100 YEARS OF SHOWS

THE STORY OF THE MELBOURNE SHOW, 1872-1972

The National Agricultural Society of Victoria held its first show on a 17-acre site bordering St. Kilda Road. This Show was held over a four-day period at the end of November, 1871, and resulted in a $1044.02 loss for the Society.

Foreword

This booklet is titled "100 Years of Shows", but in fact agricultural exhibitions and ploughing matches were held many years before the first of the "modern" shows in 1871. The earliest recorded show was at the old cattle market in Melbourne's Elizabeth St. in 1842, but it was a complete failure. Ploughing matches, which tested a farmer's ability to plough a straight furrow, followed, then agricultural exhibitions and displays until, in 1870, the National Agricultural Society was formed and the first Show held in 1871. This Society was given Royal assent in 1890 and the Royal Agricultural Society became the organisation responsible for the Royal Melbourne Show. This booklet traces the history of the early exhibitions, and the development of the Royal Melbourne Show as we know it today.

— G. P. H. WILSON,
President.

The first exhibition

The history of agricultural shows and exhibitions is closely tied with the settlement of the Port Phillip district after 1835 when many colonists followed Batman and Fawkner from Tasmania. By 1840 the district had 10,000 white inhabitants, many of whom were members of agricultural societies in England, which from the 1750s had provided meeting places for the more prominent farmers.

These new settlers remembered the agricultural fairs as a highlight of the English farming scene and it was only natural that they began to renew the social forms of their old environment. So, in 1840, the Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix was formed along the same lines as the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. At this time there were 750,000 sheep in the district and several

thousand cattle. The Society's first exhibition was held at the Elizabeth Street cattle market in 1842, but was a complete failure. Few entries were received and the standard was poor. The Society disbanded and no further attempt to organise agricultural displays was made for six years. It was then that the foundations for the now flourishing Royal Agricultural Society were laid . . .
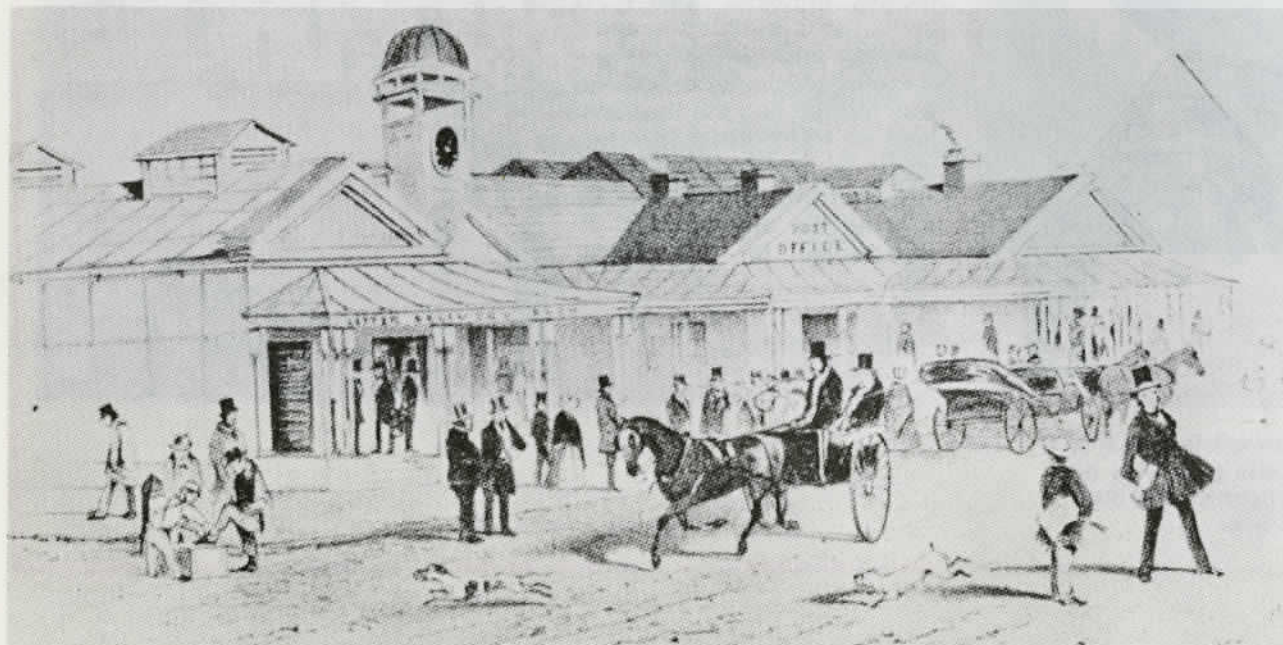
The heart of Melbourne in 1842 was this small brick, wide-verandah building at the corner of Elizabeth and "Great Bourke" Streets, which served as the town's first general post office. Nearby was the Elizabeth Street cattle market where the Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix held its first Exhibition in 1842.

The Moonee Ponds ploughing match
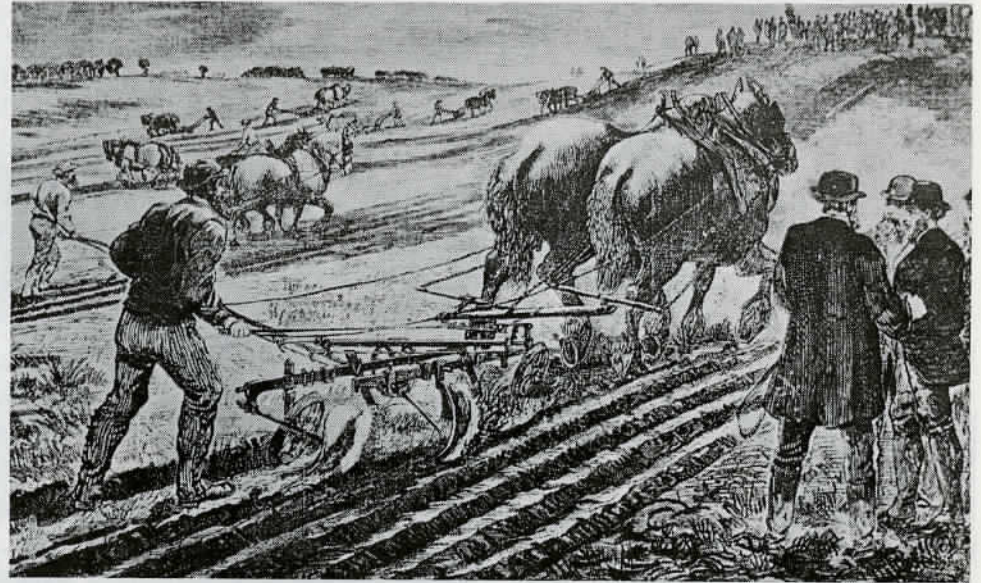
By 1848 — six years after the Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix failed — the early settlers had mustered sufficient enthusiasm and funds to start again. The Port Phillip Farmers' Society was formed with the aims of staging a district show and creating a centre where useful information on agriculture might be exchanged. About this time some of the more experienced farmers were concerned at the backward state of agriculture in the colony. They described ploughing as "disgracefully unworkmanlike". Few men in the colony calling themselves ploughmen could plough in a straight line, "every furrow being a perfect zig zag".
They decided that an annual ploughing match would improve the quality of work. The first match was held on the farm of La Rose, Moonee Ponds, in 1848

and was contested by 17 ploughing teams. The next year 21 teams entered, the following 24 and in 1851 the competitions were so popular that 33 teams took part. Then gold fever struck. Farmers left their land in hundreds to try their luck at the diggings. Ploughmen put their teams on the roads to carry stores to the diggers. Farm produce prices slumped (hay was $7 per ton, wheat 70 to 80 cents a bushel) but the cost of labour was at a premium. The Society very nearly crumbled, but survived the goldrush and gradually grew in strength. Soon after the first ploughing match at Moonee Ponds, the Society was granted Showgrounds at Parkville where stock exhibitions were held. One newspaper of 1859 records that entries for the Exhibition arrived from the country by bullock dray "watched by

groups of curious barely-clad aborigines, whose former corroboree grounds were now being used by the white people for a peculiar corroboree of their own". The 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 head wear of the gold diggers. During the 1850s the Society formed branches at Mornington, Gisborne and Bacchus Marsh, but the new branches soon developed separate interests and support for the parent body dwindled. Its last exhibition was held in 1867 during the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, and in 1870 the Port Phillip Farmers' Society lapsed, soon to be succeeded by the National Agricultural Society . . .

1871—the first Show

Agricultural societies in the colony of Victoria at last began to get a firm foothold, with the establishment of the National Agricultural Society in 1870. By the end of the first year, 135 governors were enrolled (at a fee of three guineas ($6.30)) and 274 members at a fee of one guinea ($2.10)).

The Parkville Showgrounds were exchanged for a lease of 17 acres near the military barracks in St. Kilda Road and the Society's first Show was held, over four days.

Although successful, it incurred a loss of $1044.02. By 1874, however, the Show was well established and stock exhibits came from New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and New Zealand. There were 146 horses on show, 236 cattle, 213 dogs, 162 pens of sheep, 50 pens of pigs and 70 pens of poultry. Stands displaying knife polishers, steam engines, artificial manures, washing machines, preserved meats, were also on show and 33 butter entries, 5 cwt. of cheese and 16 bacon and hams were judged.

Forty shearers entered a sheep shearing contest and on the last day a market was established for the


The dog tent at the first show.
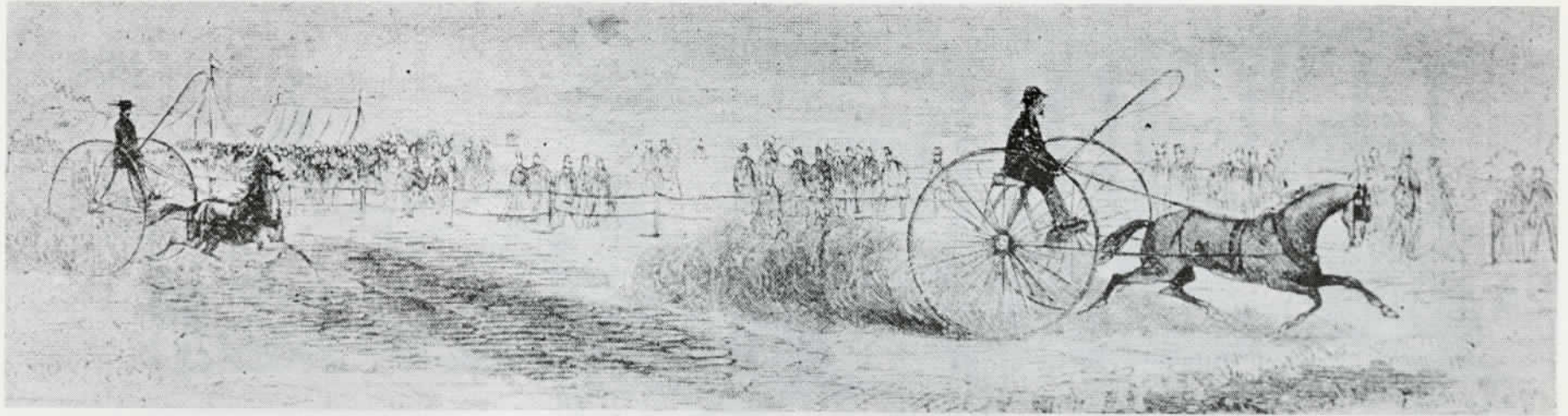
sale of prize stock. The St. Kilda
Road showgrounds lasted 10 years.

The Emerald Hill Borough (now
South Melbourne) wanted the site
for building purposes and after
frequent bickering betwen the
two bodies the Society accepted
the Government's offer of
the present Showgrounds site
next to Flemington Racecourse,
taking up 30 acres (the present
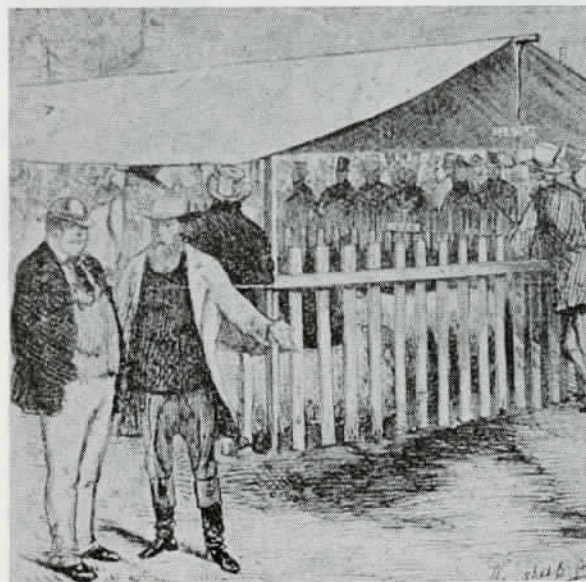site covers 73 acres).

The Railways agreed to transport
visitors for 3d (5c) each way
and the first Show at Ascot Vale
was held during Melbourne Cup week
1883, but not without complications.
The Public Works Department
refused to connect water to the

ABOVE:
A trotting contest.
RIGHT:
The poultry tent.
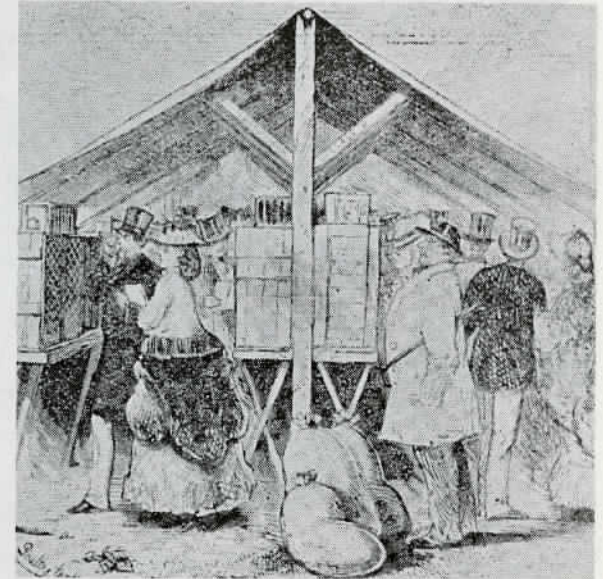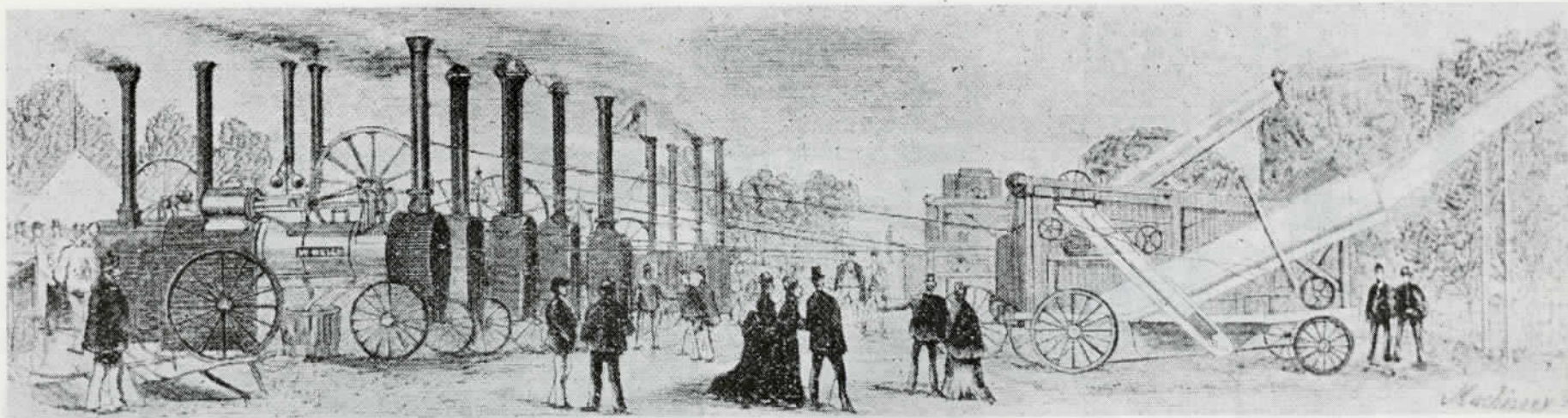
ABOVE:
Machinery display.
LEFT:
The sheep pens.

Showgrounds and a supply was tapped from the Flemington Racecourse main. On the second day of the Show, the Railways Department refused to allow trains to stop at the Showground siding because of a race meeting at Flemington.

Show Week soon became firmly established in the lives of the citizens of the thriving colony, and in 1885 the Premier of Victoria granted the first Show Day Holiday (a holiday that was to become a permanent fixture after 1896).

In the next year the first grandstand was erected (at a cost of $10,540) and by the end of 1886 the Society had spent $36,171.32 on

permanent works at the new
Showgrounds. Entries for the
Show that year totalled 2478. Three
years later entries totalled 3278,
and there were 104 stands to
house machinery, implements and
miscellaneous exhibits. Capital
expenditure reached nearly $50,000
and the Show was on a sound
profit basis (the 1887 profit was
$7,625.44 compared with the
1880 profit of $146.06).

The importance of the educational
and merchandising aspects of
the Society's activities, and of the
annual Show was being realised
by the more influential people in
the community. By 1890 it was time
to press for the use of the
prefix "Royal" . . .

Horse judging.
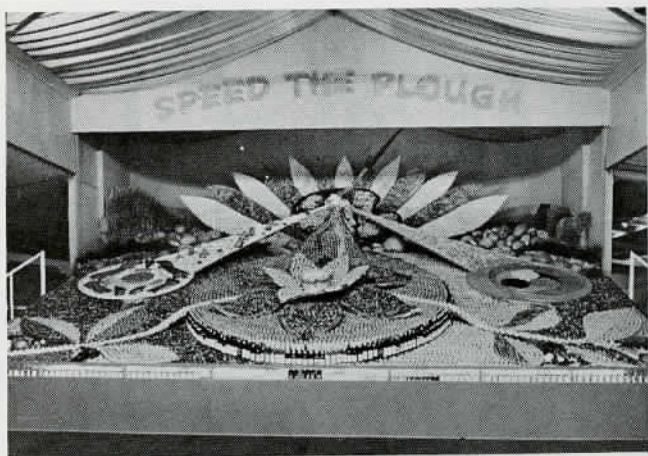
It's 'the Royal'

This display symbolises the produce of Victoria, ranging from wool through grains, wines, fruits, conserved fodder to preserves.

His Excellency,
Rt. Hon. The Earl of Hopetoun,
Governor of Victoria.

Downing Street,
London, England.
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 to 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.

With this advise from Queen Victoria, in May 1890, the National Agricultural Society became the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, and the Show became known as the Royal Melbourne Show or more familiarly "the Royal".
The Society adopted the motto "Speed the Plough", which still exists today. With the title Royal, the Show expanded in size and prestige, and the Society pursued a policy aimed at establishing the Show as a venue for cultural, social and educational exchange between city and country folk, while at the same time providing an avenue of commerce for primary and secondary industry.
About this time the need for a strong, central organisation of agricultural societies to press for or against legislation, and to promote agriculture, was high in the minds of the more politically-minded councillors of the R.A.S. To this end,

the Chamber of Agriculture was formed in 1900 and continued to operate as a political and economic force until 1965. The 10 years 1890 to 1900 saw remarkable progress. From around 3550, the number of Show entries climbed past 5000, and the number of stands for exhibiting machinery rose from 104 to 169.
Until 1913, the Show was held during the last week in August. The last week in September was then adopted, with the Show Day public holiday being declared as the last Thursday in the last full week in September.
The real development of the Showgrounds as we know them today began after a fire during Show Week of 1914 destroyed the Industrial Hall and 12 other buildings. The Jubilee Show, in 1921, marked 50 years of progress and expansion for the National and Royal Agricultural Society — a period which

went hand-in-hand with the rapid
development of Victoria. It was a period
that saw the transition to the mechanisation
of primary and secondary industry,
from the horse era, through to steam engine,
motor car, electric train and tram.
Despite the family picnic and carnival
atmosphere of the Show, its aims,
as in the early days of the Colony
of Victoria, are educational. Its displays
and demonstrations in industrial and
agricultural know-how have led to a vast
and continued improvement in primary and
secondary products; and the fact that
these tests are performed before the
general public means that the interest and
knowledge is spread amongst those who
would not otherwise have a chance
to learn how commodities are produced
which supply even the most
elementary needs of daily life.
The highest aggregate attendance
for the Show was established in 1971
with 888,409 people attending the
10 days and eight nights. The same year,
entries totalled 27,000, which included
1100 horses, 3500 dogs, 1700 dairy cattle,
800 beef cattle, 600 pigs and 1370 sheep
— a total value of more than $4 million.
Compare this with the 1859 exhibition
when there were 500 entries.
The Royal Melbourne Show, apart from
being a leading Australian Show, is also
highly regarded internationally.
Entries are received from many countries,
and the Show is visited each year by
people from overseas. It has earned its
place as one of the most important Shows
of the products of primary and secondary
industries held anywhere in the world.
It is a glowing example of the State's
prosperity, and a tribute to the many
thousands of exhibitors, producers
and organisers.

*The Clydesdale . . . a
symbol of the era now
past when the horse
played a significant
role in the development
of our country.*

Breed societies

Over the past 100 years most of our domestic animals have changed in conformation or structure. The two most noticable changes have been in sheep and cattle.

These changes have primarily been brought about by standards set by various breed societies and intense and rigid selection by stud stock breeders.

To look at pictures of cattle as they were 100 years ago, it is hard to imagine that such dramatic changes have taken place. Stud breeders over the years have succeeded in producing a beef animal with more top class meat and less waste. The prime cuts areas such as the loins and hindquarters now carry much more meat.

Dairy cattle breeds have not changed so much as beef cattle, but here again societies have adopted strict standards which have resulted in greater production.

The most significant change in conformation would be that of the Merino sheep.

The Australian breeder over the years has not only achieved success
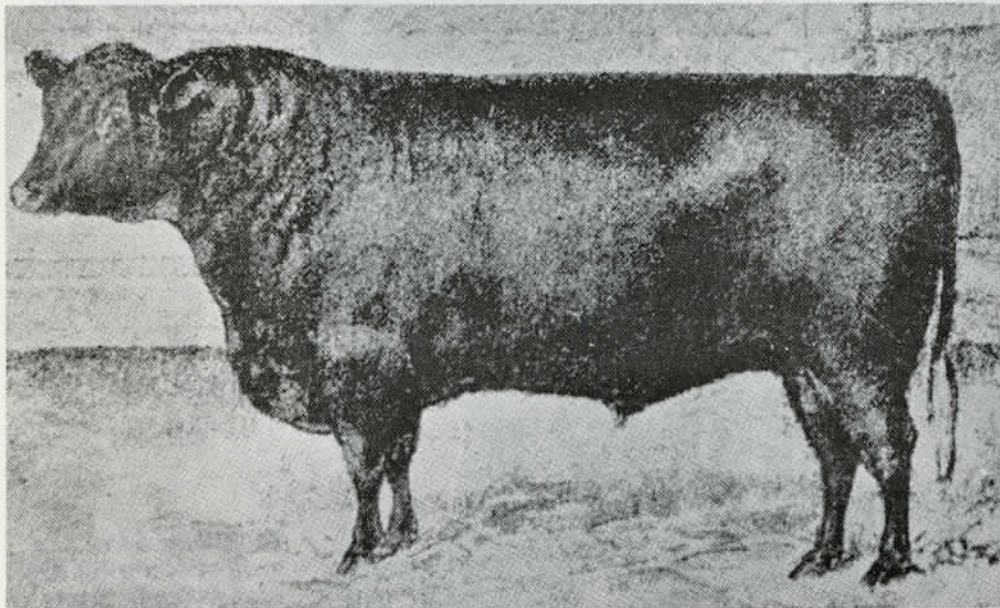
Champion bull of 1886.

Champion bull of today.

in combining great length of staple with a high density of fibre in the skin, but through pursuing a course of selection which is characteristically his own, has decreased the "wrinkles" or skin folds so that the modern day Australian Merino is a relatively smooth bodied animal.

Most of these changes have been brought about by the grading up of mixed ewe flocks by the continued use of selected Merino rams.
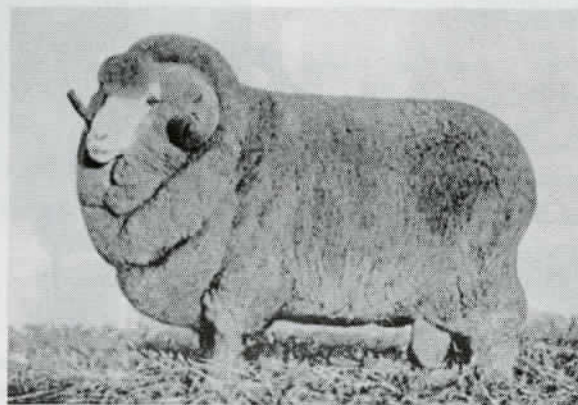
This change in Merino sheep is not only a tribute to the efficiency of the Australian breeder, but also the suitability of the Australian environment.
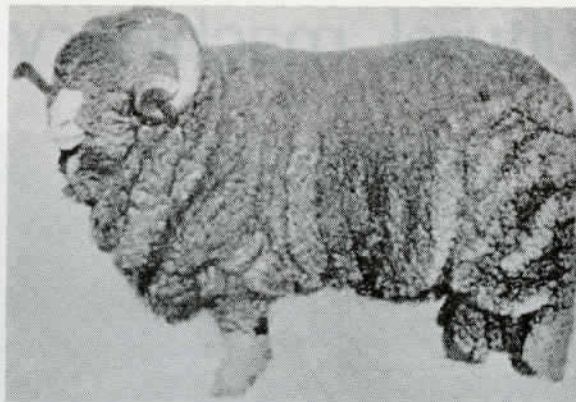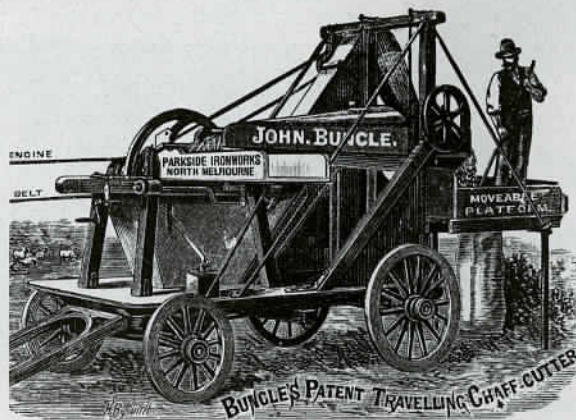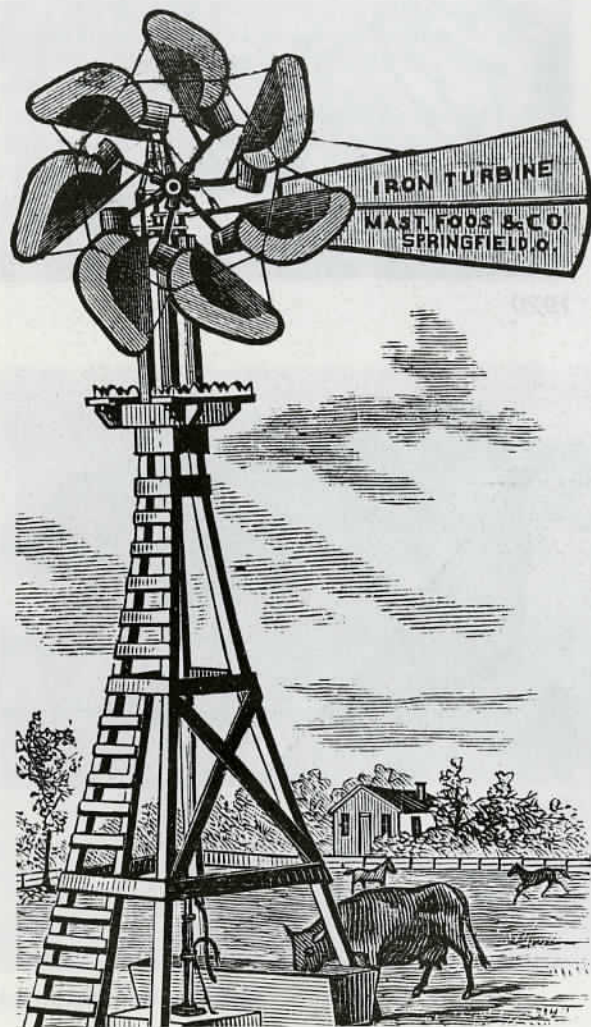

The Merino ram of 1898
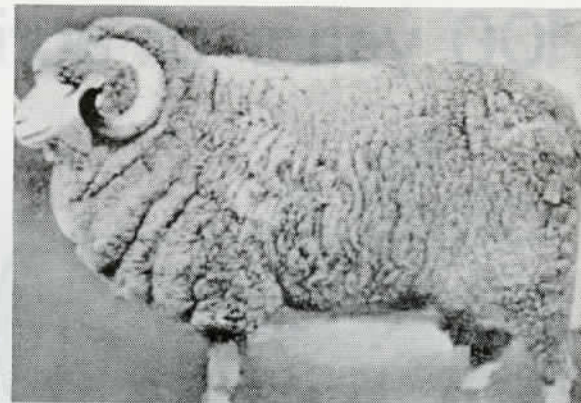
1920

1939
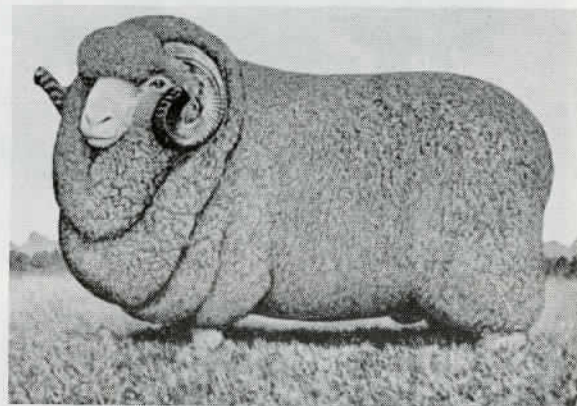
Today

100 years of agricultural machinery
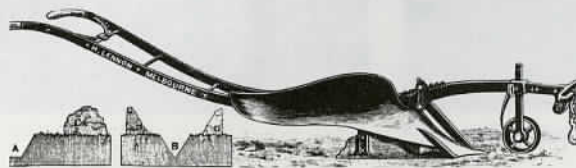
FAR LEFT: The iron turbine wind engine of the 1880s. Made entirely of iron, the manufacturers claimed the machine was "ideal for the hot winds and fierce gales which prevail in the colony".
ABOVE LEFT: One of the early combined harvesters, manufactured by a Geelong foundry.
CENTRE LEFT: Bungle's patent travelling chaff cutter, an exhibit in the Show of 1885.
LOWER LEFT: A plough manufactured by Hugh Lennon in 1885.
ABOVE: A view of the old machinery court at the 1920 Show.

ABOVE: In the years after the Second World War, the tractor
revolutionised farming techniques. Jobs previously carried out by
farm horses became more economical by tractor. Spraying of fruit trees
in orchards is now a job for the tractor.
ABOVE RIGHT: Tractor with hay baler attachment harvests a crop
of meadow hay.
FAR RIGHT: A giant disc plough on display at the Show.
RIGHT: An intricate piece of modern farming equipment, the clover harvester.
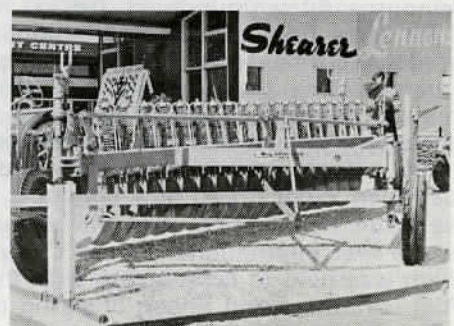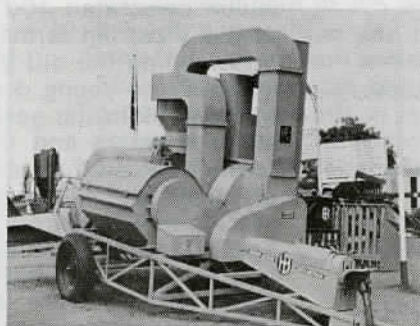
Rural industry and the Show

Competitive District Displays of farm produce were introduced in 1903 and were conducted with varying success up until the beginning of the Second World War. However in 1970, the Royal Agricultural Society decided to reintroduce a display of Victorian Farm Produce and this has since been successfully staged in Centenary Hall.

To celebrate the Centenary of the formation of the Victorian Department of Agriculture, a huge display of farm produce was staged in the Government Pavilion in 1972.

In post-war years, rural industries — as individual bodies became prominent at the Royal Show. The Australian Meat Board and the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, The Australian Wool Board, the Dairy Industry and the Victorian Egg Board have all done much to promote their industries at the Royal Melbourne Show. Although the first sheep shearing contest was held in 1874 the modern competitions were not commenced until 1947.

The first Australian Sheep Shearing Championship was held at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds in 1953.

In the same Royal Show, mannequin parades were held and a fashion competition of garments made from wool was conducted. This was the first of the "Fleece to Fashion" displays and the forerunner to the present popular displays which the Australian Wool Board now conducts.

The 1954 Royal Show was the venue for the first International Fleece Competition which was held in conjunction with the Wool Exhibition and Sheep Shearing contests. Entries in the International Fleece Competition were received from all States of the Commonwealth, England, United States of America, South Africa, Holland, Japan and Uruguay.

At the 1955 Royal Show the new Dairy Industry Display proved an outstanding attraction. This display showed in full scale the operations connected with the process of pasteurized bottled milk.

The Meat Industry became prominent in the 1956 Royal Show with the introduction of the Butcher's shop in Centenary Hall, where demonstrations were carried out by members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation.

The other industry to participate in the Royal Show is the Egg industry, which through the Victorian Egg Board has done much to demonstrate to the general public its functions and efficiency.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

At the 1972 Royal Melbourne Show the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria paid tribute to the Victorian Department of Agriculture which celebrated 100 years of service to the Victorian farmer.

Superseding the old Board of Agriculture in 1872 the young department was quick to learn the needs of farmers and stock breeders and through its research farms dedicated its work to better farming practices and the protection of Victoria's stock population from serious stock diseases. The Department of Agriculture has had a long association with the Society, going back to 1874 when the Society's Show that year was held "under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture".

The first dairy display at the 1955 Show is inspected by the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks. He is accompanied by the then R.A.S. President, Mr. T. N. Mitchell, C.B.E.
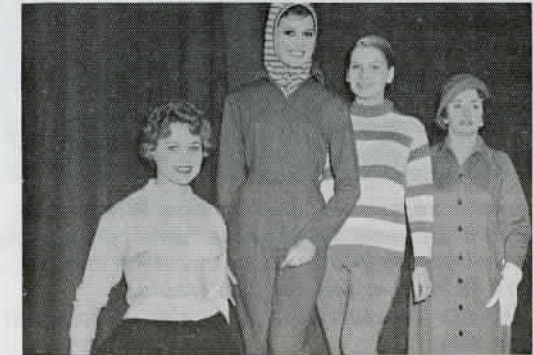
Models parade garments in the early "Fleece to Fashion" displays, forerunners of today's popular wool parades.
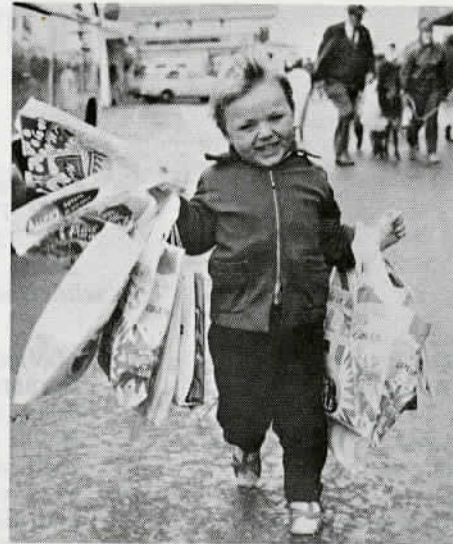
Fun and education

The first and last aim of the Royal Melbourne Show is education. Admittedly the Show has its carnival atmosphere and its family-picnic aspect. It sets out to attract the people — not only by the breadth and variety of its display of animal husbandry and agricultural produce, of machinery and manufactures, but by spectacle and entertainment in the arena. For the young in heart sideshows alternate with showbags, woodchops with mannequin parades.

All these are designed to draw the crowd. But once through the turnstiles the people are at once aware the keynote is the culture of the land.

Probably from no other area of the social and cultural life in Victoria is there so much to be learnt by so many as from the Show.

It has a wealth of information and instruction for the man on the land, for the man at the lathe, for the man at the cultivator and the man in the counting house, above all for the man in the street and the woman in the home. It is a far cry from the annual Ploughing Match of the original Port Phillip Farmers' Society, to the modern Show.

Today the exhibitions and competitions of the Show demonstrate in addititon to primary industry in all its phases every other aspect of the State's economy. The main aim and achievement of the Show remain those of education, through competition and observation, to produce the best fruits of the soil and to adapt them to the needs of mankind. From the schoolroom of childhood to the university of experience, competition is accepted as the first and final factor in education, and competition is the solid foundation on which this national institution is constructed.

The Garryowen

Miss Beverley Thomas, of Tullamarine, 1971 winner of the Garryowen, with Dad's Delight.

A tragedy which shocked horselovers and tore at the heartstrings of people all over Australia has been commemorated by the greatest of all Australian equestrienne competitions, the *Garryowen*, in which the elite among women riders and their hacks compete each year.

The smell of smoke and crackling of fire awakened Mrs. Violet Murrell at her home early on the morning of March 24, 1934. With a cry to her sleeping husband, she pulled on a robe and rushed out into the yard to the stables beyond the house, and the horses housed in them.

The stables were a roaring tidal-wave of flame, the cries of the terrified horses wrung her heart. She couldn't possibly save all of them, but Garryowen, her own favourite mount, she had to save at any cost.

Ignoring the searing heat and the crashing timber, she dashed into the blaze, to what was left of Garryowen's stall. She had set herself a hopeless task; overcome by smoke and heat she fell unconscious.

By this time her husband, Bill Murrell, was frantically trying to batter his way against timber and flame into the building. Bill loved his horses too, but his one thought now was for his wife's safety. He stumbled over her and dragged her clear of the blaze. Despite the gallant attempt, "Garryowen" perished in the fire, along with the other horses in the stables. Violet Murrell, burned beyond hope of recovery, died the next night. Her husband followed her several days later.

Australian horse breeders and riders were shocked at the tragedy. Violet Murrell had been a most popular member of their social group. She had ridden in the Royal Melbourne Show ring since she was a child and had grown up to become one of Victoria's foremost show-riders and cross-country horsewomen. She was the kind of rider who liked horses, not just because she had the ability to dominate and use them; she loved them truly for their loyalty and grace, and the delight she found in their companionship.

Her family and friends, indeed all showgoers and riders, realised that they could perpetuate the memory of her heroism in a way she would most appreciate. So they opened a fund to provide a trophy which, with the approval of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, became the *Garryowen Perpetual Trophy*.

Every year, in September, at the Royal Melbourne Show, in the main arena before a sea of spectators in the stands and enclosures — and in the adjoining Flemington Race Course — the stamping ground of the now little more renowned Melbourne Cup — the Garryowen aspirants are judged according to the rules laid down in 1934. The points are awarded for:

● HORSE — Conformation and Soundness, Manners and Paces;
● EQUIPMENT — Saddlery and Costume;
● RIDING ABILITY.

Photographs of previous winners and their mounts decorate the club walls of the R.A.S.V.

The winner is publicly introduced to press and V.I.P.s at a special conference. Garryowen is no longer either award or trophy, horse or memorial to a horse. Garryowen is a symbol — a symbol of all that is best in horse and horsewoman, all that is living in the myth of one of the finest relationships in human experience. And Garryowen winners have set a standard of horsewomanship that knows no superior in the world.

Garryowen winners

1934: Miss Kitty Sutherland (Mrs. Creber)
1935: Miss Kitty Sutherland (Mrs. Creber)
1936: Mrs. Fred Chenhall (nee Miss Phyllis Bray)
1937: Mrs. H. T. Coffey
1938: Miss Kath Donaghue
1939: Mrs. Gwen M. Moore
1940: Mrs. H. Bartram
1941: Mrs. H. T. Coffey
1946: Mrs. M. Scott
1947: Mrs. R. M. Metherall (nee Miss Kath Lucas)
1948: Mrs. Isabel Mills
1949: Mrs. R. M. Metherall (nee Miss Kath Lucas)
1950: Mrs. Frank Hopkins
1951: Miss Kath Donaghue
1952: Miss Diane Maple-Brown (Mrs. John Boyd)
1953: Miss Anne Tate (Mrs. B. Gibson)
1954: Mrs. B. M. Stride
1955: Miss Nan J. Monkivitch (Mrs. S. G. Bull)
1956: Miss Marie Hoad
1957: Mrs. J. K. McKay
1958: Miss Anne Campbell
1959: Mrs. Pauline Falkiner
1960: Miss Bridget McIntyre
1961: Mrs. R. A. Field (nee Miss Anne Campbell)
1962: Mrs. Kevin Abrahams (nee Miss Patsy
       O'Halloran)
1963: Mrs. R. A. Field (nee Miss Anne Campbell)
1964: Mrs. F. Burke (nee Miss June Bloxham)
       (Dad's Delight)
1965: Miss Lynette Lewis
1966: Mrs. Gwenda Walker
1967: Mrs. Robert James
1968: Mrs. F. Burke (Dad's Delight)
1969: Mrs. D. Hearn (Quality Street)
1970: Miss Lynette Lewis (Random)
1971: Miss Bev Thomas (Dad's Delight)
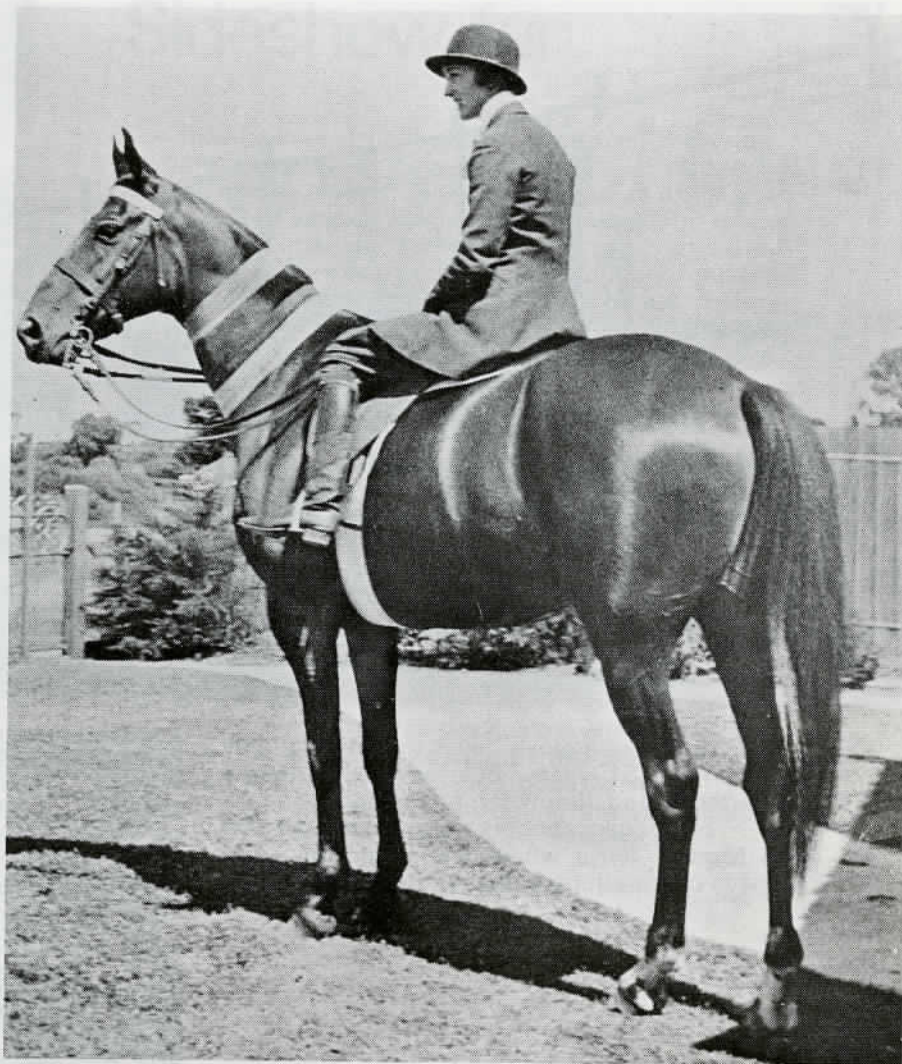
Mrs. Violet Murrell with the champion saddle horse, Garryowen, photographed just before the tragic fire of 1934.
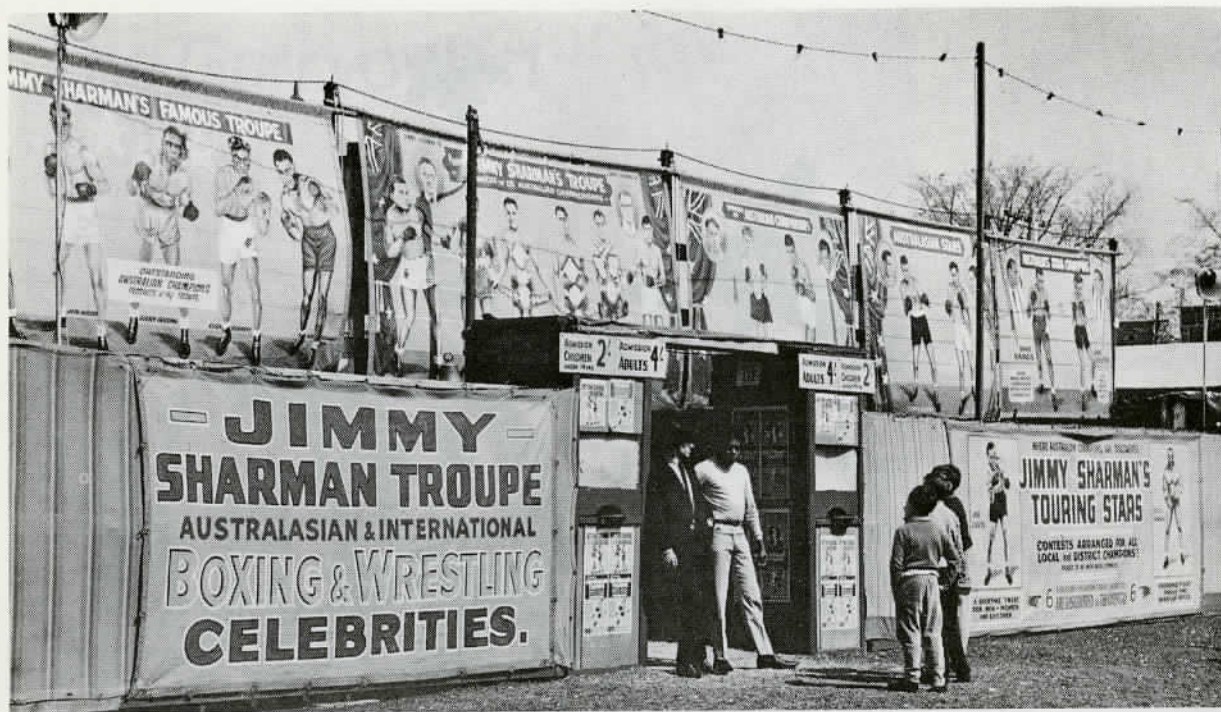
"Who'll take a glove," was the cry of Jimmy Sharman for 51 years. But his boxing troupe is no more, and Jimmy jnr. has joined the ranks of dodgem car operators. Nowadays, the Mad Mouse, ferris wheel and other fun rides have captured the imagination of showgoers.
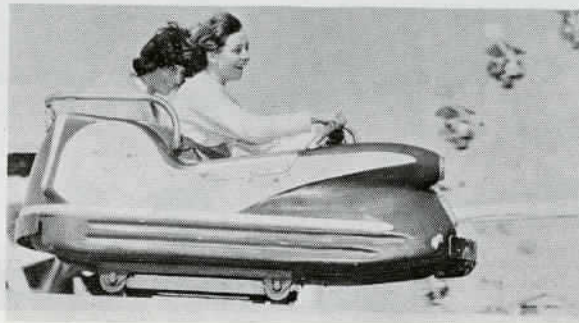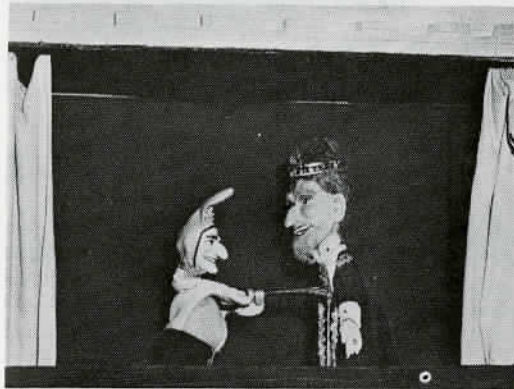
Sideshow fun

The sideshow — or tent show — has over the years become accepted as part of the Royal Show scene. And sideshow history goes as far back as 1848 when it was reported that at the first ploughing match, "merchants from the town displayed their wares and entertainers amused the womenfolk and children". Sideshow entertainment boomed in the years before the Second World War and from the late 1940s to 1956. But when television arrived the good sideshow acts were taken from the show circuit leaving such entertainment as boxing troupes, pop groups and an occasional "half man - half woman" type of show. Gone are the days of the "Fat Lady", the "Tattooed Lady", "Billy the Fat Pig" and other oddities.

The last of the recognised "tent shows" disappeared after the 1971 Royal Melbourne Show. This was Jimmy Sharman's Boxing Troupe.

Economics and regulations forced this show to close after 51 years of Royal Show appearances. No longer will be heard the cry "Who'll take a glove," and the noise from the big drum. Jimmy Sharman Junior has joined the ranks of the "rides operators" and now conducts as his pitch, dodgem cars.

However the amusements side of the Show have increased and whereas in days gone by the showgoer got his kicks from ogling the Fat Lady, he now gets them from the "Mad Mouse" and "Space Ride".

The Grand Parade
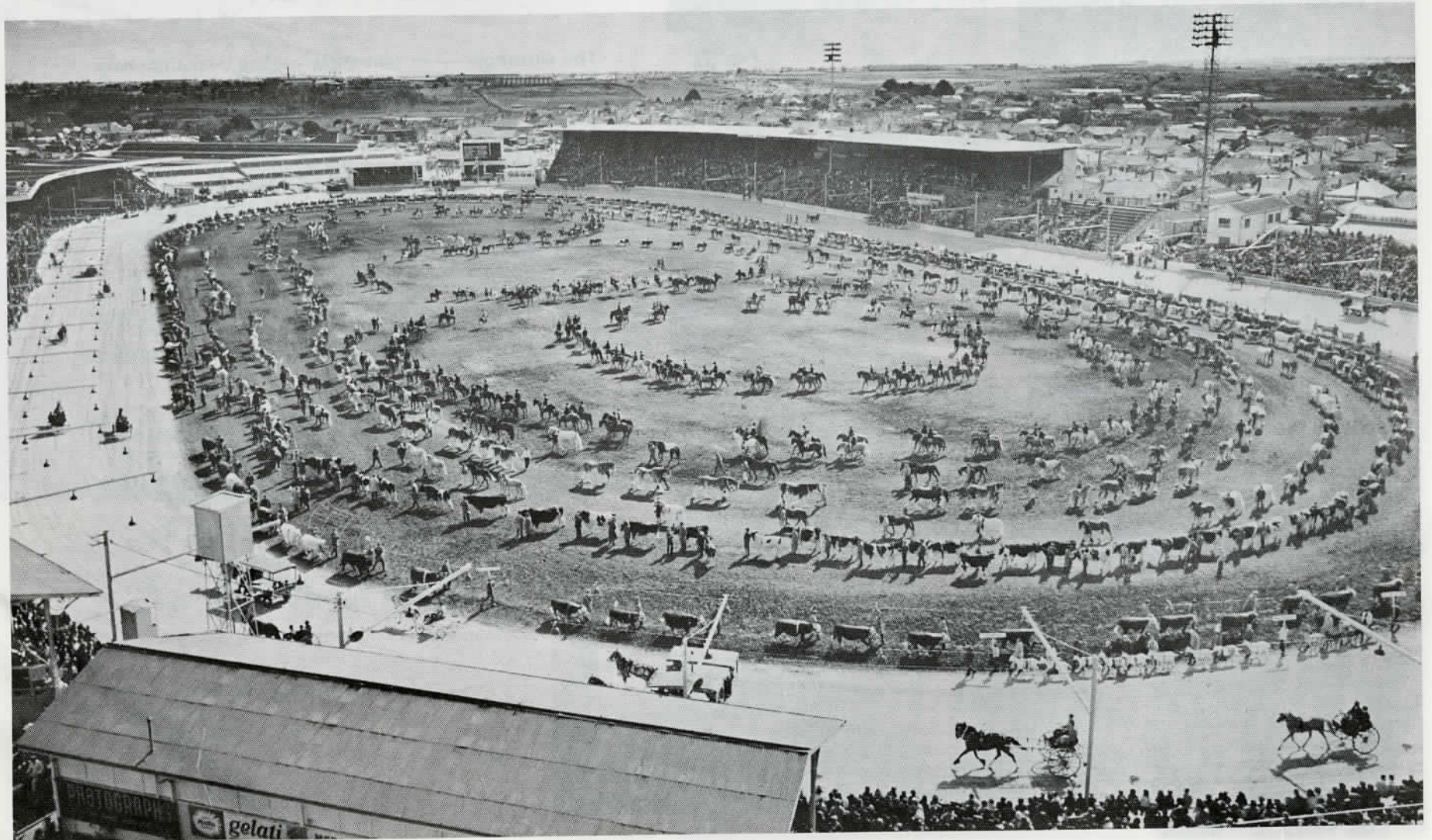
The Grand Parade at the 1971 Royal Melbourne Show.

Before 1910 there was no Grand Parade at Royal Shows. Horses paraded on their own, and then cattle.

In 1910, the Royal Agricultural Society organised the first "Massed Parade" involving horses and cattle. This later took on the form of the present "Grand Parade" and now incorporates horses ridden, led, and in harness; all breeds of cattle, and goats.

And just as that first Massed Parade proved to be the main attraction in 1910, so through the years the Grand Parades have held pride of place as the most popular event in the Royal Show.

There is hardly a Royal Show goes by without some excitement emanating from the Grand Parade.

A frisky Shetland may take the opportunity to dislodge its small rider, a proud Arab may catch his handler unawares, or a one-ton bull may decide that a Grand Parade is no place for him.

In these moments, although anxious for a while, the mounted red-coated marshalls are soon in control and the animals quickly settle down.

On the average there are 850 to 900 animals on exhibition in the Grand Parade and, all being prize winners, are the most valuable collection on the Showgrounds, conservatively valued at $2 million.

You have not seen the Royal Show if you have not seen the Grand Parade.

ABOVE: The parade of horses at the 1907 Royal Show. At this time there was no Grand Parade as we know it today — horses and cattle paraded separately.

LEFT: It's his first Grand Parade, and this youngster is a little confused about it all.

Arena entertainment

It is only in recent years that arena entertainment has become prominent at the Royal Show.

Before the Second World War, the serious side of showing, such as judging of cattle, horses, etc. was the main function of the arena, with few exceptions, such as the Victoria Mounted Police display. However, in 1948 the Australian Broadcasting Commission in conjunction with the Military authorities, the A.B.C.

Symphony Orchestra, Variety Orchestra and the National Band, produced the "1812 Overture".

This started an era of Main Arena features, such as rodeo, polo, tent pegging, tree climbing, human cannonballs, Mexican birdmen, jet rocket man, kite man, precision car driving team, the Flying Carellas, dressage demonstrations and many others. Now of course these have become

firmly entrenched as part of the Royal Melbourne Show.

As distinct from the Main Arena features the purely equestrian activities are a highlight of the Royal Melbourne Show. So many of our now accepted and practiced arena horse contests throughout Australia started at The Royal, not the least of which are the Olympic Jumping contests which were initiated at the 1953 Royal Melbourne Show.
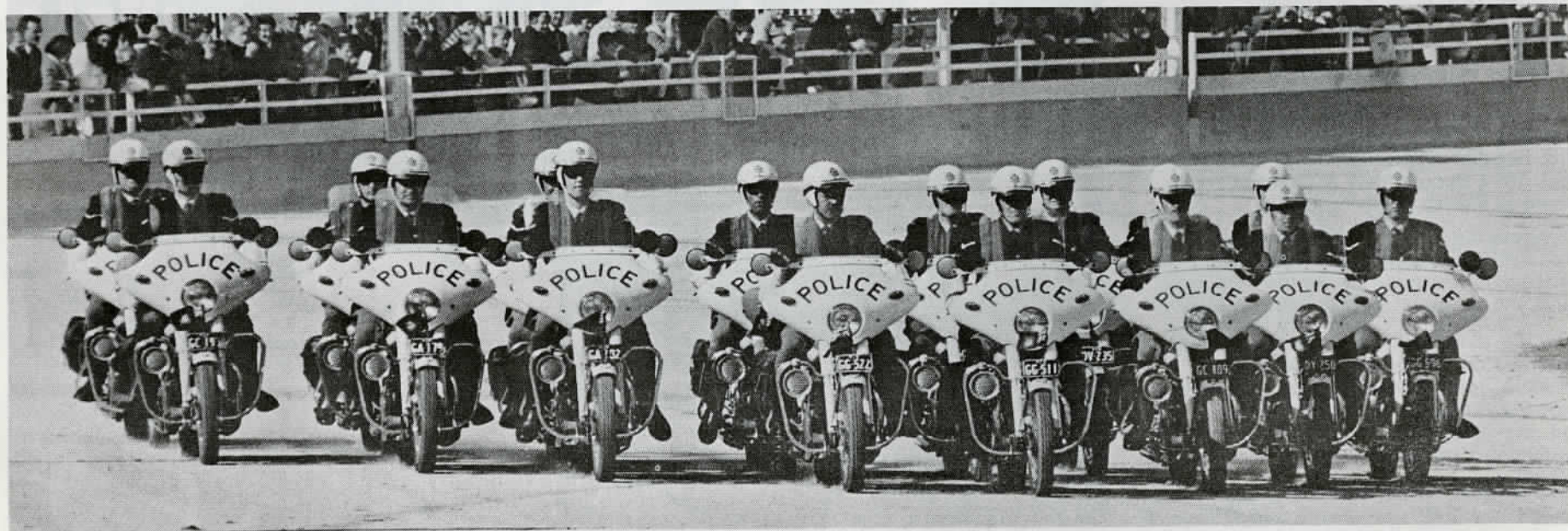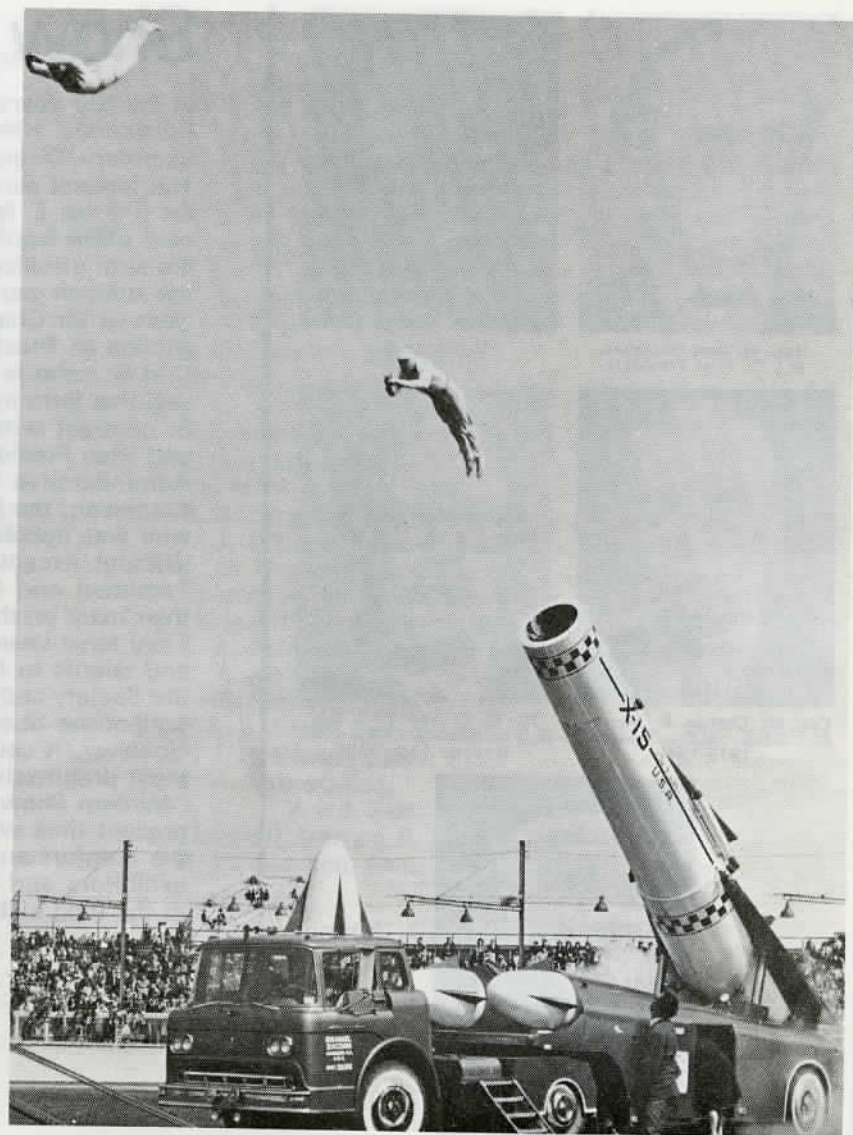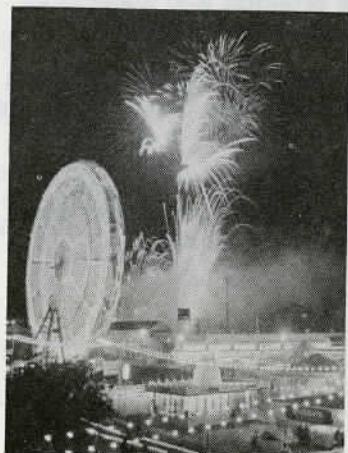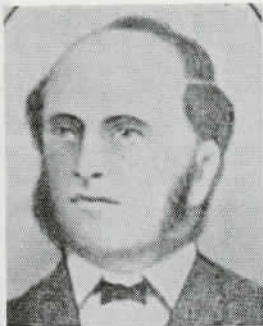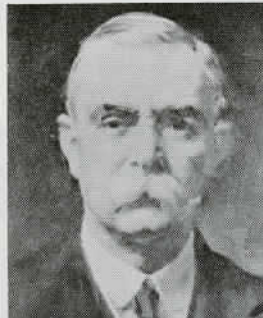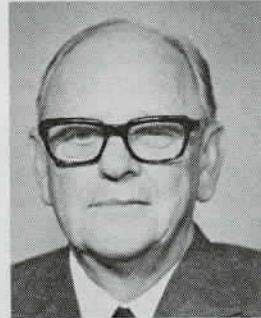
Show leaders

Hon. William Degraves, M.L.C., First President.
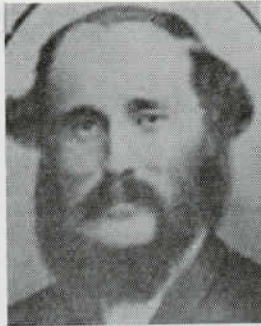
D. Munro Esq., First Secretary.

Col. Sir Charles E. Merrett, Kt. C.B.E., V.D., President 1915-1946.

H. T. C. Woodfull Esq., O.B.E., Secretary 1953-1963 Director 1963-1972.

G. P. H. Wilson Esq., C.M.G., President from 1964.

In its 100 years, the Society has had 26 Presidents, 108 Vice Presidents and seven Secretary/Directors.

The longest serving President was Colonel Sir Charles E. Merrett, Kt., C.B.E., E.D., who held office from 1915 until 1946, and during his term of office guided the Society through the difficult periods of two World Wars. Next to Sir Charles Merrett in length of service as President is Mr. G. P. H. Wilson, C.M.G., who is now serving his ninth consecutive term in the top office of the Society. In contrast with the number of Presidents and Vice Presidents, there has been but seven Administrative Heads, including Mr. H. J. Clappison, the Society's second Director who was appointed in 1972.

Without exception, each President, Vice President and Secretary/Director have left their mark on the Society throughout the years. They have unselfishly contributed their time and talents to the progress and success of the Society and especially the Royal Melbourne Show.

However, it could be said that the Society's most progressive period has been that of the "Modern Show" — from 1946 up until the present time when more has been done for the comfort and enjoyment of patrons, exhibitors and stock, than any other time in the long history of the Society.

PRESIDENTS

Hon. William Degraves, M.L.C.	1871
Hon. Robert Simson, M.L.C.	1872 - 1874
Sir Samuel Wilson	1873
Edward Henty, Esq.	1875
M. McCaw, Esq.	1876
Archibald Fisken, Esq.	1877
Hugh Lennon, Esq.	1878
Job Smith, Esq.	1879, 1902, 1903
Hon. Robert Simson ·	1880
W. J. Lobb, Esq.	1881
Dr. Andrew Pummer	1882, 1884 to 1891
James Gibb, Esq., M.H.R.	1883, 1901
Francis Henty, Esq.	1884
D. R. McGregor, Esq.	1891, 1892
Frederick Peppin, Esq.	1893, 1894
Hon. T. Brunton	1895, 1896
Hon. Thomas Skene	1897, 1898, 1906 to 1908
William Thomson Esq.	1899, 1900
Hon. T. F. Cumming	1904, 1905
Alexander McCracken, Esq.	1909 to 1915
Col. Sir Charles E. Merrett, Kt. C.B.E., V.D.	1915 to 1946
C. N. McKay, Esq.	1947 to 1951
A. G. Hunter, Esq.	1952
T. N. Mitchell, Esq., C.B.E.	1953 to 1956
His Honour Judge Norman F. Mitchell, C.M.G.	1957 to 1963
G. P. H. Wilson, Esq., C.M.G.	1964 to

SECRETARIES

D. Munro, Esq.	1871
Walter McFarlane, Esq.	1872 to 1879
Thomas Patterson, Esq.	1880 to 1910
Henry Schweiger, Esq.	1911 to 1931
Louis Monod, Esq., O.B.E.	1931 to 1953
H. T. C. Woodful, Esq., O.B.E.	1953 to 1963

DIRECTORS

H. T. C. Woodfull, Esq, O.B.E.	1963 to 1972
H. J. Clappison, Esq.	1972

The new cattle pavilion, most recent addition to the Royal Melbourne Show.