the most entertaining programmes ever produced, and all was in readiness for what promised to be an exceptional show. However, just before the opening day, an official announcement, following reports of the spread of poliomyelitis, urged parents on no account to permit children to attend the Show, and also discouraged the flow of visitors from different parts of the State to the metropolitan area. The adverse influence of this announcement cut the total attendance to 306,881, more than 240,000 below that of 1948.

An innovation at the 1949 Show was the shearing contests which were arranged to draw attention to the shortage of competent shearers. Also, in order to gauge acceptance or otherwise to Show patrons, the Council arranged two demonstrations of buckjump riding during the Show, and these were so well received that it was agreed to continue them in the following year.

#### THE ROYAL MELBOURNE DIAMOND JUBILEE SHOW

The 1950 Royal Show, which was held from 21-30 September, carried the title 'The Royal Melbourne Diamond Jubilee Show', in order to commemorate the fact that in 1890 the then National Agricultural Society was given permission to use the prefix 'Royal'. The Show was very well supported by the exhibitors and standholders, and was attended by 519,408 persons during the nine days and eight nights. Entries numbered 18,605, which showed a decrease on the previous year of a little over 500. Even so, committees were again given the responsibility of reducing entries.

New features in the arena programme included camp drafting competitions for males and females, with the winners in each being eligible to compete for the Gloucester Cup, which had been presented by HRH the Duke of Gloucester for competition throughout Australia. Fireworks displays were also given. Another first was the Novice Dressage Test.

In 1950 advantage was taken of the revised Constitution and Rules, adopted in late 1949, to appoint as Honorary Councillors the following members who had rendered more than twenty years service on the Council: Messrs J. E. Robertson; J. A. Beattie; R. N. Scott and J. F. Guthrie. These vacancies were filled by the election of Dr Frank Stephens, Geoffrey Howell, Kenneth Luke and George Wilson.

#### THE ROYAL MELBOURNE 1951 COMMEMORATION SHOW

This Show, held from 20-29 September 1951, was so named at the express wish of the Government that the Society co-operate in the widespread celebrations to commemorate the centenary of responsible Government in Victoria, the centenary of the discovery of gold in this State, and the Jubilee of the formation of the Commonwealth Government.

The Show was thought to be the best staged by the Society, both from the viewpoint of comprehensiveness, and the quality of the exhibits in all sections. Entries again passed the 19,000 mark (19,130), with an all-time record of 2,491 entries in Home Crafts



All available space had been allocated early in the year, and there was a long waiting list. Although it was not expected that the attendance would match that of the first post-war Show, the total of 585,778 was 165,000 above the pre-war record of 1938.

#### ROYAL MELBOURNE CENTURY SHOW

Bearing in mind that the Society was the successor to the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, which was instituted in 1848, the Council resolved to name the 1948 Show 'The Royal Melbourne Century Show', 'to commemorate one hundred years of service to the primary producers of Australia in general, and Victoria in particular'. To commemorate the occasion, the Council decided to issue engraved medallions to owners of champion animals and successful exhibitors in selected classes.

Following the embarrassing situation with stock entries in the previous year, the Council resolved that quality rather than quantity should be the keynote for the Royal Century Show, and early indications were given of its intention to restrict entries to ensure that only quality stock of a high standard be exhibited. But despite this, the entries numbered 19,263, almost 1,300 more than the previous year. The result was that committees had the task of reducing the horse entries, after examining performances, and the cattle entries were arbitrarily reduced to one entry from any one exhibitor in each class for animals under three years old.

The weather was not particularly kind for the 1948 Show, and reduced attendance to 531,214. Arena events were again very popular, with the highlight being the presentation of the 1812 Overture. This spectacular musical was presented with the co-operation of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and military authorities, with the ABC Symphony Orchestra, Variety Orchestra, and the National Band. The comprehensive display organised by the Australian Wool Board in the Horticultural Hall was a show within the Show, and attracted wide public support.

In 1948 Council acceded to the unanimous request of metropolitan poultry showing societies, and formed a Poultry Control Council. The object of this body was to control poultry showing along similar lines to those which had proved so successful with the Kennel Control Council. A strong committee was appointed from nominations received from various poultry societies, and Harold Bartram, a member of the RASV Council, was elected chairman.

With the object of staging educational displays of meat during Royal Shows, and also for special exhibitions between Shows, the Australian Meat Board decided to co-operate with the Society and install a refrigerated display case. This was situated in Centenary Hall.

#### OLYMPICS

The Olympic Invitation Committee, prior to visiting Rome in April 1948 to meet the World Olympic Council, chose the Showgrounds for development as the Olympic Stadium. The State Government, which had approved of the proposal to use the Showgrounds, had also undertaken to make the necessary financial arrangements to ensure that adequate facilities were provided for the presentation of the games in Melbourne.

officials. The move to the new venue was most satisfactory, and on the opening day of the woodchopping, the entire seating capacity was sold out within an hour of the stadium opening.

For many years the Council had been convinced that rodeo events would prove popular with Show crowds, but due to lack of suitable facilities had not been able to stage them. During 1952 a portable crush was designed and constructed, and proved satisfactory. The events were very popular, and Council decided to proceed with plans to conduct rodeo events at the 1953 Show.

Over the years the outstanding arena event had proved to be the Grand Parade, and in 1952, with the inclusion of all horses for the first time, this event became even more of a spectacle.

For many years the entries in home crafts had been building up, and space for exhibiting became more crowded, so the Council decided to move the horticultural displays to Centenary Hall, and make the Horticulture Hall (now the Arts and Crafts Pavilion) available for the home crafts.

Lack of materials, and indecision over the site for the Olympic Games had prevented the Society from carrying out many permanent improvements since 1946. Early in 1952 the Olympic Games authorities advised that the Showgrounds would not be the venue for the 1956 Games, and Council decided to immediately begin works which had been delayed pending the final decision. To undertake the Society's new works programme which was part of its master plan, the Council advertised nationally for a works manager and finally appointed Alex Drew. At the same time, it wished to show appreciation of the years of effort in the Society's interests by the secretary, Louis Monod, and because his arduous duties had affected his health, Council decided to send him abroad on an extended tour.

#### ANOTHER LAND ACT AND A CORONATION SHOW

A necessary preliminary to the expansion of the Showgrounds over the far western reaches of the Society's land holdings, was the passing of the Essendon Land Act (Amending) in the Spring of 1953. That Act in effect returned to the Society land that, in the terms of the Essendon Land Act of 1934, had been deemed to have been transferred to the care of the Essendon City Council should that Council consider it necessary to construct a new road in exchange for the former municipal unmade street of Watson Terrace that had been taken within the Showgrounds in the terms of the 1934 Act.

The only section of the 1954 revested land that had been previously part of the Showgrounds was that strip about sixty feet wide between the northern wall of the Nicholas Jersey Pavilion and the Leonard Crescent boundary, that the Essendon Council had permitted the Society to use for the 1952 Show. In 1953 lots 65 and 66 had been the first land purchased by the Society along Leonard Crescent since 1926, and when, in time for the 1962 Show, the grounds were extended over lots 68 to 71, the Showgrounds was complete over all the Bagotville Estate allotments that had been available on the original subdivision along the Leonard Crescent front. The aggregate area of lots 68 to 71 was one acre.

The length of the Leonard Crescent frontage over that western half was about 445 feet (including an easement between lots 66 and 67). On the eastern aspect, the frontage



(previously Women's Industries). Unfortunately the weather was bad, and for the whole period of the Show wintry conditions prevailed. This naturally had a bearing on the attendance which was exceptionally good in view of the conditions – 432,935 – but was nevertheless down just on 87,000 on the previous year. The excessive rain caused the cancellation of the evening session on the first Friday, but the events scheduled for that session were catered for before the end of the Show.

Without a doubt the features of the arena programme were the Olympic type of events for equestrians, which were completely new to Australia. These included Olympic jumping and dressage tests.

In February 1951, the chairman of the Organising Committee advised Council that the Australian Olympic Federation had adopted the Society's plan of the proposed stadium and other facilities for the Olympic Games, on the grounds. The Council immediately opened negotiations with the State and Federal Governments regarding the provision of finance to enable the works to be commenced. However, in October the Premier advised that the Federal Government could not provide the necessary funds.

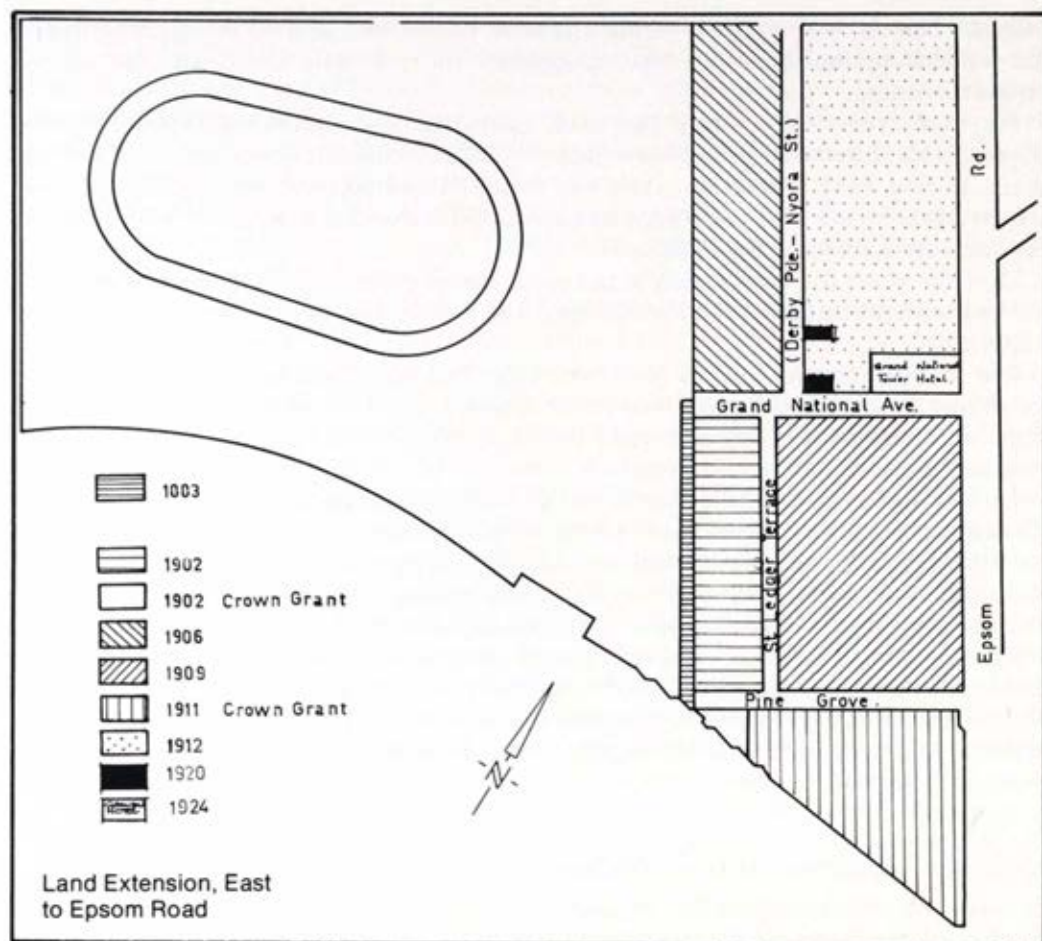
Early in November the President, C. N. McKay, communicated with the Prime Minister, and also made a public statement to the effect that the Society was prepared to modify the plan if required to do so. During these negotiations, ample evidence appeared in the press of a concerted effort to have another ground made available for a section of the Games, but the trustees of that ground had clearly indicated that they would decline the honour.

Under the provisions of the Essendon Land Bill of 1934, as compensation for the closing of Watson Terrace as an Ascot Vale street, the Society was prepared to relinquish a strip of land along the boundary of Leonard Crescent to enable a new street to be laid out, and subsequently constructed, if the Essendon City Council so decided. The Jersey Pavilion was set back a width of slightly over sixty feet from the Society's boundary on Leonard Crescent, and the pavilion's outer wall became the Show's boundary for eighteen years. In 1952, two years before the big expansion of the 1954 Show, the Society was permitted 'by courtesy of the Essendon City Council', to anticipate the passage through State Parliament of the 1953 Essendon Land Act (Amending) Bill, that reverted in the Society the land set aside by the 1934 Watson Terrace legislation. When the Society was able to move its Show boundary to the Leonard Crescent parallel, which it did in 1952, the width of sixty feet behind the Jersey Pavilion was divided by amusements along the inner half, and commercial exhibits on the outer half.

At the 1952 Annual Meeting Mr A. G. Hunter was elected President as Mr C. N. McKay did not seek re-election.

The 1952 Royal Show, held from 18–27 September, was the first post-war Show to re-introduce sideshows, and these added greatly to the success of the Show. Sideshows had been excluded after the war, because the area normally occupied by these was still under the control of the housing authorities in the eastern area of the grounds. The 19,642 entries constituted an all-time record, being 329 more than the previous highest record in 1948. The total attendance for 1952 of 579,075, made it the third largest in the Society's history.

As the Jersey judging ring was not required for sales, after Judging Day it was made into a woodchopping stadium. This move filled a long felt want, as the conducting of these events on the arena was not satisfactory either to the competitors or to the arena

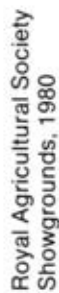


measured 360 feet for six allotments having an area of one acre, one rood and twenty-five perches, bought by the Society in 1926 but not taken into the Show until 1956. Fodder boxes and some horse-stall accommodation was provided on portion of lots 62 and 63 without breaching the legislative provision of the set-aside margin of sixty feet between the boundaries on the Leonard Crescent perimeter.

With the passage of the 1953 reversioning Bill, the Bagotville front of the Showgrounds joined the Leonard Crescent frontage – except in the case of lots, 59, 60 and 61 where were located the three cottages and yard properties that had a combined width of 180 feet. The setting aside of the upper sixty feet had been catered for legislatively, but not physically. Before it could be prepared for inclusion in the Showgrounds the Society itself had to see to the demolition of the buildings on the area.

The practice for years had been to let the cottages. Preparations for a new turnstiles entrance from Leonard Crescent involved an arrangement with a cottage tenant by which a piece of ground was taken in order to install the turnstiles close to the eastern side of lot 62. The space the cottage properties had occupied was eventually taken into the Showgrounds in time for the 1956 Show.







*The International Fleece Competition drew large attendance at the 1954 Royal Show.*

The 1953 Show, which was held from 17–26 September, was named the Coronation Show, as a tribute to the new Queen, Elizabeth the Second. Entries for the Show were an all-time record, reaching 22,329 which was 2,687 more than the previous year's record. The Society had no less than six international judges officiating at the 1953 Coronation Show. Three judged cattle, two horse events, and one dogs. Poor weather marred at least three days of the Show, and this reduced attendances to 572,086. Arena attractions included Olympic jumping, fireworks, massed bands, an Army display and polo. For the first time floats from various country agricultural societies were included in the Grand Parades. A special feature was the wool exhibit, fleeces, and sheep shearing competitions, which were conducted in Centenary Hall.

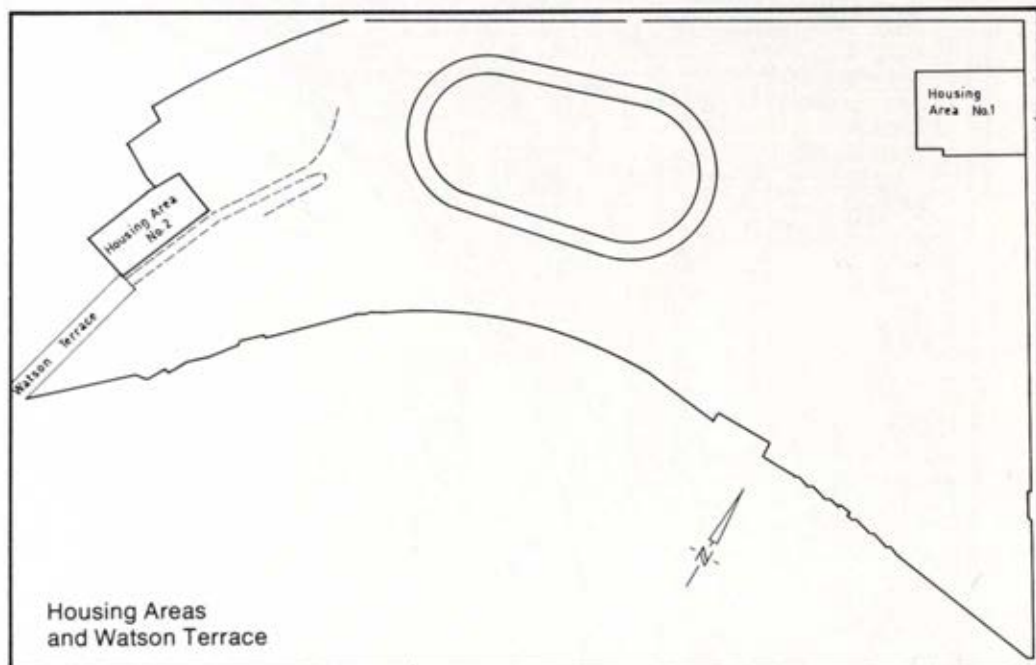
During this year, work was commenced on the demolition of the huts in one of the emergency housing areas, recovered from the State Housing Commission, which had held two areas from 1946–53 inclusive.

#### EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The year 1954 saw the big development programme get under way, with the area of the Showgrounds increased by nearly five acres. This was made possible by the legislation already referred to, along with the return of the areas used for emergency housing.



Officially prepared plans associated with the 1934 and 1953 legislation delineated two blocks of land, about 165 feet by 60 feet, west of the Society's 1962 purchase on Leonard Crescent; these were easement blocks 65 and 66. The Society's acquisitions of 1953-62 numbered seven blocks. But during the debate on the reversioning Bill in 1953, Mr Mibus, MLA, said nine Leonard Crescent property holders were interested in the provision the Bill was making for safe-guarding the rights of owners in regard to easements, sewerage and drainage, abutting reversioned land.



Title Office plans indicated space for two allotments west of the seven bought by the Society between 1953-62. Mr Mibus, while agreeing that the proposed exchange had not been needed, said that the VRC had originally asked for the street. Although this was not confirmed, it may have been thought that the exchange street would reduce the distance from Epsom Road to the Hill area of Flemington Racecourse, with a widened section of Leonard Crescent, when compared with traffic using Langs Road.

Within the expanding Showgrounds on the Bagotville division, Watson Terrace developed a long and winding promenade between the northern and southern sections. On certain race traffic days, other than Showtime, it was the custom to open a stock gate at the intersection of Langs Road and Leonard Crescent and the former opening of Watson Terrace as a Bagotville access street to the Flemington Racecourse. (The Crown Grants and respective Certificates of Title are detailed on map 12 of the Showgrounds. This map also sets out, in diagonal hatching, the area set aside for the proposed exchange street in the Bagotville, western area.)

Prior to the commencement of the 1953 Show the Council suffered a tremendous loss with the sudden death of Mr A. G. Hunter. Mr T. N. Mitchell succeeded him as President.

### DAIRY INDUSTRY DISPLAY

The 1955 Royal Show was conducted from 22 September to 1 October, and again had entries in excess of 22,000. However, adverse weather in the early part of the Show reduced attendances to 648,137, which was 29,324 less than the record created the previous year.

A most popular innovation was the dairy industry display, which incorporated the full scale operations connected with the production of pasteurised bottled milk; the dairy display sandwich bar; a special dairy sample bag stand, and a colourful display of all milk products made in Victoria. Through the new display, homogenised flavoured milk was produced for the first time in Victoria, and more than 30,000 bottles were sold through two special milk bars. In all, more than 65,000 bottles of milk were processed and sold from the new display.

Special arena attractions included a Navy display, which featured a helicopter, and the finish of the Warrnambool to Melbourne cycle race. In this year, the Society introduced a special concession for school children, by admitting parties for half price if the students were accompanied by their teachers. Just on 7,000 children took advantage of this concession.

In 1956 many parts of the State suffered considerably from serious flooding, and it was something of a surprise to receive a total of 21,500 entries, under such conditions. Bad weather again reduced attendances to 588,325, and caused the Council to consider very carefully, as had been the case on many previous occasions, the practicability of altering the time of the Show. To add further to the problems, the President, T. N. Mitchell, suffered a severe set-back in health, and was unable to continue in this position, which was filled by the senior Vice-President, Judge Norman F. Mitchell.

The 1956 Royal Show, was held from 20-29 September, and a number of changes were in evidence. The sheep were moved to the pavilion previously used for poultry, and the poultry exhibits moved to the pavilion previously used for sheep. Accommodation for dairy cattle was still a problem, so it was decided to delete the yearling heifer classes from the schedule. A revision was made of the Fat Lamb Competition, and this proved encouraging with an increase in entries. Much interest was shown in the demonstrations by butchers in Centenary Hall, and an apple packing competition for juniors proved a successful and interesting innovation.

Also in 1956, the day nursery was established, not only as a service to patrons during the Show, but on a year-round basis to accommodate children from areas close to the Showgrounds, under the auspices of the Victorian Association of Day Nurseries.

The new A. G. Hunter Stand was completed in this year, rising from the area of the Jubilee Stand which was constructed by donation in 1923, and demolished to make way for the new structure.

### THE FAMILY TICKET

Council for some years had been occupied with the idea of providing some tangible form of goodwill to the patrons, especially families, which continued year by year to support the Royal Melbourne Show. The goodwill was sought by the introduction of a family admission ticket, permitting the entry of two adults and four children at a concession rate. This concession immediately proved popular, and for the 1957 Royal



A new dog pavilion was erected, and named after William Cockbill, a member of the RASV Council, who for many years had been steward-in-chief of the dog section, and also chairman of the Kennel Control Council. The new pavilion was capable of housing 800 dogs, and was officially opened during the 1954 Royal Show by Lady Brooks, wife of the Governor of Victoria.

Further construction included: the building of 300 horse boxes and lockers in the western area, which also required the construction of roads and provision of services, such as water and electricity; the conversion of a horse pavilion into a cattle pavilion (No. 5), for dual purpose breeds of cattle; the modernising of the pig pavilion; construction of new lawn areas for the public and the use of some of these for judging and selling of sheep; a new electrical sub-station; several new cafes and modernising of one restaurant into a cafeteria, and many alterations in most halls and pavilions.

The Society's work throughout the year, under the new administrator, was well rewarded, for the 1954 Royal Show, held from 23 September to 2 October, provided a record entry of 22,531, and the attendance record of 679,167, eclipsed the 1946 record by more than 26,500. The highlight of the Show was the first International Fleece Competition, held in conjunction with the wool exhibition and sheep shearing contests; entries were received from all States, and from the USA, England, South Africa, Uruguay, Netherlands and Japan.

During 1955 additional land was brought into use with the demolition of the old cottages in Leonard Crescent. Work was commenced on the new members' stand, subsequently named the A. G. Hunter Stand, and this required the demolition of part of No. 2 Cattle Pavilion, which in turn required re-grouping the accommodation for some breeds of dairy cattle.

*The first Dairy Display. The Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks, samples a bottle of pasteurised milk. R.A.S.V. President Mr T. N. Mitchell in attendance.*





*Grand Parade 1971.*



Show, was a prominent feature in the attendance increase. Complementary to the introduction of the family ticket, was the Education Department's recognition of the Show as an educational excursion, and thus more pupils and their teachers attended.

#### THE JOURNALISTS' TOUR AND COUNTRY SHOW GIRL

The year 1957 witnessed the introduction of two sponsored promotions which were of great service to the Society. The Shell Company of Australia Limited, and Shell Chemical (Australia) sponsored a tour for journalists throughout certain country areas, so that they could gain some background of the preparations for the Show. At the same time, the *Sun News-Pictorial* sponsored a most successful Miss Show Girl Competition, which enabled country agricultural societies to select a representative to compete in the final at the Royal Melbourne Show.

The 1957 Royal Show was conducted from 19–28 September, and attracted a total of 21,797 entries, and an attendance of 622,060, an increase of 33,735 on the previous year, but still some 57,000 short of the record 1954 figure. New features included the exhibit staged by the Good Neighbour Council and Immigration Department, which enabled new Australians to participate more actively in the Show. The Victorian Aquarium Society staged the largest display of fish yet seen in Australia. And from the dairy industry display, 25,000 bottles of milk were distributed by the Society to school children, free of charge.

During the year the question of altering the date of the Show arose again, but after very full discussion it was agreed to continue to hold the Show in the Spring. Two significant changes occurred during 1957, with the transfer in June of the Society's headquarters staff from Temple Court, Collins Street, Melbourne to the Showgrounds and the change in representation on the Trotting Control Board. Since its birth as the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, only three situations had been used as offices. The first, for the PPFS, was W. Law's shop in Swanston Street; the National Agricultural Society used Kirk's Bazaar in Bourke Street West, then moved into the Equitable Building (later Temple Court), Collins Street. It was the custom for the staff to move out to the Showgrounds a week or two before the Show started, and then return to the city when the Show was over. However, with the completion of the Hunter Grandstand, the staff of the Trotting Control Board, which occupied the Administrative Building on the Showgrounds, moved to new offices in the Hunter Stand, thus enabling the Society to occupy the vacated offices and operate all its business from the Showgrounds headquarters.

The Trotting Races Act was amended by Parliament to provide three representatives from the Society, three from the Metropolitan and Country Trotting Association, with a Government nominee as chairman. The amended Act also provided that the Trotting Control Board pay two-thirds of the total cost of the new Hunter Grandstand, and that the fee paid by the Board for use of the Showgrounds be assessed on a sliding scale, according to attendances, in lieu of a flat rate.

At the 1958 Royal Show held from 18–27 September, the Society introduced guided tours for senior students from secondary schools. The guides were provided from breed societies as well as from country agricultural societies, and they gave the groups competent instruction in the importance and points of various breeds of animals and



*'Lindenow, Duke of Derrimut, 40th'. Oil painting 44cm × 63cm. Property of A. G. Simpson, Clifton, Hamilton. Bred by A. J. Webb, Hillside, Gippsland. Signed Norman Dale 1919. (Edwin Woodhouse.) RASV Collection.*



*'Duchess of Derrimut', owned by Richard Morton, 'Mount Derrimut'. Red and white shorthorn. Oil painting 44cm × 59cm. (Fred Woodhouse) 1875. RASV Collection.*





*Princess Alexandra of Kent's visit in 1959.*

other interesting aspects of the Show. These tours proved extremely popular, especially with students from teachers' colleges and technical schools.

The entries for the 1958 Show numbered 21,540, and the attendance reached 664,709. Classes for Poll Dorset sheep and Landrace pigs were included for the first time. Prominent among the new classes and competitions were those for inter-breed competition for the maintenance of cattle, classes for new Australians in the Homecrafts Section, and a scone baking competition.

New buildings included a beef cattle sale ring, named after the Society's Vice-President, L. M. Dugdale; the G. J. Coles Ltd stand, and one erected by Dennys Lascelles. On the Sunday of the Show, approximately 4,000 people attended a church service held on the main arena. The service, the first of its kind, was arranged by the Victorian State Committee of the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches. It was conducted by Dr Alan Watson, with the address given by Dr Frank Woods, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne.

For the first time in the history of the Society, the Showgrounds were used for the production of a film. In late 1958 the Society made arrangements with the Stanley Kramer Pictures Corporation of USA, to enable that organisation to produce the film *On The Beach*, based on a novel written by Nevil Shute, who as Nevil Norway, was a Victorian agriculturalist.

in the 1961 Show was immense. The total entry reached 25,948, which was an increase of more than 2,500 on the record, and attendance climbed to an all time level of 714,715, which included 20,522 children admitted at school concession rates.

The success of the Australian Equestrian Team at the Rome Olympic Games in 1960 led to increased interest and competition in the sport in Australia, and to foster this, the Society invited Eric Ixer, an English expert in course-building, to construct the Show's jumping courses.

Also in 1961 the Fat Cattle Section was revised, and a distinguishing feature among the new classes was the introduction of a Lot Feeding Competition, which was conducted in the fat cattle pens on the Showgrounds. Steers of different breeds and ages were fed identical rations under identical conditions for a period of 100 days. The results of carcase growth revealed a great deal of interesting and informative data, which was made available to the respective beef cattle breed societies.

*R.A.S.V. Life Councillor Geoffrey Howell explains machinery exhibits to Asian students visiting under the Colombo Plan at the 1963 Royal Show.*





#### A ROYAL VISITOR – A NEW PAVILION

The 1959 Royal Show, which was held from 17–26 September, was in all ways a 'Royal' Show. The Society was honoured to have as its special guest Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra of Kent, who performed the Official Opening ceremony on Friday, 18 September, and afterwards inspected certain sections of the Show with the President, Judge Mitchell.

The entries for the Show surpassed all previous records (23,384), and the attendance aggregate of 653,208 was the third highest on record. There appears little doubt that, but for the extremely bad weather on the first Saturday, all records would have been broken.

The imposing new Sheep Pavilion, with a clear floor space of 26,000 square feet, and accommodation for more than 1,500 sheep and also judging rings, was officially opened by the State Premier, Mr (later Sir) Henry Bolte, and was acclaimed as the largest in the world. Of special interest was the first showing of Santa Gertrudis cattle, which with a limited number of entries, nevertheless created a great deal of public interest.

The Showgrounds between shows, already a gathering ground for sports enthusiasts, ranging from trotting to basketball and soccer, became the centre of public interest as the venue for a religious revival. Thousands of people attended the Dr Billy Graham Crusade meetings in the arena at the Showgrounds during 1959.

#### STOCK RETAINED ON LAST SATURDAY

Up until the 1960 Royal Show, exhibitors were permitted to remove their stock prior to the last Saturday of the Show, and at the same time the admission charges for the last Saturday were reduced. However, in 1960, the Society faced the serious problem of steeply rising costs, and besides finding it necessary to increase the price of admission and standholders' space, the Council resolved to popularise the last Saturday by making it a full Show, with no change in admission from the other days, and the exhibitors were requested to retain their stock on the Showgrounds until after the close of the Show on the Saturday evening. As the exhibitors reacted favourably, the success of the last Saturday was assured.

The 1960 Royal Show, which was held from 22 September to 1 October, proved a most successful undertaking. The total entries, 23,076, were only 308 below the all-time record of the previous year, and the attendance figures of 677,687 were the best ever. The display of 1,300 British breeds of sheep was said to be the best ever staged in the world; and for the first time since 1936, the Cat Section was reintroduced with an entry of 238 cats.

During the year 1960, the Society introduced the Victorian Farm Management and Improvement Competition, which immediately captured the interest of progressive farmers. The Commonwealth Bank generously agreed to sponsor the competition, which was won by E. G. Laver, of Leongatha South.

Before the 1961 Royal Show was staged from 21 to 30 September, the Council was apprehensive and perturbed as to what effect the economic recession the country was passing through might have on the Show. However, these doubts were dispelled immediately entries in the first series of classes closed, when it was apparent that interest



*They're never too young for the Royal Show.*

Great interest was displayed in the old Cobb & Co. coach, which ended its 3,000 mile trek from Queensland at the Showgrounds, and featured in the Grand Parade on official opening day.

#### BREED SOCIETIES

Over the years the Society had built up a huge secretariat for different Breed Societies, and by 1963, with the introduction of the new Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society, and the acceptance of the Australian Hereford Society (Southern Branch), the number of societies, associations, and allied organisations for which secretarial work was carried out numbered thirty-four.

During the many years over which this work had been administered, the Society continually eroded its own finances, by supplementing costs on behalf of these bodies, and despite almost annual suggestions from the Society that this gap should be bridged, most organisations ignored the pleas, and the onus remained with the Society to make up these shortfalls.

At the 1964 annual meeting, Judge Mitchell did not seek re-election as President, and was succeeded by G. P. H. Wilson. Judge Norman Mitchell served the Society as President for seven years, the second longest period for a President since the formation of the NASV in 1870.

The 1964 Royal Show was held from 17-26 September, and proved an outstanding success. The entries reached 27,058, thus passing the 27,000 mark for the first time, and the aggregate attendance of 708,325 was the highest since 1961. This Show began the



During the year, the Sheep Club was built for use by sheep exhibitors and members of sheep breed societies. The inaugural Bloodhorse Show was conducted on the Showgrounds on Sunday, 12 March 1961, and was a great success. The parading area was placed on the arena and marked off with small shrubs and seats. The entry was good, numbering 103, and many fine horses were paraded.

At the 1962 Royal Show, held from 20–29 September, the total entries passed the 26,000 (26,295) mark for the first time, with records in nearly all sections, and although there were more visitors on the first three days than the previous record year, cold and wet conditions for the remainder of the Show, coupled with a one-day rail strike, reduced the total attendance to 648,171. Among the features were the National Wine Championship and the Australian Shearing Championships. The Lot Feeding Competition increased in entries from forty-eight in 1961, to sixty-three in 1962.

#### CONFERENCE OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

In June 1962, the Director of the Society, Colin Woodfull, convened a conference of country agricultural societies, at which eighty delegates from more than fifty societies joined in useful discussions on show matters of common interest. This meeting was the forerunner to the formation of the Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association, subsequently launched in 1964.

Again during the year the Society made an approach to the Minister of Labour and Industry, on the need for legislative action to counter the growing incidence of tractor accidents on farms. A later conference of more than twenty organisations was held to follow up the Society's initial concern. The report of the proceedings of the conference was examined by the Minister, Hon. G. O. Reid.

After carrying out the secretarial work for forty-five years for the Victorian Branch of the Jersey Herd Society, that body decided to transfer its administrative headquarters to new offices in North Melbourne. A wry note in the Annual Report of 1962 states, 'we are pleased that during the time we carried out the work for this Society they were able to become financially strong enough to enable this to be done'.

#### TROTTING CONTROL BOARD DISCUSSIONS

During 1962, some discussions took place between the members of the Trotting Control Board and the Council on the possibility of an extension to the length and shape of the Showgrounds' trotting track. The huge demolition involved with the necessary reconstruction and arrangement to avoid seriously harming the Society's enterprise, resulted in an estimated cost that made the projects impracticable.

The 1963 Royal Show, which was held from 19–28 September, created still another record for entries. The total number of 26,941 was just on 700 more than the record created the previous year. The attendance of 688,543 was the second highest ever. The Society was host to two teams of competitors from New Zealand. They competed in the showjumping and the woodchopping events, and proved skilful in both areas. Other attractions were the arena events, which included the Victoria Mounted and Motor Cycle Police exhibitions; the South Australian Police Troopers; interstate polocrosse matches, and Young Farmers hay loading competition.



*Animal Nursery: kids love animals and animals love kids. By courtesy A.T.V.O., Royal Show 1970.*

The 1965 Royal Show was held from 16-25 September, and proved an exceptionally successful one, with the entries reaching a record 27,243, and attendances also creating a record 717,055. Arena attractions included the Pacific Islands Regiment Band from Papua New Guinea, the Services bands from Southern Command, Northern Command and the Royal Australian Engineers. The Society introduced the Australian Gold Cup Tent Pegging series, and Council member, David W. R. Knox, donated the Gold Cup.

The Army organised a mechanised musical drive and displays by the Commando Unit, the rodeo was again presented, and Faye Grainger, a trick rider, was engaged to give demonstrations. A popular attraction was the return of the floral clock. This equipment had been stored over the period of the war and occupation of the Showgrounds by the RAAF, and its re-introduction as a display in Centenary Hall created wide public appeal.

The first Australian Beef and Lamb Symposium, arranged by the Society in conjunction with the Australian Meat Board, was held in the VRC Lawn Restaurant at Flemington Racecourse on Show Eve, 15 September 1965. The theme of the symposium was 'the Production of Livestock Most Suited in Australia's Domestic and Overseas Markets for Beef and Lamb'. Eleven papers were prepared by prominent representatives from all sections of the meat industry.

The 1966 Royal Show, held from 15-24 September, was a wet one, and resulted in attendances dropping to 688,663. Entries totalled 26,137, which was a decrease of almost 1,100 on the previous year. Main arena attractions included the Zacchini Troupe Human Cannonballs, the return of Kelly Stanley, and the Australian Gold Cup Tent Pegging, which attracted interstate teams. New buildings were erected by the State Electricity Commission and the Commonwealth Banking Corporation.





*Champion tree climber, Kelly Stanley  
at the 1964 Royal Show.*

'industry' era, with the introduction of Wool Court and the Meat Hall, alongside the Dairy Industry Pavilion in Lennon Avenue.

The 1964 Show also initiated a new concept in arena attractions, with the introduction of American Kelly Stanley, the world's tree climbing champion. This act was exceptionally well received by the public, and started a fad with the formation of tree climbing clubs. Other arena attractions included the re-introduction of a rodeo, tent-pegging contests, marching girls display, Service massed bands, and a bullock team.

#### ANIMAL NURSERY

Conscious of the attraction of baby animals to young children, the Society set up a small area in the Sheep Pavilion as an animal nursery. It contained kid goats, lambs, calves and a foal, and because of its popularity, became an embarrassment, with big crowds of people queuing up to see the antics of the small animals. From this small beginning was to grow one of the most popular attractions at future Royal Melbourne Shows.

#### VICTORIAN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES' ASSOCIATION

In December 1964, the Society hosted delegates from country agricultural societies in Victoria, who, under the auspices of the Chamber of Agriculture, launched the new Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association. The new body elected Mr Frank Ruler, of Kyabram, as the foundation President, and appointed the Society's Director, Colin Woodfull, to carry out the administrative duties.



*Sir Henry Bolte tries his hand at the Cricket Centre at the 1966 Royal Show.*

A cricket centre was established in conjunction with the Victorian Cricket Association, and proved a very popular innovation. Co-operation in this venture was given by Bill Lawry and Graeme Watson, two of the top Australian cricketers. The Commercial Farmers' Interests project, introduced in 1965, was extended to include sheep management instruction and demonstrations. And one floor of the Poultry Pavilion was made available to the Commercial Poultry Industry, for displays and demonstrations.

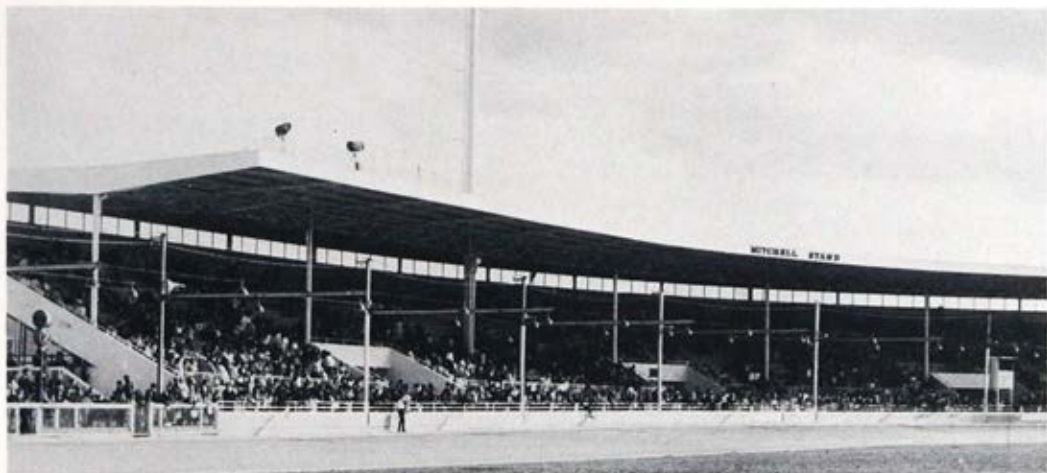
#### NEW STAND AND RECORD CROWD

According to the Annual Report for 1967, the Royal Show of that year, which was held from 21–30 September, was the best Show staged by the Society over the previous decade. Although entries were down to 25,156, this was due in no small way to the reappraisal of some classes, sections and competitions, and also the extended dry conditions throughout the year. The attendance reached the all-time record of 738,196, and the weather was almost perfect throughout. The Society was justifiably proud of the new Mitchell Stand, which replaced the old tubular steel stands erected almost twenty years previously, as a temporary measure for the commencement of night trotting.

From 1886 when the first grandstand was erected, the Society made a charge to the public for the use of the stand. However, in 1967 the Council resolved that all grandstands, with the exception of the members' reserve in the A. G. Hunter Stand, be open to the public without charge.

The arena programme was considered one of the most entertaining ever presented, with the highlight being the Bell Rocket Belt Team. This act was exciting and a very big





*The new Mitchell Stand opened for the 1967 Royal Show.*

draw. Supporting features included the King's Shropshire Light Infantry Band, from Singapore; the Australian Gold Cup Tent Pegging series; Victoria Police displays; dressage demonstrations, and dog obedience demonstrations.

#### DAIRY CATTLE JUDGING CHANGE

All breeds of dairy cattle were judged on the first Monday of the Show in 1967, instead of the traditional Thursday. The request for the change came from the Registered Dairy Cattle Breeders' Association of Victoria, on behalf of dairy cattle breeders and exhibitors, who desired the change to enable exhibitors to arrive at the Showgrounds with their cattle only a day or two before the Show opened, thus shortening the total period away from their properties.

To add to the interest in horticulture, the Society introduced competitive and exhibition floral arrangements in Centenary Hall. At the same time, the fleeces were transferred to the building in Lennon Avenue, which had been used for two years for fresh fruit displays.

#### SUNDAY SHOW

The 1968 Royal Show, 19-28 September, saw the introduction of the first Sunday Show, and a new attendance record of 767,014. The Sunday Show, although restricted to the period from 1.30 p.m. to 6 p.m., was responsible for an attendance of 71,483 in the four and a half hours.

In spite of the driest season on record, the entries at 24,311 were remarkably good. Main improvements to the Showgrounds included the construction of a large area for amusements at the rear of the Mitchell Stand, and additional turnstile facilities in the



*American Bill Soutar demonstrates the Bell Rocket Belt.*

south-western area, to service patrons from the VRC car park. The arena programme featured four Indian Army Cavalry officers, who participated in the Gold Cup Tent Pegging, gave exhibitions of riding, and played three polo matches. Unfortunately, on the eve of the Show, one member of the team had an accident and broke his ankle, and was not able to compete. The world champion tree climber, Kelly Stanley, and the American champion Larry Downing, also featured at the 1968 Royal Show.

The Commercial Farmers' Project was extended to cover cattle husbandry and management practices, and in conjunction with these, the Society conducted trials of nitrogenous fertilisers in cereal crops on the Flemington Racecourse, to which a free bus service was provided from the Showgrounds to carry interested patrons.

#### MAN-ON-THE-MOON SHOW AND A NEW STAND

The 1969 Royal Show was held from 18–27 September, the second to include a Sunday Show day, and thus the second to be conducted over a duration of ten days and eight nights. It attracted a record attendance of 780,139, in spite of some of the coldest





*Indian Army Officer Capt. Singh makes a 'draw' in the Tent Pegging.*

September weather ever experienced in Melbourne. The aggregate attendance was 13,125 ahead of that for the 1968 Show, when the feature innovation was the introduction of the Sunday Show. That first Sunday attracted an attendance of 71,483 for an afternoon in ideal weather. And although the Council was successful in having the time for the second Sunday Show extended to six hours, bad weather reduced the gate to 43,683. Coming out of the drought years of 1967 and 1968, the overall entries climbed to 25,829, which was an increase of more than 1,500 on those of the previous year.

For many years the classes for photography were included in the Arts and Crafts Section of the Show, but in 1969 it was decided to make this a separate section, and to display the exhibits on the mezzanine floor of the Mitchell Stand. This decision received the full support of camera clubs and associations, and resulted in an increased entry of 983 exhibits.

For two years there had been a deviation from the traditional Thursday judging for some breeds of dairy and dual-purpose cattle, which caused some feeling among breeders, and confusion to those farmers who made it a practice to follow the judging. However, for the 1969 'Royal' Council, after close liaison with the breed societies, decided to fix the judging day for all breeds of cattle on the first Thursday. Also during

centenary of the formation of the Victorian Department of Agriculture. Council agreed to this request.

The 1960s had been good to the Society, and it entered the 1970s with the quiet confidence of well being.

#### A NEW DECADE AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

From the early 1950s the RASV had made great progress in all its activities. With respect to the Royal Show, attendances were increasing, as were overall entries. Two main hobby, or 'pet' sections, became industries – horses and dogs – and with the resulting increase in the numbers of entries in these sections, the Council was confronted with the added problem of endeavouring to find more and better accommodation. How the Council met these challenges is covered in greater detail in the following year to year accounts.

There were also far reaching changes in administration, with the retirement of H. T. C. Woodfull, as Director, and the appointment of Harley J. Clappison – and almost simultaneously, the changes in the office of President from G. P. H. Wilson to Peter B. Ronald, and later Robert T. Balderstone.

The 1970 Annual Report refers to an outlay of \$250,000 by the Society on improvements, alterations and additions, which included major improvements to the electricity supply and distribution; additions to the equipment deck abutting the Mitchell Stand, and a new ceiling in the Dairy Display Pavilion.

Commercial standholders were also showing their faith in the Society, and new buildings were erected by the Australia New Zealand Banking Group, the South African Trade Commission, and Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association, besides the extensive alterations made to catering complexes by Dennis and McClures.

#### THAT HOLIDAY LOOPHOLE

Late in 1969 the Minister of Labour and Industry decided to revise the legislation relating to public holidays, and in the process unfortunately left a loophole, which several large commercial organisations, including Myer Ltd, took advantage of, and opened their establishments for the whole of the recognised Show Day public holiday. This matter was later adjusted in time for the Melbourne Cup holiday, but the Show 'missed out'. One of the good things to emerge from this error was that the future Show Day holidays were fixed as the fourth Thursday in September. Further, just prior to the opening of the 1970 Royal Show, the guards section of the Railways' Union decided to press claims for a wage increase, and refused to man trains to the Showgrounds Station for the first Thursday and Friday. This matter was fortunately resolved before the first Saturday.

Despite these problems, and the fact that cold conditions prevailed on a number of days, as well as the added competition from the finals of the Victorian Football League, the 1970 Royal Show, which was held from 16-27 September, was still able to create a new attendance record of 810,233, which exceeded the previous record of 1969 by





*Modern farm machinery on display.*

this year, the Council acceded to a request from the Australian Hereford Society for permission to conduct sales for this breed on the main arena immediately following the judging. This experiment did not prove wholly successful, and it was agreed to revert to the previous arrangements for future Shows.

During the year the Wilson Stand had been erected on the site of one of the old tubular steel stands adjacent to the A. G. Hunter Stand. Underneath the new stand provision was made for standholders and amusements, and also for a cafe-bar.

To celebrate the historical moon landing, the Society was able to obtain photographs, foodstuffs and equipment used by the astronauts, and have these on display for the general public. The Man-on-the-Moon exhibition was sited in McGregor Street, and proved one of the big attractions of the 1969 Royal Show.

To mark the centenary of the formation of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria in 1870, Council set up a special committee to investigate and advise on preparations for the 1970 'Centenary Royal Show'. Shortly after this committee had begun its work, a request was received from the Minister of Agriculture, Sir Gilbert Chandler, asking the Society to defer its celebrations until 1972, to coincide with the



*Crowds at the 1971 show, as seen from the chairlift.*



the chairmanship of Colonel M. H. McArthur, the Board chairman, and member of the RASV Council, discussions were held between members of the Board, producers, butchers and beef cattle breeders. Closed circuit television, arranged by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, was used for the first time to an overflow audience, which was accommodated away from the Meat Hall in Wool Court.

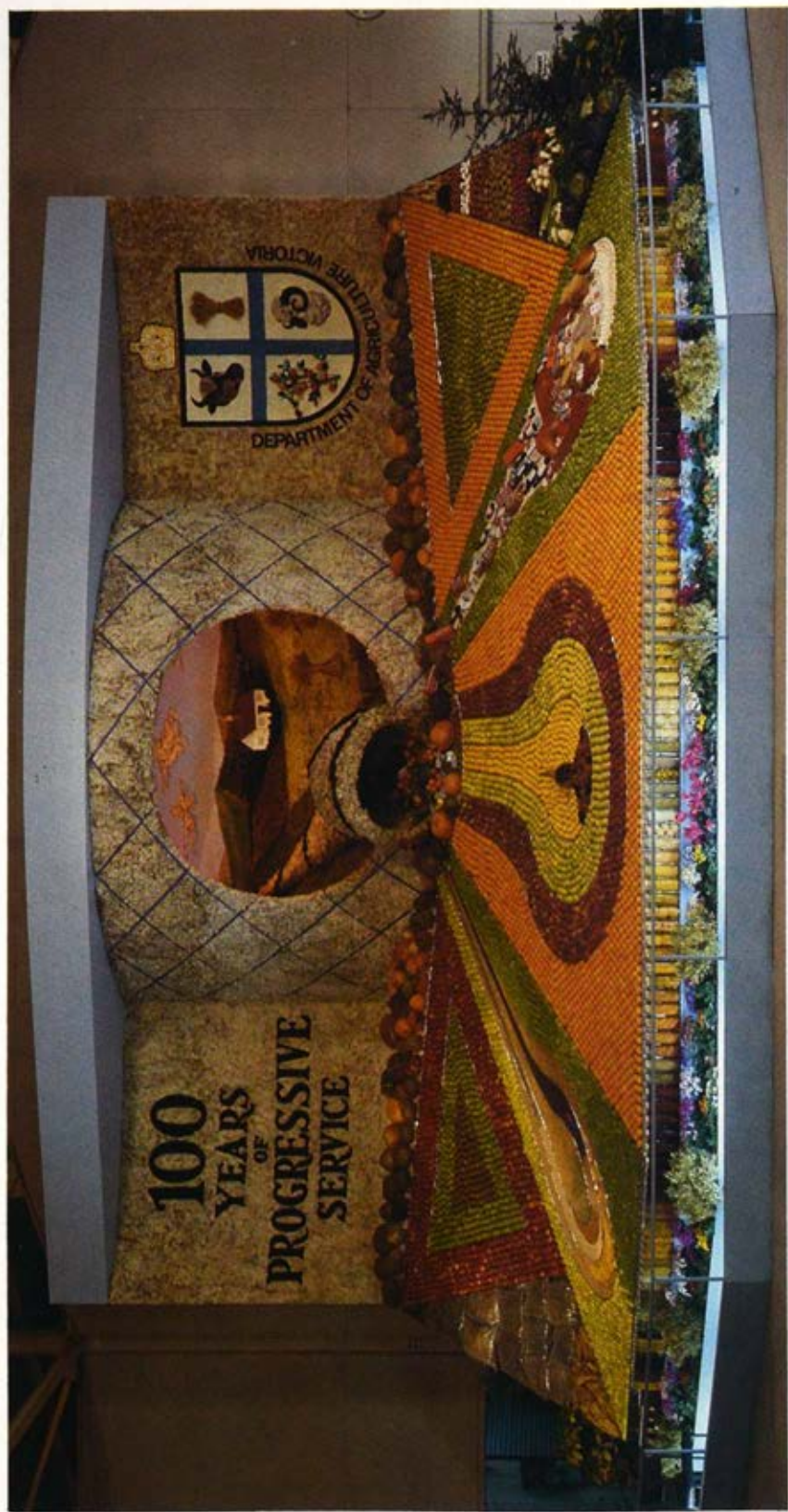
#### CHAIRLIFT AND PRODUCE DISPLAY

A chairlift was erected by private enterprise to carry patrons from the farm machinery area in McCracken Avenue to the Centenary Hall area of the Showgrounds. This transport with 112 chairs covered the 1,800-foot journey in about seven minutes, and proved a most popular means of traversing the grounds, especially on the main Show days.

With the exception of two years following the Second World War, the Society had not had a comprehensive display of all farm produce, and in 1970 an excellent display was

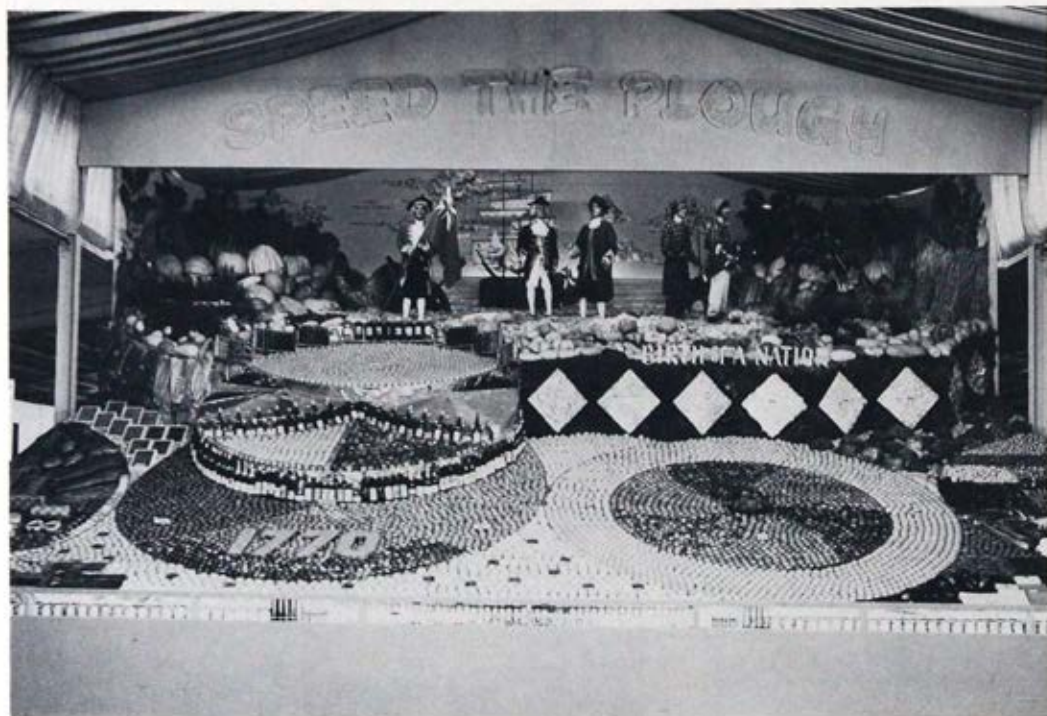






*RASV Stand in Government Pavilion, 1972, to commemorate the centenary of the formation of the Department of Agriculture.*





*Farm Produce Display, Centenary Hall, 1970 Royal Show.*

established in the centre of Centenary Hall. Taking as a theme the bi-centenary of Captain Cook's discovery of Australia, the design and supervision of the display was under the control of E. F. Nowak, of Sydney, who took his directions from the Centenary Hall Committee. Special features in the arena included the return of hang-glider pioneer, Bill Moyes; the Autoaction Precision Driving Team; the Australian Gold Cup Tent Pegging series, and interstate polocrosse contests.

The Society added two new organisations to the list of breed societies during 1970. These were the Red Angus Society, and the Welsh Pony and Cob Society of Australia.

#### A BREAK WITH TRADITION

The 1971 Royal Show was held from 16–25 September, and although the depressed conditions of certain rural industries and a carpenters' strike just prior to the start of the Show, caused apprehension among some members of the Council, these fears proved to have little bearing on what was to be a most successful Royal Show.

The weather, although better than the previous year, reduced attendances on the first Saturday, Show Day holiday, and the last Saturday evening. In spite of this, a new overall



*R.A.S.V. President George Wilson introduces Sir Rohan Delacombe Governor of Victoria to make the first Official Night Opening of the 1971 Royal Show.*

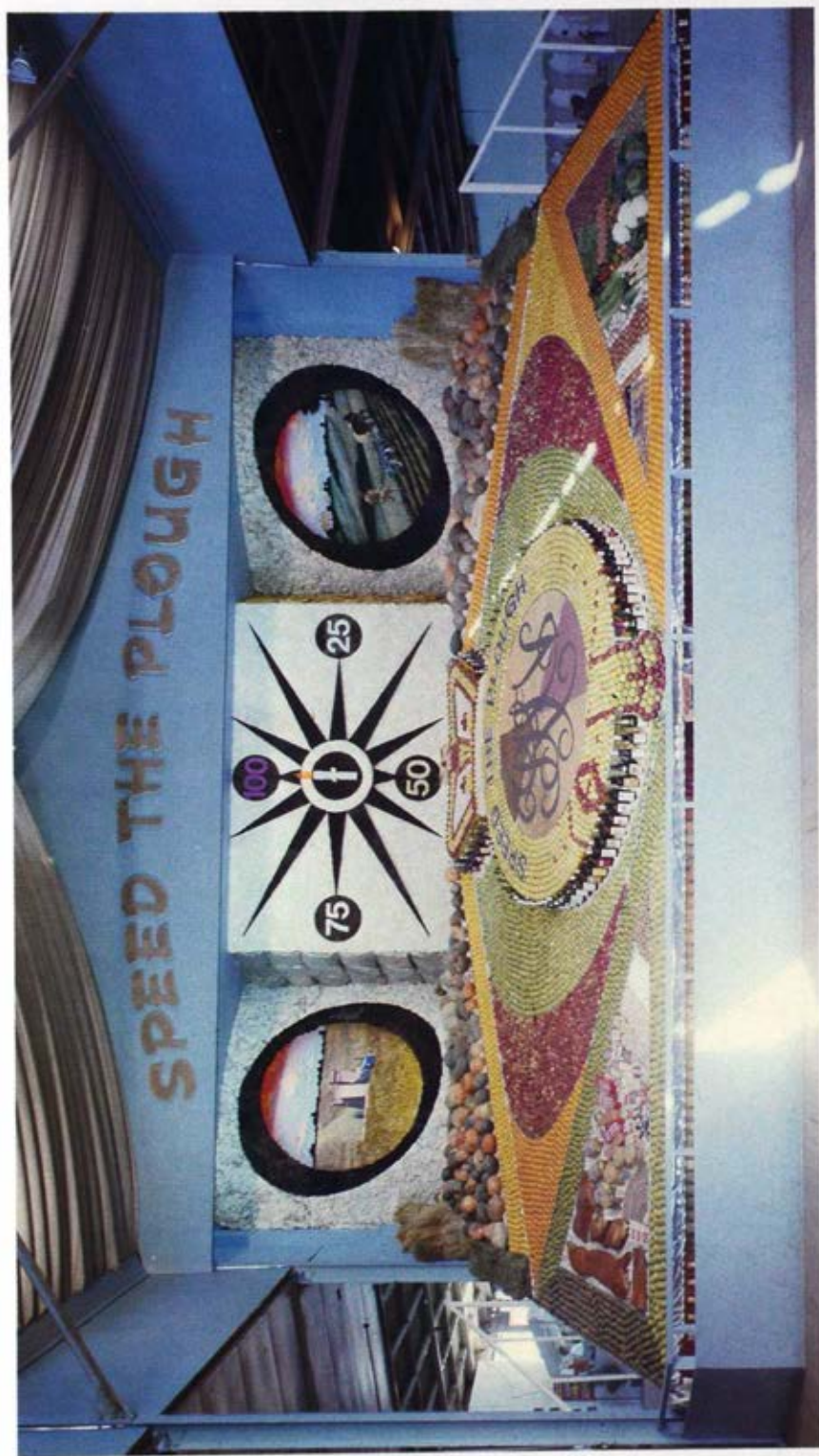
attendance record of 888,409 was created. This was the fifth successive year in which attendance records were broken, and the fourth year in succession in which the total of 750,000 had been passed. Besides the record attendance, the overall entries reached an all-time high of 27,453.

A break with tradition occurred in this year, when the official opening ceremony was performed at 8 p.m. on Saturday 18 September, instead of at the usual Friday afternoon function, as had been the practice for more than sixty years.

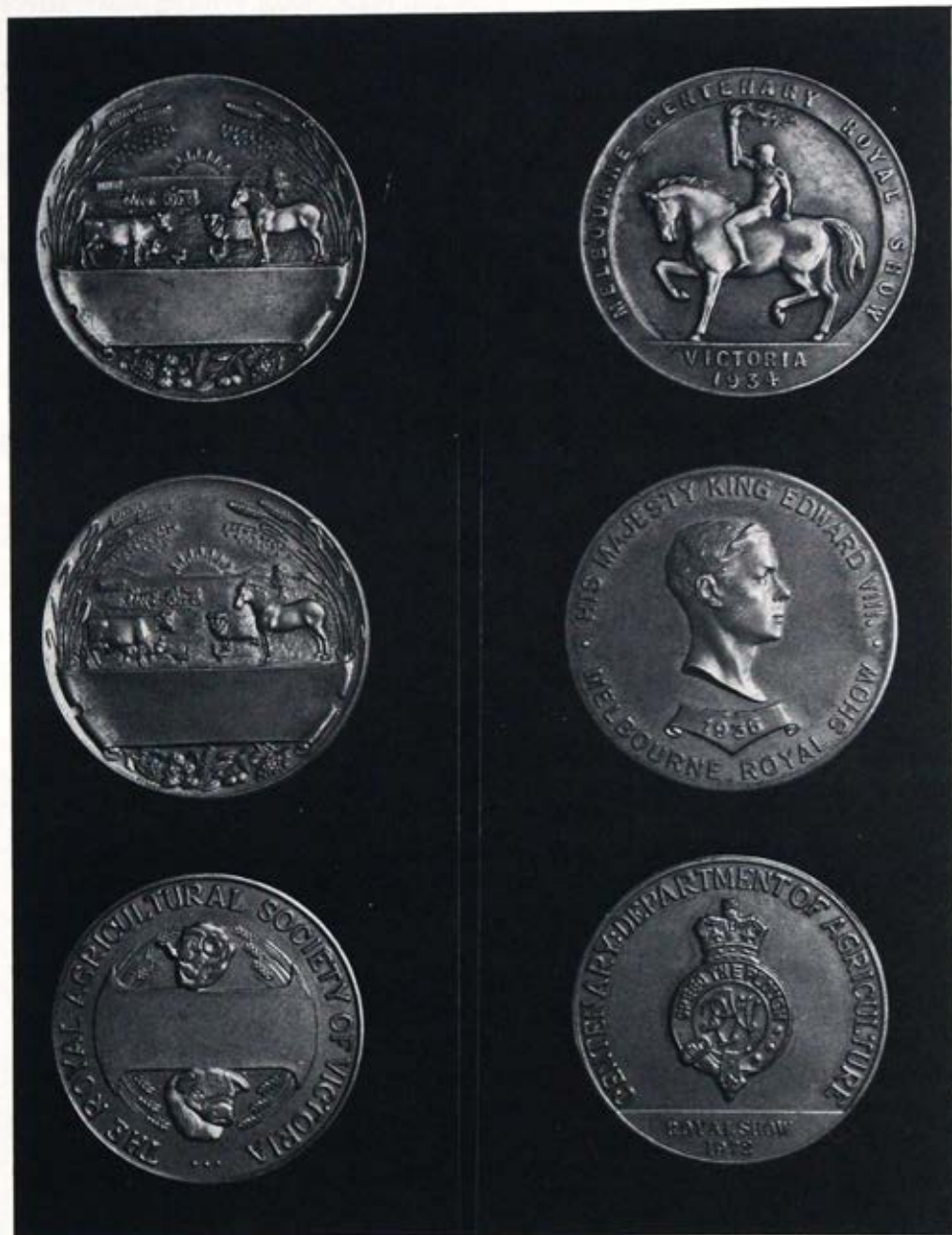
With the beef cattle boom, great interest was again displayed in both beef and fat cattle sections, and the Brangus breed was shown in competition for the first time. More than usual interest was also shown in the Three Day Horse Event, with the selection of the equestrian team for the 1972 Munich Olympic Games being made following the third phase, Show Jumping, on Monday 20 September.

Unfortunately for the Society it was a tragic year, with the death of Council members L. R. Dooling, in March; Sir Kenneth Luke in June, C. C. Johnson in July, and R. F. Sanderson in August. Each of the deceased had special talents, and served the Council and the Society in an outstanding manner. New members joining Council in 1971 were Messrs R. T. Balderstone, R. B. Langdon, J. W. Rae, and A. H. C. Richards. Messrs W. B. Boothby and C. O. Moore were created Honorary Life Councillors.





*RASV Farm Produce Display in the Centenary Hall, 1972*



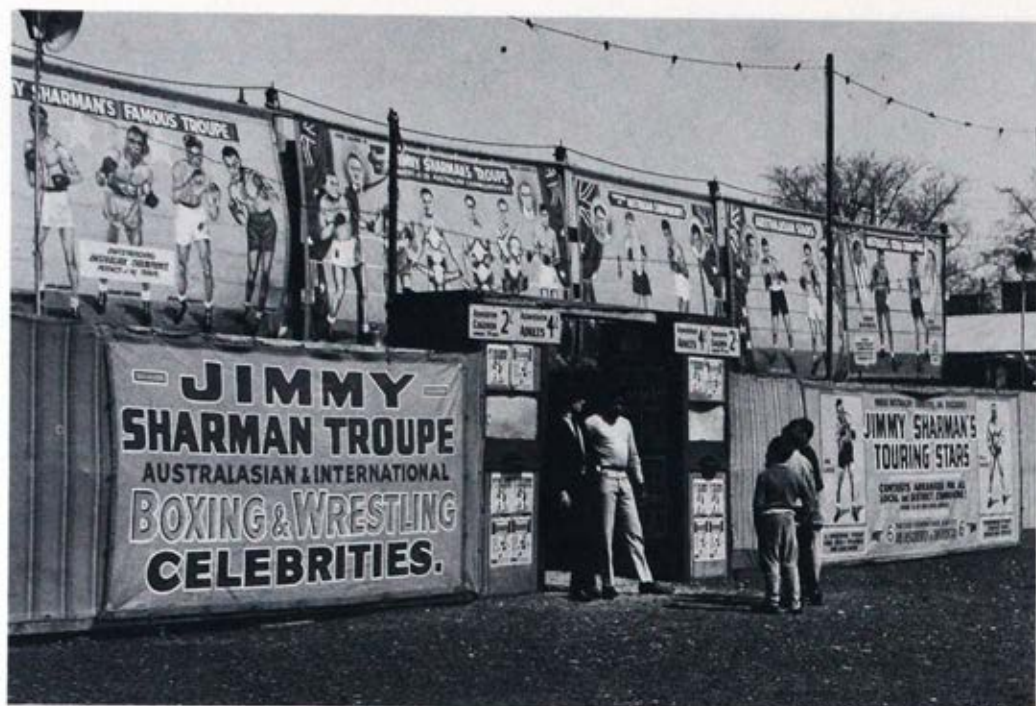
*Sets of medallions issued to commemorate special events. The Edward VIII Medallion was struck in anticipation, but was never issued.*

*Top Melbourne Centenary Medal 1934.*

*Middle King Edward VIII Medal 1936 (never used).*

*Bottom The present (1972-) Medallion.*





*The last of the Tent Shows—Jimmy Sharman's Boxing Troupe's last appearance at the Royal Melbourne Show in 1971.*

Two further organisations were added to the Society's list of administrative responsibilities: The Simmental Society of Australia (Victorian Branch), and the Australian South Devon Breeders' Association.

#### MORE NEW BUILDINGS AND A DOUBLE CELEBRATION

In 1972 just on \$400,000 was spent on improvements. These included the new No. 6 Cattle Pavilion situated on the Leonard Crescent boundary next to the Nicholas Jersey Pavilion. The new building cost \$250,000, and was claimed to be the most modern of its type in Australia for stud stock accommodation. Other alterations and improvements included the reconstruction of the Fleeces Hall in Lennon Avenue, to the Sir William Angliss Art Gallery; and major alterations to the Arts and Crafts Pavilion.

The Society adopted an historical theme for the 1972 Royal Show, which was held from 21–30 September, making it the first of ten days and ten nights. The theme was a combined tribute to the founders of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria formed in 1870, and the Victorian Department of Agriculture, which was formed in June 1872. Special medallions were struck, and sashes, ribbons and award cards were specially designed to mark the occasion.

advice and guidance have been responsible for the most progressive period in the long history of the Society.

His assistance to me and those Presidents preceding me has been of the utmost importance to this Society, and although his services will not be entirely lost to the RASV we wish him and Mrs Woodfull a long and happy retirement.

The Council appointed Mr Harley John Clappison, to the position of Director earlier in the year and he had the opportunity to work with Mr Woodfull over the 1972 Royal Show period.

Mr Woodfull's association with the Society began as a dog exhibitor which led to his election to the Council in June 1950. He was persuaded to leave the Council and take up the appointment of secretary of the Society in 1953, following the resignation of Louis Monod. On his retirement in March 1973, the Council saw fit to create him an Honorary Life Councillor. He died on 11 August 1976.

Also in 1972, F. E. S. Scott was elected an Honorary Life Councillor after serving twenty years on the Council, and F. R. I. Stephens, son of the late Dr Stephens, was elected to Council to fill the vacancy created by Mr Scott's elevation to Life Councillor.

In June 1972, the Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society made the decision to move its headquarters from the RASV. As with a number of similar organisations, notably the Jersey Herd Society and the Friesian Cattle Club, the Murray Grey Society was entirely dependent on the RASV in its formative years, but immediately it became established through RASV expertise and sound financial management, it 'went it alone'. Nevertheless, at this time the total number of breed societies and allied organisations being administered by the RASV numbered thirty-nine.



*Mr Frank Crawford, Editor of the Weekly Times, makes a presentation to Mr Colin Woodfull on his retirement.*



The Society mounted a comprehensive display of historical material including medallions, prize cards, records, and old photographs. The arena programme included an historical parade of horsedrawn vehicles, and early motor vehicles and tractors. In keeping with the Society's theme, many standholders produced articles and machines with historical significance on their stands and in their pavilions.

The Government Pavilion contained many reminders of past farming practices in the form of equipment and produce. The Society erected a huge display of produce in the Government Pavilion as a tribute to the Victorian Department of Agriculture's centenary.

The Sir William Angliss Art Competition made its debut at the 1972 Royal Show, and was to become one of the most prestigious of its kind in Victoria. Favoured with ideal weather, the 1972 Royal Show created yet another attendance record of 916,730, which was supported by a total entry of 30,184 – the greatest ever recorded to that time.

#### DIRECTOR RETIRES

From the 1972 Annual Report of the President, G. P. H. Wilson, this extract is taken relative to the retirement of the Society's Director, Mr Woodfull:

At the conclusion of the 1972 Royal Show Mr H. T. C. Woodfull, OBE, retired as Director of the Society. Mr Woodfull was appointed Secretary in 1953 and Director in 1963. His sound

*Historical Parade of horse-drawn vehicles, 1972 Royal Show.*



## A NEW PRESIDENT

At the Annual Meeting of the Society in March 1973 the President, G. P. H. Wilson, did not seek re-election, and Peter B. Ronald was elected unopposed. The new President was well equipped for the position, having been Vice-President since 1966, and having served the Council in almost every main position, including that of ringmaster. Mr Wilson's term of nine years as President from 1964 was the second longest in the Society's history, and in association with Mr Woodfull, he led the Society through its most progressive period to this time.

In preparation for the 1973 Royal Show running from 20 to 29 September, the Society expended approximately \$150,000 on improvements and alterations. These included new turnstiles and entrances in the western area from the VRC car park, and on Epsom Road where ticket selling machines were installed at McCracken Avenue, thus making McCracken Avenue and Brisbane Avenue the main entry points for the patrons, and eliminating the entrance into Merrett Avenue off Epsom Road.

New portable cattle pens were also acquired to service the still strong fat and beef cattle entries; major alterations were made to the interior of the administration building, and the sewerage of stock pavilions was completed.

The 1973 Royal Show drew an attendance of 913,834, second only to the previous year's record, and the total entries of 31,385 were the best ever to this time. With the beef cattle boom continuing, almost every breed established new entry records. Entry records were also created for horses, dogs, cats, wines, and a number of other sections. This Show also marked the jubilee of the first performance of the Victoria Mounted Police Musical Ride, and as a tribute to the Mounties the Society asked that the drum horse, Gendarme, lead the Grand Parades.

The year was again a sad one for the Council with the further loss of four prominent members. Judge Norman Mitchell died in March; W. C. Greaves, in August; A. H. Richards, in September, and A. E. Dahlenberg, in October. Judge Mitchell, who joined the Council in 1940, was Vice-President from 1952-57, President from 1957-63, and a trustee from 1949 until his death. He was the driving force behind the Kennel Control Council, and that organisation has him and Mr Woodfull to thank for the strong position which it now enjoys. Judge Mitchell was also a pioneer in the establishment of night trotting at the Showgrounds, and was chairman of the Trotting Control Board from 1953, until he was elected President of the RASV in 1957. Mr Greaves joined Council in 1936, was Vice-President from 1944-49, and made an Honorary Life Councillor in 1957. An all-rounder in the show business, he was associated with horses, sheep, and the build up of the programme in Centenary Hall. Mr Richards was not long on the Council, having been elected in 1971. His main interest was in the pig section. Mr Dahlenberg was elected to Council in 1936, and was created an Honorary Life Councillor in 1960. His main contribution was in the horse section, especially the Clydesdales - he played a leading role in having the statue of the Clydesdale placed in the main street in Nhill. He was also a prominent member of the Farm Produce Committee, in which his main interest was cereals and crop competitions.

In 1973 J. M. Buchanan, J. M. Gardiner and David W. R. Knox, were elevated to Honorary Life Councillors, and J. M. Burston, J. K. Buchanan, W. D. Crowley and Adrian Gibson were elected to Council to fill the necessary vacancies.



During the year four new breed societies came under the care of the Royal: the Blonde d'Aquitaine Society of Australia, the Australian Limousin Breeders' Society, the Galloway Beef Cattle Society of Australia, and the Australian Stock Horse Society.

#### REDEVELOPMENT AND AGGRAVATION

In late 1972 the Council decided to form a sub-committee 'to investigate the merits of engaging professional advice on redevelopment of the Showgrounds over the next twenty-five years, particularly with a view to increasing revenue'. This move followed a recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee, relating to a request from the Kennel Control Council for the Society to consider erecting a new complex for the showing of dogs, for which the KCC had accumulated funds.

On 11 June 1973 a submission for redevelopment was received on behalf of a group of consultants. A similar submission was also received from the architects who had had previous dealings with the Society. An extraordinary Council Meeting was held on 16 August 1973 'to discuss the matter of redevelopment, in accordance with the principle of the resolution carried in late 1972'.

After considerable discussion the following motion, moved by Colonel McArthur and seconded by Mr Woodfull, was carried:

This Council approves in principle the overall redevelopment of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Showgrounds, with a view to maintaining and improving the facilities considered essential to pursue our basic object of furthering the interest of the Society. In planning the redevelopment of the Showgrounds full recognition should be given to the desirability of making the greatest possible use of the area and its facilities with a view to increasing total revenue.

Before final approval is given to any specified plan for overall development the Council will satisfy itself that the financing of such a project is within the capacity of the Society, without loss of control and ownership by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

The general attitude of the members of the Council at this time was that they accepted the fact that the economic stability of the Society was heavily dependent on the success of the Royal Show, and in the existing economic situation this could prove a danger. They were confident that the Royal Show would continue to be a major contributor to the Society's stability, so long as the Council was flexible enough to accept the changes in public attitude, meet the challenge of competing outlets for leisure time, and be prepared to face the ever increasing costs of staging the Royal Show. The general consensus was that it was necessary to improve the facilities at the Showgrounds as quickly as possible to retain public goodwill, by producing a Royal Show of the highest quality.

Although the Council was acutely aware of the lack of facilities, it was the approach by the KCC committee to the Council in late 1972 which started the discussion on redevelopment. In its submission the KCC requested 'a firm agreement with the Society concerning a form of security of tenure', besides the request for additional area. The latter request resulted in the Society negotiating with the Victorian Department of Agriculture and acquiring the Government Pavilion for use by the Kennel Control Council. The agreement was that the KCC would make available to the Society its accumulated funds so that a new Government Pavilion could be erected in the near future.



*Inside the Grand Parade, 1973 Royal Show.*

*Watching the Grand Parade from the  
Public (1915) Grandstand 1973 Royal Show.*



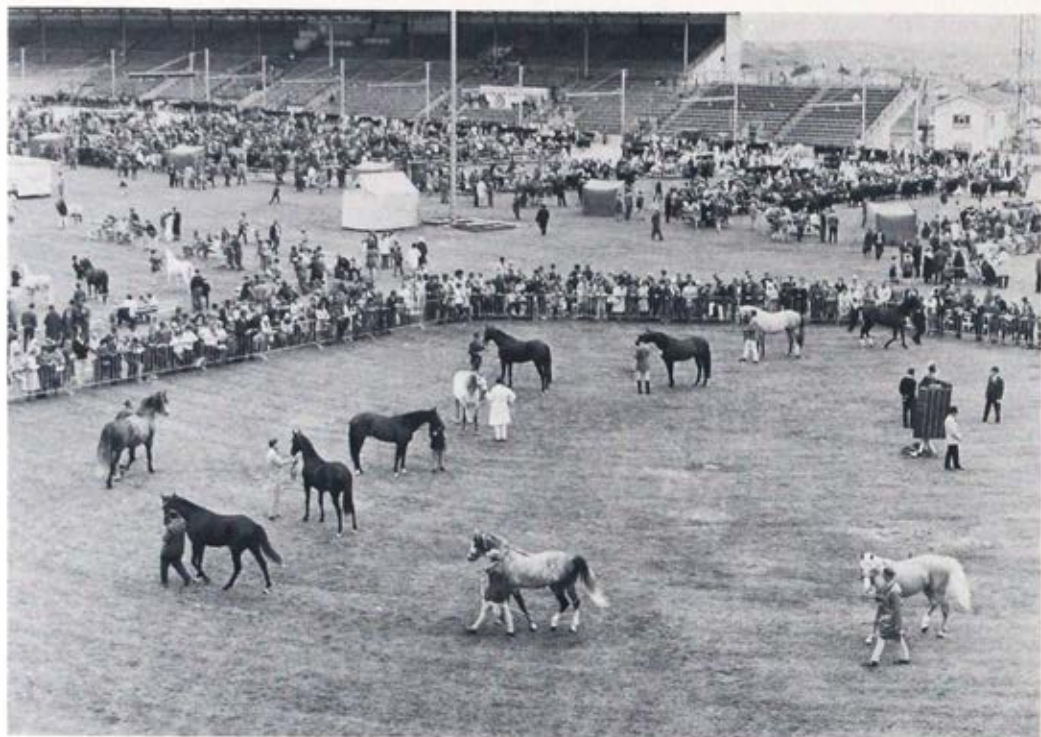
why the TCB could not use, or commit, its excessive funds to the redevelopment of the trotting complex on the Showgrounds. This was the climate in which the Society's Council entered 1974.

A decision making meeting of Council was arranged for 14 May, and in preparation for this, the Society's Director, Mr Clappison, forwarded to each Councillor complete information on the background of trotting at the Showgrounds, and a summary of effects of the respective redevelopment schemes. The TCB requirements included: firstly, an 800-metre track; secondly, improved facilities; and thirdly, joint management.

The financial position of the TCB at 31 July 1973 showed an operating surplus of \$570,021; a bank balance of \$1,415,743; and investments of \$620,613. The 'decision making' meeting of the Council held on 14 May 1974 proved to be an anticlimax. The President outlined the events leading up to the meeting, which he stressed was vitally important to the future of the Society. However, in the interim, the Director had written to the Premier, seeking official confirmation that the Government favoured a four furlong track, and would give consideration to the provision of finance, and/or a guarantee. And although the salient points of the Director's letter were not specifically answered in the Premier's reply, it was stated that the Government favoured maximum use of the Showgrounds' facilities. This inconclusive reply left the whole discussion in a vacuum; nevertheless reference was made to the comprehensive submission made by the Director, and the points made therein.

The aspect of joint management was examined, and it was stated by Mr Nicholas, one of the RASV representatives on the Board, that the TCB requirement would be equal representation on a Board of Management, which would assume complete control of





*Judging Day on the main arena.*

#### THE TROTTING DILEMMA

It is worth recording that since June 1961, the Society had been under considerable pressure from the Trotting Control Board, aided and abetted by selected trotting writers and broadcasters, to extend the length of the Showgrounds trotting track to a minimum of three and a half furlongs, and to widen the curve at the western end of the arena. Pressured by plans and counter-plans for the redevelopment of the Showgrounds, the President and his Council faced a dilemma. At this time it is worth remembering that when trotting was established on the Showgrounds in 1947, the Council was by no means unanimous in the decision. In fact the members reluctantly agreed to the arguments of the then newly formed Metropolitan and Country Trotting Association, and acquiesced in the legislation which resulted in the establishment of the Trotting Control Board. Now faced with the vision of a project which might result in the expenditure of enormous sums of money, many Councillors began to question the advisability of such extravagance, which was loaded strongly in favour of the Trotting Control Board. They were also aware that, over a number of years, the TCB had been accumulating funds which it was understood would be used on the Board's own trotting complex at Keysborough or some other place. These Councillors could not understand



*R.A.S.V. President Peter Ronald accompanies The Shah of Iran through Centenary Hall at the 1974 Royal Show.*

Once again the wet weather marred the Royal Show, as rain fell on ten of the eleven days, and cut the attendance to 777,357, which was 136,477 below that of 1973. However, the rural recession did not deter exhibitors, and a record 32,917 total entries were received. On Tuesday 24 September the President and his Council members had as special guests, their Imperial Majesties, The Shahahshah Aryamehr and the Shahbanou of Iran. They lunched with the President and Mrs Ronald, and Councillors and their wives. After lunch, quick changes were made in the arena programme so that the Shah's party could see a Grand Parade. (Traditionally the Grand Parade is held in the evening on Tuesdays.) After viewing the parade, the Shah made a brief tour of other Royal Show attractions.

The 1974 Royal Show had the privilege of staging four National Championships, for wines, sheep shearing, fleeces, and the first ever National Friesian Cattle Feature Show. They all attracted excellent entries and proved extremely successful.



the arena and grandstands except for the period of the Royal Show. He stated that the TCB representatives would include one or more of the RASV members on the Board, and the proposed Board of Management would have one of the RASV representatives as chairman.

A long discussion followed, and it was evident that opinion on the matter under discussion was such that a decisive vote or recommendation would not be advisable. Sir Rubert Clarke moved the following motion:

In the event of an encouraging reply being received from the Premier, the President be authorised to form a sub-committee consisting of himself, the Vice-Presidents – and after consultation with the RASV's representatives on the TCB, Messrs Nicholas and Head – for the purpose of an approach to the Premier in regard to a firm proposal from the Government in regard to financing the proposed project by way of:

1. A Government Grant
2. A Grant from the Racecourses' Development Fund
3. A loan in the joint names of the Society and the TCB, such loan to be guaranteed by the Government.

(Sir Rupert Clarke's proposal of three-pronged finance was for total amounts of \$12 million from the Government and \$20 million from the Racecourses' Development Fund.) Sir William McDonald moved the following amendment:

That the Society defer consideration of Sir Rupert Clarke's motion until such time as a reply from the Premier has been placed before a Council Meeting.

This amendment was carried by eighteen votes to thirteen.

To add to the Society's problems and those of the affiliated breed societies, a world energy crisis arose in late 1973 with the decision of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to impose restrictions on the supply, and substantially increase the price of oil. This action, combined with the coming world recession, resulted in the Australian export meat market virtually disappearing overnight. The beef boom was over. In his Annual Report to members in 1974 the President, Peter Ronald, said:

The past year has not been an easy one for the country people, but despite their anxiety they continued to support the Society, their breed societies, and especially the 1974 Royal Melbourne Show. It is very pleasing to again report that a new total entry record was established.

Between the Royal Shows of 1973 and 1974 the Society spent approximately \$200,000 on improvements, alterations and maintenance. These works included new turnstiles in Brisbane Avenue, Langs Road and Leonard Crescent. During the year the Society finalised negotiations with the Department of Agriculture, so that it could take over the Government Pavilion for the use of the Kennel Control Council. This action was taken on the understanding that a new Government Pavilion would be erected in the near future as the Department of Agriculture had used the Government Pavilion since it was built in 1918. Its display and information centre for the 1974 Royal Show was moved to the former General Motors Pavilion in Smith Street.

The 1974 Royal Show was conducted over eleven days and nine nights from 18–28 September. The additional day, Wednesday, 18 September, was used for horse judging, and led classes of fat cattle on the main arena. This proved to be a great success, in that it permitted the full use of the arena on Thursday for beef and dairy cattle judging.

Throughout the year your Council has pursued its policy of endeavouring to make more use of the Showgrounds. And although the Planning Committee has worked diligently, and liaison with the Government committees has been cordial, our efforts have been frustrated, firstly, by an appeal against the decision regarding the future of trotting, and secondly, by long drawn out procedures regarding Showgrounds redevelopment.

However I am able to report that a decision has been reached regarding the building of the new Government Pavilion, which should commence during 1976.

The Society having been responsible for introducing night trotting to Victoria, by fostering the initial legislation resulting in the Trotting Races Act 1946, will now lose this sport to Moonee Valley.

The decision was made early in the year when in March the Racing (Further Amendment) Act was spear-headed through Parliament by the Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Brian Dixon.

This decision is a harsh one for the Society which took all the risks in the formative years, and gave every assistance to the newly formed Trotting Control Board in its early years – even to the extent of reducing charges to enable the TCB to become established.

Now that night trotting has become the premier night sport entertainment, made possible by the construction of the track and track facilities at the Royal Showgrounds, it appears ludicrous that this now famous arena, with its intimate viewing of the track (built at the request of the Trotting Control Board), should be the main reason for night trotting leaving the Showgrounds.

Another disappointment for the Society is that in the Racecourses (Trotting) Improvements Fund, there is a large accumulation of monies mainly derived from betting at Showgrounds meetings, which will now be used to provide the new trotting track at Moonee Valley.

What is undoubtedly meant to be a note of consolation to the members of the Society, is contained in the following extract of the President's 1975 Annual Report:

Most assuredly the Society will miss the trotting in the short term, but it is anticipated that in the future more use will be made of the Showgrounds throughout the year – a restriction which was imposed on the Society by having trotting established here.

The 1975 Royal Show was conducted over eleven days and nine nights from 17-27 September, and resulted in an attendance of 849,564. As already stated, a new overall record of 33,319 entries were received. In this number new records were created for horses, dogs, cats, sheep shearing, pigeons, wines, arts and crafts and photography.

#### EXHIBITORS' DISPLAYS AWARDS

As an incentive to standholders to make their exhibits more appealing, the Society conducted a competition for displays at the 1975 Royal Show, and provided perpetual shields and replicas. The awards were divided into seven categories, and every standholder was included. Standholders showed unexpected interest in the competition and it created keen rivalry within the selected categories.

The arena entertainment was built around a theme of 'horses in action', and saw the reintroduction of rodeo and campdrafting. These competitions were supported by tent pegging, stock horse demonstrations, polo, dressage demonstrations, and the usual supporting competitive horse events.

Following the successful debut in 1974 of the Dalgety Commercial Beef Herd of the Year award, it was again conducted in 1975, and created keen support and competition. The Society introduced a further cattle competition in 1975, which embraced commer-



With the dramatic downturn in beef prices, the Society joined with the Australian Meat Board in organising a Beef Symposium on Sunday 22 September, at the Flemington Racecourse. The function was chaired by Colonel M. H. McArthur, a Councillor of the RASV and Chairman of the Australian Meat Board, and took the theme, 'What happened to Beef'. Speakers included AMB representatives from the United Kingdom and EEC, Japan, South-East Asia, the Middle East, USA and Canada. These speakers were ably supported by representatives from the export and domestic market meat trade in Australia.

During 1974, the Victorian Herd Improvement Association, which had been administered by the RASV for many years, combined with the Artificial Breeders' Association to become the Herd Improvement Organisation. The new body decided to move its secretariat from the RASV, as did the Australian South Devon Breeders' Association.

A new Society to come under the RASV umbrella was the Maine-Anjou Cattle Breeders' Association of Australia, thus giving the RASV forty-eight breed societies and allied organisations, for which it carried out secretarial duties.

Honorary Life Councillors Lance Cunningham and Keith Drummond received congratulations on their elevation, and new Council members, Bruce Langlands, Colin Kelly and Sir Cecil Looker, were welcomed during the year. P. J. R. Steele resigned from the Council, and was elected Vice-Chairman of the Victorian Racing Club.

#### RURAL INDUSTRIES IN DOLDRUMS – DECISION ON TROTTING

The Annual Report for 1975 highlights the problems faced by the Society following the loss of the beef export markets, and those associated with the dairying industry. Relevant passages of the Report give an accurate assessment of the Society's situation in 1975, and record with disappointment the Government's handling of the trotting move:

It would be no exaggeration to say that the year just passed has been one of the most trying in the Society's long history. The country people have had a prolonged period of instability within their respective rural industries, resulting in extremely poor prices for their product, and have had to face the increasing costs without any avenues open to them to pass on, or ease, their burden.

This situation has naturally been reflected through Breed Societies.

In spite of these difficulties, the support for the Society, and allied bodies administered by the Society, had been most heartening. And as a result of this support, it is pleasing to report that a new entry figure of 33,319 total competitive entries, was established for the 1975 Royal Melbourne Show.

Major works carried out throughout 1975 included the removal of all the very old wooden stands on the south side of Brisbane Avenue, to make way for a lawn picnic area. This amenity was soon to disappear with the later construction of the new Government Pavilion. The woodchop arena was reconstructed, and additional facilities provided for competitors and the public, 'and is now a world class competition arena'. In the same area, the miniature train tracks were removed to create more leisure area for patrons, and also to accommodate a temporary bandstand for a new feature, the AMP Guest Bands performances throughout the Show period.

A note of impatience, disappointment and frustration appears in the Annual Report on redevelopment and trotting, as will be seen from the following extract:

this time was investigating every possible source of additional income as a buffer against the loss of trotting.

All members of the Council were saddened by the sudden death of Stan Turner on 12 October 1975. He had joined Council in 1964, and had contributed much to the Society, especially the Dairy Cattle Committee.

As a result of the change in the Society's constitution to add to Council the Minister of Agriculture, the President welcomed Hon. I. W. Smith as a member of Council. To fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr Turner, John Fiskien was elected to the Council, thus becoming the third generation of the Fiskien family to have served on the Council of the Society.

#### ROYAL SHOW EXTENDED TO TWELVE DAYS

In 1976 very dry conditions persisted throughout the State, with the first break in the weather coming in mid-August. These conditions, coupled with instability in most primary industries, especially those of dairying and beef, compounded the problems of the man on the land. It was with some trepidation, therefore, that Council looked at the prospects for the 1976 Royal Show. As it turned out, this apprehension was not fully justified, for once again, as has happened so many times in the Society's long history, support through the various organisations and exhibitors produced an all-time high entry figure of 35,145, which exceeded the 1975 record by 2,826 entries.

Throughout 1976, Council, following its 'open space' policy, decided to provide a new large picnic area in the main section of the Showgrounds. The complete block bordered by Degraes Street, Plummer Avenue, Brunton Avenue and Mitchell Street, was cleared of all stands, levelled off and sown to grass. During the 1976 Royal Show this area was used, when weather permitted, for the AMP Guest Bands. Other main improvements, especially the new Government Pavilion, were to further erode standholders' space, and cause resiting problems.

Immediately following the 1976 Royal Show, work was begun on the site for the new Government Pavilion. On an area of two acres, bounded by Epsom Road, Plummer Avenue, Peck Street and Brisbane Avenue, were many very old buildings including the Industrial Hall. This building was on site when the National Agricultural Society first took up the thirty acres of Crown Grant in 1883. Also in the area taken over for the new building was the small thoroughfare of Pearson Avenue, which connected Gibb Street with Peck Street.

Other changes during the year included extensive alterations to the Pigeon and Poultry Pavilions, the dog area, the western horse area, and the Cumming Stand.

Following Victorian Government's decision to move trotting from the Showgrounds to Moonee Valley Racecourse, the first meeting was held at the new venue on Saturday 30 October 1976. However, sixteen meetings were programmed for the Showgrounds track for the 1976-77 season, mainly to cover the dates when race meetings were listed for Moonee Valley on the Saturdays. The Society also agreed that the TCB administration retain offices at the Showgrounds for the time being.

The 1976 Royal Show was held from 15-26 September. This was the first occasion on which the Show ran for twelve days and ten nights. Fickle September weather, and the worsening economic situation reduced the aggregate attendance to 847,761; although





*R.A.S.V. President Peter Ronald and Councillor Hon. Vernon Wilcox present awards for display at 1975 Royal Show.*

cial dairy farmers. This competition was sponsored by Gippsland and Northern, and was named The Gippsland and Northern Commercial Dairy Herd of the Year award.

Although breed societies were feeling the economic pinch, the RASV continued its policy of subsidisation, and added three more minor organisations to its secretarial responsibilities: The Australian Nuffield Scholars' Association, The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, and the Victorian Horse Trials Club, thus increasing its involvement to fifty-three organisations.

#### OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

During 1975 the Society made an agreement with Pacific Outdoor Advertising, in which it appointed that body sole contractor for outdoor advertising within the Showgrounds for a period of three years. The terms of the agreement favoured the Society, which at



*The Prime Minister of Bahrain (Shaikh Sulman Alkahlifah) shares a joke with President Peter Ronald and the Minister of Agriculture the Hon. Ian Smith, MP, at the 1976 Royal Show.*

New attractions outside the arena included an exhibition and demonstration of past farming skills by Mr Bill Ronald. This feature was made up of an authentic blacksmith's shop, a number of old-time stationary engines, a chaffcutter, restored horsedrawn farm vehicles, and many old fashioned farm aids. Demonstrations were given in blacksmithing, sleeper-cutting, mortising fence posts, and numerous old farming practices.

#### CATTLE LEAVE EARLY

In an endeavour to assist cattle exhibitors with costs, the Society permitted exhibits, other than champions, to leave the Showgrounds on the last Friday evening of the Show. To keep faith with the public, the Society placed the male and female cattle champions of all the twenty-three breeds in No. 6 Cattle Pavilion for the last Saturday and Sunday. This Hall of Champions turned out to be one of the main features of the 1976 Royal Show.

#### DEATH OF FORMER SECRETARY-DIRECTOR AND COUNCILLORS

During 1976 Council and the Society suffered the loss of three outstanding Councillors. W. B. Boothby died on 6 August, H. T. C. Woodfull on 11 August, and L. S. K. Cunningham on 20 December. Mr Boothby was elected to Council in May 1951, and





*Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP, shows an interest in our fleeces at the 1976 Royal Show. R to L: Mrs Thatcher; Mr P. B. Ronald; Lady Winneke; His Excellency Sir Henry Winneke; Mr Vin. Tyquin.*

the highest aggregate for any Australian Royal Show for 1976, it was still well below the record of 1972.

A special guest of the President and Council was the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, leader of the British Conservative Party. Mrs Thatcher, with her husband, Mr Dennis Thatcher, and Mr A. Butler MP, lunched with the President and Mrs Ronald, and members of the Council and their ladies. Afterwards, the visitors were given a guided tour of the Showgrounds. Other special guests included His Excellency, Shaikh Khalifah bin Sulman Alkahlifah, Prime Minister of Bahrain, who was accompanied by his Ministers for Development and Industries, and State for Cabinet Affairs; and RAF Air Chief Marshal Sir Dennis Smallwood, accompanied by Group Captain and Mrs Dalston.

Included in the overall record entry for 1976, individual sections such as horses, dogs, cats, pigeons, viticulture, woodchopping, and photography all established new records. In the arena, new features included the mass display by the Victoria Police Department; the RASV Judging Championships; Youth, Sport and Recreation display; the Ride and Drive Championship, and the Golden Eagles' Parachute Team.



*Display in the Hall of Champions, 1976.*

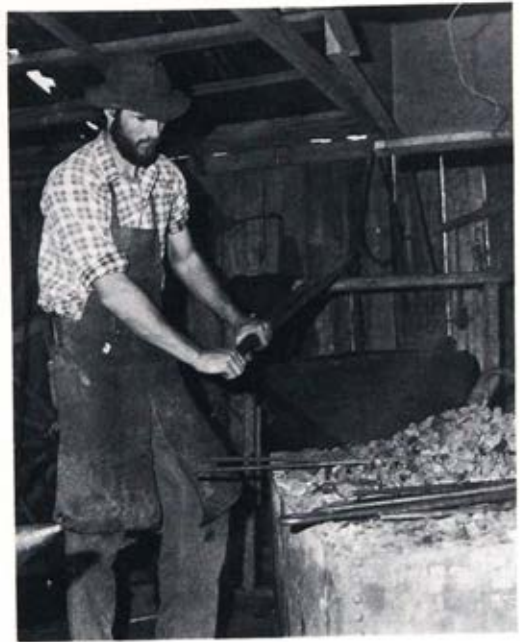
became an Honorary Life Councillor in 1971. During his twenty-six years on the Council, he was prominent as a member of the Beef and Fat Cattle Committee, Sheep Dog Competition, Centenary Hall and Farm Management Competition Committees. He was Chairman of the Farm Management Committee at the time of his death. Mr Colin Woodfull joined Council in June 1950, mainly through his interest in the Kennel Control Council, as a breeder and exhibitor of dogs.

In 1953, when Louis Monod resigned as the Society's Secretary through ill-health, Mr Woodfull was persuaded to leave the Council and take up the appointment of Secretary. Ten years later, in 1963, the designation was changed to Director, and he served in this capacity until his retirement in March 1973. During the twenty years in which he occupied the position of chief executive officer, the Society experienced the most progressive period in its history. In June 1968 he was honoured with the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for service to agriculture. On his retirement, Council changed the constitution of the Society and created him an Honorary Life Councillor.

Mr Lance Cunningham was elected to Council in 1954, also through his interest in the KCC. He became a Life Councillor in 1974. He was Vice-President of the Society from 1961-65 and a prominent member of the finance, dogs, media and public relations, Centenary Hall and other committees. In 1965 he was appointed Chairman of the



*Mr Bill Ronald works the Forge at the 'Village Smithy' display.*



Kennel Control Council, and held that appointment until 1972. In 1973 he became President of the fast growing KCC, and retained that position until his death.

Sir Edgar Coles was created an Honorary Life Councillor in 1976, and Ian K. Morton was elected to Council. The financial situation of the Society was at this time causing Council some concern. For three consecutive years, the organisation had recorded deficits, and in the 1976 Annual Report the President made these comments: 'It will be noted (in the financial statements) that costs have increased quite dramatically and this has placed the Society's affairs in a most unfortunate position.'

#### REDEVELOPMENT AND A NEW PRESIDENT

Immediately following the 1976 Royal Show work began on the new Victorian Government Pavilion. Costing \$1,800,000, this building was designed and constructed in only seven months. The contractors, Civil and Civic, carried out the project under the authority of the Victorian Public Works Department. Covering an area of 2,839 square metres (30,559 square feet), the exhibition areas are on two levels of almost equal dimensions, contained in a polygonal-shaped building, having twenty-four sides opening out from a central courtyard area. The pavilion includes a 300-seat theatre and conference room, storeroom, workshop, administration area and all other facilities, including car parking, to make it completely self-contained. During the 1977 Royal Show it accommodated nineteen Government Departments.

Another major project during 1976-77 was the extension of the dog-showing complex. To enable the extension of the Dog Pavilion along the Epsom Road frontage, it

was necessary to demolish the Society's manager's residence. This well-constructed, solid brick structure was erected in 1913 on the Epsom Road frontage of the land transferred from the VRC, later to become the Crown Grant. This residence served two manager-secretaries, Henry Schwieger and Louis Monod, and from the early 1950s, Alex Drew, the grounds manager.



*The Victorian Government Pavilion 1977; taken from across Epsom Road.*

The new extensions, built and financed by the Kennel Control Council of Victoria, cost approximately \$580,000, the first phase of a complex expected to cost \$1,000,000. Further improvements during this year were made in Lennon Avenue, where the old buildings on the railway boundary housed the Victoria Police Exhibit, the wild life exhibit and Anderson's furniture stand (the last remaining furniture stand on the grounds). These were all demolished to make way for a new Animal Nursery costing \$150,000, which was provided by the National Bank. This new building covered an area of approximately 17,500 square feet, extended over the full length of the Hall of Commerce, and backed on to the Society's southern boundary of the railway line. The construction created a covered walkway along Lennon Avenue for the length of the Hall of Commerce.

For many years Council was concerned with the effect of electrolysis on the roof of the A. G. Hunter Stand, and by 1976 the decomposition of the iron necessitated the complete reroofing of this building, at a cost of \$50,000. Other major works of note included the construction of toilets for handicapped persons; the resiting of the International (South African) Pavilion, (later renamed the Epsom Road Meeting Room), and



other stands from the two-acre area required for the Victorian Government Pavilion; a new section of brick fencing along Epsom Road; the installation of ten mercury vapour lights for the arena, and other alterations and improvements costing in all just on \$75,000.

A new concept in kiosks was a building erected in Plummer Avenue behind the Chirnside and Cliff Stands, for O'Brien Catering and Four'n Twenty Pies. This construction was of circular design, supporting a huge arch-type structure, and cost \$80,000. To make way for the new kiosk, the old Showgrounds post office building was demolished. Originally this service was the first fully operative post office on any Australian showgrounds, and during the Second World War, it served the thousands of RAAF personnel stationed on the grounds from 1940-46. The service was moved to the AMATIL (British Tobacco) Pavilion in 1965, and a few years later into a mobile office outside the Amatil building, on the small lawn in Lennon Avenue and Degraes Street. Also in Plummer Avenue on the south side of O'Brien's building, the Benson Trading Company erected a new building at the cost of \$60,000. All in all, just on \$3,000,000 was spent on the improvements to the Showgrounds between the 1976 and 1977 Shows.

This redevelopment, which cost such a huge amount, the greatest ever expended in one year, proved a fitting climax to Peter Ronald's term as President of the Society. In his four years he had devoted his full time to the Society and its interests, he had lobbied parliamentarians from the Premier to back-benchers, he had fought frantically against the move of trotting from the Showgrounds to Moonee Valley, and when this failed, he sought and obtained a Government commitment for a new Government Pavilion and compensation. During his term he did much to improve relations between the Society, exhibitors and standholders, but most of all he was responsible for creating better relations with the Essendon City Council and the Melbourne City Council. It is recorded that he did not refuse one invitation to represent the Society at any function, whether it were from the smallest country agricultural society, to open a show; officiating at a field day or symposium; or a Government House reception. At the Annual General Meeting in March 1977 he did not seek re-election as President, and Mr R. T. Balderstone was elected.

The 1977 Royal Melbourne Show was held from 14-25 September, and resulted in an attendance of 873,532, which although just on 26,000 higher than the wet year of 1976, prompted the following comment from the new President in the 1977 Annual Report:

The Royal Show 1977 was well conducted, smooth running, and trouble free but disappointing in attendance.

It is a matter of concern that, despite good weather and many improvements, the attendance in 1977 represents an increase of only 3.06 per cent over 1976. Considering that 1976 was a year of inclement weather, this result becomes even more disturbing.

In defence of the attendance drop the report went on to say:

Attendances appear to be decreasing at race meetings, trotting meetings and VFL football matches, perhaps due to money being spent in other directions, such as Tattsлото, bingo and coloured television.

Your Council is keenly aware of the challenge in this situation and fully realises the urgent necessity to attract larger crowds by providing continually improving and more entertaining Royal Shows.

breed societies, the Beef Shorthorn Society of Australia (Federal Council), and the Red Angus Beef Cattle Society of Australia, transferred their secretariats from the RASV.

For the fourth consecutive year the Society's financial position showed a deficit, and the following reference to the position is made in the 1977 Annual Report:

The financial statements of the Society as contained in this Report disclose a deficit for the year 1977 of \$133,393.

Extraordinary costs were incurred in the extensive building programme which was carried out, and is covered earlier in the Report.

Despite the financial help received, the Society had to face up to demolition and removal costs in the area of the new Animal Nursery, the Government Pavilion, and the Plant Nursery.

From the time the move of trotting became imminent, Council devoted its main thrust towards greater use of the Showgrounds, and a quote from the 1977 Annual Report indicates that this policy was becoming fruitful:

Throughout the year various organisations conducted yearling sales, thoroughbred sales and other stock sales, cooking lessons and demonstrations (organised by the Victorian Egg Marketing Board, involving groups from metropolitan and country areas), dog shows, cat shows and poultry shows.

The Australian Pony Stud Book Show, conducted annually, is considered to be the largest of its type in the world, and the Barastoc Horse of the Year, rates as a must on the Australian horse calendar of events.

Sport also has its part with basketball being played nightly and soccer each fortnight. Melbourne's largest carpet auction is conducted every two weeks, and large commercial exhibitions by such organisations as Mat-Pak Pty Ltd and Civenex Pty Ltd, are held with great support and success.

Add to all this activity the creche, which caters for forty-five children daily, and meetings of many breed societies, the Yooralla Week-End Market and Telethon Auction; the holding of twelve night trotting meetings a year and trotting training taking place on a daily basis, and it makes the Showgrounds a very busy place.

The 1970s had so far produced a mixture in the fortunes of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and the Royal Melbourne Show. The Society continued to encourage the formation of new breed societies which reached a peak of fifty-three in 1975. However, rising costs, especially in salaries and the equal pay decision, compounded by the long lasting rural recession, forced a number of breed societies to cut their activities to a minimum, and in a number of instances move their administrative work away from the RASV.

#### A NEW PAVILION, MORE IMPROVEMENTS AND A ROYAL VISITOR

The year 1978 started on a positive and optimistic note for the Society. For a number of years Council had endeavoured to arrange a Royal visit to coincide with the Royal Melbourne Show, but had not been successful; the last such occasion was in 1959 when the young Princess Alexandra of Kent had performed the official opening. So when early in the year word was received that Princess Alexandra would make a return visit to Australia, and had accepted the Society's invitation to open the 1978 Royal Show, it was planned to make it a memorable occasion.



At the 1977 Royal Show the total entries were 35,897, topping the previous record in 1976 by 752. Although five individual records were established within the horse section, there was an overall drop from 7,162 in 1976 to 7,021 in 1977. In the cattle sections, fat cattle entries increased by 42; beef by 194; and dairy classes by 171. There was an overall increase of 102 entries in the sheep classes. Showing of dogs and cats continued to boom, with overall dog entries reaching an all time record of 6,991, and cats also created new figures with 2,470. Two new breeds of beef cattle made their first appearance at the 1977 Melbourne Royal, these were the Belted Galloways and Maine Anjou.

There were two commemorative events staged in conjunction with the 1977 Royal Show, one being the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth, and the other the celebration of a century since the first Galloway Herd Book was established. To commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the Silver Jubilee Commemorative Organisation, in conjunction with the Society, made available special trophies and ribbons for selected sections within the Royal Show. The same organisation met the cost of one of the six fireworks displays held during the Show. For its part in the Breed's centenary celebrations, the Galloway Cattle Society issued special ribbons, sashes, trophies and medallions.

The official opening of the 1977 Royal Show was conducted on Saturday 17 September by His Excellency, The Hon. Sir John Kerr, Governor-General of Australia and Patron-in-Chief of the Society. Other members of the official party included Lady Kerr; the Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Malcolm Fraser, and Mrs Fraser; the US Ambassador, His Excellency Mr P. H. Alston and Mrs Alston; the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. R. J. Hamer and Mrs Hamer; the Rt Hon. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr I. Rockman and the Lady Mayoress; and His Worship the Mayor of Essendon, Cr I. Blair and Mrs Blair.

International visitors during the Show included a delegation from the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, and His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador, Mr Okawarra, accompanied by Mrs Okawarra.

To keep producers and interested meat trade people informed on current trends within the meat industry, the RASV, in conjunction with the Australian Meat Board, conducted another Meat Industry Symposium at Flemington Racecourse on Sunday 18 September. This function was chaired by the Australian Meat Board Chairman, Colonel McArthur, and was officially opened by the Rt Hon. Ian Sinclair, Minister for Primary Industry and Leader in the House of Representatives. Over 500 people attended, including visitors from the USA and Japan.

The arena programme for the 1977 Royal Show closely followed those of the two previous years, with the exception of two additional fireworks displays, making six in all for the whole Show period. Council members were disappointed once again in the poor attendance on the second Sunday, and this additional day also concerned standholders, who were committed to paying penalty rates in wages to their employees.

In an endeavour to keep Society members and those of breed societies better informed on RASV matters, Council resolved to launch a monthly magazine in April 1978. The publication was to use the title of 'The Royal'.

During the year the Society accepted the secretarial responsibility for three further organisations; the Victorian Branch of the Angus Society, the Angora-Mohair Association of Australia, and the Australian Ayrshire Breeders' Association. However, two other

The Annual Report goes on to say:

During the year the new Dog Complex was completed by the Kennel Control Council at a total cost exceeding \$600,000.

A new Children's Palace has been erected in a prominent position in Plummer Avenue, and will be used as a theatre during each Royal Show.

On the opposite side of Plummer Avenue, another building incorporating toilets adds to the 'new' look of the main thoroughfare.

Among the numerous other improvements made, the almost complete rebuilding of the vehicle shed in the Heavy Horse area, and the further upgrading of the arena lighting with mercury vapour lights are probably the most important. Considerable maintenance in re-roofing, painting and roadworks – a never-ending task – was also achieved.

The Society welcomed to Council distinguished industrialist Sir Ian McLennan, elected in February 1978. He replaced Mr G. R. Starritt, who was elevated to Life Councillor of the Society. During the year Council was saddened by the death of two members, Mr T. N. Mitchell, who died in June and Mr H. F. Yuncken, who died in December. The late Mr Mitchell joined the Council in December 1943; was Vice-President from 1950-53; President from 1953-57, and was made an Honorary Life Councillor in 1963. And although incapacitated by illness during his closing years, he was still able to render service to the Society up until the time of his death. The late Mr Yuncken joined the Council in 1957, and served over a period of twenty-one years on six different sectional committees, and was for some time one of the Society's representatives on the Trotting Control Board. He was elected an Honorary Life Councillor in 1977.

The 1978 Royal Melbourne Show started on 20 September and ran through to the 30 September. With everything set for a bumper Show, the attendances did not live up to expectations, as revealed in the President's Annual Report for 1978:

Almost perfect weather by day and somewhat cooler nights brought 862,926 people to the Show. It is always disappointing when the attendance figure is less than that of the previous year, but when one takes into consideration the cancellation of the second Sunday, the attendance was only 10,606 less than in 1977. The fall away in evening attendances continues to cause us concern, and needs re-appraisal.

The Council realises that attendances must be increased and efforts will be made to attract those who appear to attend the Show irregularly. It is pleasing to acknowledge the general improvement in farming, particularly in the beef and dairy industries, and I trust this will see more country people return to the Show.

The total competitive entries numbered 39,217, an increase of 3,320 on the 1977 record. In the horse section there was an overall increase of eighty-nine entries, the beef cattle entries decreased by twenty-one, the dual purpose breeds increased by ten, and the dairy breeds by two hundred and forty-seven. Three cattle breeds made their first showing in competition, these were: Chainina, Lincoln Red and Australian Shorthorns. All-time records were established in classes for Poll Shorthorns, Murray Greys, Braford, Brangus, Charolais, Simmental and Limousin cattle.

The sheep section entries were 143 above those of 1977, with increases in almost every breed. Other sections recording increases on the previous year were: wood-chopping, arts and crafts and dogs – all with record entries – while pigs, poultry, pigeons, wines, dairy and farm produce and apiculture, all had increased entries on 1977. The horticulture section made an auspicious return to the Royal Show, with an overall entry





*H.R.H. Princess Alexandra opening the 1978 Royal Show.*

*H.R.H. Princess Alexandra after opening the P. B. Ronald Pavilion is escorted on an inspection of the Show by R.A.S.V. President Bob Balderstone, 1978.*



At the Annual Meeting Mr Balderstone was re-elected President unopposed; a fitting decision, as he had been one of the prime movers in advocating a Royal visit for a number of years. From the 1978 Annual Report the following extract details the improvements to the Grounds since 1977:

In the period between the 1977 and 1978 Royal Shows a new pavilion was started and completed. This magnificent pavilion replaces a motley collection of old structures in the centre of the Showgrounds, and we were indeed pleased to honour my predecessor for his untiring efforts over many years in many official capacities, by naming this pavilion the P. B. Ronald Pavilion.

The pavilion is a complex of two floors with a total exhibition space of approximately 1,670 square metres – at a cost of \$483,657. The finance for this building will be provided through a yearly grant by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, and we thank the Minister, the Hon. Brian Dixon; the Director, Mr B. A. Keddie, and the staff of the Department for the assistance given in this respect.

This new pavilion is situated in the area between Munro Street in the east, the Hall of Commerce in the west, Plummer Avenue to the north, and Lennon Avenue in the south. The 'motley collection of old structures', included Steele's, Brashes, and the old ICI Commonwealth Fertiliser buildings.

The Society has by tight control over expenditure during the year improved its cash position which was aggravated by the extraordinary costs incurred in the extensive building programme in 1977.

A noteworthy advance during 1978 was the move by the Society, encouraged by the Victorian Government, to install an ICL 2903 computer. It was helped by programmes from System Aid Ltd of the United Kingdom.

The Kennel Control Council records and registrations have been transferred over to this system, thus providing additional relevant information not easily available from manual records and registers. It is expected that various other accounting and membership records will be transferred to the computer at an appropriate time, with the resulting increase in efficiency and a reduction in costs.

The departure of full-time trotting from the Showgrounds created a vacuum, which to this point had not been satisfactorily filled by any comparable main arena replacement. However, over the past two years the Society has been able to encourage much greater use of the whole Showgrounds area by an increasing number of outside organisations, thus slowly realising the policy for the greater use of the Showgrounds between Royal Shows.

In this regard it is of interest to note the following 'between Shows' activities on the grounds for 1978. On the main arena, there were eight trotting meetings; horse shows and equestrian activities, eight days; sheep dog trials, three days; soccer, thirteen days; football training, twenty days; Rotary Club function, two days, and Marching Girls Association, one day. Outside the main arena there was also increased activity. The dog showing complex catered for sixty-two dog shows; in the Poultry Pavilion and Pigeon Pavilion, there were five shows; the Feline Fancy held three shows, and there were seven shows for rabbits. The grounds were used for fifteen horse sales; six goat shows and sales, and one cattle sale.

Demonstrations and exhibitions occupied areas of the grounds for thirteen days as follows: industrial exhibition, seven days; fencing demonstration, one day; vintage cars, one day; model truck exhibition, two days, and a construction equipment auction was held on two days.

A book promotion occupied the Sheep Pavilion from November to March, and toy sales were conducted on three days. The Australian Sheepbreeders' Association Annual Sheep Show and Sales was held over three days in July, and the Wine Show in August. Basketball is played five nights each week, and bingo, one night weekly from March to August. The Victorian Government Pavilion was used for twenty-four days and nights for seminars, Apprenticeship Week etc.

When the ongoing activities such as the child-minding centre, the carpet sales in No. 1 Pavilion and the Yooralla functions in the Hall of Manufactures, are added to the above, it becomes an imposing list, and indicates, with credit, the administration's efforts to carry out Council policy for greater use of this complex.

The RASV has continued its long-established role in the formation of new breed societies and allied organisations, and in 1978 were administering forty-eight such bodies. Of this total, thirty-five were stock breed societies which include eleven dealing with beef cattle, two with dual purpose cattle, three breeds of dairy cattle, twelve breeds of sheep and associated activities, one breed of goats, one pig breeders' society and five horse societies.



of 826. These exhibits were shown to great advantage in the newly built P. B. Ronald Pavilion.

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the formation of the Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society, the RASV organised four special parades of Clydesdale exhibits during the Show. We take this further extract from the 1978 Annual Report, which covers the visit by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra of Kent to the show:

The most outstanding event of the year was undoubtedly the visit by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra and her husband, the Honorable Angus Ogilvy. It is nineteen years since we were last honoured by a visit from Her Royal Highness, and once again she proved a most charming guest with a natural friendliness to everyone.

Saturday 23 September dawned brightly and although we did experience some cloud and a few spots of rain during her visit, we were pleased that the weather remained reasonably fine thus allowing a large number of people to see Her Royal Highness at close quarters, and she obviously enjoyed stopping to talk to many in the crowd.

Her Royal Highness consented to open the P. B. Ronald Pavilion and then proceeded to view the exhibits of arts and crafts and horticulture, before walking with her party through the Animal Nursery to Centenary Hall, where she watched some shearing, and then continued on to the Hunter Stand, where an official luncheon was held in her honour.

Her Royal Highness officially opened the Show after inspecting the guard of honour by the Royal Australian Air Force, the Victoria Mounted Police Escort, and the Victoria Police Band. Among the distinguished company of guests were the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. Malcolm Fraser and Mrs Fraser; the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. R. J. Hamer and Mrs Hamer; the Rt Hon. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr I. Rockman and the Lady Mayoress, and His Worship the Mayor of Essendon, Cr K. A. F. Readwin and Mrs Readwin.

The 1978 Royal Show arena programme was again one of non-stop action, covering all types of horse events and demonstrations, from led class judging to trick riding and dressage demonstrations. The Grand Parade continued to be the most popular arena event, with the fireworks displays also drawing big crowds. Items such as precision driving in cars and in large prime movers, flat track displays, parachuting, massed bands, sheep dog trials, obedience dog displays, campdrafting, tent pegging and displays by the Victoria Mounted Police and the Police Motor Cycle Squad, provided an arena programme which catered for all tastes.

Supporting attractions outside the arena also received good public support, especially the record dog section, the ever popular Animal Nursery, the woodchopping events, the Centenary Hall programme and the AMP Guest Bands. But without a doubt the main attraction outside the main arena was the P. B. Ronald Pavilion, which housed classes of arts and crafts and horticulture. The return of the competitive horticulture classes brought displays and exhibits from horticultural societies and garden clubs, besides the displays from nurserymen not seen on the Showgrounds for many years. This new attraction, in such excellent surroundings, drew capacity crowds throughout the whole Show period.

All in all, the 1978 Royal Show was a great success, and deserved greater public support than it received. But the attendance aside, this Show reversed the sliding financial trend that the Society had experienced for the previous four years, and prompted the President, Mr Balderstone, to make the following reference in his 1978 Annual Report:

The Financial Statements of this Society as contained in this Report disclose a surplus of \$76,835 for the year ending 31 December 1978.

This year also marked a milestone for Councillors Messrs H. L. Lyall and W. J. T. Clarke, the former having joined the Council in 1934, thus completing forty-five years of service, and equalling the long record of the late Sir Charles Merrett; and the latter, having completed forty-three years on the Council.

The 1979 Royal Show was conducted from 19-29 September, and started on a high note with total competitive entries of 37,562, which was only 1,655 less than the all-time record aggregate of 1978.

The attendance on the first day, Wednesday 19 September, was a record, and the Society looked set for an excellent result; however, the fickle September weather was to once again have a deciding influence on the overall attendances of 785,350, which was 77,576 short of the 1978 total.

The Annual Report for 1979 recorded the Show in the following terms:

The Show itself was an outstanding success, despite the fact that the last three days were marred by wet weather. Although attendances suffered slightly as a result, the quality of exhibits was without parallel; the arena programme was the most comprehensive the Society has ever undertaken. It was highlighted by the two magnificent bands of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards which rivalled the Grand Parade in drawing crowds to the arena area.

The Centenary Hall had a non-stop programme featuring the Australian Shearing Championships, the bands of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards; the New Hebridean Custom Dancing Troupe, and light entertainment.

The Centre Point proved an ideal venue for the Australian Wool Corporation's fashion parades, and the ever popular Puppet People.

It is interesting to note that the above attractions were all free of charge to Show patrons, as indeed were many others including: the animal nursery; the Government Pavilion; the meat demonstrations; international woodchopping; horticultural exhibits; arts and crafts exhibits; the dairy industry display; bands in concert; all livestock exhibits, and many other attractions. Any of these features would merit a substantial charge for admission if shown in a separate venue elsewhere.

For the first time in the history of the Society the official opening of the Show was held on a Sunday. It was performed by the Society's Patron-in-Chief, His Excellency, Sir Zelman Cowen, Governor-General of Australia, who was attending his first Royal Melbourne Show since assuming office. His Excellency was accompanied by Her Excellency Lady Cowen, Miss Kate Cowen in the official capacity of Lady-in-Waiting to her mother, and their fourteen year old son Benjamin. Other distinguished guests included the Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser and Mrs Fraser, the Premier of Victoria, Mr R. J. Hamer and Mrs Hamer, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr. Ralph Bernardi and the Lady Mayoress, the Mayor of Essendon, Cr. K. A. Dowling and the Mayoress Mrs D. Batman, also the newly appointed General Officer Commanding Logistics Command, Major General P. Gratton and Mrs Gratton.

Whether it was merely the inclement weather, or the rise in admission prices for adults from \$3 to \$4 which affected attendances at the 1979 Royal Show, is a matter of conjecture, but in his Annual Report for the year the President had this to say concerning the finances of the Society:

The Financial Statement of this Society as contained in the report discloses a deficit of \$98,480, after providing for depreciation of \$255,387 for the year ended 31 December 1979. Despite tight controls over expenditure, costs continued to increase. The result was affected by a lower than expected revenue from admissions, due to inclement weather during the latter part of the Show.



Besides the 'pure' breed societies mentioned, large bodies such as the Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association, the Victorian Young Farmers, the Kennel Control Council and Australian National Kennel Council, the Equestrian Federation of Australia, the Feline Control Council, all continued to be administered by the RASV. Nor is the Society's influence in land husbandry eroded, for it maintains the administration of the Farm Competitions Association, conducting cereal crop competitions; the Victorian Farm Management, Production and Improvement Competition; the Commercial Wool Flock of the Year Competition; the Commercial Beef Herd of the Year Competition, and a one hundred and thirty years continuity of ploughing with the National Ploughing Association. It also continues to foster that unobtrusive but vitally important service to the cattle and sheep producers, the Victorian Working Sheepdog Association.

In the administration of all these organisations and bodies, the RASV has been served throughout the years by a dedicated staff. These people, in many instances, have spent their whole working lives in advancing the cause of the RASV and breed societies, and but for their loyal and dedicated application, many breed societies would have long since disappeared, and Royal Shows would never have 'got off the ground'.

#### ANOTHER FIRE, A NEW PAVILION AND MORE OPEN SPACE

Although the year 1978 ended on a high note for the Society, its fortunes fluctuated in 1979. On 2 May the Dairy Industry Pavilion was completely destroyed by fire. To that time the old Dairy Pavilion was the second oldest existing building on the grounds, having been built in 1911. A special meeting of Council, held a week after the fire, resolved to proceed with a programme to replace the building at a cost of \$620,000. The project was to be carried out in two stages; stage one, costing \$450,000 to be completed and ready for occupancy by the Show, and stage two, the completed project, by the end of January 1980. The first stage was completed for the Show, thus enabling the Society to keep faith with the dairy industry.

The Society's decision to rebuild, and the speed with which the work was completed, led to a decision by the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority to further add to the complex by commissioning a new building in the shape of a 'Big M' carton on the adjacent site. The overall complex is valued at \$750,000.

Further improvements during the year included the demolition of a number of old stands, in the area bounded by Merrett Avenue and McCracken Avenue between McGregor Street and Epsom Road, to make way for a new open area for agricultural machinery displays. In addition, an amount of \$500,000 was spent on maintenance around the grounds.

At the Annual Meeting the President, Mr R. T. Balderstone, was re-elected for a third term. The members of Council were saddened by the news of the death of Kenneth P. Palmer, who had been a member of the RASV Council since 1962. A forward-thinking innovator, he was closely associated with the beef and fat cattle sections of the Society, and closely involved with past RASV-Australian Meat Board activities. A well-known vigneron from Avoca, J. S. A. Robb, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr Palmer. Past President Peter Ronald was awarded the CMG in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, and received the congratulations of all members of the Council.

Other major works included: the first stage of redevelopment of the Ringmaster's office complex, the demolition of the old casualty room, redecking of the Gibsonia Stand, remodelling of turnstiles at the railways entrance, improvements to sheeters' facilities, and construction of a new upper stage in Centenary Hall. The year also saw complete renovation of the Hall of Commerce, redevelopment of the Ford Pavilion and associated buildings for a Roller Disco Centre, and construction of new offices for the Public Relations staff, on the ground floor of the Administrative building.

Of particular significance was the construction of an all-weather woodchop arena, undertaken by the Boral-Cyclone Group, at the cost of \$100,000. Other improvements included the upgrading of the arena lighting, improvements to the Woodfull Pavilion, the redevelopment of the racecourse underpass incorporating new landscaping and kerbing, new lighting and more directional signs; and completion of the Dairy Industry Pavilion.

In May 1980, the Society's director, Harley Clappison, announced his wish to retire. His request was acceded to by Council at its May meeting, and his retirement was to become effective from February 1981. In his Annual Report for 1980 the President referred to Mr Clappison's retirement as follows:

The Council and indeed the Society as a whole, recognise the great contribution the Director has made in the areas of Showgrounds development and the Show itself, and this will stand as a credit to his drive and organising ability.

Council appointed Mr J. B. Parry as Mr Clappison's successor in the position of chief executive officer, as from February 1981.

Entering the new decade, the Society was servicing fifty-four breed societies and allied organisations. In 1980 four new bodies were added, these were: the Australian Council of Rural Youth, the Australian Donkey Breed Society, Sharlea Ultra Fine Society of Australia, and the Victorian Stud Beef Cattle Breeders' Association. Two organisations left the RASV administration, the Dookie Field Day Committee – now handled by the Dookie Agricultural College – and the Farm Competitions Association, which after a long struggle, went into recess.

#### THE FAMILY TICKET COMES BACK

In an effort to attract more people to the Show, especially family groups, Council agreed to reintroduce the family concession admission ticket for the 1980 Royal Show, and at the same time, not to increase admission charges from those of 1979. Family tickets were first introduced in 1957, but due to administrative problems, were discontinued in the mid-1960s. Two forms of family concessions were offered for the 1980 Show; one admitted two adults and two children for \$9, the other catered for one adult and three children for \$6. In each case the amount saved represented the admission cost of one child (\$1).

The Royal Show City Parade was again staged on Monday 15 September, and was equally as successful as the previous three, with over seventy individual participants. The 1980 Royal Show was held from 17-27 September, and attracted an attendance of 822,110, over its eleven days and nine nights, an increase of 36,760 on the previous year.



Referring to the Society's agricultural extension work in the report, the President went on to say:

While the Royal Show achieved its purpose by providing such a high standard of excellence in all sections, and bringing to the city people a better understanding and knowledge of country life, there are other activities of the Society, not so widely recognised, which are as much a part of its charter as the organising of the Show.

Just as the Royal Show is centred around competition, so are the agricultural extension activities which the Society conducts throughout the year.

These include five competitions each culminating in a Field Day held on the property of the winning owner; and acting as a stimulus to improve the excellence of the branch of farming for which the competition was designed. I would expect that competitions of this nature will assume a much more important role in the Society's future work.

The past decade has brought its problems and rewards to the RASV. It has included the beef cattle boom, collapse and revival, the stabilisation of the wool and grains industries, and the reconstruction of the dairying industry. It has witnessed the explosion of three 'hobby' sections – horses, dogs and cats – into industry status, sometimes with embarrassing consequences for Royal Show accommodation. But in all instances the challenge has been met and resolved.

The same period has seen the gradual redevelopment of sections of the Showgrounds, with the demolition of a number of very old buildings and structures, and the building of new facilities, such as the Mitchell and Wilson Stands, No. 6 Cattle Pavilion, the Victorian Government Pavilion, the dog showing complex, the P. B. Ronald Pavilion, and the first stage of the new Dairy Industry Pavilion. More picnic areas have been created, and the overall appearance of the entire area has improved considerably.

Both the Royal Show attendances and entries reached their peak in this period. The huge attendance total of 916,730 has stood since 1972, but entries are still climbing, and the total of 39,217 established in 1978 is the greatest by far for any Australian Royal Show.

Over the years, the Society's barometer of well being has been reflected through the Royal Show competitive entries, indicating support from all sections of the community. If this is a true indicator, then the RASV at the end of the 1970s, was in good shape.

#### MORE IMPROVEMENTS AND THE DIRECTOR RETIRES

Although the last year of the 1970s was a disappointing one financially, the Society entered the new decade with a quiet confidence. Just about all of the rural industries were back on an even keel, and industry and commerce interests were again slowly becoming involved with extra sponsorships and support. In preparation for the 1980 Royal Show, the Society's expenditure on buildings and improved facilities amounted to \$1,150,000, with an additional \$250,000 used on Showgrounds maintenance. Almost a quarter of the capital works expenditure was used to improve catering facilities on the grounds. The Royal Luncheon Block was upgraded and refurbished; a log cabin style take-away food facility was constructed at the rear of the Administrative building; and improvements were made to the horse exhibitors' bar, and the catering facilities in the dog showing complex.

Entries again topped 37,000 (37,515) for the third time, and were only 1,702 short of the record of 1978. New records were established in horses, sheep, and beef cattle breeds.

The 1980 Royal Show pulled the Society 'out of the red', with a surplus of \$3,382, as compared with a deficit of \$98,480 in the previous year. The President said: 'Tight controls kept the additional costs lower than the increase in revenue. The result was affected by a greater than expected increase in attendance, and a higher return from space and ground rentals.'

#### CHANGE OF SHOW DATE CONSIDERED

Almost from the time of the first show at the Ascot Vale grounds in 1883, Council has periodically studied and reviewed the advisability of retaining the Spring Show, or changing to the Autumn. The subject again arose in 1980 and is covered in the Annual Report thus:

The subject of a change of date for the Royal Melbourne Show is one of such importance, and creates so much speculation in the press, that I feel mention must be made of it.

The matter is under continual review, indeed has been for the last twenty years, and there is now a very thick file covering all aspects of it.

With the advent of colour television and its general appeal, the cold September nights do not attract a satisfactory evening attendance, and this has concerned us for some time remembering that one of our major objectives is to let as many city people as possible see what the country is producing.

It has become an even greater problem to keep the Royal Show date under review since the VFL extended their season by one week to stage the grand final on our last day, thereby creating tremendous publicity during that week to the detriment of our Show, and commenced the televising of the grand final which has brought about a reduction in the Show's final Saturday crowd of approximately twenty per cent.

The subject of Show dates was discussed immediately after the 1980 Show. There existed the possibility that if the 1981 Show could be conducted two weeks later, we would avoid the above problem and may have the honour of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, opening it. This was appealing; however, at the moment, the Council realises they are 'locked in' to the present dates and many Victorian and Tasmanian shows are involved in any alternative dates as is the VRC, and it would be impossible for the RASV to stage the Show without the VRC's parking facilities.

Protests at any move were received from a number of organisations, and from breed societies where breeding dates for show exhibitors are so important.

The Government is keen to see a move and thereby spread out Melbourne's attractions, but there appears to be no easy solution.

Council will continue to carefully watch the position and alternatives. The Royal Show is, and must remain, the number one, the premier Show of the State, and every effort will be made to keep it that way.

During the year, the Society lost a most distinguished Life Councillor with the death of Mr Harry L. Lyall, on 15 March, at the age of 88 years. Mr Lyall became a member of Council in October 1935, and was created a Life Councillor in March 1957. In a period of distinguished service, the late Mr Lyall held the positions of assistant ringmaster and ringmaster, and was also a member of the finance, catering, space, entertainment, and horticultural committees.

In August 1980, two members of the Council, J. W. Kelly and J. W. D. Ward, were elected Life Councillors. And at the December meeting, Council welcomed John Balfour



Brown and Ian Starritt to the Council to fill the vacancies created by the elevation of Messrs Kelly and Ward.

#### SUMMARY

To this time no mention has been made of the huge number of voluntary workers associated with the running of the Royal Melbourne Show, including the hundreds of stewards. These people are vital to the success of this great annual event, they return year after year – some having served for more than forty years – do their respective tasks without fuss, and with outstanding efficiency.

Another group which must be mentioned in association with the Society and the Royal Show, are the sponsors and donors, for without their financial support the RASV would be sorely pressed to conduct a Royal Show of the present magnitude.

Little mention has been made of the 'showies', that group which has been a vital part of Royal Shows since the early days of the Port Phillip District, and has provided the necessary amusements and entertainments for Show patrons for over one hundred and thirty years. Furthermore, the 'showies' have provided the RASV with revenue for space occupied on the Showgrounds.

The RASV is a unique organisation, its influence and that of its predecessors on stud stock breeding and land husbandry stems from the earliest days of 'The Settlement', when it was the only body capable and willing to foster stock and agricultural pursuits in the new land. In those early days the RASV received full support from all sections of the community, and this support continues today. As in the past the Society met challenges and overcame problems, all the present indications point to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria continuing its vital role in promoting all aspects of agricultural advancement, into Victoria's future.

So after more than one hundred and thirty years of continuous service and application to the farmers, stock breeders and all rural industries, the RASV enters the decade of the 1980s with confidence, as well as with the continuing challenge to provide the necessary leadership in the everchanging technology within the rural industries.

The first Council of 1871 had among its members well known stud breeders, including those of Merino sheep, Shorthorn cattle, and others, thus setting a pattern of breeder representation, and in some cases domination, of the Council in future years. However, this breeder domination did not particularly apply to Merino sheep breeders, for after the formation of the Australian Sheepbreeders' Association in 1877, most of the Merino breeders found that it was more profitable to show and sell at the Association's Show, which was always conducted earlier than the Royal, and consequently did not disrupt their shearing programmes. Nevertheless some of the best known breeders of Merino sheep, such as Frederick Peppin and William Learmonth, have held office on the Council of the Society.

But apart from the Merino sheep breeders, as the variety of breeds of stock exhibited at the Show increased, so correspondingly did stud representation on the Council. A typical example is that of the Ayrshire breeders, whose stock outnumbered and dominated the dairy cattle section between 1900–1920, with the result that in 1911 there were five Councillors representing the interests of the Ayrshire breed. Throughout the history of the Council just about all interests have been represented, but livestock interests have always outnumbered others. There have been few crop farmers, but machinery interests have been represented by people such as Hugh Lennon, Charles Merrett, the Mitchell and McKay families, and stock, station and produce agents by Matthew McCaw, David Whitely, E. Trenchard, H. H. Peck, H. L. Howe and others. Flour millers, grain merchants, owners of meatworks – all with commercial interests directly linked to agriculture – have from time to time occupied places on the Council. These include: Hon. William Degraives, Hon. Thomas Brunton, H. L. Lyall and W. Cockbill, Sir William Angliss, Arthur Angliss and others.

The first Council of the NASV in 1871 contained thirty-two members, with one half retiring annually, but at a special meeting of members in 1903, the rules were amended to increase the Council to thirty-three, and to provide for one-third instead of one half to retire annually. To bring this into effect, the whole Council was to retire at the following annual election, 'and their positions be afterwards determined by their order on the poll'.

The Council in 1980 consists of thirty-three members, twenty appointed Honorary Life Councillors, the Minister of Agriculture, and four trustees. Councillors (not including Life Councillors) hold office for three years, one-third retiring annually in rotation and eligible for re-election. There have been instances in the past where some groups seeking entry into the management of the affairs of the Society have complained of the difficulty in disturbing the status quo. The first challenge from a 'reform' group attempting to upset the then existing structure came in 1899 from persons representing the farm machinery and implement interests; fifty years later another group representing light horse interests also made a move to reform the Council.

In the attempted coup of 1899, the *Farmer and Grazier* publication of February of that year reported as follows:

The idea is prevalent that the influence of the present members of the Council is so great amongst the voters that it precludes the possibility of outsiders getting in. The defeat of the machinery and implement candidates will be regarded as a further evidence of this. We are of a different opinion . . . First it is necessary that the machinery, implement and dairy people should be prepared to put forward a couple of candidates for the next election (not half a



## ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

THE PORT PHILLIP Farmers' Society failed in the late 1860s through its own rules which restricted its activities to the Port Phillip District of the new colony. And likewise, the Board of Agriculture failed when Government policy concerning Boards and their authority to distribute public funds was changed. This left the Colony of Victoria without any form of agricultural authority or guidance, a void which was filled with the formation of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria in December 1870.

The founders of the NASV were determined that the new Society would not be strangled by a limited area in which to operate, hence the title 'National' to cover the entire colony and beyond. They also wished to make sure that the new body would operate without statutory backing in order to prevent a repetition of the fate of the Board of Agriculture.

### ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF COUNCIL

The old PPFS created Life Governors within its structure, this privilege was obtained simply by paying a higher membership fee than that paid by the ordinary member. The governors elected all office bearers from among their own number, including the President, Vice-Presidents, trustees, secretary, treasurer and a committee of eight.

When the NASV was formed, thirty-nine PPFS Life Governors were admitted as governors of the new society which continued to recruit in the same manner, and from this group the first NASV Council which was elected in 1871. This consisted of a President, six Vice-Presidents, twenty-five councillors and three trustees.

The election of office bearers and Council members by governors continued until 1883, after which Council began electing its own President and Vice-Presidents. In the same year Council rescinded the rule which had prohibited any one man from holding the office of President for two years in succession. And since that time several long terms of office have occurred, the longest being that served by Charles Merrett, who was elected President in 1915 and stepped down in 1947.

remaining names count equally – see illustrations), this method of support could now prove most expensive.

In 1949, yet another attempt was made to upset the balance of power in Council by a group of candidates representing the light horse exhibitors. It was their contention that the 1948 Royal Show ring events were a shambles, and something had to be done about it. Their grievances were supported by the press of the day, which made special reference to the Garryowen Trophy event and the Alice Laidlaw Trophy.

The Garryowen event started two hours late, and finished in the dark, just prior to the beginning of the evening programme. And in the Alice Laidlaw stir, the visiting equestrian judge from England, Arthur Baxter, refused to award the trophy, and walked off the arena saying he would never return to it. The fuss began with the interpretation of the conditions governing the event, which stated that the award be made to 'the best lady rider over hurdles'. Mr Baxter said Mrs Kath Kearns should be awarded the trophy, for although she had not won an event over hurdles, she had won over fences, and he considered that fences were a better test than hurdles. But the Arena Control Committee of the RASV (Messrs A. G. Hunter and H. Howe), decided that the wording of the official catalogue favoured Miss Kath Lucas as winner, and the award was made accordingly. (The conditions of the Alice Laidlaw Memorial Trophy now state that it will be awarded for 'the best lady rider over "obstacles" about 3ft 6ins high'.)

The editor of the *Australian Farm and Home* of 1 February 1949 took the Reform Party to task in no uncertain manner, and extracts from his editorial indicate the feeling in existence over this period:

During this month of February there will be an election which should be of vital importance and interest to members of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, now numbering approximately 8,000. This election involves that one-third portion of the RAS Council which retires annually after completing the three-year term of office for which it was elected.

This is not the usual RAS election, with individuals seeking a position on the Council because they feel they will be able to give greater service to the society than retiring members. It is not a question of an affiliated organisation putting forward a candidate or candidates for reasonable representation.

No, this election brings before the RAS members the retiring eleven councillors and a group of seven nominees who termed themselves a Reform Party.

This Reform Party, although some members may have varied interests, has been put forward by one organisation. It did seek unsuccessfully to enlist the support of other organisations affiliated with the RAS. Moreover there is evidence that it falls far short of having the unanimous support of its own members.

Fundamentally, therefore, this Reform Party campaign must be regarded as an organised attack on the RAS Council, rather than opposition to individual retiring members who are seeking re-election.

The danger lies in the fact that the move represents a concerted attempt by one organisation to obtain the block election of its own representatives. The move is doubly dangerous, because the campaign chairman of the Reform Party has declared it will be satisfied if it obtains election of only some of its candidates, that more candidates would be nominated next year and in following years. On that basis, it is conceivable that this one organisation could gain control of the RAS Council in three or four years.

The 1949 Reform Party organised a strong election campaign for its seven candidates, but the opposition was too strong and resulted in the eleven retiring Council members being returned. The Reform Party made the same mistake as the 1899 group, by putting



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

## 1949 ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS

The following 11 Candidates, who retire through rotation of office, are seeking re-election for the year 1949. The election will be held on Wednesday, 1st February, 1949, at 7.30 p.m. at the Victoria Club, Melbourne. The election is open to all members of the Society who are entitled to vote. The ballot paper will be sent to all members of the Society who are entitled to vote. The ballot paper will be sent to all members of the Society who are entitled to vote. The ballot paper will be sent to all members of the Society who are entitled to vote.

**TO THE BEST INTERESTS REPRESENTATION CAN VOTE THUS:**

BARTRAM, P.  
BEDFORD, J.  
BURKE, H.  
CLARKE, V.  
DUGDALE  
HARTLEY  
HOWE, H.  
KERR, R.  
LAIDLAW  
MCLE  
MEAKI  
MITC  
SONH  
SCO  
SYA  
WA  
WI

**REMEMBER!**

The Qualifications, Experience and Factual Records of Retiring Councillors Must Be Carefully Studied and the Ballot Paper Must Be Filled in by 7.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 1st Feb.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - COUNCIL ELECTIONS

## WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE CENTURY ROYAL SHOW?

If you were a Member of the R.A.S. for the year 1949 you are entitled to vote at the election on February without any further subscription.

YOU SHOULD RECEIVE A BALLOT PAPER BEFORE FEBRUARY 1. CAREFULLY READ ITS INSTRUCTIONS.

**RECORD YOUR VOTE FOR**

BEDFORD, A. E.	LAILAW, A. A.
BOURKE, HUGH	RONALD, PETER B.
HARTLEY, C. G.	SYME, DAVID F.
WILLIAMS, ERN. W.	

**AND FOUR OF THE OTHER CANDIDATES**

THESE MEN ARE PREPARED TO WORK FOR YOU AND FOR A BETTER ROYAL SHOW

KEEP ON ASKING YOUR FRIENDS - HAVE YOU VOTED?

**REVIVE THE "MELBOURNE ROYAL"**

HOW DELAYS FINES ANGER HORSEMEN

Arena Events Not Run To Time

## DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN AGAIN!

THE R.A.S. LIFT SUSPENSION ON RIDERS

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**VOTE FOR**

BEDFORD A. E.	
BOURKE HUGH	
HARTLEY C. G.	
LAILAW A. A.	
RONALD P. B.	
SYME D. F.	
WILLIAMS ERN. W.	

AND FOUR OTHER CANDIDATES

THESE MEN ARE PREPARED TO WORK FOR YOU FOR A BETTER ROYAL SHOW

What is Wrong With Show?

SHOOTING EVENT ENDS IN FIASCO

More protests by horsemen

Shooting event at the Royal Show ended in a fiasco. The shooting event was held on the 1st day of the show and was a complete failure. The shooting event was held on the 1st day of the show and was a complete failure. The shooting event was held on the 1st day of the show and was a complete failure.

Council election advertisements, 1949.

dozen at once) and in the meantime add their friends to the subscribers' roll. One hundred new votes is all that is required to secure representation on the Council of the Society.

Rule 43 of the Society enables Council to nominate candidates for election, and it has been the practice for Council to support those retiring Councillors who seek re-election, together with sufficient selected candidates to fill any vacancies. And although nominations may be made by any two members of the Society, in all but one case - that of William Cockbill in 1924 - the membership vote has tended to follow Council pre-selection. William Cockbill, who upset the system in 1924 by successfully contesting and winning a seat on Council, was very strongly supported by the huge dog showing group who lobbied members of the Society in a well-organised campaign.

Whereas in the case of William Cockbill, the election was successful by sheer weight of helpers, winning the election by adding one's supporters to the subscribers' roll, although it may have been feasible in 1899, but with the large membership, and no preferential voting (electors vote by erasing names of unwanted candidates from the list,

forward too many candidates at the one time and advertising its intention to control the Council.

However, opportunity became available to all sections to put forward candidates for election to the Council later in 1949 when the Society's rules were changed by Rule 58A, which gave Council the power to appoint Honorary Life Councillor status to those members who had served on the Council for a period of twenty years or more. The Life Councillors are free from further election, thus making it possible for vacancies, created by their new status, to be filled without contesting the seats of existing Councillors as they complete their three years' term.

The Council has always been the heart of the RASV, and over the years the Society has been fortunate in the Council's composition. Many families have had long associations with the RASV Council, including the Buchanans, the Botts, the Fiskens, the Lithgows, the Greaves, the Stephens and Wilsons. All of these families are still represented on Council in 1980. Council members all act in an honorary capacity, and although in some cases the primary industries have not been their main support, they have all contributed talents and expertise and all have held a deep interest in the development and improvement of agriculture in Victoria.

#### ADMINISTRATORS – SECRETARIES AND DIRECTORS

Nine chief administrative officers have carried out the work of administering the Society since 1848. The Life Governors elected the Council and all office bearers up until 1883 on an annual basis; even the secretaries were so appointed.

Over the years there have been several designations given to these officers, beginning with the title of secretary, then secretary-manager, back to secretary, and from 1963, the title became director.

*A. E. McCracken 1848–55.* The responsibility of establishing the first meaningful agricultural society in the Port Phillip District rested on the shoulders of A. E. McCracken. He was responsible for organising the early ploughing matches and stock and produce exhibitions. He owned a farm in the Moonee Ponds area and tended that as well as his duties of secretary of the PPFS. In 1855 he resigned as secretary and was immediately elected to the committee of the PPFS.

*Thomas Skilling 1855–59.* Thomas Skilling's contribution to agriculture in the colony was a substantial one. During the progressive period of the PPFS, he was called upon to initiate the moves which procured the first Showgrounds on Sydney Road; the formation and function of the Experimental Farm; and the draft legislation for the formation of the Board of Agriculture. His involvement in the Experimental Farm was such that he resigned his position as secretary to take up the post as manager of the farm.

*James Skilling 1859–69.* It is not clear whether James Skilling was the brother or son of Thomas Skilling. However, he carried out his secretarial duties with skill and tact. During his period as secretary, the three branches of the PPFS were most progressive, and it was through his initiative that the parent body took up the role of administration and showing, thus leaving the field trials such as ploughing and machinery testing, to the three branches. The most spectacular exhibition conducted by the PPFS was, ironically, the last one, which was held at the Parkville (Brunswick) grounds in 1867, when the Duke of Edinburgh was the guest of honour.





*Donald Munro.*



*Walter Macfarlane.*



*Thomas Patterson.*



*Henry Schwieger.*



*Louis Monod.*



*Colin Woodfull*



*Harley Clappison.*

He was concerned that the Society present a balanced Show and to this end encouraged the farm machinery and implement exhibitors, as well as farm and dairy produce exhibitors, knowing that the livestock exhibitors would continue to support the Society. He encouraged the establishment of breed societies and allied organisations, and was the first secretary of the Federation of Agricultural Societies and the Chamber of Agriculture. He kept in close touch with the country agricultural societies' scene, and through the Chamber of Agriculture initiated District Exhibits at the 1903 Royal Show. On his retirement in 1910, Council granted him a retiring honorarium of £300 (£10 for each year of his service as secretary of the Society).

*Henry Schwieger 1910-31.* Henry Schwieger, a school teacher, first became associated with the RASV in 1903 when he was appointed a collector of membership fees. He was appointed to the position of assistant secretary to Thomas Patterson in 1907, and became secretary-manager when Thomas Patterson retired in 1910. In his twenty-one years he accomplished a great deal. Like his predecessor, he was anxious to develop breed societies and one of his first tasks was to establish a herd book for Shorthorn cattle on the lines of the long established English Coates' Herd Book, and this was followed by the Ayrshire Herd Book. Also in his first year the rules of the Society were revised; a conference was called to discuss methods of judging; and a section for Women's Industries (Arts and Crafts) was introduced into the Royal Show. It was during his term of office that standholders were encouraged to erect their own stands on sites within the Showgrounds allocated by the Society.

He was in no small way responsible for the legislation enabling the Society to enclose Nyora Street and the Grand National Avenue within the Showgrounds, and to eventually purchase the Grand National Tower Hotel, thus giving the Society complete control of the eastern area from the original Crown Grant boundary to Epsom Road.

His period was one associated with a vast expansion in buildings on the Showgrounds, brought about mainly by the Government loan of £50,000 for this purpose, and the devastating fire of 1914. These additions included: the Dairy Industry Pavilion; the Cumming, Chirnside and Public Grandstands; the Manager's residence; the first Horse Pavilion; No. 1 and No. 2 Cattle Pavilions; the present Stud Horse Pavilion; the Agricultural Hall (now Hall of Commerce); the Hall of Manufactures; Royal Luncheon Rooms complex; the Government Pavilion; No. 3 Cattle Pavilion; the Administrative Building; and the Sheep and Poultry Pavilions. All these buildings, with the exception of the residence – now demolished – are still in use and in serviceable condition. Farm competitions were commenced during Henry Schwieger's term, and a restriction on showing other than registered stud stock was introduced. And on the machinery side, the first motor tractor trials were initiated. Also in this period a Royal visitor was guest of the Society, the first occasion since 1867. The Prince of Wales, later to become Edward the Eighth and Duke of Windsor, attended a special exhibition of stock and produce on 29 May 1920. His Royal Highness laid the foundation stone for the Jubilee Grandstand, which was completed in 1923 and demolished in 1955 to make way for the A. G. Hunter Grandstand.

Every aspect of the Society's objects were advanced during Henry Schwieger's administration, and many initiatives introduced. He had the reputation of being a good 'communicator' and built up a most efficient staff which he trained in all forms of stud stock recording and Royal Show organisation. Unfortunately for the Society he collapsed on 16 September 1931 on the eve of the Royal Show, and died on 9 October 1931.



*Donald Munro 1871.* Although the NASV was formed in late 1870, it was not until March 1871 that the appointment of a permanent secretary was made. The interim work was carried out by a Mr Savage, then 'agricultural editor of a weekly newspaper in Melbourne'. The first secretary of the NASV was Donald Munro, who held the office for one year only. He was obviously efficient for it is understood that he prepared the first draft of the NASV rules, which incidentally have stood on a broad basis up to this time. He is also credited with the negotiations to change the site of the Showgrounds from Sydney Road Parkville to St Kilda Road, and in organising the first NASV Show in 1871.

*Walter Macfarlane 1872-79.* Walter Macfarlane was the secretary on whose shoulders rested the responsibility of the transfer of assets from the PPFS, and establishing the Society in the eyes of the Colony. It was not until the 1874 Exhibition that the Society was out of debt and had a credit balance of £326 6s 6d. Apparently Walter Macfarlane was a good lobbyist, for although the new Department of Agriculture had only been in operation for two years, he was successful in having the 1874 Exhibition placed 'under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture', and that Department supplied prize money to the extent of £500 towards the NASV prize fund. Again, acting on the Council's behalf, he sought and obtained Government permission to hold stock sales on the last day of the 1874 Exhibition, thus opening up a complete new era for stud stock breeders. In 1877 he was a member of the first deputation to the Minister of Lands seeking a new and enlarged area for the Showgrounds on a site in Royal Park. The long, and sometimes bitter, dispute which followed, undoubtedly undermined his health and for this reason he did not seek the position of secretary in 1880.

*Thomas Patterson 1880-1910.* Mr Patterson's long and fruitful term began with many problems. He inherited the change of site trouble, and faced an initiation period when the Government (in the eyes of Council) was being difficult. However, he supervised the change over of land from St Kilda Road to Ascot Vale, and sorted out the early problems of establishing the new Showgrounds. His relationship with the secretary of the Victoria Racing Club, Byron Moore, was excellent and resulted in not only two transfers of VRC land to the Society, but other advantages in later years such as the Epsom Road subway and the use of VRC land for special purposes. He continued the good relations set up with the Department of Agriculture, and thus had the backing of that body with almost annual grants to the prize fund.

In 1882 he organised the first Intercolonial Champion Ploughing Match on the estate of Messrs Thomas and Alexander Chirnside at Werribee, thus carrying on the tradition set by the founders of the Port Phillip Farmers' Society. When complications arose concerning the Crown Grant, and the Society's inability to use it as security in 1884, he finally convinced the Crown Solicitor in 1888, to approve a new deed which gave the trustees of the Society power to borrow up to £15,000 on the security of the Crown Grant land and the rent profits.

In 1885 he established and edited the excellent *Journal of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria*, and continued as editor for the next five years. In the first seven years of his administration, the Society's income rose from £1,831 4s to £8,442 14s 4d, and over the same period the profit of the Annual Show rose from £72 15s 3d in 1880 to £3,813 12s 2d in 1887. He was a strong advocate for the establishment of stud and herd books, and in fact initiated action in this direction. During his term the first purchase of freehold land was made by the Society, which resulted in widening the scope of the Society and the Annual Show.



them step by step through the various sections of the Society's functions, so that there was always an understudy for every section head, and each staff member was capable in an emergency of filling any role.

He was again placed under great pressure in 1948 when the Olympic Invitation Committee, prior to visiting Rome to meet the World Olympic Council, chose the Showgrounds for development as the Olympic Stadium for the 1956 Olympic Games. For the next four years, an 'on again, off again' situation continued, before the Society was advised that the grounds would not be required for the Olympic Stadium. This period of indecision was an extremely difficult one for Louis Monod and seriously affected his health, so much so that the Council decided to send him on an extended tour overseas. Soon after his return in 1953 he resigned as the Society's secretary. His resignation was not without incident within the Council and at senior staff level, for it was felt by many that his resignation was the result of a well-organised coup. The outcome of this unpleasant business was that Professor (later Sir Samuel) Wadham resigned from the Council, and the assistant secretary, William Craig, also resigned.

*Colin Woodfull 1953-73* Mr H. T. C. Woodfull was appointed Secretary of the Society in 1953, following Louis Monod's resignation. He had been a member of Council since June 1950, his main interest being in breeding and exhibiting dogs and the functions of the Kennel Control Council. He had a well-established law practice, and was persuaded to forgo this in favour of the Society's interests, in a strained atmosphere caused by Louis Monod's resignation.

This was the third consecutive appointment of the chief executive officer from inside the Society, both Henry Schwieger and Louis Monod having served as assistant secretaries prior to their appointments as secretary. Mr Woodfull's appointment was different in that he had been a member of Council, and this experience allied to outstanding administrative and legal ability, were to carry the Society through its most progressive and profitable period.

One of his first reforms was to delegate duties and responsibilities to senior staff members, and this led to a much happier and more efficient staffing situation. He soon became closely involved with breed societies, and in this area alone he made a significant contribution. His legal background enabled him to advise, as well as to draft rules, regulations, and constitutions. The present framework for the Kennel Control Council was set up, and this has since been copied by similar bodies all over the world.

He forged a closer association with country agricultural societies, and was keen to have them participate in joint competitions with the RASV. He encouraged discussion with all such societies, and with the waning influence of the Chamber of Agriculture, he organised meetings of their representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern, and in fact set the stage for the formation of the Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association, which has subsequently joined with the RASV in conducting farm, stock, cereals, and farm management competitions, besides the Sun Country Show Girl competition.

He was conscious of the need for primary industries to be more positive in promoting their products and he gave them the opportunity to do so through the Royal Melbourne Show, firstly the dairying industry, followed by wool, meat, and poultry interests.

Like Henry Schwieger, he was concerned that the Royal Show be a balanced Show with interest for all sections of the community, and accordingly encouraged the



*Louis Monod 1931-53* In December 1931 Council appointed Louis Monod to succeed the late Henry Schwieger as secretary and manager of the Society. He had been assistant secretary to Mr Schwieger for a number of years and was well versed in all the administrative matters of the Society. He too was keen to expand breed societies within the framework of the Society, and during his twenty-two years as chief executive officer, this aspect of the administration received special attention. He was most conscious of the Society's role in the community, especially through the influence of the Royal Show, and made every effort to project the importance of the agricultural side of the Annual Exhibition. To this end he introduced, in 1931, with the help of the newly formed Light Horse Association, a procession of saddle and harness horses and ponies which paraded through the city from Princes Bridge to the Showgrounds.

His early years in office were difficult ones, for the depression of the 1930s limited the Society's building programme quite considerably. Nevertheless in 1934 the Centenary Hall was erected, and through the generosity of the Nicholas family the new Jersey cattle Pavilion was completed. He, like his predecessor, also had the opportunity to be involved with a Royal visitor. His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester officially opened the 1934 Centenary Show, and was the guest of the Society in this inaugural event in the celebrations of 1934.

Louis Monod showed great interest in the growth of calf clubs, and at the 1933 Royal Show convened a conference of all interested parties which resulted in the formation of the Victorian Young Farmers Clubs' Association, and the following year the first Young Farmers' Show Camp was established on the Showgrounds.

The build up on the Bagotville Estate also fell within this period, and Louis Monod exercised tact and initiative in his dealing with the Essendon City Council which resulted in the smooth transfer of lands to the Society. Night Shows were also introduced during Mr Monod's term, and this extension of the Royal Show created a complete new concept in entertainment. It was also during the period 1936-37 that legislation was enacted to permit night trotting at the Royal Show.

From 1940-46 the Showgrounds were taken over by the Defence Department, and in this period of six years with staff enlistments in the services, and the need to service breed societies and other sectional interests, Mr Monod came under great pressure, and was forced to suspend some of the Society's functions in the administrative field, and to organise others in the country areas. During the latter part of the Showgrounds occupation in 1945, the question of control of trotting came before Council, and Louis Monod was very much involved with this, and later with the formation of the Trotting Control Board, on which he became one of the Society's initial three representatives.

With the handing back of the grounds in early 1946, the big task was to prepare the area for the first post-war Royal Show. This was an almost impossible task in the time allowed, but was accomplished under Mr Monod's supervision. The result of this effort must have given him great satisfaction, for the 1946 Royal Show was an outstanding success in every way. It was his practice prior to a Show to organise a special train to carry all Councillors and press to the Showgrounds, where he would personally conduct a guided tour of the grounds and give his annual preview of the coming Show. This practice was discontinued after the Society moved its offices permanently to the Showgrounds in 1956. With regard to the staff, Louis Monod continued the practice of Henry Schwieger in employing very young people, in most cases school leavers, and would take



exhibition of arts and crafts equally with all other sections. During the late 1950s into the late 1960s, the Royal Melbourne Show boasted the largest farm machinery exhibition in the southern hemisphere, and he can take most of the credit for this in that he was in close contact with the respective machinery manufacturing bodies, and was always willing to discuss their problems with them. Likewise, he also encouraged the carnival component, but was determined that no one segment should dominate and so disturb the overall balance.

His twenty years in office paralleled Henry Schwieger's in many ways, not the least of which was the building up on the land, for from 1953 the Society began to embark on an extensive programme of new buildings and renovations for itself and standholders, including new pavilions for dogs, sheep, cattle; new horse boxes; the A. G. Hunter, Mitchell and Wilson Stands. The Dairy Industry Display was reorganised, and Wool Court, the Meat Hall, and the Fresh Fruit Hall established, and the Victorian Egg Board allocated space for exhibition and demonstrations; a new cattle sale ring was built; both remaining housing areas cleared; leaving space for 500 horse boxes in the western area, and a new home for woodchopping in the eastern part of the grounds. New amusement areas were put up in Degraes Street, Lennon Avenue and Staughton Parade, with additional space on the Epsom Road frontage. Alterations were also carried out to the administrative block to cater for the move of the head office from Temple Court in Collins Street to the Showgrounds. Records declare that there was not one Society-owned building or service that did not receive an up-dating during this period, including attention to all roads and walkways.

New standholders' buildings totalling well over one million dollars were also erected in this period, these included: Ford, GMH, Coles, British Tobacco, Dennys Lascelles, Machinery Court (corner Degraes Street and Plummer Avenue), the Forestry Commission, State Electricity Commission, State Savings Bank, National Bank, Commonwealth Bank, CBA Bank and ANZ Banking Group. All bars and eating establishments were either rebuilt or renovated.

Other initiatives by the Society during the Woodfull era were: the annual RASV-Shell journalists' tour; the introduction of the family admission ticket; guided tours for students; the building up of the last Saturday of the Royal Show by retaining all stock on the grounds; the introduction of the Farm Management competition and Lot Feeding trials; the Thoroughbred Horse Show; the Country Show Girl competition, and the extremely popular Animal Nursery.

He worked hard to introduce the Sunday Show, and the children's carnival on the last Saturday as a counter to the VFL Grand Final. He was firm in dealing with the Trotting Control Board, and endeavoured to protect the Society's interests in all such negotiations.

Mr Woodfull's astuteness and ability to communicate with his staff and all sections of the community, whether media, exhibitors, standholders, showmen or the general public, set him aside from all previous holders of the office, and did much to establish the Society on a higher plane of credibility. He was awarded an OBE in June 1968 for service to agriculture, and retired as director of the RASV in March 1973, at which time Council changed the rules of the Society to permit his election to Council as an Honorary Life Councillor of the Society.



*Harley Clappison 1973-80* Pending Colin Woodfull's retirement in March 1973, Council appointed Mr H. J. Clappison in July 1972 to assume control after Mr Woodfull left. He came to the Society with a balanced background of rural affairs and business acumen, having been associated with a large woolbroking and stock and station firm for a number of years before joining Ansett Transport Industries. His appointment was the first from outside the Society since that of Thomas Patterson in 1880.

The new director was quick to introduce administrative changes and structural alterations to the head office, and it was a little unfortunate that a number of long serving staff members were due to retire about this time. The situation was further aggravated by a change in the position of President, for after a term of nine years George Wilson did not seek re-election in 1973; the Council and staff were therefore faced with a new top structure, a new director, and a new President in Peter Ronald.

Harley Clappison was aware of the joint pressures being applied to the Society by the Trotting Control Board and certain sections of the media, for the improvement of facilities for trotting on the Showgrounds track; he had to consider ways and means of satisfying these requirements, at the same time endeavouring not to place the Society at a disadvantage. This period was one of upheaval, and is covered in detail in that part of this history dealing with redevelopment.

However, when it became evident that trotting would move from the Showgrounds to Moonee Valley, he looked for alternatives to replace it. Such alternatives included soccer, and some of the horse events staged outside the Showgrounds, such as the Barastoc Horse of the Year event, and Show Jumping. Horse auctions were also introduced along with stud cattle sales, goat sales, and a number of other activities including the use of the Hall of Manufactures for a weekend market.

The period between 1973-80 was one of further building activity on the Showgrounds, covering almost three million dollars. The most substantial of the new additions were the Government Pavilion, the new Kennel Control Council complex, the P. B. Ronald Pavilion, and the replacement Dairy Industry Pavilion. With the construction of the Government Pavilion, many long established stands were demolished, but a number of these were relocated in other areas of the grounds. Also over this period there was a considerable turnover of breed societies, many old established ones leaving, and a number of new ones coming in to replace them.

Harley Clappison's term as director was a difficult one, especially from the point of view of Society finance, and although some trotting meetings are still conducted on the Showgrounds track, the shortfall is considerable, thus placing much greater importance on revenue from the Royal Show, a situation that Council was seeking to avoid as far as possible.

He has followed his predecessor in encouraging farm competitions, and in his short term introduced three such projects, namely, the Wool Flock of the Year, the Commercial Beef Herd of the Year, and the Commercial Dairy Herd of the Year awards, all of which are conducted in conjunction with the Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association, and well patronised. However, the Royal Show scene has changed over recent years, and although the total number of entries continue to rise, machinery field days have eroded the number of machinery stands at the Royal Show, but this has been countered to a degree by an increase in farm equipment space, and a maintained interest in primary industries.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### PRESIDENTS 1848–1980

From 1848 twenty-nine presidents have served the Society, each in some unique way making a contribution to the Society's progress. They are listed in chronological order of service with short biographical notes on each.

- 1848–64 Hon. Donald Kennedy, MLC—Emigrated from Scotland to NSW in 1834, arrived Port Phillip 1840. Pastoralist, Penshurst district, Croxton and Linlithgow Plains, Mt Sturgeon, and Moonee Ponds. Commissioner Savings Bank; deputy governor Colonial Bank; company director. Promoted scientific agriculture, was the spearhead in establishing the Board of Agriculture, and Model Farm.
- 1871 Hon. William Degraives, MLC—Merchant, millowner and station holder.
- 1872 Hon. Robert Simson, MLC—Western District station owner.
- 1873 Sir Samuel Wilson—Longerenong settler.
- 1874 Hon. R. Simson
- 1875 Edward Henty—Commenced the Portland settlement in 1834, later settled at Port Phillip and became MLA for Normanby.
- 1876 Matthew McCaw—Auctioneer, former treasurer of PPFS, sponsor of annual horse parades and sales until 1883.
- 1877 Archibald Fiskien—Station owner, company director and Tax Commissioner 1871. Vice-President Victorian and Southern Riverina Pastoralists' Association.
- 1878 Hugh Lennon—Agricultural implement maker, said to be the first to establish a farm implement business in Victoria.
- 1879 Job Smith—Farmer in the Carlton area, sold out later for building allotments.
- 1880 Hon. R. Simson
- 1881 William J. Lobb—Farmer and grazier
- 1882 Dr Andrew Plummer—Government Medical Officer, chairman Council of Agricultural Education, sheep breeder.
- 1883 James Gibb—Berwick settler and stud breeder, revived Mornington Branch PPFS in the 1870s, MLA for Mornington 1880, MHR Flinders 1905, a vigorous free trader.
- 1884 Dr A. Plummer  
Francis Henty—(Completed year of office due to ill health of Dr Plummer).
- 1885–90 Dr Plummer
- 1891–92 D. R. McGregor—Wine and spirit merchant and Shorthorn breeder.
- 1893–94 Frederick Peppin—Merino breeder and station owner.





*Brian Parry.*

In 1977 he placed a submission before Council to establish the 'Royal' magazine, a publication initiated to keep members of the Society informed on breed societies and other functions of the Society. This publication is gaining increasing acceptance as an authoritative medium relating to rural industries in Victoria, interstate and overseas. Mr Clappison handed over his duties to Mr J. B. Parry in February 1981.

*Brian Parry 1981—* Following Council decision in May 1980 to permit Harley Clappison early retirement, Mr J. B. Parry was appointed to the position of director. He brings to the Society a reputation of distinguished service with the Australian Society of Accountants, where he held the post of deputy director. Prior to this he was director of finance and administration for a large group of architects, planners and engineers.

His qualifications, covering a wide range of managerial and financial expertise, should prove invaluable to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.



*Hon. William Degraives, MLC.*



*Hon. Robert Simson, MLC.*



*Sir Samuel Wilson.*



*Edward Henty.*



*Matthew McCaw.*



*Archibald Fiskien.*



*Hugh Lennon.*



*Job Smith.*



*William J. Lobb.*



- 1895-96 Hon. Thomas Brunton, MLC—Flour miller, later became Lord Mayor of Melbourne.  
 1897-98 Thomas Skene—Station owner, Director of Colonial Bank, MHR Grampians 1901.  
 1899- William Thomson—Early settler in Kyneton district, first chairman Chamber of  
 1900 Agriculture.  
 1901 James Gibb  
 1902-03 Job Smith  
 1904-05 T. F. Cumming—Merino breeder, stock and station agent, co-founder and secretary  
 of Australian Sheepbreeders' Association.  
 1906-08 Thomas Skene  
 1909-14 Alexander McCracken—Brewer, chairman of the Victoria Racing Club.  
 1915-46 Col. Sir Charles Merrett—Managing Director farm machinery; vice-president  
 People's Liberal Party 1915, and New Settlers' League; foundation member Big  
 Brother Movement; executive member Chamber of Agriculture; South Melbourne  
 City councillor; member of Town Planning Commission and State Employment  
 Council.  
 1947-51 C. N. McKay—Farm machinery manufacturer, company director.  
 1952 Alec G. Hunter (died in office)—Thoroughbred horse breeder, cattle breeder,  
 Chairman TCB.  
 1953-56 T. N. Mitchell, CBE—Managing Director of agricultural implements manufacturers,  
 vice-president Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers.  
 1957-63 His Honour Judge Norman Mitchell, CMG—County Court Judge, dog breeder, one  
 of the first to import German Shepherds; Chairman TCB.  
 1964-72 George P. H. Wilson, CMG—Farmer and grazier at Berwick and north-east Victoria;  
 stud sheep breeder; chairman Victorian Inland Meat Authority; Nuffield Scholar  
 1953; Chairman Nuffield Scholars' Association (Australia); Council member Monash  
 University 1960-69; president Berwick and Dandenong Agricultural Societies.  
 1973-76 Peter B. Ronald, CMG—Farmer and grazier at Pakenham; stud stock breeder; Master  
 of Hounds Melbourne Hunt Club; vice-chairman and chairman Pakenham Racing  
 Club; president Pakenham Agricultural Society; many years councillor and past-  
 president Berwick Shire, director Gas and Fuel Corporation.  
 1977- Robert T. Balderstone, CMG, MC—Commercial beef and Corriedale breeder in  
 Western District; director Denny's Strachan Mercantile, wool brokers and stock and  
 station agents; president Geelong Legacy Club 1978; council of Marcus Oldham Farm  
 Agricultural College; chairman Young Farmers' Finance Council.

## APPENDIX II

## VICE-PRESIDENTS 1848-1980

During the life of the PPFS there are only two Vice-Presidents recorded; these were William Nicholson, MLC, who, like the President Donald Kennedy, MLC, appeared to be the old society's permanent Vice-President. However, when William Nicholson returned to England for a respite, Captain Andrew Clarke, RE, MLA, occupied the position of Vice-President until William Nicholson returned.

From 1871 up to and including 1897, Council elected six Vice-Presidents annually, which number was reduced to three from 1898 onwards. In all, up to 1980, one hundred and nine different councillors have served the Society in the office of Vice-President, of whom many were later elected to the office of President.

The following list of Vice-Presidents is again in chronological order of election from their first term in office, and although the actual years they served are not detailed, their terms (of one year) have been recorded.

- 1848 William Nicholson, MLC  
 1856 Captain Andrew Clarke, RE, MLA



*Dr Andrew Plummer.*



*James Gibb.*



*Francis Henty.*



*D. R. McGregor.*



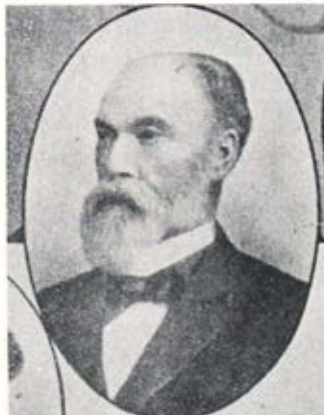
*Frederick Peppin.*



*Hon. Thomas Brunton MLC.*



*Thomas Skene.*



*William Thomson.*



*T. F. Cumming.*



- 1871 Hon. Phillip Russell (one term); Hon. Robert Simson (nine terms); Hon. Niel Black (one term); Hon. John Cumming (one term); John Benn (one term); George Carmichael (four terms)
- 1872 R. K. Hammond (one term); Hon. William Degraives (two terms); Sir Samuel Wilson (two terms); Hon. Thomas McKellar (one term); William McCulloch (three terms)
- 1873 Matthew McCaw (three terms)
- 1874 W. Taylor (two terms); Edward Henty (three terms)
- 1875 Joseph Clarke (two terms); Alexander Patterson (three terms); W. J. Fleming (two terms)
- 1876 Hon. W. J. Clarke (six terms)
- 1877 F. R. Godfrey (two terms); S. Gardner (seven terms)
- 1878 Archibald Fiske (three terms); Job Smith (three terms)
- 1879 Hugh Lennon (three terms); D. C. McArthur (two terms)
- 1881 Dr Andrew Plummer (three terms); J. Simson (two terms)
- 1882 W. J. Lobb (sixteen terms); James Gibb (fifteen terms); D. R. McGregor (eleven terms)
- 1883 Francis Henty (five terms)
- 1884 J. M. Peck (two terms); David Mitchell (fifteen terms); John Finlay (four terms)
- 1885 Frederick Peppin (nine terms)
- 1888 Hon. Thomas Brunton (nine terms)
- 1892 John Blyth (six terms)
- 1897 Alexander McCracken (eight terms)
- 1899 J. K. Joynt (three terms); George Young (three terms)
- 1902 G. T. Chirnside (three terms); T. F. Cumming (two terms)
- 1904 G. S. Staughton (three terms); Robert Clarke (five terms)
- 1905 H. Cliff (two terms); W. McNab (two terms)
- 1906 J. B. Pearson (three terms)
- 1908 Angus McNaughton (one term)
- 1909 Thomas Skene (one term); W. B. Cumming (one term)
- 1910 T. F. Rutledge (one term); C. W. Campbell (one term); H. A. Currie (two terms)
- 1911 Charles Merrett (one term); A. E. T. Payne (three terms)
- 1912 H. A. Anderson (four terms); T. A. Grant (one term)
- 1913 J. E. Robertson (two terms)
- 1914 D. Stewart (one term); R. J. Argyle (one term)
- 1916 J. A. Mitchell (five terms); A. D. Rowan (two terms); W. C. Greaves (two terms)
- 1917 G. L. Wilson (two terms); A. McMillan (two terms)
- 1918 W. P. Brisbane (one term); J. A. Beattie (one term); Phillip Tuckett (one term)
- 1919 H. H. Peck (one term); W. Woodmason (two terms); Oswald J. Syme (one term)
- 1920 W. G. Macalister (one term); J. Lang (one term); R. O. Blackwood (seventeen terms)
- 1921 A. C. Gibb (four terms); L. Dugdale (six terms)
- 1922 Dr S. S. Cameron (one term); F. B. Lithgow (two terms)
- 1924 Sen. J. F. Guthrie (eight terms); D. McLennan (one term)
- 1925 J. C. Mackinnon (four terms)
- 1926 J. F. Bedwell (one term)
- 1927 F. E. Clarke (two terms)
- 1929 S. McKay (one term)
- 1930 T. V. Cowan (one term)
- 1933 R. N. Scott (one term); A. G. Hunter (eight terms)
- 1935 William Cockbill (two terms)
- 1937 A. M. Mactier (three terms)
- 1938 W. M. Black (one term); C. N. McKay (four terms)
- 1944 Sir Clive McPherson (six terms); W. C. Greaves (six terms)
- 1950 T. A. Meaklim (three terms); T. N. Mitchell (three terms)
- 1952 Judge Norman Mitchell (five terms)
- 1953 John Bott (eight terms)
- 1957 Dr Frank Stephens (four terms); George P. H. Wilson (seven terms)
- 1961 Sir Alex Creswick (three terms); Lance S. K. Cunningham (five terms)

- 1964 John M. Gardiner (eight terms); F. E. Selwyn Scott (five terms)  
 1966 Peter B. Ronald (six terms)  
 1969 G. Ray Starritt (twelve terms—still in office)  
 1972 John H. Sleight (six terms—still in office)  
 1973 Robert T. Balderstone (four terms)  
 1974 Adrian Gibson (six terms—still in office)

## APPENDIX III

## TRUSTEES 1871–1980

The Port Phillip Farmers' Society (1848–70), had no trustees recorded although Sir James McCulloch played a leading part in handing over the assets of the PPFS to the NASV in 1871.

Since the formation of the NASV in 1871, twenty-eight trustees including those now holding office, have served the Society:

1871–72	Sir James McCulloch	1921–48	Captain A. E. T. Payne
1871–83	T. J. Sumner	1934–67	H. A. Mullett, ISO
1871–82	Robert McDougall		(Government nominee)
1872–83	Hon. J. G. Francis	1940–43	G. L. Wilson
1882–95	Dr Andrew Plummer	1943–48	A. C. Gibb
1884–1915	Hon James Gibb	1948–68	C. N. McKay
1884–1916	W. J. Lobb	1949–73	His Honour Judge
1896–1907	Hon. Charles Young		Norman F. Mitchell, CMG
1908–15	Alexander McCracken	1949–53	A. G. Hunter
1915–33	Dr S. S. Cameron	1953–59	Sir Clive McPherson, KB, CBE
	(Government nominee)	1959–70	A. C. Fiske, CMG, OBE, MC
1915–48	Col. Sir Charles Merrett	1967–	Hon. Sir William McDonald
1915–18	Robert Clarke		(Government nominee)
1916–18	Job Smith	1968–	George P. H. Wilson, CMG
1918–40	G. T. Chirnside	1970–	W. J. Trevor Clarke
1918–21	John Mitchell	1973–	Peter B. Ronald, CMG

## APPENDIX IV

## COUNCIL MEMBERS 1871–1980

- 1871 Hon. W. Degraives, Hon. P. Russell, Hon. R. Simson, Hon. N. Black, Hon. J. Cumming, J. Benn, G. Carmichael, F. Robertson, D. R. McGregor, J. Hood, M. McCaw, W. McCulloch, J. Whiteman, J. Mitchell, R. K. Hammond, W. Sumner, F. Search, A. Murray, J. Donaldson, J. Bell, T. Henty, T. Shaw, A. Fiske, J. Horwood, J. C. Addis, P. H. Fanning, A. Patterson, J. Buchanan, Dr A. Plummer, J. Buncle, R. C. Morton, J. M. Peck  
 1874 J. Smith, J. Gibb, T. Learmonth, S. Gardiner, F. Henty, H. Lennon  
 1875 W. J. Lobb, J. Currie, J. Hearne, D. Munro, F. S. Roberts, F. Peppin, J. Malcolm  
 1882 D. Mitchell, J. Garton, C. Lynott, J. Finlay, J. G. Brisbane, W. Learmonth.  
 1884 S. G. Staughton, T. Brunton, C. Young, W. Thomson, J. Hurst





*Alexander McCracken.*



*Col. Sir Charles Merrett.*



*C. N. McKay.*



*A. G. Hunter.*



*T. N. Mitchell, CBE.*



*His Honour Judge  
Norman Mitchell, CMG.*



*George P. H. Wilson, CMG.*



*Peter B. Ronald, CMG.*



*Robert T. Balderstone, CMG, MC.*

- 1954 \*K. A. Drummond, L. S. K. Cunningham
- 1956 Sir Edgar Coles
- 1957 H. F. Yuncken, \*Sir Rupert Clarke, \*W. A. Angliss, \*L. G. C. Nicholas, \*R. Hunter,  
\*Professor H. C. Forster, \*G. R. Starritt
- 1959 L. R. Dooling
- 1960 \*J. W. Kelly, P. J. R. Steele, \*J. W. D. Ward
- 1962 \*Colonel H. M. McArthur, K. P. Palmer
- 1964 \*Hon. V. F. Wilcox, S. A. Turner
- 1966 \*D. S. MacGregor, \*R. B. Gerrand
- 1967 \*Sir William McDonald (Government Trustee)
- 1968 \*J. G. W. Head, \*W. McL. Greaves
- 1969 \*J. H. Sleigh
- 1970 \*E. W. Best, \*C. B. Gardiner
- 1971 \*R. T. Balderstone, \*F. J. Lithgow, \*J. W. Rae, \*R. B. Langdon, A. H. C. Richards
- 1972 \*F. R. I. Stephens
- 1973 \*J. M. Burston, \*A. Gibson, \*W. D. Crowley, \*J. K. Buchanan
- 1974 \*F. B. Langlands, \*Sir Cecil Looker, \*C. R. Kelly
- 1975 \*Hon. I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture)
- 1976 \*A. J. Fiske, \*I. K. Morton
- 1977 \*K. W. Urquhart, \*C. Bott, \*R. M. Butler, \*W. R. R. Beggs, \*B. N. Naylor, \*R. G. Walker
- 1979 \*J. S. A. Robb
- 1980 \*J. Balfour Brown, \*I. Starritt

\* Still serving in 1980 as Honorary Life Councillors or Councillors.

## APPENDIX V

### OFFICIALS WHO HAVE OPENED THE ROYAL SHOW

It was not until 1907 that the first Official Opening took place, for prior to that time the Council was accustomed to inviting official guests to lunch during the Show, and recording in the Annual Reports that these guests 'patronized' the Show, or officially visited the Show.

The Vice-Regal Official Openings as we know them, started, in 1907 when His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, Sir John Madden, G.C.M.G., LL.D. performed the first ceremony.

- 1908 Sir Thomas Carmichael, Governor of Victoria
- 1909 Sir Thomas Carmichael
- 1910 Sir Thomas Carmichael
- 1911 Sir John Fleetwood-Fuller, Governor of Victoria
- 1912 Sir John Fleetwood-Fuller
- 1913 Rt Hon. Lord Denman, Governor-General
- 1914 Sir Arthur Stanley, Governor of Victoria
- 1915 No Show
- 1916 Rt Hon. Sir Ronald Ferguson, Governor General
- 1917 Sir Arthur Stanley
- 1918 Sir Arthur Stanley
- 1919 Sir William Irvine, Lieutenant-Governor
- 1920 Sir William Irvine
- 1921 The Earl of Stradbroke, Governor of Victoria
- 1922 The Earl of Stradbroke
- 1923 Sir William Irvine, Lieutenant-Governor
- 1924 The Earl of Stradbroke
- 1925 The Earl of Stradbroke



- 1886 R. Clarke, John Bond, J. Jones, L. L. Smith
- 1887 John Blyth, D. White, W. J. Clarke, W. Glover
- 1889 W. McNab
- 1891 A. McCracken, W. B. Cumming
- 1898 G. T. Chirnside
- 1899 H. Cliff
- 1900 H. H. Peck
- 1902 C. E. Merrett, J. Wilson
- 1903 W. P. Brisbane
- 1904 J. B. Pearson, W. Woodmason, T. A. Grant
- 1906 J. Mitchell, G. Peppin
- 1907 C. W. Campbell, H. A. Currie
- 1908 H. A. Anderson, A. E. T. Payne, A. D. Rowan, J. E. Robertson, T. J. Rutledge, W. C. Greaves
- 1909 D. Stewart
- 1910 W. Kendell, J. C. Rockliffe, G. L. Wilson.
- 1911 W. G. Macalister, J. A. Beattie
- 1912 R. J. Argyle
- 1913 P. Tuckett, O. J. Syme
- 1914 A. McMillan, J. Lang
- 1915 A. C. Gibb, Dr S. S. Cameron, F. Lithgow, R. W. Scott
- 1916 J. F. Guthrie, T. V. Cowan, D. McLennan
- 1917 R. O. Blackwood
- 1918 R. C. Bell, L. Dugdale
- 1920 M. C. G. Hutton
- 1921 F. E. Clarke, H. V. McKay
- 1922 H. McClelland, J. F. Bedwell
- 1923 J. C. Mackinnon
- 1924 W. Cockbill
- 1925 R. E. Dawson, A. G. Hunter, W. M. Black
- 1926 S. McKay
- 1927 W. D. Leslie
- 1928 A. M. Mactier, J. A. Mitchell
- 1929 A. V. Hiskens
- 1933 C. N. McKay
- 1934 A. H. Moore, H. A. Mullett (Government Trustee)
- 1935 H. L. Lyall, A. M. Nicholas, R. G. Ritchie
- 1936 \*W. J. T. Clarke, Professor S. M. Wadham, A. E. Dahlenberg, W. C. Greaves Jr
- 1937 S. A. Greaves
- 1938 M. A. Nicholas, W. A. Winter-Irving
- 1939 Sir Clive McPherson
- 1940 K. McGarvie, T. A. Meaklim, Judge N. F. Mitchell
- 1941 Sir William Angliss
- 1942 H. Bartram, D. Sutherland Smith, R. H. Blackburn
- 1943 J. McMillan, T. N. Mitchell
- 1944 J. Bott, A. C. Fiskens, H. Howe
- 1946 L. Dugdale
- 1948 \*A. R. Creswick, R. R. Kerr
- 1949 \*P. B. Ronald, T. Luxton Jr., E. A. Doyle, Hon. Trevor Harvey
- 1950 \*G. Howell, H. T. C. Woodfull, Dr F. Stephens,  
\*G. P. H. Wilson, K. G. Luke
- 1951 \*C. Owen Moore, R. F. Sanderson, W. B. Boothby
- 1952 \*F. E. Selwyn Scott
- 1953 \*J. M. Buchanan, \*J. M. Gardiner, C. C. Johnson,  
\*D. W. R. Knox

APPENDIX VI

ATTENDANCES AND ENTRIES 1871-80

The attendance records up until 1910 were estimated on the amount of gate takings. After 1910, the first year of the turnstiles, they are accurate. The entries up until the year 1927 included machinery stands. From 1928 onwards the entries were confined to competitive entries.

Year	Attendance	Entries	Year	Attendance	Entries
1871	1,200	696	1946	652,666	13,752
1889	16,000	3,278	1947	585,778	18,071
1899	33,000	5,006	1948	531,214	19,263
1909	140,000	6,708	1949 (4)	306,881	19,141
1910	148,421	7,610	1950	519,408	18,605
1911	153,350	7,717	1951	432,935	19,130
1912	167,390	8,548	1952	579,075	19,642
1913	184,637	9,844	1953	572,086	22,329
1914 (1)	99,807	10,296	1954	679,167	22,531
1915 No Show			1955	648,137	22,457
1916	107,688	8,339	1956	588,325	21,500
1917	162,098	9,003	1957	622,060	21,797
1918	173,934	10,395	1958	664,709	21,540
1919	205,539	10,166	1959	653,208	23,384
1920	186,186	9,071	1960	677,687	23,076
1921	212,916	10,754	1961	714,715	25,948
1922	230,265	11,454	1962 (5)	648,171	26,295
1923	300,075	11,455	1963	688,543	26,941
1924	284,984	11,842	1964	708,325	27,058
1925	318,457	11,942	1965	717,055	27,243
1926	298,225	12,005	1966	688,663	26,137
1927	293,129	11,444	1967	738,196	25,156
1928	274,256	10,261	1968	767,014	24,311
1929	254,664	10,030	1969	780,139	25,829
1930	219,611	10,372	1970	810,233	27,272
1931	233,579	10,834	1971	888,409	27,453
1932	264,474	11,847	1972	916,730	30,184
1933	272,176	12,139	1973	913,834	31,385
1934 (2)	224,479	14,901	1974	777,357	32,917
1935	276,581	12,045	1975	849,564	33,319
1936	311,289	12,588	1976 (6)	847,761	35,145
1937 (3)	250,476	13,308	1977	873,532	35,897
1938	420,430	13,857	1978	862,926	39,217
1939	355,071	14,522	1979	785,350	37,562
1940 } No Show			1980	822,110	37,515
1945 }					

(1) Drought year and start of World War One.

(2) First major tram strike.

(3) First Poliomyelitis epidemic.

(4) Second Poliomyelitis epidemic.

(5) Rail strike.

(6) Drought year.



1926	Sir William Irvine
1927	Lord Somers, Governor of Victoria
1928	Rt Hon. Baron Stonehaven, Governor-General
1929	Lord Somers
1930	Lord Stonehaven, Governor-General
1931	Sir William Irvine, Lieutenant-Governor
1932	Sir William Irvine
1933	Sir William Irvine
1934	H. R. H. The Duke of Gloucester, Governor-General
1935	Lord Huntingfield, Governor of Victoria
1936	Rt Hon. Lord Gowrie, Governor-General
1937	Sir Frederick Mann, Lieutenant-Governor
1938	Sir Frederick Mann
1939	Sir Winston Dugan, Governor of Victoria
1940	Sir Winston Dugan (Exhibition Buildings)
1941	No Show—Second World War
1942	No Show—Second World War
1943	No Show—Second World War
1944	No Show—Second World War
1945	No Show—Second World War
1946	Sir Edmund Herring, Lieutenant-Governor
1947	Sir Winston Dugan, Governor of Victoria
1948	Sir Winston Dugan
1949	Sir Edmund Herring, Lieutenant-Governor
1950	Sir Dallas Brooks, Governor of Victoria
1951	Sir Dallas Brooks
1952	Sir Dallas Brooks
1953	Sir William Slim, Governor-General
1954	Sir Dallas Brooks
1955	Sir Dallas Brooks
1956	Sir Dallas Brooks
1957	Sir William Slim, Governor-General
1958	Sir Dallas Brooks
1959	H. R. H. Princess Alexandra
1960	Lord Dunrossil, Governor-General
1961	Viscount De L'Isle, Governor-General
1962	Sir Edmund Herring, Lieutenant-Governor
1963	Sir Rohan Delacombe, Governor of Victoria
1964	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1965	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1966	Lord Casey, Governor-General
1967	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1968	Lord Casey, Governor-General
1969	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1970	Sir Paul Hasluck, Governor-General
1971	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1972	Sir Paul Hasluck, Governor-General
1973	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1974	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1975	Sir Rohan Delacombe
1976	Sir Henry Winneke, Governor of Victoria
1977	Sir John Kerr, Governor-General
1978	H.R.H. Princess Alexandra of Kent
1979	Sir Zelman Cowen, Governor-General
1980	Sir Henry Winneke, Governor of Victoria

# INDEX

In the following index, entries have been restricted for some headings:

- (1) Shows: Information about every Show, from 1842 to 1980, occurs at regular intervals throughout the whole text and is easily located. Information about Arena events, entries and Programme features is presented as part of the narration about each Show; entries have been made only for the first mention and any subsequent significant developments. Appendix VI, Page 201, tabulates attendances and entries from 1871 to 1980.
- (2) Buildings; Livestock: Information about these topics occurs frequently throughout the whole text. Entries have been made only for the first mention and any subsequent significant developments. Concise summaries of building developments occur on Pages 94-113 and 188.

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Bob Morgan



Fred Noble

### ROBERT MORGAN

Bob Morgan joined the staff of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in March 1956 after spending six years with the Victorian Department of Agriculture. He retired from the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in October 1977, having spent the last fourteen years in the position of Public Relations Manager.

He launched and edited the 'Victorian Young Farmer' magazine in 1963 and was also editor of several other publications, including the 'K.C.C. Gazette', 'VASA', and 'Feline Focus'.

Always interested in the historical background of the Society, he worked closely with Fred Noble in the preparation of his notes, and was responsible for producing the Society's Centenary Brochure in 1972: '100 Years of Shows'.

When he retired in 1977 the Council made him an Honorary Life Member for services to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

### FREDERICK HARWOOD NOBLE, 1893-1978

Fred Noble began his journalistic career with *The Age* on 18 September 1911 and retired from that paper in 1961. During his fifty years as a member of staff of *The Age* he reported almost every sort of news published in that paper, from shipping to the Show, and according to *The Age* of 15 November 1978, the day after his death:

'He was regarded as the epitome of accuracy and a fount of knowledge on many subjects, but especially cricket, the Royal Melbourne Show and Gilbert and Sullivan'.

Fred Noble reported every Royal Melbourne Show from 1923 and continued attending and reporting this event for *The Age* part time for many years after his retirement in 1961.

He was an Honorary Life Member of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria—the only member of the media ever to be accorded this honour.



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