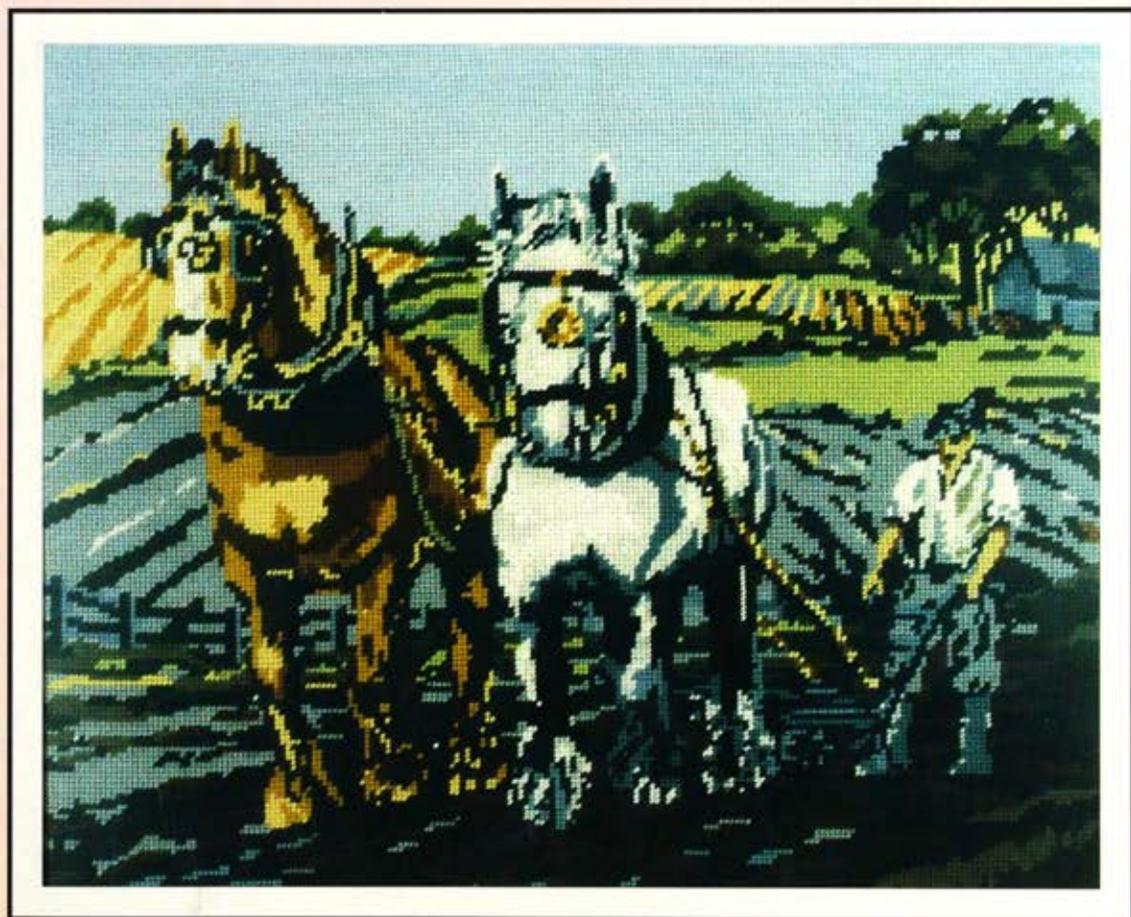


# *Speed the Plough*

Volume Two 1980 - 1998

A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA



Robert Morgan

## **Speed the Plough**

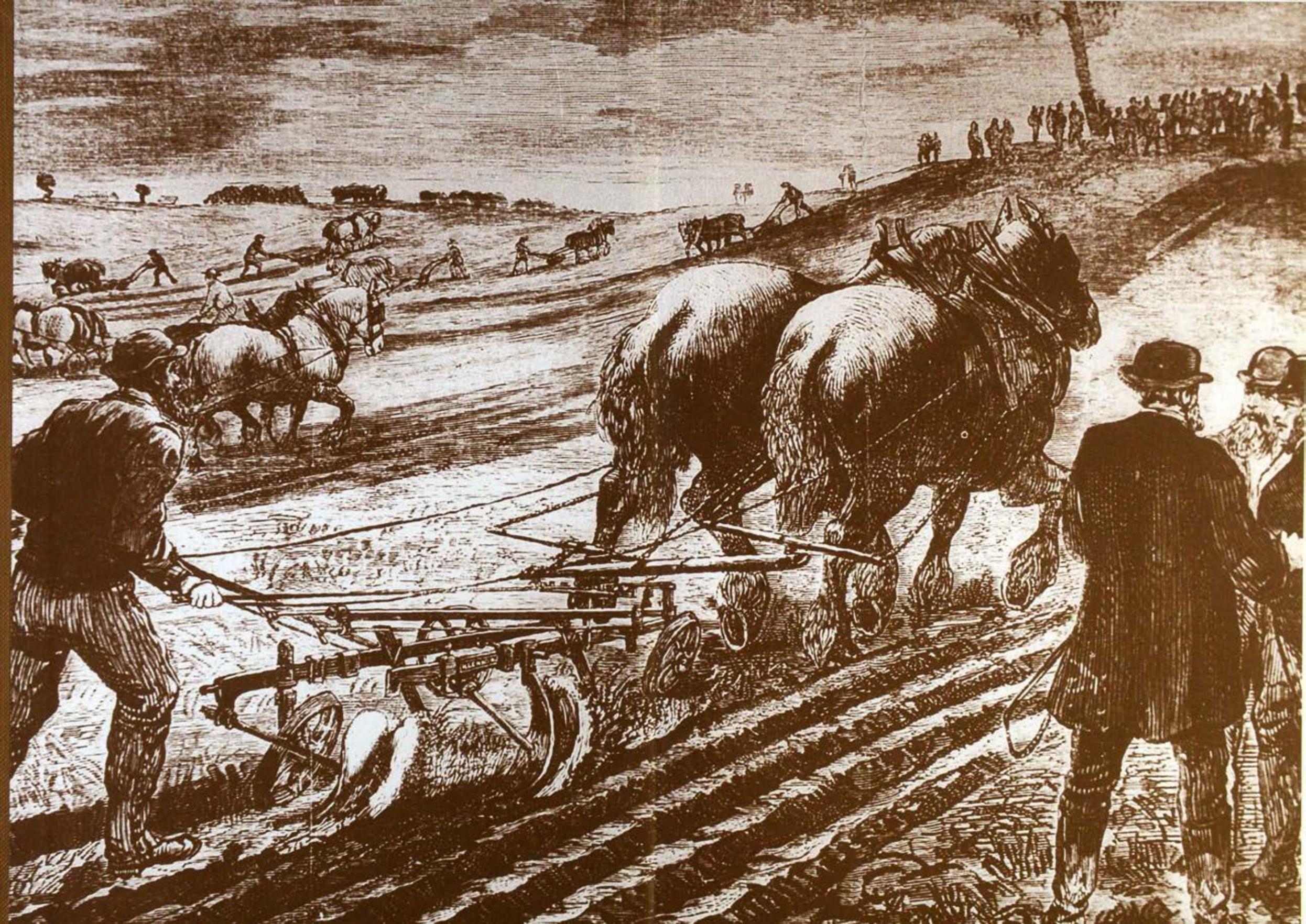
This history is an update of 'Speed The Plough' which was launched in 1981 and recorded the activities of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, and its predecessors through the early days of Australia Felix, the District of Port Phillip and into the State of Victoria era.

The RASV has mirrored the progress and development of our great State, and has always been the hub and a catalyst for all agricultural activities.

In times of adversity, droughts, floods, bushfires, wars and depressions, this Society has drawn extra strength and support for its activities from all sections of the community, especially the rural industries.

The Royal Melbourne Show is still able to attract the greatest aggregate attendance of any function in Victoria.

As the Society moves into its 150th year of influence in 1998, it carries with it the privilege of being the oldest, continuous functioning organisation in Victoria, and this is because it has been able to read the signs, and move with the times.



# **Speed the Plough**

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# Speed the Plough

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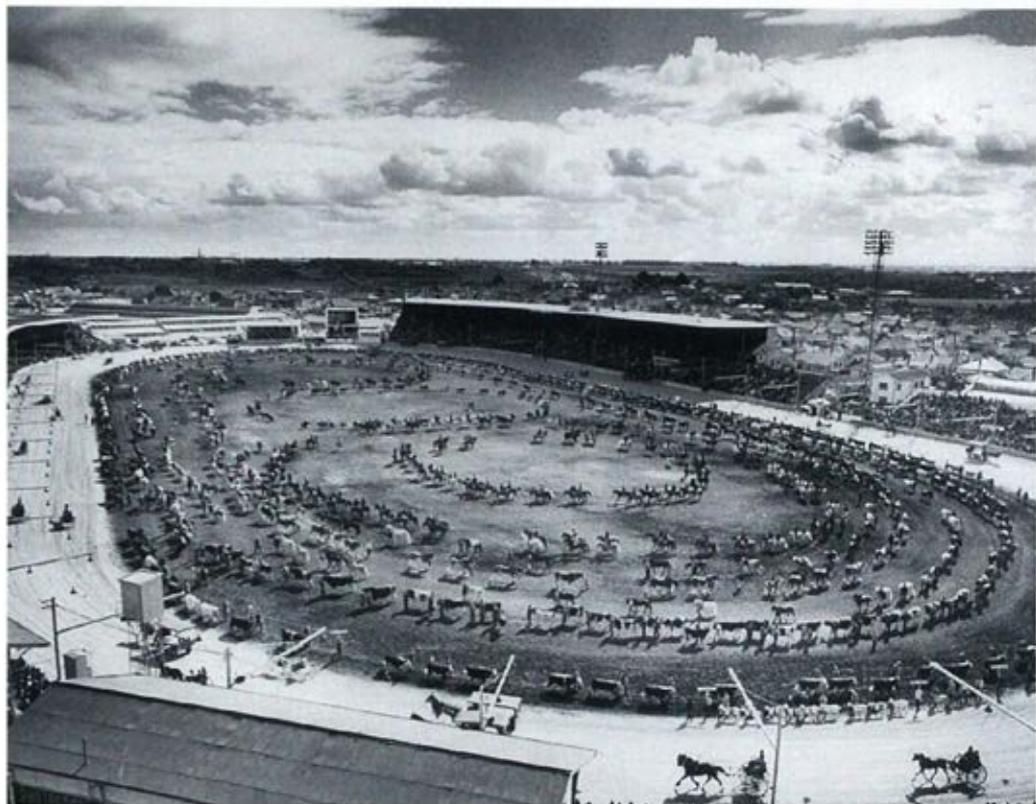
**Volume Two**  
**1980 - 1998**

**A History of**  
**The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria**  
*And its role in Developing Agriculture in Victoria*

*Compiled and written by*

**Robert Morgan**





*Royal Show Grand Parade*

# Speed the Plough

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Speed The Plough: The motto of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited 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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Australian National Library ISBN 0-646-35959-2

Produced in Australia by  
Rothfield Print Management

23 Hall Street, Hawthorn East, Victoria for  
The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited  
Royal Show Grounds, Epsom Road, Ascot Vale, Victoria

Layout by Grant Gittus Graphics

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# Foreword

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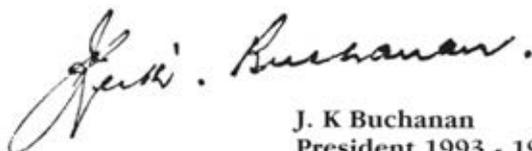
I am indeed honoured to be given the invitation to write the foreword to this update of 'Speed The Plough' documenting the story of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria from 1980 to 1998. Author Bob Morgan is very well versed in the Society's history and is acutely aware of the changes during these years; He is eminently qualified to put Volume Two together.

1980 to 1998 was a period in our history where we saw a number of most significant changes in the lifestyle of Australians and when it was of paramount importance for societies like ours to adjust and meet not only with legislative changes but with modern business practices in order to look forward to continuing successfully into the 21st Century.

The book gives an insight into the big changes that have taken place in many aspects of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and its structure including its governance. None has been implemented without careful consideration and all have been done in the name of more efficient, effective and accountable management.

The Society has, during this time of change, restated its mission and strengthened its desire to continue to serve agriculture into the next century in the promotion of agriculture in general and the pursuit and quest for excellence in particular.

I commend the book to you as a means of gaining a better understanding of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited of the present time and of the foreseeable future - an organisation with a proud history spanning 150 years, a great tradition of service and determined to continue to play what we believe to be a most important role in the world of tomorrow.



**J. K Buchanan**  
**President 1993 - 1997**

# Acknowledgements

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Most of the matters of interest in this update of 'Speed The Plough' have been covered in the Author's Note. However, with all such works, one is always looking for - and grateful for - any available assistance and advice, and in this instance I have been fortunate to have received both from several people.

I express my thanks and appreciation to Frank and Lea, Mrs. Joy Bertram, and members of the staff of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria for taking the time to sort through photographs in the Society's library.

To Kath - who misguidedly thought that when I retired from the RASV twenty years ago that we were in for a long period of serenity - I thank you for your patience and understanding, and also for the many hours spent in reading over and correcting the manuscript.

To everyone who contributed to this work, feel rewarded that you have made a contribution to the history of a remarkable organisation.

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## Author's Note

In updating 'Speed The Plough' from 1980 to 1998 I have been made aware of the dramatic changes the Society has gone through in such a short period of time.

Less than two decades have passed since 'Speed The Plough' was launched, but in that time much of the fabric of the Society has been subject to alteration.

Up until the early 1980s the Rules of the Society had hardly been altered - other than minor amendments - since they were first framed back in the early days of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria in the 1870s.

They underwent an update in December 1949 which merely presented them in a more readable and understandable form, but did not change or alter the basic direction of procedures outlined in The Rules.

For over a century the Society was an unincorporated Association, and given the size of the Royal Melbourne Show and the Society's other activities, this caused some concern in recent years. First, the liability of members was unlimited - members were personally liable for debts and other obligations incurred by the Society in its activities and as such, it was most difficult to conduct the Society's activities in a commercial way. This was rectified in 1993 when the Society was incorporated under Victoria's Associations Incorporations Act 1981.

In November 1993 the Council commissioned a Market Research Survey by the PGI Group to undertake research to help determine what actions needed to be taken to halt and reverse attendance trends at the Royal Melbourne Show. Also at this time the Society engaged Mr. David Crawford of KPMG Peat Marwick to assist in some restructuring of the Society. Seven months later, in June 1994, the Council adopted the Crawford Report, thus approving a new governance for the Society which incorporated the formation of a Board of ten Directors of the RASV Limited, which would report to the full Council four times a year.

This new structure will in no way lessen the responsibilities of Councillors. Sub-committees will - as in the past - be appointed to organise special projects and individual agricultural activities, including the competitive sections of the Royal Melbourne Show.

Other matters of great importance were the adoption of 'Vision 2000' embracing the redevelopment of the Showgrounds; the Showgrounds Conservation Plan and Heritage Victoria's registration of the Showgrounds as a site of Cultural Heritage Significance thus giving the Society a clear view of those buildings and structures to be preserved in the redevelopment plan; the on going Amendment L268 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as it effects the activities on the Showgrounds; and the reorganisation of the reporting structure within the Society as detailed by Chief Executive Peter Payne in his reorganisation memo of 27 November 1997.

Besides these changes, more obvious directions have been taken to make the Royal Show more appealing to the general public with a big shift to basic agricultural education, which has been well received by show patrons.

Greater emphasis has been placed on the role of the 'hobby-farmer' in recent times, maybe to the detriment of the authentic exhibitor, but this is a matter which will receive due attention no doubt should the 'mix' become unbalanced.

Melbourne, December 1997

R. Morgan

## The Uncertain Eighties

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The weather cycle in the early 1980's gave members of the Council cause for concern. Following the wet years of the late 1970's, all indications pointed to a pattern of dry years and unfortunately this was to be only too true

Drought conditions were experienced throughout Victoria during the period commencing April 1982 and continuing into 1983. The drought was extremely severe in all districts north of the Great Dividing Range where rainfall totals for the nine months from April to December were the lowest ever recorded. Southern Victoria fared only slightly better with serious to severe deficiencies in rainfall occurring generally.

By July 1982 most parts of Victoria were in a state of severe drought. Melbourne and most parts of the State experienced the driest winter on record with most districts receiving less than one-quarter of average August rainfall. By September sixty-two municipalities had been declared eligible for drought relief. Further, there was a change in government at both State and Federal levels during 1982 and 1983 and these changes were to create great problems for the man on the land and all associated rural industries. The new Federal Labour Government sought fit to deregulate the Australian currency and this, with falling prices in all rural commodities and the drought saw complete devastation for many farmers and their families throughout the country.

In preparation for the 1981 Royal Melbourne Show, more than \$800,000 was spent on grounds and facility improvements and maintenance.

The main projects included:

- The first stage of the Member' facilities upgrade programme in the Hunter Stand.
- Completion of the Arena Control Centre and the Casualty Complex at the western end of the Arena.
- Installation of cooking and refrigeration equipment in the Royal Block and Members Stand.
- The renovation of the Log Cabin cafeteria in Degraeves Street.
- New fencing along the Epsom Road and railway perimeters.
- Construction and fitting out of the Enquiry Centre within the Administration Building.
- General works including the demolition of several old buildings in the areas of Smith and Peck Streets, the creation of new garden areas, the painting and maintenance of buildings, roadways, and public services.

This year was the first since trotting began at the Showgrounds that no meeting was conducted on the grounds, however with the assistance of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, successful negotiations were completed with the Trotting Control Board and trainers resident near the grounds, for the continued use of the trotting track for training purposes.

A number of major entertainments were conducted on the Showgrounds during the year, namely, the Willie Nelson Country Music Concert in February; the May Fair - a children's entertainment staged during the May school holidays and the first Supercross Masters motor-cycle event in November.

During the year the McClure contract for catering in certain parts of the grounds expired, and the vacated areas were taken over by O'Brien Catering Pty. Ltd. The McClure/RASV asso-

during the year. Following a long illness, Mr. F. E. Selwyn Scott, MBE, died on 21 January 1981, aged 87 years. Mr. Scott became a Councillor in September 1952 and served as Vice President from 1964 to 1968. In addition to his responsibilities as Vice President, he was Chairman of the Sheep and Goat Committee, and a member of the Beef and Dairy Cattle Committees. He was made a Life Councillor in September 1972.

Outside his RASV activities, Mr. Scott was directly concerned with the administration of the Dorset Horn Sheep Association, the Dairy Shorthorn Association and the Australian Sheepbreeders Association and held the office of President in each. He was a respected judge of both Dorset Horn sheep and Dairy Shorthorn cattle, having officiated at Royal Shows in New South Wales, South Australia, and his home state, Victoria.

## **New President and a shorter show**

Commenting in his final report to Members at the 1982 Annual Meeting, retiring President Mr. R. T. Balderstone, CMG, MC, made special mention of the 1981 Royal Show entries which included a number of records in major stock sections. He reiterated that the records achieved in the cattle and sheep sections proved that the Show maintained a strong agricultural base and belied the statements of critics who claim that support for the Show from the agricultural sector, including the stud stock industry, was waning.

Referring to the introduction of Corporate Membership in 1981, Mr. Balderstone said that nearly fifty companies had joined the Society as Corporated Members contributing between \$250 and \$1,000 each in membership fees, and that this special membership would serve as a genuine incentive for companies to become directly involved with the RASV. Mr. Balderstone was optimistic that the Society could face the future with confidence as long as it grasped some of the problems and tried to overcome them. The increasing use of the grounds between Shows would be a must, not only to justify the superb location, but to supplement Show income so charges can be kept to the minimum.

He went on to say:

*I believe the Society must also be certain it keeps in touch with the problems of commercial farmers and endeavours to assist them in every way. This year (1981) has commenced with headaches for many farmers - disappointing cattle and sheep prices, higher costs and inflation, and a devastating drought, is a cause for great concern.*

Mr. G. R. Starritt, OBE, was elected the Society's 29th President at the 1982 Annual Meeting on 16th March. He became a member of the RASV Council in 1957, held the office of Vice President since 1969, and was created a Life Councillor in 1977. In addition to his responsibilities as Vice President, Mr. Starritt was an active member of the Society's Sheep and Goat, Works and Planning, Finance, and Beef and Fat Cattle Committees.

Outside his RASV activities Mr. Starritt has been acknowledged as a top stud-master in Border Leicester, Poll Dorset, and Southdown sheep, and Beef Shorthorn cattle. He was also a respected sheep and cattle judge, having officiated at the Royal Highland Show in Scotland, The Queenstown Show in South Africa, and most Royal Shows throughout Australia.

His association with breed societies and other rural and producer organisations was extensive having served in the senior offices in the Australian Society of Breeders of British Sheep, Poll Shorthorn Society of Australia, Beef Shorthorn Society of Australia - including Chairman of the 1977 World conference of Shorthorn Societies - the Victorian Prime Lamb Committee and the Australian Meat Research Committee. Mr. Starritt was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE), in June 1977 for Services to Agriculture.

ciation covered many years and it was at this Showgrounds site that the now famous Four-n-Twenty Pies were first made and sold.

The total competitive entries for the 1981 Royal Show were 37,397 including a number of records in cattle, sheep, arts and crafts.

On Monday 14th September, the Society conducted its fifth Annual Royal Show City Parade down Swanston Street. More than 60 groups and individual participants took part and brought many aspects of the Show and agriculture before the people of Melbourne. And, for the first time the Society conducted a series of Royal Show promotions in the City Mall and AMP Square. These took place on Tuesday and Wednesday 15-16 September and ran in each location for approximately two hours over the city luncheon break. These comprised shearing, obedience dog demonstrations, a mini animal nursery, heats of the McWilliams/RASV Wine Waiters' Race and was highlighted by a hand milking demonstration by the State Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. T. L. Austin.

The 123rd Royal Melbourne Show was held from 16-26 September inclusive, and resulted in an overall attendance of 802,573 despite the uncertain weather in the second week. The official opening was conducted on Saturday 19 September by His Excellency, Sir Zelman Cowen, AK, GCMG, K. St. J, QC. Governor General and Patron in Chief of the RASV. Other honoured guests at the Official Opening were the State Premier, the Honourable L. H. S. Thompson and Mrs. Thompson, the Mayor and Mayoress of Essendon, Cr. and Mrs. Colin Clark.

Highlights of the spectacular arena programme included the 'Manchester Unity' Rocket Man from the USA, the 'Flying Lohtas', motor cycle displays by the 3rd Military District Police Company and Bull Riding, all of which were either new attractions or had not been seen at the Royal Show for some considerable time. These acts were supported by fireworks, horse event, and the time honoured Grand Parade.

This year the Society embarked on two pilot agricultural education programmes - 'Learning about Livestock' and the 'Story of Haymaking'. The stock programme proved most successful, giving almost 11,500 people the chance to learn more about beef and dairy cattle, and wool and meat producing sheep. Most of those participating in the programmes were children, in a large number of school groups. Both programmes have formed a firm base that can be developed and extended in years to come.

During 1981 the Council invited a number of corporations to join the new membership classification - 'Corporate Members'. Fees for the current year were set at a minimum of \$250 rising to a maximum of \$1,000 and this produced a total of 48 corporations. The progress of this new initiative was watched with interest, and it was hoped that further organisations could be attracted to membership in the future.

In 1981, the RASV served 56 breed societies and associated rural organisations in a secretarial capacity. Four new organisations joined during the year. They were: the Australian Council of Rural Youth; The Australian Donkey Breed Society; The Sharlea Ultra Fine (Wool) Society of Australia and the Victorian Stud Beef Cattle Breeders' Association. At the same time services were terminated for the Dookie Field Day Committee and the Farm Competitions Association.

On 14 November 1981, the Council mourned the death of a most distinguished and respected Life Councillor - Professor H. C. Forster, OBE, aged 78 years. He was elected to Council in May 1957 and was elected a Life Councillor in May 1977. He devoted a great deal of time to RASV affairs despite an extremely busy career. He served on the Scholarship and Educational Grants Committee, the Beef and Fat Cattle Committee, the Centenary Hall and Commercial Farmers Interests Committees. This was the second loss suffered by the Society

On the 15th March the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria invited the Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable T. L. Austin to launch its official history 'Speed The Plough'. The book highlighted the fact that the Society, over the years, had mirrored the progress and development of the State, from the early colonial days to the present. It traced the Society's evolution from the early 1800s and details the advancements made by our past 'guardians' of agriculture in their efforts to establish an organisation whose aims were to foster and promote all forms of primary industry within the young state.

'Speed The Plough' was also very much about the Royal Melbourne Show which had done so much over the years to bring about a better understanding of Victorian agriculture, industry and commerce through a genuinely and justifiably unique event.

The need for an official reference and history of the Society had been a long standing one, and in 1968 the then Director, the late Mr. Colin Woodfull, suggested that such a work be undertaken and broached the matter with the late Mr. Fred Noble, a retired journalist of high repute with 'The Age', who had covered every Melbourne Show since 1923.

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 work.

Upon his retirement in 1977, Mr. Bob Morgan, a member of the Society's staff since 1956 and for the fourteen years prior to his retirement, the Society's Public Relations Manager, agreed to complete the work. He and Fred Noble were good friends and had worked together in covering the activities of the Society and the preparation of the early drafts of the manuscript of the history.

Mr. Morgan, who had a deep appreciation of the history surrounding the Society's development and progress, produced a 'stand-in' publication - '100 Years of Shows' - to celebrate the combined centenary of the Royal Show and the Department of Agriculture Centenary Show in 1972. Following the death of Mr. Noble in 1978, Mr. Morgan took over the task of completing the manuscript and produced the official history.

In May Council agreed to significant changes for streamlining and tightening its policy-making function. It approved a reduction in the number of committees from thirty-one to twenty, with corresponding change of each committee's responsibility and function. This was seen as a necessary move to reduce the overlap of operation previously experienced.

Also during the year, Council re-defined three Royal Show objectives as follows:

- 1 (a) To encourage the development of excellence through competition between exhibitors in all activities set out in the Objectives of the Society, and such other activities as shall be in harmony with all other Show objectives;
- (b) The interest of the citizens of Victoria in the activities set out in the Objective by appropriate educational display of prize winners in such competition.
- 2 (a) To provide educational opportunities for lay persons in all the activities set out in the Objective;
- (b) Educational activities for the purpose of popularising rural life and increasing among the non-rural community and governments, an understanding and appreciation of the role and contribution of the rural sector;

- (c) A venue whereby agriculturalists, pastoralists, horticulturalists, stock-raisers, manufacturers, industrialists (including mineral resource developers), with all their related activities, who may wish to display and/or market their products and services to the public.
- 3 To provide an opportunity for the citizens of Victoria for an Annual Spring celebration of all aspects of the State's life.

The result of achieving the above objectives, would be improvement in areas of production, (from stock-raising to crafts) in addition to an improvement in the quality of life for all Victorians.

The business of exhibiting at the Royal Shows was an expensive one, and this particularly so in the case of cattle exhibitors, whose stay on the grounds had, in most cases, been longer than other groups of exhibitors. Acknowledging this, and in consultation with exhibitors, Council decided to shorten the Show by one day. This move met with an appreciative response from exhibitors and resulted in another important benefit in that the Society was able to conduct a Grand Parade on the final Saturday, something that has not been possible in recent years due to the early release of cattle on the second Friday night.

Also, to promote the 1982 Royal Show, Council adopted the theme 'A 65 Acre Showroom'. The theme was successfully carried through all Show advertising and picked up by the media in its coverage of what was considered a value for money show.

Improvements valued at \$1,085,000 comprising new constructions, major renovations, the upgrading of services and utilities and maintenance, were put in place during the year.

A large extension to the Commonwealth Bank building in Degraeves Street was undertaken to provide new facilities for the joint use of the Bank and the RASV during and between Shows; a new building for the use of the Victorian Producers' Co-operative was constructed in Fiskens Avenue. Valued at \$30,000 the building was better located for VPC personnel to service their existing and prospective clients during showtime.

Other works included renovations to the Aquarium in Lennon Avenue, \$45,000; the former Coles Show Bag building in Plummer Avenue, \$20,000; catering facilities, \$25,000; No. 2 Electricity Sub Station, \$100,000 and new sewerage and water draining works \$30,000. To these main improvements was added the annual Grounds maintenance costs of at least \$500,000.

Following the retirement of His Excellency, Sir Zelman Cowen as Governor General, the Society was delighted that His Excellency, The Right Honourable Sir Ninian Stephen, AK, GCMG, GCVO, KBE, K. St. J, Governor General of Australia, accepted the Society's invitation to become Patron in Chief.

Despite worsening drought and hard economic conditions generally, and a resultant down-turn in attendance at Royal Shows in most other states, the 1982 Royal Melbourne Show, with a total attendance of 865,662 - with one day less than previous years - was a most pleasing result. The Show was conducted from Thursday 16 September to Saturday 25 September (inclusive), and was officially opened on Saturday 18 September by Victoria's new Governor, His Excellency, Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray, KCMG, AO, K.St.J. Accompanying His Excellency on the official dais during the ceremony were the Premier, The Honourable John Cain; the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser; and Mr. Peter Thorley, Chief Commissioner of the City of Melbourne.

In his address His Excellency was particularly mindful of the serious drought situation within Victoria and the resulting hardship for the man on the land. He said that even though just over six percent of the nation's work force was engaged in agricultural production, it was

The Council's concerns fortunately were not realised, and in fact, Melbourne was the only Australian Royal Show to improve upon its 1982 attendances, in establishing new attendance records on Sunday (18th September) with 127,018; and on Show Day, Thursday (22nd September) with 173,790 people passing through the turnstiles.

The severe economic downturn and stringent financial controls cut capital works to a minimum during the year, however, improvements undertaken included the refurbishing of the Royal Banquet Rooms in order to accommodate the Diners Club Wine Tasting; redevelopment of Skene Street into a beautifully paved pedestrian mall; the modification of the western end of the Pig Pavilion to house the Commonwealth Bank Farm Learning Centre; and the provision of special comfort facilities in the Mitchell Grandstand for disabled people. In all, over one million dollars was expended by the Society in new works and maintenance.

The 125th Royal Melbourne Show, was conducted over ten days and nine nights, from 15 September to 24 September inclusive and attracted a total of 898,293 people.

The creation of the Show around the theme 'Victoria on Parade', heralded a number of significant changes to the traditional format of the Show, particularly in terms of entertainment and education. In the area of entertainment, the Victorian theme was highlighted in 'Victorians in Action', through the involvement of seventeen community groups, ranging from sports car enthusiasts to the Girl Guide Movement, performing massed activities on the Main Arena.

More than 70 Victorian sporting and recreational organisations provided instructive entertainment on the AMP Lawn and at Centre Point, under the banner of 'Victoria at Play'. The overall entertainment programme was supplemented by the Victorian Schools and Municipal Bands Festival, together with other activities depicting Victorians at work.

The Commonwealth Bank Farm Learning Centre was based at the western end of the Pig Pavilion, and Centenary Hall housed the Westpac Produce display. This display was unique in that it introduced a new concept which allowed patrons to see, feel and smell the farm produce, and to witness the milling of wheat into flour, and breadmaking. An additional component to this display was the staging of regional displays by seven Victorian Premier Rural Towns - Bairnsdale, Bendigo, Maryborough, Sale, Murchison, Portland and Stawell.

Competitive entries totalled 38,031 an increase of 370 on the 1982 figure.

Despite the very serious problems caused by drought and the devastating bushfires, entries in the major stock sections were not significantly effected; in fact, a number of breeds in the Dairy Cattle, Beef Cattle and Sheep sections recorded an increase on last year's figures. Further to this, the showing of Poll Dorset Sheep at our Melbourne Royal Show is now considered to be the largest in the world.

In the 1983 Annual Report the President referred to the current financial situation of the Society thus:

*The additional revenue resulting from the successful Show has been largely offset by increased costs generally in addition to a lower return from out-of-show activities. This has been due to the fierce competition between venues and the general economic situation.*

During the year, Society was saddened by the loss of two distinguished Life Councillors - Mr. W.J.T. Clarke, who was also a Trustee of the Society who passed away on 10th May and Sir Alec Creswick, who died on 10th June.

Mr. Clarke, aged 81, became a Councillor in 1936, and his subsequent 47 years of service to the Society made him the longest serving Council Member. He was created a Life Councillor in 1957 and became a Trustee of the Society in 1970. A valued Committee

responsible for forty-three percent of Australia's total export earnings, and it is only in times of severe drought that we discover how dependent we are on the rural sector as an export earner and domestic supplier.

A total entry of 37,661 was recorded for the 1982 Royal Show despite the drought throughout the State. Record entries were received in the Horses and Ponies and Appaloosas and Spotted Ponies, Australian Riding Ponies, and Harness Horses; in Beef Cattle for Limousin, Simmental, South Devons, Murray Greys, and Santa Gertrudis breeds.

Coupled with the shortening of the Show by one day, Council on the recommendation of its Beef and Dairy Cattle Committees, transferred cattle judging from the first Thursday, to the Monday in the second week. These changes necessitated a number of others. Judging of thoroughbred horses was conducted on the first Thursday, sheep were judged on the Sunday, and the 'Garryowen' Equestrienne Turnout event, was moved from the traditional Monday spot to the Tuesday in the second week - as were the judging of the Supreme Beef Bull, Champion Dairy Cow, Champion Dairy Heifer, Champion Dairy Bull and the Dairy Interbreed Competitions.

Features of the 1982 arena programme included the Flying Lotahs, Dancing White Horses, trick riders - the Flying Gollans, the precision Driving Team, Speedway Sidecars and Motorcycles, the Hi-Flyer, the ever popular Grand Parades and Fireworks. Around the grounds, all the normal free entertainments were in place. The 'Learning about Livestock' educational programme was further extended, and a new Industrial Pavilion in Lennon Avenue was created to house a number of special exhibits prepared and presented by industrial and commercial companies and organisations.

In May 1982 Colonel Sir Malcolm McArthur was created a Life Councillor in recognition of twenty years service on the Council of the Society. Over his two decades of service he was actively involved as a member of the Finance, Beef Cattle, Public Relations, Space Allocation and Sponsorship Committees.

In August Mr. Robert Potter, of 'Yarram Park', Wallaura, was elected to Council. A very competent judge of beef cattle, it was expected that his presence on Council would be most beneficial to the Society. Another addition to Council during the year was the new Minister of Agriculture, The Honourable D. E. Kent, MLC. Mr. Kent replaces the former Minister, the Honourable T. L. Austin, and was welcomed to the Council at the September meeting.

During the year the number of breed societies and like organisations administered by the RASV totalled 59 and included the following four new societies: The Australian Belted Cattle Society; The Australian Cashmere Goat Society; The Luing Society of Australia (Beef Cattle); The Victorian Stud Beef Cattle Breeder's Association. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society of Australia terminated its administrative association with the RASV in November and established offices in Essendon.

## **Drought and bush fires**

The year 1983 was greeted by the Council with an understandable degree of caution as the effects of the worst drought on record, the devastating bush fires and the general economic malaise, had yet to be determined in relation to Royal Show attendances and entries.

On 16th February 1983, major bushfires erupted in south-eastern Australia. In Victoria, they occurred in the Otway Ranges, the Western District, Macedon, Belgrave Heights and Cockatoo in the Dandenong Ranges, and Warburton in the Upper Yarra Valley. The last major blaze, at Warburton, was contained on 20th February 1983. Forty-eight persons lost their lives in the bushfires, over 1,700 homes were destroyed, 210,000 hectares burnt out, and 25,000 head of stock died - at a total cost of more than \$200m.

Member, he served on Council's Horse and Arena, Executive, Finance, and the Beef and Fat Cattle Committees. Apart from his involvement with the Royal Agricultural Society, Mr. Clarke's commitment to racing extended over many years and included his service as Joint Vice Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Victorian Racing Club, and Life Member of the Warrnambool, Hamilton, and South Western Districts Associated Racing Clubs.

Sir Alec Creswick died at the age of 71 years. He was elected to Council in 1948 and held the positions of Ringmaster, Chairman of the Horse and Arena Committee, and Society Vice President. He became a Life Councillor in 1968. Like Mr. Clarke, Sir Alec had a keen appreciation and love of horses, which led to his involvement with the Equestrian Organisation, the F.E.L., the Victorian Polo Association, Victoria Racing Club, Racecourse Licensing Board and the Melbourne Hunt Club. In each instance, his involvement was significant in terms of service in high positions of office. He was manager of Australian's Olympic Equestrian Teams in Stockholm in 1956, Rome in 1960, and Montreal in 1976, and up until 1981 was a selector for the Overseas Touring Team.

Mr. Brian Naylor, who was elected to Council in 1977, tendered his resignation in November. He served as a member and later Chairman of the Public Relations committee, and was involved in a number of other sections including Arts and Crafts and the Miss Sun Country Show Girl Quest.

The 1983 Royal Show was officially opened on Saturday 17 September, by the Society's Patron-in Chief, His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen, AK, GCMC, GCVO, KBE., K.St.J., Governor General of Australia. Present also at the Official Opening Ceremony was a special guest of the society, the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Yanagiya, who was visiting the Show as a prelude to Japan's participation in the 1984 Royal Melbourne Show as our first Guest Nation.

Also at this time, reference was made to the Society's centenary of tenure of the Ascot Vale site, at the first Show (7 - 9 November 1883) held on the original 30 acres of the Crown Grant.

## **Guest Nation concept introduced**

The year 1984 proved a real 'salad' of weather conditions, the month of May was the driest for 50 years with only 10.2mm of rain recorded. July produced the coldest July day since 1901, with a top temperature of seven degrees centigrade, and September was the wettest since 1920.

In March, the Showgrounds was the venue for a popular music concert staged by a group from the United Kingdom called 'The Police', and attracted around 50,000 young people onto the Main Arena.

Early entries for the Show dispelled doubts of a downturn in this area despite the worst weather for over 60 years. A total competitive entry of 38, 983 was recorded for the 1984 Royal Melbourne Show, which was an increase of 952 over the previous year.

The Show which ran from 20 - 29 September, attracted an attendance of 812,305 people and proved one of the most interesting and entertaining for a number of years. Council's choice of Japan as the Society's first Guest Nation was carefully based upon her close and vital ties with Australia in the area of trade, especially the primary industries. Under the official theme 'See Japan at the Show', the Guest Nation's participation was highlighted by an outstanding display in the P.B. Ronald Pavilion. This was supplemented by performances of traditional Japanese music and dance by world famous Japanese artists including the Hachijo-Ryumei Taiko Drummers, the Kinuko Wakayanagi Sogo Gakuin, and Hanagasa Dance Groups. Younger showgoers were entertained nightly by Japan's popular music

group, 'Godiego', and the Japanese community resident in Victoria were also prominently involved in performances of traditional music, dance, and demonstrations of craft.

The 1984 Royal Melbourne Show was officially opened on Saturday 22 September, by His Excellency, Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray, KCMG, AO., K.St.J., Governor of Victoria. Victoria's Premier, the Honourable John Cain MP, and Mrs. Cain were present on the dais, as was former Japanese Prime Minister, Zenko Susuki. Following the Opening Ceremony, the official party viewed the Grand Parade before proceeding to the P. B. Ronald Pavilion for the official launch of the Japanese Display.

Two Golden (50th) anniversaries were celebrated at the 1984 Show, these commemorating the 'Garryowen' Trophy and first showing of Stud Shetland Ponies. The 'Garryowen' Trophy was first competed for at the 1934 Royal Melbourne Show and then every subsequent Show. On this special occasion the Society hosted a special afternoon function for all available past winners of the Trophy. The winner in it's 50th year of competition was Mrs. Vicki Ward, who had previously won the event in 1981 and 1983 on the same horse, 'Picasso'.

All Stud Shetland classes were well supported for the breed's 50th showing, and an additional feature was the involvement of top U.K. Shetland breeder and Judge, Mr. Dougal Dick, from Scotland, who officiated in all Led Shetland classes.

The 1984 Royal Show hosted the inaugural Miss T.A.A. - Japan Airlines Agricultural Show Girl of Australia Contest. State winners from Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria contested the National title which was decided on the Main Arena of the afternoon of Show Day, Thursday 27 September. The Victorian entrant, Mareeta Grundy, won the competition and received an eighteen day Viva holiday for two to Japan and a travel wardrobe.

An important move was made at this year's Show to use the facilities of the Commonwealth Bank Farm Learning Centre for evening programmes, aimed at adults who showed interest as Hobby Farmers. Lecturers from the Melbourne College of Textiles were on hand each evening (Friday to Friday) to provide resumes of available courses in livestock husbandry, machinery maintenance and workshop practices, fencing, wool and mohair production, and a range of other rural interests. These programmes were poorly attended.

All undercover displays and demonstrations were in demand at the 1984 Royal Show, and this applied particularly to the Westpac Produce Pavilion (Centenary Hall), the now famous National Australia Bank Animal Nursery, the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation demonstrations (Meat Hall), the Australian Dairy Corporation (Dairy Hall) and the numerous State Government Departments housed in the Government Pavilion.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade issued a log of restrictions for stock exhibitors which caused some concern prior to the opening of the Show and this matter was referred to by the President, Mr. G. R. Starritt, in the Society's Annual Report as follows:

*Due to the new and increased regulations required by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, all exhibitors in major stock sections were forced to observe additional precautions pertaining to cooking and heating within Pavilions.*

*On behalf of Council, I would like to express sincere gratitude to exhibitors for their strict compliance with the new regulations.*

During the year three new Members were elected to Council, Mr. R. B. Hallows was elected in February, Sir Roderick Carnegie in July, and Mr. R. F. Haselgrove in September. Mr. Vernon F. Wilcox, was elected a Life Councillor on 10 July after serving as a Councillor for 20 years.

Referring to this matter in the Annual report, the President, made these points:

*One point that has become abundantly clear is that we cannot continue to finance and upkeep the grounds on the basis that they are only fully utilised during the ten-day period of the Show.*

*In view of this, the Re-development Sub-Committee has vigorously pursued its studies and investigations into possible options for the better utilisation of the grounds out of Show periods.*

For a number of years the Society was engaged in endeavouring to satisfy the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's demands for greater fire prevention measures, and this again became an issue in the mid 1980s, with this reference in the 1985 Annual Report:

*Continued pressure is being exerted on the Society by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, to implement widespread and expensive fire prevention measures which have been laid down for many major buildings and facilities. In late October a joint report was received from the Essendon Council and the Fire Brigade requiring these works.*

*To implement such measures immediately is impossible both in terms of cost and time, and therefore a suitable time-frame is currently being negotiated. The Essendon Council is the body required to make the final decision on the works to be undertaken and the time table for implementation.*

*There are many important and complex problems which arise as part of these fire prevention stipulations, one of course being the accommodation of exhibitors on the Showgrounds over the period of the Royal Show. The Council will continue to press the authorities to ensure that exhibitors can be suitably accommodated.*

On the evenings of the 3rd and 4th April 1985, the Showgrounds was the venue for night concerts by the American entertainer, Bruce Springsteen. Over 40,000 fans attended on each night, making it one of the largest open air concerts to be conducted in Melbourne in recent years. The Society's administration worked closely with concert promoters, police, transport and other authorities in the planning stages and during the concert to ensure its smooth conduct.

In complete contrast to 1984, the weather for the 1985 Royal Show was warm and sunny with only the last three days effected by intermittent rain. These favourable conditions contributed to a satisfying total attendance of 873,288 for the ten days and nine nights from the 19th to 28th September 1985.

Entries in competitive sections of the 1985 Royal Show totalled 39,210 with best ever entries recorded in a number of horse breed sections, cattle breed sections, woodchopping, poultry and photography.

The 1985 Royal Melbourne Show was one of the last major events to take place in Victoria's 150th birthday year and accordingly was conducted under the theme 'Victoria on Show'. And to herald the Show the '150th Primary Industry/Royal Show Parade' was staged down Swanston Street on Sunday 15 September. This was a co-operative effort involving the Society, Elder's Pastoral Group and Victoria's 150th Primary Industry Committee.

A feature of the Parade was the droving of over 1,000 Merino wethers from the 'Mountjoy' property at Puckapunyal, down Swanston Street, an extraordinary sight not seen in the heart of Melbourne for more than 100 years. The 'dog work associated with this muster was carried out by Mr. Tim Austin and his renowned 'Elfinvale' kelpies. In addition to the sheep, close to 200 Victorian Pony Club members rode in the Parade, many who commenced a relay

The Society's Immediate Past President Mr. R. T. Balderstone, resigned from Council on 10 April 1984, following his decision to reside in Queensland.

In mid-year, Council agreed to commission organisational and management consultants, McKinsey and Company, to undertake a study of, and produce a report on, the Council's function in its policy making role, the current and future status of the Society's finances and the structure of the Society's administration. In commissioning McKinsey and acting upon their recommendations, members of Council showed a determination to see the Society better equipped, from a decision-making point of view, to meet its future aims, objectives and responsibilities.

In November 1984, RASV Councillor Mr. John Gardiner, along with the Society's Sponsorship Manager Mr. Vance Hilton, and Mr. Val Quanchi of the Victorian Axemen's Council, visited New Zealand, the United States of America and Canada, to discuss with representatives of timber sports organisations, the International Timber Festival, a most exciting feature of the 1985 Royal Show. The proposition created wide interest overseas, and a prize purse of \$A60,000, had been assured. The timber sports events would include speed tree climbing, log rolling, axe throwing, as well as the more traditional woodchopping and sawing events.

In accordance with recommendations set down in the McKinsey and Company Report tabled in December 1984, Council approved the creation of a Management Committee to assist in the streamlining of the policy making function. This committee, which replaced the old Executive, Finance and Works and Planning Committees, was set up in March 1995 with Sir Ian McLennan as Chairman, and Councillors W. R. R. Beggs, J. K. Buchan, A. Gibson, J. G. W. Head, R. B. Langdon, I. K. Morton, and the President and Vice-Presidents as members.

The McKinsey recommendations also called for the senior level of management to be strengthened by establishing management positions reporting to the Director.

These managers would have the responsibility for Administration, Finance, Grounds, Information Systems and Marketing. By mid year, all positions had been filled as follows:

Administration Manager - Mr. John Clifford  
Grounds Manager - Mr. Kevin Monkhouse  
Information Manager - Mr. John Butler  
Marketing Manager - Mr. Vance Hilton

## **Showgrounds re-development and fire prevention**

A Showgrounds Re-development Sub Committee, appointed following a McKinsey recommendation and chaired by Mr. Adrian Gibson, put forward a number of important objectives later adopted by Council:

1. To retain the Royal Melbourne Show at Ascot Vale as the major community agricultural event in the State, and to work towards its recognition as the premier Royal Show in Australia.
2. To ensure that any development of the Showgrounds is consistent with, or contributes towards, the Society's overall philosophy of 'Speeding the Plough'.
3. To establish the Showgrounds as an economically viable, quality venue for agricultural and leisure related activities for metropolitan Melbourne and the State.

ride from country areas several weeks before, bringing with them scrolls containing messages of goodwill from their home centres to the Lord Mayor of Melbourne.

Also, as part of the 1985 Royal Show the world's first International Timber Festival was conducted attracting over 50 top international sports men and women from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand who challenged Australia's competitors for a total prize purse of \$60,000.

The International Year of Youth was also celebrated during the Royal Show, and this important occasion was duly recognised by the Society with massed youth performances on the Main Arena.

His Excellency, Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray, KCMG, AO, Governor of Victoria officially opened the Society's 127th show on Saturday 21 September. The Governor was accompanied on the official dais by the Hon. John Cain MP, Premier of Victoria, The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr. Tom Lynch, and the Mayor of the City of Essendon, Cr. Brian Shanahan.

Council and Members of the Society were deeply saddened by the death of two Life Councillors during the year, Colonel Sir Malcolm H. McArthur, Kt., OBE, 'Melrose Farm', Wollert, died on 28 February, aged 73; and Mr. J. M. (Jack) Buchanan, Flinders, died on 18 April, at 87 years. Colonel MacArthur was elected to Council in May 1962 and was made a Life Councillor in 1982 and he served on most of the Council Committees during that time. He had a distinguished army career, and in civilian life was Chairman of the Australian Meat Board (1970 - 77); Australian Egg Board (1967 - 70); President of the Egg Marketing Authorities of Australia, and was Government nominee of the Victorian Egg Board. He received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1966 for services to Primary Industry, and was created a Knight in 1978, for distinguished service to the Australian Meat Industry.

Mr. J. M. Buchanan was elected to Council in 1953 and was made a Life Councillor in 1973. His contribution to the Society was through the Dairy Cattle Committee and the Dairy Cattle Section of the Royal Melbourne Show. As a second generation principal of the historic 'Gleneira' Ayrshire Dairy Cattle Stud, Mr. Buchanan's love of the breed led to a close association with the Ayrshire Cattle Society in Australia, an organisation his father helped to establish. He served on the Victorian Branch Committee of the Ayrshire Society, was Branch President, served on the Society's Federal Council and was created a Life Member of both the Victorian Branch and Federal Council. He was recognised as one of the top Ayrshire judges in Australia and was in demand at Royal Shows in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, and leading provincial shows in Victoria and Tasmania.

Active in his local community, he became a Justice of the Peace in 1950 and during the Second World War was appointed by the Department of Agriculture to the War Agriculture committee.

From 14 to 17 October inclusive, the Society hosted the 1985 biennial Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth Conference which attracted 149 delegates from 14 Commonwealth Countries, and Guest Nations, in addition to 120 Australians. The Conference, held at the Southern Cross Hotel in the centre of Melbourne, was officially opened on 14 October by His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, in his capacity as the President of the RASC. His Royal Highness was also present at a Dinner for Representatives of member organisations, conducted on the Showgrounds on the evening of the opening.

Under the theme 'Agriculture, Future World Needs' the Conference discussed topics which were relevant worldwide. Preceding the Conference, around 160 delegates and their partners took part in a five day tour of the Northern Region of Victoria organised by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

Mr. Brian Parry, the RASV Director since 1980 tendered his resignation in December in order to take up the position of President of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Mr. Parry succeeded Mr. Harley Clappison as Director in November 1980, and experienced his first Royal Melbourne Show in the top position, in September 1981. During his six year term, Mr. Parry worked closely with Council to significantly increase the level of free entertainment for families at the Show in addition to introducing agricultural based programmes aimed primarily at the urban dweller, particularly school children.

During his time as Director he reduced the number of games, rides, and novelty stands on the Showgrounds and achieved a higher overall standard of amusements. He also initiated the theme concept for each Royal Show, and pulled together basic components of entertainment, education and agriculture to compliment the themes.

### **President steps down**

At the 1986 Annual Meeting the President, Mr. G. R. Starritt, did not seek re-election and was replaced by Vice President Mr. John H. H. Sleigh who joined the Council in 1969. Mr. Ray Starritt served the Council and the Society in a number of capacities, and prior to being elected to the position of President in 1982, had served 12 years in the office of Vice President.

Other changes in Council were; Vice Presidents - Mr. Adrian Gibson, Mr. W. R. R. Beggs, and Mr. J. M. Burston. Two prominent Councillors were elected Life Councillors, Mr. R. B. Gerrand, MBE, and Mr. D. S. MacGregor, MBE. Both were elected to Council in February 1966. To fill the vacancies created by the elevation of Mr. Gerrand and Mr. MacGregor to Life Councillors, Council elected Mr. Ian I. Bucknall, 'Yaralla', Maryborough, and Mr. Ken J. McIver, Ballarat.

### **Split in cattle judging**

To satisfy the desire of the majority of cattle exhibitors for a shorter stay at the Show, a split judging timetable was introduced in 1986. Dairy cattle were judged on Thursday 18 September, and left the grounds the following Sunday while beef cattle arrived on Saturday and Sunday 20 -21 September, with the main judging day being Wednesday 24 September. The stock change-over was effected smoothly and efficiently thanks to the complete co-operation of exhibitors, who with members of Council and staff were directly involved in its planning and implementation.

The 1986 Royal Melbourne Show was held from 18 - 27 September inclusive, with Italy participating as Guest Nation. The Italian Government and major Italian companies mounted a spectacular display in the Ronald Pavilion titled 'Italy Today' which highlighted Italy's contribution to fine design and technology, in the office equipment, furniture and automotive fields. Victoria's Italian community made a significant contribution to the success of the Show by presenting an outstanding programme of traditional and contemporary music, song and dance.

'Showfest', another highlight of Italy's involvement, took place on the Main Arena on Sunday, 21 September, and included a comprehensive entertainment programme and a cavalcade of classic Italian cars.

Overall entries for the 1986 Royal Show numbered 39,299, with all time records in the horses (8,000), arts and crafts (6,450) and wines (2,688). The poultry section equalled its best ever figure of 2,794, established in 1985. Beef and dairy entries increased overall, indicating support for the Society's move to shorten the time at the Show for these exhibitors.

## **Incorporation and a new Director**

In March 1987, the RASV Limited, a company incorporated in Victoria by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, legally came into being.

Under the terms of incorporation, RASV Limited was responsible for all activities of a business/contractual nature formerly undertaken by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria. This included the organisation and management of the Royal Melbourne Show.

The move to become incorporated was taken to ensure the Society's members, Council and staff were protected against any legal liability claims.

At the May meeting, Council approved the appointment of Major General J. C. Hughes, AO, DSO, MC, RL, as the Society's new Director. He commenced his term on 1 June in time to gain an appreciation of Royal Show preparation at its peak.

Following an outstanding military career General Hughes spent three years as President of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board. He had a first hand association with the rural sector having farmed a property near Yass, New South Wales, where he ran sheep and stud ponies. General and Mrs. Hughes are also well acquainted with the Show scene, having exhibited their horses extensively at shows in New South Wales and Queensland.

During the year the Council appointed 41 Honorary Life Members to the Society. These members have served the Society for 20 years or over and included not only stewards and stewardesses from all breed and crafts sections of the Show, but also members of staff.

Show entries for the 1987 Royal Melbourne Show reached the best overall figure of 40,798 with record entries in beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses and sheep. In the beef cattle section, the Black Simmental and Belgian Blue breeds were exhibited for the first time. Besides the records in the stock sections, substantial entry increases were received in the pig, dairy produce and apiculture sections for the 1987 Royal Show.

## **School holidays come into line with Show**

The 1987 Royal Melbourne show was held from 17 - 26 September and drew a total attendance of 780,222 during ten days and nine nights of remarkably fine, warm weather.

For the first time since the Second World War, the September school holidays coincided with the Show, as a result of the introduction of a four term structure into the State's Primary and Secondary schools. The school holidays had two important effects on the Show attendances; firstly, the total attendance for the period was down because many families spent the time out of the state attending the International Exhibition in Brisbane. Secondly, there emerged a new pattern for attendances on a day to day basis, which revealed a far more even spread of visitors over the Show's duration, with the result that figures for the traditional quieter days were increased while the Show Day holiday (Thursday 24 September) and the final Saturday (26 September), were down. Interestingly, attendances for the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, were records for the respective days.

The official opening was performed by His Excellency, Dr. Davis McCaughey, AC, Governor of Victoria, on Saturday, 19 September. Also present in the official party were the Premier, the Honourable John Cain, MP; Mr. Barry Rowe, MP, for Essendon; Councillor Lecki Ord, Lord Mayor of Melbourne; Air Vice Marshall A. R. Reed, Air Officer Commanding, Support Command, and Councillor Monica Hayes, Mayor of Essendon.

Victoria's progression into the 1990s and beyond provided an exciting focal point for the 1987 Show which carried the theme 'Show me Tomorrow'. The leading supporter of the theme was the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial and Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The total attendance was 807,770 over the Show period which was considered a satisfactory result in view of the very fickle weather conditions.

The official opening was carried out on Saturday 20 September by his Excellency, the Right Honourable Sir Ninian Stephen, AK, GCMG, GCVO, KBE, Governor General of Australia, and the RASV's Patron-in-Chief. The Guard of Honour was provided from HMAS Cerberus supported by the Victorian RAN Band.

The Society's 10th annual Royal Show City Parade was staged on Sunday 15 September and featured the droving of 50 head of Hereford cows and calves down Swanston Street by members of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association, whose involvement had the desired effect of attracting the attention of the metropolitan media.

In October 1986 the Society's Public Relations Manager Mr. Tim Morgan, made an organised visit to Canada and the United States of America to get an understanding of the Fair and Exhibition industry in those countries. During the four week trip Mr. Morgan visited Expo '86 in Vancouver, Canada, the facilities of the Pacific and National Exhibition in Vancouver and two of the USA's largest fairs - the State Fair of Texas in Dallas and the Arizona State Fair in Phoenix. He also inspected facilities at the Anaheim Convention Centre and Disneyland in California, and on his return to Australia saw some of the developing agricultural research facilities in Fiji.

Two further matters of interest occupied the attention of Council during 1986. These were a 'Farm World' feasibility study, and membership of the Animal Welfare Federation of Australia. Following the guidelines set down by Council and in particular the RASV Re-development Sub Committee, a study was commissioned to determine the feasibility or otherwise of re-developing the front 25 acres of the Showgrounds complex. The study embraced the idea of establishing a theme park with a heavy emphasis on agriculture. The 'Farm World' concept presented a strong bias toward attracting local, interstate and overseas tourism, while incorporating a broad educational component. Such a re-development would be in keeping with the aims and objectives of the RASV, as well as ensuring an additional, constant source of income throughout the year.

In July the RASV was invited to attend a meeting of rural and associated organisations to discuss the formation of a federation whose function would be to counter the excesses of some of the more radical animal rights minority groups. A subsequent meeting was held in early December to consider a draft constitution for the body, which is to be titled the Animal Welfare Federation of Australia Incorporated. The guiding principle set down for the new federation reads as follows:

*The membership of the Federation acknowledge that the welfare of human society is dependent on animals for food, clothing, health, education and companionship, and that animal related activities are legitimate provided a high standard of animal welfare is sustained.*

And, the prime objective of the Federation shall be:

*To promote high standards of animal welfare in accordance with defined Codes of Practice, and to raise the awareness of the community and its elected representatives about society's dependence on animals.*

The RASV would contribute to this new organisation.

## Bicentenary observed

The Society expressed its support for Australian Bicentenary celebrations by adopting the Show theme for the 1988 Royal Melbourne Show - 'Australia - Showing Our Best' and by hosting the Bicentenary National Arts and Crafts Exhibition, titled 'ArtCraft '88'.

More than 500 guests gathered on the Showgrounds AMP Lawn on Wednesday 24 February 1988 to see and hear the Governor General Sir Ninian Stephen, officially open the ArtCraft '88 exhibition. In introducing the Governor General, the President of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Mr. J. H. H. Sleigh, said that the Society was making a fitting contribution to the Bicentenary, by focusing attention on the arts and crafts in Australia in this special year.

As Australia's biggest exhibition of its type, ArtCraft '88 attracted 7,000 entries in more than 360 classes, covering all skills - presented by more than 3,000 exhibitors representing every state of Australia except the Northern Territory. Before leaving the Showgrounds, Sir Ninian and Lady Stephen viewed works in the '50 Fine Artists' and Craftworks invitational exhibition, where His Excellency presented the prizes.

The 1988 Royal Melbourne Show received official endorsement from the Australian Bicentenary Authority to be one of the last major events in the Bicentenary celebrations, and to compliment this endorsement, the Society's Council adopted 'Australia - Showing Our Best' as the 1988 Royal Show theme. In support of the theme the Society wanted to highlight the achievements of our stud stock breeders, and also focus attention on two major Australian industries - wool and automotive.

The year started well for the Society with the President Mr. J. H. H. Sleigh, being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 1988 Australia Day honours. The Award was made in recognition of the Mr. Sleigh's contribution and service to primary industry, in particular, the cattle industry.

In accordance with the terms of the joint MFB/Essendon City Council fire report, the installation of a \$1.5 million water main was completed prior to the opening of the 1988 Royal Show.

Initial work was also commenced on the refurbishment of Society's administrative building in Plummer Avenue, a project which is required to be completed by August 1989, as stipulated in the Fire Report.

Other improvement works undertaken during the year included the stage one completion of the Clydesdale Pavilion refurbishment, a project undertaken with the generous support of Bunge (Australia); the laying of a concrete floor in the Hall of Commerce and the completion of stage one of a three year upgrading programme for arena-lighting. New dressing rooms and toilet facilities were constructed for woodchop exhibitors at the Epsom Road end of the Boral Stadium and the demolition of several old buildings. Roofing repairs were carried out on several buildings including No. 5 Cattle Pavilion, the Horse Club, and some catering outlets.

The interiors of all cattle pavilions were white-washed and the exteriors of the Centenary Hall, Royal Block, Horse Club and Hall of Manufactures were painted. New lawn areas established on the Epsom Road frontage, adjacent to the Main Gate and near the Hall of Manufactures.

The 1988 Royal Melbourne Show - the Society's 130th - was conducted over a period of 11 days and 9 nights from Thursday 15 September to Sunday 25 September, inclusive. It was the first time since the mid 1970s that the Show included the second Sunday and the result this year was such, that Council has given favourable consideration to a similar extension in 1989.

Situated in the P. B. Ronald Pavilion, the CSIRO exhibit, 'Adventures With Science' provided patrons with an entertaining, thought provoking and 'hands on' introduction to science. It also focused attention on the many facets of CSIRO's involvement in research and development. The display was officially opened by the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable R. J. Hawke, on Sunday 20 September.

The Victorian Government through its 'Show Me The Future' display in the Victorian Expo Centre, together with the Australian Wool Corporation's fashion shows highlighting tomorrow's designs in wool, added depth to the overall theme.

On and off farm computer systems provided a background to an ambitious and completely new concept for the Show - 'Farm Tech '87'. This exhibit represented the largest display of farm computer systems in Australia and the first of its type at any Australian Royal Show. Twelve organisations specialising in farm computer systems joined with the RASV in mounting this exhibit.

With the Show coinciding with the school holidays, the format of the Farm Learning Centre was dispensed with in favour of a new concept provided by the Farm Animal Expo. This consisted of a major display of beef and dairy cattle breeds, sheep, goats and horses, all under the one roof in the one time No. 2 Cattle Pavilion. The emphasis of 'Expo' was on education on an informal basis with special attention given to animal care and the responsibility of the owner.

'Expo' appealed to children who simply wanted to pat animals, as well as hobby farmers who want first hand advice on the breed of animal best suited for their particular area. It proved one of the major successes of the 1987 Show and would be continued in future years.

The arena programme was headed by top Australian stuntman, Ian Jamieson, and the Brophy Brothers aerial act. An excellent selection of supporting acts included a hovercraft display, skydivers, and the Military Police Motorcyclists. Among the many outstanding exhibits and displays on the grounds were those mounted by the Tasmania Visitor Corporation; Australia's Mining Industry; and the Army. Described by the organisers as one of the most ambitious tourism promotions ever, the Tasmanian exhibit was supported by about 100 tourism operators and the Tasmanian Premier. The 'Army On Show' display was the largest ever presented at a Royal Melbourne Show and featured a Leopard tank, a 155mm field gun, communications equipment and a field kitchen.

Due to many business commitments which included that of President of the Business Council of Australia, Sir Roderick Carnegie tendered his resignation which was reluctantly accepted by Council in July 1987. He was elected to Council in June 1984, and until his resignation was involved solely in the area of sponsorship. He served as Chairman of the Sponsorship committee and contributed greatly to the increase in sponsorships over that period.

In October Mr. Maxwell T. Marriott, Tatong Estate, Benalla, attended his first meeting of Council, having been elected in September. At the time Mr. Marriott conducted a large grazing enterprise at Benalla, and was also a noted breeder of Clydesdales. He was the current Federal President of the Commonwealth Clydesdale Horse Society and Vice President of the Victorian Branch.

In the 1987 Queen's Birthday Honours List, Mr. G. R. Starritt, OBE, the Society's immediate past President and a Life Councillor, was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). During his 30 year membership of Council, Mr. Starritt contributed significantly through his service on the beef and sheep committees, and over his term as Society President from 1982 to 1986 and this Award for his services to primary industry and the horticultural show movement was seen as a just reward for his lifelong contribution.

The Non Show Commercial Space Committee had as its staff support, the Marketing Manager and Space Sales Executive whose special expertise was vital in order to accomplish the desired result.

In 1988, this Committee's initial responsibility was to:

- Identify the most realistic potential commercial uses of the Showgrounds.
- Establish a scale of realistic commercial rental rates for facilities.
- Identify those facilities which have the greatest potential for commercial use during the year.
- Commence the planning and production of suitable printed material to promote available facilities.

Two other activities, associated with and complimentary to, the 1988 Royal Melbourne Show were the ploughing match re-enactment, and the wine show. The ploughing match re-enactment was staged in Yarra Park, near the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and within 'a stone's throw' of John Pascoe Fawkner's first wheat crop grown in 1836 near Princes Bridge. The re-enactment of the 1848 ploughing match was promoted as part of the 1988 Royal Show 'Australia - Showing Our Best' theme and was well received by all sections of media.

The Society was justifiably proud of the 1988 Royal Melbourne Wine Show which attracted 2,436 entries and was judged by a distinguished panel of experts including, for the first time, two international judges. Mr. John Avery from the renowned Avery's of Bristol (UK), and Mr. Peter J. Morrell of Morrell and Company New York (USA), provided a critical international focus on our Australian wines at a time when more attention than ever before was being paid to them in the traditionally hostile and self-centred overseas markets.

There were many changes in Council in 1988. On 19 September, the Council Members were deeply saddened by the death of Sir Cecil Looker, one of the Council's most distinguished personalities. Sir Cecil was elected to Council in September 1974 and served on the Sponsorship, Public Relations, Finance, Membership and Woodchopping committees.

Mr. J.G.W. Head and Mr. W. McL. Greaves were made Life Councillors during the year in recognition of their service to the Society over the past 20 years. Mr. Ern Drinkwater was elected to Council in July to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Head's elevation to Life Councillor. Mr. Drinkwater and his wife Joan have had considerable success as breeders and exhibitors of Labrador and Cocker Spaniels and Mr. Drinkwater had a reputation as a competent judge of Working Dogs. He had been a Royal Show Steward in the Dog Section since 1966, and has served on the committee of the Kennel Control Council since 1968.

Following the 1988 Annual Meeting, Mr. J. M. Burston did not seek re-election to the office of Vice President. After seven years in the position, Mr. Burston's decision was met with regret, and the position was filled by the election of Mr. R. B. Langdon.

Three Council committee chairmen - Mr. Duncan McGregor, Mr. Roydon Gerrard and Sir Ian McLennan, decided to step down from their respective responsibilities at this time. Mr. Duncan McGregor retired as chairman of the Sheep and Goat committees after 17 years, and Mr. Roydon Gerrard, after the same period as chairman of the Dairy Cattle. Sir Ian McLennan retired as inaugural chairman of the Council's Management Committee.

Since its establishment in 1985 as a result of the McKinsey study, this committee achieved a great deal in assisting to establish a more streamlined management structure within the RASV's administration, and it was readily agreed that Sir Ian's vast managerial expertise was very much the reason why this committee proved such a success.

Overall the attendances were disappointing with a total of 738,437. Evening attendances fell away, however there were a number of days where admissions up to 6.00pm exceeded the 1987 attendance. Factors, including appalling weather on the first and traditionally biggest weekend; competition from Expo'88 in Brisbane; school holidays and the Olympics replays in the evenings were all responsible for the downturn in the overall attendance figures.

Competitive entries totalled 39,639 and within this figure, increases were recorded in the Clydesdales, Harness Ponies, Australian riding ponies; Simmental and Limousin beef cattle, Ayrshire and Jersey dairy cattle; Border Leicester, Romney Cheviot, Dorset Horn, Ryeland and Poll Dorset sheep breeds; pigeons; dairy and farm produce, and cats.

The National Cheese Show introduced during the year, proved a major new initiative for the Royal Melbourne Show and the Society. The competition, generously supported by Coles New World Supermarkets (Victoria), is the only one of its kind in Australia to give Australian cheesemakers the chance to have their products marketed through one of the country's biggest supermarket chains. Coles New World provided a \$1.2 million, twelve month supply contract to the winner of the champion cheddar cheese, and a twelve month supply contract worth \$150,000 to the winner of the fancy cheese section. The National Cheese Show project highlights the Society's determination to look critically at its Show competitions with a view to updating the existing or traditional format in order to make them more commercially relevant and acceptable.

The winners of the above prizes were: Champion Cheddar - United Milk Tasmania, Wynyard Tasmania; and Champion Fancy Cheese - Lactos Pty Ltd., Burnie, Tasmania.

The Federation Ring, a new indoor judging facility for sheep and cattle, was also introduced this year. Situated in the Sheep Pavilion it created a new dimension for the exhibiting and sale of livestock at the Royal Show. This facility offers great potential not only during the Show but for major stock shows and sales throughout the year, making it a most valuable asset for all livestock interests.

His Excellency, The Right Honourable, Sir Ninian Stephen, AK, GCMG, GCVO, KBE, Governor General of Australia, and the Society's Patron-In-Chief, officially opened the 1988 Royal Show on Saturday 17 September.

During the year the Society serviced 41 breed societies and associated rural organisations. At its State Conference in June, the Victorian Young Farmers voted to move that organisation's administration from the RASV to the Victorian Farmer's Federation. This decision effectively ended a 55 year association between the VYF and RASV and was prompted by changes to the movement, the most significant being the Labor State Government's decision to cease direct funding for the Victorian Young Farmers Area Advisory Officers.

The Victorian Pinto Society also decided to alter its administrative direction during the year and left the RASV umbrella in early 1989 to set up its own office. However, the RASV gained three new breed societies during the year - the Australian Highland Cattle Society; the Australasian Dexter Association (Inc.), and the Australian Cashgora Fibre Growers. In the case of the two new cattle societies, the RASV undertook all animal registrations in addition to providing general secretarial and accounting services.

For a number of years the Council had been occupied with the use of the Showgrounds outside the Show period. This commitment was reaffirmed during the year, and towards this end a new committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. W. R. R. Beggs, to fully investigate and submit proposals to the Council on alternative usage of facilities, the prime object of which is to substantially boost income to the Society.

Shadows of the 1956 Olympics loomed over Council when it was suggested that should Melbourne be successful in its bid to host the 1996 Olympic Games, the Showgrounds would be the venue for track cycling and the equestrian section of the Modern Pentathlon. To house the cycling, a building would be constructed on the Epsom Road frontage, between Plummer Avenue and the Woodfull Pavilion. The new building would be of multi-purpose design and construction, allowing it to be used by the Society for the Royal Show and for other events throughout the year.

With the generous assistance of Cadbury Schweppes Pty. Ltd., the Society was able to completely refurbish the Public Stand. This included re-roofing, the installation of new seating and repainting. All improvements were in keeping with the stand's original design and construction in 1915 - following its rebuilding after the disastrous fire of 1914. In recognition of Cadbury Schweppes support in this project the stand was renamed the 'Schweppes Stand'.

Partial demolition of the old creche building (Plummer Avenue) was completed prior to the Show. This coincided with the construction of a new building located on the triangular lawn behind the Wilson Stand, to house the Ascot Vale Day Nursery. The new nursery was opened in November and doubled for the Lost Children's centre during future Royal Shows.

Several old buildings in the south east corner of the grounds were demolished in 1989; extensive re-roofing work was carried out on the Sheep Pavilion and the Clydesdale Pavilion. Repainting of the Halls of Manufactures and Commerce were completed, as was the repainting of 75 per cent of the horse boxes in the western area. The second stage of a three stage upgrading of the main arena lighting was undertaken, in addition to further improvement of the arena public address system. Improvements were also made to the No. 3 Cattle Pavilion, and a new VIP area was constructed in the Boral Woodchop Stadium.

Building and structure upgrading which had been the subject of the 'Joint MFB/Essendon City Council Fire Report' was completed with the exception of the Administration Building - this work was expected to reach finality by the end of April 1990.

Major General J. C. Hughes resigned from the position of Director in May and was succeeded in August by Mr. R. E. Carr. Mr. Carr's background was as a business executive with such companies as BHP and Elders IXL. His previous position was Chief Executive Officer of the Zoological Board of Victoria. Mr. Carr, aged 48 and married with three teenage children, saw exciting times ahead for the Society, and considered the Showgrounds a great community asset which could be used by agricultural, community and commercial groups,

In February President John Sleigh along with Mrs. Sleigh, Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Starritt, Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Buchanan, Mr. and Mrs. J. G. W. Head, Mr. and Mrs. C. O. Moore and Mr. and Mrs. G. P. H. Wilson (all Councillors and their wives), attended the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, at which the President delivered a paper as a support speaker on the subject of 'Breeding, feeding and animal health'.

Entries in the 1989 Royal Show's competitive sections totalled 38,652, increases were recorded in several animal and produce sections with new entry records established in the following: Australian Riding Ponies; Poll Shorthorn Beef Cattle; Charolais Beef Cattle; Simmental, Limousin and Saler breeds of beef cattle.

The reputation of the Royal Melbourne Show as a premier event for livestock was further reinforced by the number of new breed sections added to the prize schedules in 1989. These were: Black and coloured sheep, Gelbveih Beef Cattle, Anglo-Arabian Horses, Part-bred Arabian Horses, Part-bred Arabian Ponies and Miniature Ponies. Several new classes were also introduced in the very popular arts and crafts section, including a 'technology' section for schools. Students were invited to take up the challenge of producing exhibits for entry in three categories - 'materials', 'energy', and 'mechanical systems'. In each case, judges

Following the successful amendments to the Society's Rules 5, 7 and 10, fourteen Honorary Life Memberships were presented during the year to persons who have served the Society for 20 years or more.

## Further Council losses and a new Director

President Mr. John Sleigh prefaced his address to the Annual General Meeting with these remarks:

*Before commencing the review of the Society's activities for 1989, I wish to pay special tribute to three very distinguished former members of Council, the late Mr. Duncan McGregor MBE, the late Mr. Peter Ronald, CMG and the late Mr. John Fisken. Their deaths were formally announced to the Council in August, making that meeting one of the saddest in the history of the Society.*

Mr. Duncan MacGregor, 'Dalmore' Baringhup, died on 18 July at the age of 72. He was a well regarded breeder of Beef Shorthorn cattle and British Breed sheep. He was elected to Council in 1966 and became Life Councillor in 1986. He served a record of 17 years as Chairman of the Society's Sheep and Goat Committee and also chaired the Beef Cattle Committee. He participated actively on the Farm Management and Inventions, Woodchop and Fleece Committees. In 1977 Mr. MacGregor was awarded the MBE for services to agriculture and the farming community.

Past President, Trustee and Life Councillor, Mr. Peter Ronald, CMG, died suddenly at his property 'Koo-man-goo-nong' Pakenham, on 25 July, at the age of 68. Shortly before his death, Mr. Ronald celebrated his 40th year on the RASV Council, an occasion marked by a special presentation to him at the May meeting of the Council. During this term, he served as Ringmaster (1960-1966), and led the Society as its President from 1973 to 1977. He was made a Trustee in 1973.

In 1978 a new pavilion was named in his honour, and officially opened by HRH Princess Alexandra at the 1978 Royal Melbourne Show. He was made a Life Councillor in 1969 and had been a member of the Finance, Horse, Attractions, Public Relations, City Parade and Membership Committees.

Mr. John Fisken, 'Lal Lal Estate', Yendon, passed away on 8 August, at the age of 62 years. He was elected to Council in 1975 and was Vice President from 1981 to 1984. He had been a member of the Farm Management and Inventions, Woodchop, Dairy Cattle and Public Relations Committees. The Fisken family had a long association with the RASV with Mr. John Fisken representing the third generation of this family on the Council.

In November 1988, Council commissioned a commercial real estate agency to assess and report on the value of grounds facilities. The formal recommendations from the agency were used by the Society to restructure commercial rentals for show and non-show use of grounds facilities.

Following more than eighteen months discussion and negotiation with the State Government, management and control of the Victorian Expo Centre was to be transferred to the Society in 1990. This allowed the Society to take advantage of this very valuable facility, in terms of its commercial usage throughout the year.

Several discussions between the Council and staff took place during the year to consider the medium to long term development of the Showgrounds. These discussions proved beneficial in generating ideas for facility usage and improvement, and was to be implemented progressively as funds became available. As part of these discussions, it was agreed that the rural emphasis of the Royal Show would be maintained and enhanced.

## **Council changes**

The Society's President, Mr. J. H. H. Sleigh, AM, was made a Life Councillor in September. He was elected to Council in September 1969, and three years later took on office of Vice President, one of the youngest Councillors to do so. In 1986, Mr. Sleigh succeeded Mr. G. R. Starritt, AM, OBE, as president.

Mr. J. M. Gardiner, a Councillor with 36 years service, was appointed a Trustee of the Society in October 1989. His appointment followed the death of Mr. Peter B. Ronald.

There were five new Council appointments during the year. Mr. K. A. Finnin and Mr. A. J. Woods were elected on 7 February, and Mr. C. J. Fox and Mr. C. R. Lyons, on 14 November. A former state manager of the Commonwealth Development Bank, Mr. Andy Finnin, 62 of Mount Waverley, filled the vacancy created by the death of Sir Cecil Looker, Kt.

Mr. A. J. (Alf) Woods, 61, from Essendon, filled the Council position left vacant after Mr. W. McL. Greaves was created a Life Councillor. Mr. Woods had held a life time interest in the breeding and showing of poultry and is an accomplished judge, having officiated at shows across Australia, in England, America and New Zealand. Mr. C. J. Fox filled the vacancy caused by Mr. John Sleigh's elevation to Life Councillor. John Fox was 49 years old and from Highton. He held the position of General Manager, Operations, for the Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria. He played a significant role with the Corporation in helping farmers through the 1982/83 drought and the disastrous 'Ash Wednesday' bushfires. He was responsible for the Heytesbury Land Settlement Development and the subsequent successful sales of these blocks. Replacing the late Mr. John Fiske on Council, was Mr. C. R. Lyons aged 41 years, from 'Dundas Park' Vasey. He operated a Merino sheep and Shorthorn-Hereford cross beef cattle enterprise. He was an experienced sheep, beef cattle and farm management competition judge, and was a past President of the Balmoral P & A Society. The Honourable Barry Rowe, MP, was elected to Council on 14 March, following his appointment to the Agriculture and Rural Affairs portfolio- he succeeded the Hon. Evan Walker MLC.

The outstanding contribution made to the ongoing development of the Australian Nuffield Farming Scholars' Association by Mr. G. P. H. Wilson, CMG, received formal recognition in July, when he was made an Honorary Trustee of the Nuffield Trust. He was afforded the honour while attending the triennial Nuffield Farming Conference in the United Kingdom, and is the first person outside that country to have been so recognised.

During the year, Honorary Life Membership of the Society was bestowed upon seven people for their outstanding service to the RASV and the Royal Show, over a considerable period of time. The recipients were: Mr. J. West (Illawarra Dairy Cattle), Mr. M. Jarvis (Poultry Section), Mr. W. A. Fink (Poultry Section), Mr. T. R. Morgan (RASV Staff), Mr. S. Anderson (Poultry Section), Mr. D. Goddard (Ayrshire Dairy Cattle), Mr. L. Ewing (Horse Section).

## **Travel grant**

During the year the Society took advantage of a special travel grant offered by Encyclopaedia Britannica Australia, which enabled the Director, Mr. Bob Carr, to attend the International Association of Fairs and Expositions Convention in Las Vegas USA. The five day visit gave Mr. Carr the chance to gain an increased awareness of, and exposure to, those issues which are of interest to overseas organisations similar to our own. It was also a valuable opportunity for him to get an appreciation of the latest trends in event marketing, cleaning, and general visitor services.

sought the most innovative and imaginative application of resources and skills. This section, in its first year, proved very successful.

The 1989 Royal Melbourne Show - the 131st - ran from Thursday 21 September to Sunday 1 October, and recorded a total attendance of 808,104, the highest attendance since 1985, and included two best ever day figures for Wednesday, 27 September, (113,345); and a second Friday, 29 September, (86,980).

Following the civil disturbances in China in the middle of the year, Council reluctantly decided not to proceed with China as a Guest nation for the 1989 Royal show. The theme 'See the Winners' was adopted, and the costume character 'Champ' was developed to emphasise the Society's commitment to promoting excellence in rural industries through competition.

The highlight of the evening entertainment programme was the combined Australian Defence Forces display which was performed on the main arena on five evenings. Titled 'Aussie Defence Action' the displays incorporated the participation of the Navy, Army and Air Force and served to illustrate the high-tech capabilities of these defence arms as a combined force. The three services were also represented in a very large exhibition, (located on the Epsom Road frontage) designed to emphasise the defence self-reliance priority, together with the services' employment of the latest technology.

Other attraction highlights were the ever popular free entertainment around the grounds such as the ANZ Animal Nursery, Commonwealth Bank Farm Expo, The Dugdale Theatre, Australian Wool Corporation Fashion Displays, Children's Circus, Championship Woodchopping, the Farm Sunday on the Main Arena and all the other time proven attractions such as stock in pavilions, the dogs, cats, poultry, and horse events.

The official opening of the 1989 Royal Melbourne Show was conducted by Victoria's Governor, Dr. Davis McCaughey, AC, on Sunday, 23 September. This year's opening ceremony was made even more of a highlight as a result of the participation of contingents from the Berwick Light Horse Troop, Victoria Mounted Police and Victorian Pony Clubs. Included in the mounted ranks were some former Australian Olympic competitors. Horse-drawn carriages and vintage cars added to the ceremony. These significant additions were suggested and planned for this year by the late Mr. Peter B. Ronald.

The Society provided secretarial support for 33 breed societies and associated organisations in 1989. Rising costs of administration resulted in the RASV having to increase its charges to breed societies during the year. This decision was not taken lightly but was necessary in order to realistically cover the Society's costs in providing the services required by these organisations. However, the Council remained committed to the support of breed societies and, in view of this commitment, continued to constantly review administrative procedures to ensure that an efficient and cost effective level of service was provided.

In December 1986 Society representatives became involved with the Animal Welfare Federation of Australia Incorporated, and Council agreed to support this new organisation. The Society's positive position on the issue of companion animals was expressed to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs during the year. The Director of the Society, Mr. Bob Carr, had been appointed by the Minister as a member of the government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, which will enable the Society to be fully informed and make its views known on animal welfare matters.

Increased use of the Showgrounds' facilities during the year remained one of the Council's primary considerations in view of the potential financial return to the Society. Out-of-Show use of the grounds this year yielded net income of \$674,000 - an increase of 8.5% on 1989.

The theme chosen for 1990 was 'Young Horizons', a focus on the skills and abilities of young people and the potential they have to contribute to society and industry. It was a recognition by the RASV of the enthusiasm and vision of the younger generation. Special youth events were conducted throughout the Show. For the first time there were junior woodchop events for those aged from nine to 13 years old. These classes attracted much attention.

Work Skill Australia conducted competitions for young tradespeople in the butchery, breadmaking, baking, pastrycooking, cake decorating and florist disciplines. The winners of these took part in national competitions later in the year. Attention was focused on the junior handler and judging competitions in the cattle section. State and national finals of sheep and cattle judging for young people aged 25 years and under were staged by the Victorian Agricultural Societies' Association Incorporated and the Federal Council of Agricultural Societies. A special 'Young Horizons' area was set aside for demonstrations and activities in McGregor Street and Merrett Avenue. These included BMX bike and skateboarding displays, and basketball demonstrations by prominent National Basketball League stars.

In the State Government Pavilion, emphasis was placed on the opportunities for the young in trades and education. The Marching Koalas, a group of young boys and girls from Newcastle, NSW, were a big attraction on the Main Arena Programme, and some of the best school bands in Victoria entertained in the new AMP Rotunda on the AMP Lawn.

The 'Young Horizons' theme was a timely one in view of the all time high youth unemployment situation in the State and by demonstration of care and concern for the young people the Society recognised the importance of our youth within our community.

All in all the 'Youth Show' proved a great success.

Competitive entries for the 1990 Royal Melbourne Show totalled 36,372 with record entries in: Harness Horses; Australian Stock Horses; Riding Ponies; Santa Gertrudis; Charolais; Limousin; Salers; Belgian Blue; Braunvieh; Gelbvieh; and Brown Swiss Cattle. Three new breeds of beef cattle made their debut at this Show. These were Highland Cattle, Welsh Black, and an Italian breed, Piedmontese.

Feature breeds for this year were Suffolk Sheep which attracted entries from all States and exhibited more than 200 Suffolks, and were judged by international judge Mr. James Taylor Wilson, of Barnyards Mintlaw, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. A record number of Simmental beef cattle - this year's Elders Pastoral Feature Breed - entered for the 1990 Royal Show, with 70 exhibitors showing 230 animals, this was the best ever entry for a Feature Breed.

Two relatively new farming industries had displays at the 1990 Royal Melbourne Show. The deer industry had animals of several breeds on display in different areas as well as information samples of deer products. Two ostriches in the Goat Pavilion attracted attention as did samples of ostrich leather goods and painted eggs.

Contracts with Coles New World Supermarkets valued at more than \$1.25 million were made available for the 1990 National Cheese Show organised by the Society. The winner of the Champion Cheddar (Open Section) won the contract to supply Coles New World with 350 tonnes of the prize winning cheese, a contract worth in excess of \$1 million. The other prize, for Champion Non-Cheddar (Open Section) gave the winner the opportunity to supply Coles New World with 20 tonnes of cheese, a contract worth \$250,000. The Champion

In his Annual Report President Mr. John Sleigh made the following reference to the new RASV Support Group:

*I am very pleased to be able to report on the growing membership of the Royal Agricultural Society's Support Group, which met during the 1989 Royal Show.*

*This group comprises young adults who have rural backgrounds and a common interest in the continued development of the RASV. From its ranks, we are hopeful of recruiting future Royal Show judges and stewards.*

## **A recession, new President, and youth show**

The deepening economic recession, rising unemployment, adverse seasonal conditions, and dropping commodity prices being experienced nationally, but mainly in Victoria, were all factors concerning the Council as the new decade began.

It was into this climate that Mr. Robert Beggs was elected President at the 1990 Annual Meeting of the Society. He succeeded Mr. John Sleigh, AM who did not seek a further term.

In a tribute to the retiring President Mr. Beggs said:

*I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. John Sleigh, who was President of the Society from April, 1986 to April 1990. There were two occasions during Mr. Sleigh's presidency when the Society was without a Director, and Mr. Sleigh devoted himself tirelessly to ensuring that the Society's management was not without leadership during those periods. Throughout his presidency, Mr. Sleigh was most capably assisted by his wife, Shirley, and together, Mr. and Mrs. Sleigh were outstanding ambassadors for the Society.*

The Council established a Finance Committee in February to monitor the Society's financial planning, reporting and performance, and Mr. Keith Buchanan was appointed chairman of the New Committee.

On 6 May 1990, the Society celebrated the centenary of the granting by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, of 'the requisite permission for the Society to assume the title of the 'Royal' Agriculture Society of Victoria'. During the year the Society, with the assistance of town planning consultants, made a comprehensive review of the planning and development strategy for the Showgrounds. A detailed submission supporting changes to the Essendon and Melbourne Planning Schemes was made to the respective City Councils in October, 1990. The proposed changes were directed towards allowing the Society greater flexibility in using the Showground's facilities all year round.

The economic downturn dictated the financial outlay the Society could afford on general repairs and maintenance during the year but ongoing works were continued as far as was practicable. Refurbishment of the Administration building continued and many staff members moved to new areas. The old creche in Skene Street was demolished and made way for the new horticulture area. Phase One of the Horticulture Project was the construction of Stone Park at the Plummer Avenue end of the old creche site. Alterations to the aisles in No. 3 Cattle Pavilion were completed and the interior steel work in both No. 3 and No. 5 Cattle Pavilions painted. Painting was also carried out on the exterior of Centre Point in Degraeves Street and the H. T. C. Woodfull Pavilion in Merrett Avenue, in the Dog Area. Windows were replaced in the Sheep Pavilion, and alterations were made to the Pig Pavilion. Landscapes were constructed to beautify the areas of McNabb Street beside the No. 1 Cattle Pavilion, and also at the front of the Poultry Pavilion. However, the major construction for 1990 was the AMP Rotunda on the AMP Lawn. The new addition made an ideal setting for the musical entertainment of the AMP Lawn during the Show.

He has been active in the Poll Hereford and Illawarra cattle breed societies. For many years he represented the RASV on the State Advisory Council of the Victorian Young Farmers organisation and was very highly regarded for this work. However, he contends his main contribution to the Society and the Royal Melbourne Show, was the successful launching of the fleece competitions in Centenary Hall in the 1950s; and pays tribute to the RASV Councillors W. C. Greaves and E. A. Doyle for their part in the organisation of this most popular Royal Show attraction. He was also the driving force behind introducing the Colombo Plan students to the Royal Melbourne Show.

Also qualifying for the 40 years of service to the Council in July was Mr. G. P. H. Wilson, CMG, JP, who joined in July 1950, was made a Life Councillor in 1970, and has given outstanding service to the Society over the 40 years period. A Trustee and Life Councillor, Mr. George Wilson, was President of the Society from 1964 to 1973, having been elected Vice President in 1957. He was the first Victorian to win a Nuffield Travel Scholarship to the United Kingdom in 1952, and was foundation President of the Australian Nuffield Farming Scholars Association from 1974 to 1989. He was appointed an Honorary Trustee of the Nuffield Trust in the United Kingdom, the first person outside the United Kingdom to be so honoured. He is also a member of the Primary Industry Selection committee for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and was Chairman of the Victorian Inland Meat Authority. A former President and Life Member of the Berwick and the Dandenong Agricultural Societies, he exhibited Shropshire and Dorset sheep at the Berwick and Royal Melbourne Shows. In 1966, Mr. Wilson was honoured with a CMG, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The former Lord Mayor of Melbourne and Empire Games athlete, Mr. E. W. (Ted) Best, CMG, was elected a Life Councillor in June 1990. He served the Society on several committees over the 20 years as Councillor and at the time, was a member of the Public Relations Committee. He was a Melbourne City Councillor from 1960 to 1975, Lord Mayor from 1969 to 1971, and deputy chairman of the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works from 1975 to 1979.

Mr. Best was Chairman of the Victorian Olympic Council and a member of the committee which gained the Olympics for Melbourne in 1956. Later, he was chairman of the State Government Sports and Recreation Council. He was the Victorian 100, 220 and 440 yards sprint champion in the late 1930s and competed in the Empire Games in 1938. As a member of the ill fated 2/22 Australian Infantry Battalion he escaped from Rabaul when the Japanese invaded New Britain in January 1942. Mr. Best was also a committeeman of the Moonee Valley Racing Club.

Sharing the honour of election to Life Councillor with Mr. Ted Best in this year was Mr. C. B. (Cos) Gardiner, who joined the Council in August in 1970. A well known Victorian Friesian breeder, now retired, he exhibited Friesians at the Royal Melbourne Show for 25 years, and had judged the breed at the Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Launceston, Hobart and other Shows. Mr. Gardiner is a Past President of the Friesian Cattle Club (Victorian Branch) and the Victorian Dairyfarmers Association, and Past Chairman of the Victorian Dairy Board, Victorian Dairy Products Board, the Australian Dairy Research Committee and the ADPB Advertising and Promotions Department. He had also served on several other agricultural bodies in executive positions. Mr. Gardiner was a member of several RASV committees, and served as Chairman and judge of the Commercial Dairy Herd Competition, RASV representative to the Victorian Agricultural Societies Association (VASA), and was Chief Steward of the Holstein-Friesian Section of the Royal Melbourne Show.

During the year Council regretfully accepted the resignations of Mr. A. J. Woods and Mr. E. B. Langlands, both of whom resigned for personal reasons. Four new councillors were elected to fill the vacancies caused by the creation of the two Life Councillors and the two resignations. Mr. R. T. Balderstone CMG, MC made a welcome return to Council after an absence

Cheddar Award was won by Farmers Union Foods Ltd., Mile End, South Australia, and the Non-Cheddar Award was won by Lactos Pty. Ltd., Burnie, Tasmania.

This year was the championship for the Royal Melbourne Wine Show which is the premier wine industry event in Victoria. There were 2,438 entries and the exhibits were assessed by a panel of judges which included M. Sasha Lichine from Bordeaux in France. Championship years are rotated between three Shows; Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne and the Australian Wine and Brandy Producers Association make available the following trophies: The T. C. Seabrook Trophy - for the best Sweet White Table Wine in class 44, and the J. C. M. Fornachon Memorial Trophy for the Most Successful Exhibitor of Sherry, Amontillado Style in Classes 49 to 68. The Seabrook Trophy was won by Thomas Hardy and Sons Pty Ltd. and B. Seppelt and Sons Ltd. won the J. C. M. Fornachon Trophy.

The 1990 Royal Melbourne Show ran for 11 days and 8 nights from Thursday 20 September to Sunday 30 September, and was the 132nd conducted by the Society. It attracted an overall attendance of 774,926, which compares favourably with 1987, the last normal year unaffected by outside factors. In 1988 numbers were down because of the exodus of Victorians to visit Expo '88, and in 1989 the figures were slightly higher than normal because of the airline pilots' dispute, which prevented many Victorians from travelling interstate during the September school holidays. Show Day, Thursday 27 September, drew the largest crowd of 135,064, which was an increase of 15 per cent over Show Day 1989, and Friday 28 September, created a record attendance for a second Friday of the Show.

The Governor of Victoria, His Excellency, Dr. Davis McCaughey, AC, officially opened the 1990 Royal Melbourne Show on Saturday, 22 September. The occasion was marked by a spectacular display, which included a special show of pageantry and youth groups from the Essendon area. The pageantry was to mark the 100th anniversary of the Society being granted Royal assent by Queen Victoria in May 1890.

The free attractions at the Show were once again a highlight and proved very popular with patrons. The very successful Farm Sunday, on 23 September, was held in perfect weather conditions and saw thousands of people on the Main Arena taking in the displays and demonstrations. The Commonwealth Bank Farm Animal Expo was once again well patronised, allowing people to touch and learn about farm animals.

Harness Racing made a popular return to its first home at the Show after an absence of nine years. Races were held under lights on four nights with the finals conducted on the evening of Show Day. An innovation was the staging of five concerts during the Show the musical styles ranged from rock to jazz to folk/country. The major concert, on the evening of Show Day, saw the rock group Noiseworks attract a crowd of 25,000 to the Main Arena.

During the year, 32 breed societies and allied rural organisations used the RASV for secretarial services. However, after many years the Equestrian Federation of Australia (Victorian Branch) set up an administration independent of the Society, although their offices remain at the Showgrounds.

## **More Council changes**

The new President, Mr. W. R. Beggs, elected at the Annual Meeting in April, was supported by new Vice Presidents: Mr. I. I. Bucknall, Mr. A. Gibson and Mr. J. G. W. Head, for the ensuing year. In May, Councillor Geoffrey Howell, achieved 40 years service on the Council of the RASV. He was elected to the Council in May 1950 and appointed a Life Councillor in 1970 in recognition of his 20 years service. He has served the Society on many committees over the 40 years, was a successful breeder of Poll Hereford cattle and has exhibited prize winners at several Royal Melbourne Shows.

## Depression hits - first lady Councillor

With the severe downturn in the economy, especially in the rural sector, the Council was of the opinion that it was important to show confidence in the primary industries and to demonstrate this confidence for the 133rd Royal Melbourne Show (19 - 28 September, 1991), it was agreed to adopt as the theme 'Our Agriculture On Show', and focus the promotion and preparations for the Show on this theme.

To quote the President, Mr. Beggs:

*It was timely and appropriate, during one of the most difficult and trying economic recessions we have faced, that the RASV demonstrated its solidarity and support for rural industries and the people who run them.*

With very limited money available, the Grounds Department carried out maintenance, construction, and beautification works started in previous years with some of these items being: The landscaped lawn area adjacent to the eastern side of the Administration Building was extended across Skene Street, which was now closed to vehicles. Stone paths and seats were added and the finishing touch was the completion of the garden beds beside the building.

'Turf paving' was installed on part of the amusements area between the Woodfull Pavilion and the chairlift station. This was intended to give a soft surface and also beautify the grounds by creating a grassed area.

Walkways were created for horses coming and going from the stables in the western area to the Main Arena. Photinia and privet hedges were planted, making two lanes, and these would beautify the area as they grew, as well as regulate the horse traffic, patrons and vehicles thus making the area safer.

New offices were built along the south end of the Administration Building, and these have now been let to permanent tenants. The Members Meeting Room in the Hunter Stand was painted and refitted in time for the 1991 Royal Show.

The hurt caused by the depression was reflected in the level of use of the Showgrounds' facilities during the year. A number of major public events recorded lower attendance, and there was a percentage of planned activities that were either postponed or cancelled due to the bad economic climate. Net income from the hire of facilities and equipment was \$615,000, which was down \$164,000 on budget expectations.

Throughout the year the Society continued to work closely with consultants Wilson Sayer Core to develop a submission to support a planning scheme amendment for the Showgrounds. If adopted by the City of Essendon and the City of Melbourne, the consequent rezoning of the Showgrounds would allow a far broader use of the facilities and would also permit the implementation of an overall land use and development strategy which has been prepared to guide the rationalisation of facilities and planning for future improvements to the Showgrounds.

At the annual election in April 1991, Mr. W. R. R. Beggs was re-elected President for a second 12 month term, as were Vice Presidents; Mr. I. I. Bucknall, Mr. Adrian Gibson, and Mr. J. G. W. Head. Also elected to Council at this meeting was Mr. P. J. B. Ronald, son of the late Mr. Peter B. Ronald who was President of the Society from 1973 to 1977. Mr. Ronald replaced Mr. W. H. Hill who had been appointed to Council in October 1990 to fill a casual vacancy.

During the year Messrs. J. W. Rae and R. B. Langdon were appointed Life Councillors in recognition of the 20 years service each had given to the Society. Unfortunately the Council recorded with regret the deaths of two of its members, Mr. J. W. D. Ward, a Life Councillor who died in March and Mr. F. J. Lithgow, in July. Council posthumously honoured Mr.

of six years. He was first elected to the Council in 1971 and served as President from 1977 to 1982. He had been involved in the primary industry area for many years both as a producer of beef cattle and serving on industry bodies. Mr. G. J. Sheppard was involved with the Poultry Section of the Royal Melbourne Show for over 20 years, serving as steward and judge in that time. He had extensive experience in State Government administration, and with the Pakenham and District Agricultural Society. Mr. N. A. Edwards was well known to woodchop enthusiasts as the handicapper and commentator of the Royal Melbourne Show woodchops. He was associated with that section for more than 15 years. He was a member of the Victorian Police CIB. Mr. W. H. Hill had been involved with the Society and the Royal Melbourne Show for several years as Chairman of Bonlac Foods Limited, one of the RASV's major sponsors. He was actively involved in dairy farming and had a wide knowledge of the rural industry scene. Mr. Bob Walker, OAM, who was elected to Council in 1977, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 1990 New Year's Honours List for service to the rural community, in particular to sheep breeding.

During the 1990 Royal Melbourne Show the President, Mr. W. R. R. Beggs, presented four people with President's Medallions in recognition of, and thanks for, their contributions to the Society and the Show. The recipients were: Mr. Vincent Fitzpatrick, who was actually born on the Showgrounds and has worked for 33 years for the Society and the Show; Mr. Brian Alford, who the previous year attended his 36th Show, received his medallion for his contribution to the Beef Cattle Section and the Royal Melbourne Show as a whole; Mr. Val Quanchi had been associated with the Royal Melbourne Show Woodchop Section for many years and first served as a steward in 1973 and Mr. Les Batten who had been involved with the Society in many capacities since 1948. He began as an exhibitor of pigs and was in charge of the Centenary Hall displays during the 1950s. He was the first manager of the Shell/RASV Journalists' Tour which commenced in 1957, and was the instigator of the popular Australian Wool Corporation Fashion Parades, and the promotion of the Miss Show Girl competitions at the Show. He was the driving force behind the Commonwealth Bank Farm Animal Expo at the Show.

Honorary Life membership of the Society was conferred on twenty nine people during the Show, each of whom had served the RASV for at least 20 years. The recipients were:

In the *Beef Cattle Section*, Messrs. M. Alberni; W. H. P. Charles; N. Corrigan; L. Jackson; D. B. James; J. Mc Diamid; A. McDonald; B. Minns; J. B. Richardson; J. L. Sullivan; P. Sutherland; S. G. Western; J. D. Wilson.

*Dairy Cattle*, Messrs. D. James; P. McGillivray; P. Shanahan.

*Horses*, Messrs. W. B. Mahncke; K. Male; G. Whitaker.

*Sheep*, Messrs. P. J. Mactier; O. Grayson.

*Shearing*, Messrs. F. D. Allan; I. Cutler; R. Harris.

*Other Sections*, Mr. D. Simpson (Poultry), Dr. N. F. Millis MBE (Wine), Mr. N. Bunting (Cattle), Mr. G. Briggs (Animal Nursery), Mrs. J. G. W. Head (Arts and Crafts).

In his report to Council and Members the President Mr. Beggs, made these comments on the failed Olympic Bid:

*It was disappointing that Melbourne was not successful in its bid for the 1996 Olympic Games and so our hope to see an Olympic Velodrome located at the Showgrounds will now not go ahead.*

*However, on a more positive note, the Society is progressing its plans for a new and larger Animal Nursery and for new horse stalls in the western area of the Showgrounds.*

37 entries in this competition and the breed attracted much public interest. Three new cattle breeds made their debut, Pinzgauer, an Austrian lean beef breed; Wagyu, the national breed of Japan which produces the popular 'Kobe-beef'; and the Dexter, a miniature dual-purpose cattle breed with its origin in Ireland, and officially listed as a Rare Breed. Palouse ponies, a breed developed in America from Spanish Conquistador ponies, were included in the Horse Section.

In the Dog Section, the Nova Scotia Duck-tolling Retriever made its first appearance at the 1991 Royal Show. As its name implies, the breed originated on the eastern coast of Canada.

A record number of Limousin beef cattle - this year's Elders Beef Cattle Feature Breed were entered for the 1991 Show. The 264 entries were judged by M. Jean-Luc Kress, from France.

Border Leicesters were the Dalgety Farmers Feature Sheep Breed. The near record 210 entries were judged by Mrs. Rosemary Whitcombe, from Surrey, England.

The 1991 Royal Melbourne Show ran from Thursday 19th September to Saturday 28th September, and drew a disappointing total attendance of 654,343 patrons. This total was 120,583 people fewer than the previous year, which ran for 11 days. Cold weather, wind and rain of the first three days set the pattern for the rest of the Show. The weather, coupled with the worsening economic depression - considered the worst since the great depression of the 1930s - meant that fewer people could afford to attend, and those able to do so were more selective in the days they chose. For example, crowd numbers from Farm Sunday, 22nd September to Wednesday 25th September, equalled or were greater than the equivalent days in 1990. This was attributed to the fine weather on these days. Tuesday 24th September, was the most popular day with an attendance of 91,437, an increase of 27,673 on the same day in 1990.

His Excellency, Dr. Davis McCaughey, A.C., Governor of Victoria, opened the 133rd Royal Melbourne Show on Saturday 21st September. Members of the Australian Army's Broadmeadows Logistic Battalion provided the Guard of Honour and was supported by the Australian Army Band Melbourne (formerly the Band of the Third Military District). Special guests at the opening ceremony were the Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, The Right Honourable John MacGregor, OBE., MP, and Mrs. MacGregor, along with the British High Commissioner, His Excellency, Mr. Brian Barder and Mrs. Barder, and the British Consul General, Mr. Stephen Brown and Mrs. Brown.

There was special emphasis on the agricultural side of the Show, a highlight of which was the magnificent display in Centenary Hall sponsored by the Weekly Times on the theme 'Our Agriculture on Show'. The individual contributors, from the Department of Agriculture to the Organic Retail and Growers Association, combined to give a display which allowed show-goers to see, sample and learn about various facets of agriculture and some of the production stages of farm produce. This display proved very popular and it was planned to continue with a similar display for the 1992 Royal Show.

Another successful project, allied to the theme, was the Yellow Brick Road Showbag presented by the Australian Dairy Corporation. Thousands of people followed the map and road markings to fill their bag with healthy snack foods and other items from the participating vendors.

For the first time at the Royal Melbourne Show, young auctioneers went through their paces in front of the judges in the State Final of the Stock Agents Association of Victoria Young Auctioneers Competition held on the Main Arena on Farm Sunday. The seven contestants, all under 25 years, each had to sell four steers to industry buyers and were judged on their appearance, diction, voice projection and personality. Joint first prize went to Gary Foat of Gippsland and Northern Yarram, and Peter Steer of Elders in Dandenong. Gary and

Lithgow by appointing him an Honorary Life Councillor at the July meeting. Also at the July meeting Council accepted the resignation of Mr. B. R. J. Hallows, because of the increased demands of the legal practice in which he was a partner.

Further changes occurred in Council in September with the appointment of three new Councillors to fill casual vacancies. These appointments were Mrs. S. C. Crooke, Mr. L. R. Latta and Mr. I. McC. Rough. Mrs. S. C. (Sarah) Crooke of Gundowring via Wodonga, was the first lady to be elected or appointed to the Council of the RASV. Her appointment filled the casual vacancy which arose from the appointment of Mr. Rae as a Life Councillor.

Mrs. Crooke ran a dairy farm with her husband and was a Central Councillor with the United Dairy Farmers of Victoria, having acted as a Deputy General Councillor on occasions. She was also a coordinator of the North East Dairy Industry Group. As a Churchill Fellowship scholar she toured the United States and Europe during which she looked at methods of increasing autumn/winter milk production. An accomplished cheesemaker, Mrs. Crooke held a diploma of Medical Technology from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Mr. L.R. Latta of Winslow was appointed to fill the casual vacancy with the resignation of Mr. Hallows. He managed the family property which ran Hereford cattle and Romney sheep. He had been a judge, steward and an exhibitor in Royal Melbourne Show horse events, and had won the 'Good Hands' Challenge Trophy.

Mr. I. McC. Rough was appointed to fill the casual vacancy which arose from the death of Mr. Lithgow. He was a current competitor in Royal Show horse and hunting events; President of the Australian Jumping Racing Association, Honorary Secretary of the Hunt Clubs Association of Victoria, and Honorary Secretary/Treasurer of the Yarra Glen and Lilydale Hunt Club for 16 years. A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, he was a former auditor of the Society.

At the October meeting of Council Mr. W.H.Hill of Benalla was appointed to fill the casual vacancy which arose from Mr. Langdon's appointment as a Life Councillor. Mr. Hill was Chairman of Bonlac Foods Limited and in that capacity had been involved with the Society and the Royal Melbourne Show for several years. He was actively involved in dairy farming and had a wide knowledge of the rural industry scene.

In May 1991, Mr. C.O. Moore was honoured at a dinner for his 40 years of service on Council. He was ringmaster of the Royal Melbourne Show from 1969 to 1972 and instigated changes which improved the presentation of the Main Arena programme. He had served on the Horse Committee and was currently a member of the Beef Cattle and Wine Committees.

As a special mark of respect and appreciation, the Society conferred Honorary Life Membership on the Governor of Victoria, His Excellency, Dr. Davis McCaughey, A.C. and Mrs. McCaughey. Dr. and Mrs. McCaughey were keen supporters of the Society and the Royal Melbourne Show.

Honorary Life Membership was also conferred on the following for dedication to the Society over a period of 20 years:

*Dog Section* - Messrs. M.D. McKerchar, L.L. Grant, W.C. Kinsman, G.A.A. Lane.

*Horse and Sheep Sections* - Mr. W.R.B. Ronald.

Notwithstanding the hard times, exhibitors showed their support for the Royal Show, and rural industries, with an overall entry total of 36,455. Record entries were received for Belted Galloways, Braunvieh, Gelbvieh, Highland, Limousin, Piedmontese, Santa Gertrudis, and Welsh Black beef cattle; Black and Coloured sheep; and Dairy Produce. Five new breeds of animals were entered and judged at the 1991 Royal Show. The most unusual was the Alpaca, a South American grazing animal related to the camel, and bred for their fibre. There were

## Royal summer horse show

From September 1992 the traditional Royal Melbourne Show horse competitions were divided into two separate events, four months apart.

Saddle pony, Galloway and hack, harness, showjumping, novelty and Clydesdale classes were judged at the Royal Show in September 1992. All other horse and pony breed classes were judged at the Royal Summer Horse Show in the first week of January. In 1993 the dates were 6-8 January inclusive.

The reasons for the change were the continued growth of the horse breeding industry and the corresponding interest in horse sports, which have meant more and more entries each year. This put increasing pressure on the Royal Show horse programme, arena space and stabling facilities and with the Show now being reduced from 11 days to 10 days this added further restrictions. By separating the events, more horses were able to compete, better use was made of the stabling facilities and there was more space on the Main Arena for each event. In this case, the severe balloting formerly required was reduced.

The finances of the Society at this time were causing grave concern. From a position of having a trading surplus in 1990 of \$90,184, the figure plummeted to a trading deficit of \$1,165,096 after the 1991 Royal Show, prompting the President to make these comments in his Annual Report:

*Unfortunately, as with so many things in this difficult economic climate, the Show was not immune from the difficulties people are facing and our attendances suffered accordingly. This in turn has put financial pressure on our Society and so, like many other businesses, we have had to regrettably reduce our staff.*

*As President, I am currently chairing a small sub-committee to review the structures and activities of our Society. This committee is to report to Council in early 1992 and I am quite confident that our recommendations will lead to a stronger organisation, better equipped to lead agriculture in the years ahead.*

Following his re-election at the Annual General Meeting for a further term, President Robert Beggs, his Vice Presidents Messrs. Bucknall, Gibson and Head, and the Council, set about redressing the Society's financial position by restructuring loans to cover the deficit caused by the shortfall from income following the 1991 Royal Show.

This positive attitude was immediately carried over to the preparations for the 1992 Royal Show, and early entries gave promise of solid support from all sections.

The Council was honoured that His Excellency The Honourable Richard E. McGarvie, the new Governor of Victoria, agreed to be patron of the Society, and accepted the invitation to open the 1992 Royal Melbourne Show on Saturday 19 September.

The Queen's Birthday Honours List in June included awards for the President W. R. R. Beggs and Life Councillor Mr. J. W. Rae. The President was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). The citation was for service to primary industry, the wool industry in particular, and the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria. Mr. Jack Rae was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his service to primary industry, particularly the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

Members of Council were saddened at the loss of Life Councillors K. A. Drummond who died on 23 February and E. W. (Ted) Best, CMG, who passed away on 1 June after a long illness. A former Lord Mayor of Melbourne, he was appointed to the Society's Council in June 1970, made a Life Councillor in 1990, and in his 22 years with the Society had served on sev-

Peter were now eligible to compete in the national final at the 1992 Sydney Royal Easter Show, with the chance to compete in the World Championships at the Calgary Stampede in Canada.

Top class free entertainment and displays were once again a highlight of the Show. Main Arena patrons saw acts such as Dar Davies, the highwire motorcycle stuntman; the Bridgestone Holden Precision Driving Team; The Manchester Unity/TTFM. Fireworks; the Shetland Grand National and the Victorian Police Musical Ride. Music and Dance were featured in the AMP Rotunda, with styles ranging from school bands to rock and roll and ethnic. Farm Sunday was again a great success with patrons enjoying the displays, demonstrations and hands-on events on the Main Arena.

An attraction which seems to draw a larger crowd each year is the Farriers' Forge where the skills of blacksmithing and farriery are demonstrated. These ancient skills hold a deep fascination for city people and the Royal Show is probably the only place most can now see them. Carl O'Dwyer and his team showed the latest shoeing techniques and a farriers' competition was staged over three days. An addition to the Farriers' Forge was a clinic on horse breaking, conducted over three days.

New at the 1991 Royal Show were Performance Breeding Classes for bulls aged more than 16 months but less than 30 months old in the Hereford, Poll Hereford, Angus and Simmental sections. The bulls were assessed on computer generated performance data as well as visual appraisal and fat depth measurements. This advance method of judging was well received by the commercial buyers as a 'second string' to the traditional visual method of judging.

During the Show, the President, Mr. W.R.R. Beggs, awarded President's Medallions to four people in recognition of their contributions to the Royal Show and the Society. Mr. Tom Wittingslow, the founder of Wittingslow Amusements, was awarded a medallion in recognition of his long and valued association with the Royal Melbourne Show; Mr. Howard Yelland, a highly respected breeder of Hereford cattle, for his contribution to the Beef Cattle Section and Mr. Ron Nestor, who has been in charge of the Royal Show Main Arena crew for over 20 years. Mr. Joe Hamblin, who had not missed a show since 1921, was awarded his medallion in recognition of his long and dedicated support of the Show and in particular the pig section. He had also regularly exhibited sheep at the Show and served many years as senior steward in the pig section.

### **Last year for stud pig section - new era for dogs**

Unfortunately, the 1991 Show was the last year of the competitive Stud Pig Section. This was one of the oldest competitions in the Show - having first appeared in the National Agricultural Society Show in 1874 at the St. Kilda Road site.

Changes in the industry over the years, from farmer owned stud herds to large minimal disease commercial piggeries, had led to a decline in the number of pig studs and likewise exhibitors. The Council extended special thanks to the exhibitors for their efforts over the last few years in keeping the competition going.

Replacing the competitive exhibits was an educational exhibit with displays and different breeds of pigs on view. The successful pig carcass competition continued and was not be affected by the cessation of the stud pig competition.

On 24 July, 1991 the Victorian Canine Association (VCA) came into being. This new organisation replaced the Kennel Control Council (KCC) which was formed in 1930 from the Canine Control Council and the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Association.

Horse Committee and Councillor in Charge of Turnout Classes, the new event is bound to prove popular.

The second new event, Jumping Equitation, designed to improve riding technique, was held for the first time. In this event competitors were assessed on style as well as ability to make the horse jump cleanly. The six bar event and the high jump were two competitions which returned to the programme in the Horses in Action segment and were both greeted with enthusiasm. Also, this year, Ladies' Hack and Ladies' Galloway classes - both of which attracted large entries - were split into separate classes for riders of mares and riders of geldings.

The 1992 Royal Melbourne Show ran from 17-26 September. All hopes of retrieving and improving the financial position for the Society unfortunately disappeared with the weather. Melbourne experienced its wettest September for more than 70 years. Throughout the whole month the temperature high did not reach 20 degrees centigrade - the only time this has happened since records began. With such wet and cold conditions it was no great surprise that the overall attendance of 654,214 was the lowest since 1962, (when a rail strike caused an attendance drop of 70,000 on the previous year).

Nevertheless, it was little consolation for the Members of Council and the depleted and overworked staff, to experience such a great disappointment, for the exceptional amount of time, preparation and promotion which had been expended on what was recognised as a very good and well presented Show.

Naturally the Main Arena events were conducted under extremely bad conditions, and within the first three days this normally green, lush area, was transformed to what could better be described as a ploughed paddock! In fact so bad was the condition of Arena that the Grand Parade was cancelled on two occasions.

Undercover attractions such as the stock pavilions, Dairy, Meat Promotions Pavilions, the Government Pavilion, Centenary Hall, Harvest Hall, the big Woodchop Arena, Animal Nursery, Animal Expo, Dugdale Childrens' Theatre and the Commercial Halls were all very well patronised.

Fashion parades made a welcome return with the presentations by the Cotton Foundation of Australia. These parades, in Centre Point, highlighting a wide range of cotton garments displayed by top professional models, proved a great crowd pleaser and each session was packed out. Another first was the participation of the new St. George Bank with a series of farm oriented activities on the eastern end of the Main Arena during the second week of the Show. Unfortunately these activities were badly affected by the bad weather.

His Excellency, The Honourable Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria, and Patron of the Society, officially opened the 134th Royal Melbourne Show at 2.30pm on Saturday 19 September. The Royal Australian Navy provided the Guard of Honour supported the Naval Band.

During the 1992 Royal Show four people were honoured by the President, Mr. Robert Beggs, for their services to the Society. Mr. Keith Kneen, who has been with Wormald Security on the Showgrounds for more than 40 years; Dr. John Arnott, veterinary surgeon, who has served on the Society's veterinary panel for 54 years; Mrs. Joy Feldt, a teacher at Canterbury Primary School who had given great assistance with the Society's school project; and Mrs. Norma Buckland, chaperone for The Weekly Times Miss Country Show Girl Quest for almost 30 years, were awarded the President's Medallion. Also, Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Mr. Stuart Mactier and Mr. Trevor King in recognition of their

eral sub-committees and, at the time of his death, was a member of the Marketing Committee. Much of his life was devoted to serving the public in many capacities ranging from Melbourne City Councillor and Deputy Chairman of the Board of Works, to Chairman of the State Government Sports and Recreation Council.

The Council, conscious of the deepening economic downturn, the high rate of unemployment, the historical part the Royal Show plays, and means to Victorian families, and the Society's policy to contain costs, agreed to hold the Show admission prices at the 1991 Show level, and in addition, to grant further concessions for the unemployed, pensioners and tertiary students.

## **Change to Financial Year and Annual Meeting**

A resolution was passed at the Annual General Meeting of members on 7 April 1992, to change the financial year end from 31 December to the following 31 March. This meant that the current financial year would end on 31 March 1993 rather than 31 December 1992, with the financial period under review extending to 15 months. As a result of this change the 1993 Annual Meeting was held on the 13 July.

The National Cheese Show continued to grow in both size and prestige each year with a record 483 entries being received in the classes of the Dairy Produce Section (which included the National Cheese Show), an increase of 23 per cent over the previous record set in 1991. For the first time, classes for ice creams were included in this section.

Australian wine producers showed strong support for the 1992 Royal Melbourne Wine Show with a record 2,426 entries from 258 exhibitors. There were 13 more exhibitors from South Australia and the Western Australian representation increased by eight.

Further evidence of support came from entries in the Grains Competition, with 205 samples received - this was an increase of 11 per cent on those of last year.

The overall competitive entry of 34,362 for the 1992 Royal Show was to a degree, misleading, in that the normally big horse entry was split with the introduction of the Summer Horse Show and the elimination of the Stud Pig Section. Furthermore, re-adjustment of classes within sections also accounted for an overall reduction in entry numbers. Nevertheless, records were established in Wines; Dairy Produce; Alpacas; ten beef cattle breeds; one dairy cattle breed; Shropshire sheep and rabbits.

Tarentaise beef cattle were shown for the first time, as were White Suffolk sheep. Cheviots, with an entry of 215 from 163 sheep, was the Dalgety Farmers' Feature Sheep breed, and Charolais, the Elders Feature Beef Cattle breed at the Show this year. The Beef Performance Classes were extended to include Murray Grey and Limousin breeds, along with classes for Angus, Hereford, Poll Hereford and Simmental initiated at the 1991 Royal Show.

'Horses in Action' was the new name for the horse classes judged at the September Royal Show. The separation of the classes gave the Society more flexibility in its September programme featuring specific classes. Most exhibitors responded well to the change, an example being the Clydesdale Section with 150 horses entered, being the biggest Clydesdale Show in the Southern Hemisphere, and likely in the world.

Two new horse events, and the return of two show jumping competitions were added to the Main Arena Programme this year. A major new event was the John Lithgow Best Equestrienne Turnout Class for riders aged 18 years and not over 21 years. The rider did not have to own either the mount or the riding gear as is required in the Esquire Equestrienne Turnout Class. This new class was designed as a step for young riders aspiring to success in the famous Garryowen event. Named after the late John Lithgow, who was Chairman of the

In presenting the Annual Report and Financial Statement for the period ended 31 March 1993, the new President, Mr. J. Keith Buchanan, made these points:

*Since the Annual General Meeting in 1992 for the year ended 31 December 1991, significant changes have taken place in your Society, and the extension of the financial year to 31 March has had an effect on some previous procedures. Matters of necessity were the moving back of the Annual General Meeting by three months, to July, as well as moving the dates for the Notice of Business for the Annual General Meeting and the nomination of members for Council, and the extension of the membership year for 1992. We have instituted a more sophisticated budgeting system throughout the organisation and over the past 15 months we have seen a satisfactory improvement in our financial result. This achievement has been brought about due to a number of factors, and we were able to achieve this result in spite of no increase in attendances on those of the 1991 Royal Show.*

Mr. Buchanan made this reference to the 1992 Royal Show:

*Our Royal Show with the theme 'It's Too Big To Miss' was again subjected to some most unpleasant weather conditions but was certainly a happy Show and, in spite of the rain and the recession, compared very favourably with that of the previous year.*

## **Society's financial situation and incorporation**

Along with the Annual Report was the presentation and explanation of the comprehensive Financial Statements for the 15 months financial period ended 31 March 1993:

*The consolidated result for the period was substantially affected by the change in the financial year end from 31 December to 31 March. As reported to members in January 1993, the result for the 12 months ended 31 December was a profit (after abnormal items) of \$99,666 compared with a loss of \$1,165,095 for the previous 12 months. The change in the date of the financial year end has resulted, for this year only, in the company reporting for a 15 month period ended 31 March 1993. Due to the seasonal nature of the company's operations, the quarter ending 31 March always records a substantial loss. This has resulted in the company reporting a loss of \$755,103 for the 15 months ended 31 March 1993. The budget for the 15 months ended March 1993 was for a loss of \$908,000 thus the actual loss of \$755,103 represents a substantial improvement on the budget. Significant reductions in salary, wages and payroll costs have been achieved. Interest costs during the period were assisted through a lower general interest rate and refinancing of our facilities with the National Australia Bank to take advantage of further interest rate reductions. The unexpected failure of the company's accounting software in February 1993 resulted in a substantial replacement cost. The abnormal items in the Profit and Loss Statement consist of a profit of \$31,245 for the sale of land in Elliot Street, Ascot Vale, which was surplus to requirements, and a \$160,229 accounting adjustment in relation to the treatment of the Catering Development Fund. Some unusual changes between 1991 and 1993 are due to several factors, these include:*

- 1) The Victorian Canine Association (VCA) taking over the RASV Dog Section staff and operating as a fully independent body from 1 January 1992. This reduced income from Secretarial Services and reduced wage and salary expenses.*

work for the Society. Each has been involved with the Royal Melbourne Show for 20 years. Mr. Mactier with the Sheep Section and Mr. King with the Horse Section.

One of the good things to come of the otherwise disappointing 1992 Royal Show was the promotion of '6 after 6'. This was a reduction in admission prices for evening attendances. Patrons were encouraged to attend the evening Show for an admission charge of \$6 after 6pm - half the normal adult entry fee. The reduction in price was enthusiastically received and evening attendances were more than doubled on most nights. Unfortunately rain kept the crowd numbers down on the very wet evenings.

## **Medallions go, new procedures, new President**

Another tie with the past was severed this year when it was decided to issue Members with cards and Member's Guest cards in place of the traditional metal badges. The metal badges were synonymous with the Royal Show and the National Show before it, having been introduced at the first National Agricultural Society Show at the St. Kilda Road Showgrounds in November/December 1871. The new card system also applied to Life Members, judges and stewards.

During 1992 the Council decided to alter the date for the election of the President and Vice Presidents to February. This previously took place following the Annual General Meeting in April. The election of the Management Committee was moved to March and other committees to April - thus allowing a settling in period for the incumbents prior to the Royal Show in September.

Mr. Keith Buchanan, AM, was elected President of the Society at the February Council Meeting in 1993. He succeeded Mr. Robert Beggs, AM, who was President of the Society for the preceding three years, and did not seek re-election to the position.

Mr. Buchanan was appointed to Council in 1973. He has had a lifetime association with the dairy industry, stud breeding and the RASV. He has served actively on a number of Council committees and, at the time of his election to President, was chairman of the Finance, Membership and Dairy Cattle Committees, and a member of the Management, Farm Management and Pig Committees.

Also at the February meeting of Council Mr. Ian Bucknell, Mr. John Fox and Mr. Robert Potter, were elected Vice Presidents of the Society. It is Mr. Bucknell's fourth term in this office, and first terms for Mr. Fox and Mr. Potter.

At the same meeting, Mr. Frank Stephens and Mr. Adrian Gibson were congratulated on their elevation to Life Councillors in recognition of their 20 years service to the Council. New Councillors Mrs. Elizabeth Lithgow, and Mr. Bill Forrest were welcomed, to their first meeting following their election. Mrs. Lithgow, of 'Flowerfield' Coldstream, was elected to fill the casual vacancy created by the appointment of Mr. Stephens to Life Councillor. She owned and managed farming properties producing vealers, steers and commercial Limousin cattle, and had a keen interest and involvement in horse sports. Mrs. Lithgow had a long and close association with Royal Show having been a horse events competitor and judge, and was currently a steward in the Arts and Crafts Section. Her late husband, Mr. John Lithgow, was a Life Councillor and Chairman of the Horse Committee.

Mr. W. J. (Bill) Forrest, filled the vacancy arising from the resignation of Sir Ian McLennan in October 1992 after serving 15 years on the Council. Mr. Forrest was a partner in a Melbourne law firm and had a long standing interest in rural matters through his family and his previous work for the Society and animal breed societies.

On 16 February the Council held a function to honour Mr. John Gardiner and Mr. David Knox, both of whom have given 40 years of dedicated service to the Council and Society.

In January 1992 the Victorian Canine Association Inc., and the Australian National Kennel Council took over their own administration, but still remained at the Showgrounds. This move by the new Canine Association brought to a close 63 years of secretarial services provided through the RASV for the dog fancy. In 1930, after many turbulent years of faction fighting, between the then Canine Control Council and the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Association, it was agreed to form a new body which would assume complete control of canine affairs in Victoria, and after a general election held among fanciers, The Kennel Control Council of Victoria came into being and the secretarial services were provided by the RASV.

The Victorian Prime Lamb Committee ceased active operations in 1992, and in February 1993 the Beef Improvement Association of Australia Inc. moved to its new office. The Association of Stud Sheep Breeders of Australia, the Australian Rural Youth Inc., the Australasian Dexter Association Inc. all found secretarial services away from the RASV.

### **The 1993 Royal Summer Horse Show**

The first Royal Summer Horse Show, sponsored by The Weekly Times was conducted on the Royal Showgrounds on 6, 7 and 8 January 1993 and was a very successful event for the Society and its horse exhibitors.

An impressive 4,641 entries were received with records created in 11 sections including: Anglo-Arabians; Part-Arabian Ponies; Australian Ponies: Breeding Stock; Galloways; Hackney Horses and Ponies; Thoroughbreds; Warmbloods, and Welsh Ponies.

The attractive Main Arena layout, and the concentration on horse events only, contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere than that of the Royal Show in September.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the Royal Summer Horse Show was the very keen response from pony club members. These accounted for 1,171 entries in 19 special classes.

When the Royal Summer Horse Show entries were added to the Royal Melbourne Show entries for 1992, the overall total became a massive 39,003 entries, which exceeds the 1991 Show entry by 2,546.

### **Corporate sponsorship**

For many years businesses, corporations, rural organisations, exhibitors and other individuals had supplemented the Royal Show prize fund and commercial farming competitions with sponsorships. In recent times certain sections of the Royal Show, which in past may have been considered sacred to the Society, such as the Grand Parade, had been sponsored by prominent organisations and institutions to the mutual benefit of both parties, so it was not altogether surprising when the President, Mr. Keith Buchanan, announced on the 6 July 1993, a major sponsorship deal.

In making the announcement Mr. Buchanan said the RASV had granted St. George Bank naming rights in the major sponsorship agreement, which could enable the Society to present an even brighter and better Royal Melbourne Show this year. In welcoming the Bank's involvement, Mr. Buchanan said that the 1993 St. George Bank Royal Melbourne Show would mark a milestone in the Society's 135th year history -

*This is the first time a sponsor's name has been included in the title of the Show and I believe that this reflects the Bank's level of commitment both to our Royal Show and to the wider Victorian community.*

When made public the announcement was very well received by all sections of the community especially those in the rural industries.

- 2) A lease agreement has been reached with the VCA effective from 1 January 1992, in respect of rental for the Dog Complex and office and storage space.

*This had resulted in increased income from Space and Ground Rental which has been partly offset by a reduction in parking income.*

- 3) A change in the accounting treatment of the Catering Development Fund.
- 4) The splitting of the Royal Show horse events between the Royal Melbourne Show in September and the new Royal Summer Horse Show in January.
- 5) The discontinuing of accounting for non-cash sponsorship due to the difficulty of valuing such sponsorship. In 1991 non-cash sponsorship was \$348,493.
- 6) Some other changes in the manner in which we account RASV kitchen supplies and for telephone lines for computer services.

On 10 March 1993 the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria became incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991.

The Society was now known as 'The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Inc'.

This matter was covered in the Annual Report thus:

*The long awaited incorporation of the Society under the Associations Incorporation Act, which will limit the liability of members, took place on 10 March 1993. The Council Incorporation Sub-Committee is now working on the amalgamation of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Inc. and the RASV Limited and the consequent changes to the rules.*

With the continued economic downturn the Council had of necessity to restrict the amount of money it could use for improvements and maintenance on the Showgrounds, nevertheless, facilities were upgraded in the Hunter Stand with extra seating in the public viewing area and some older seats replaced in other areas.

As part of the ongoing lighting programme, the overall lighting in Centenary Hall was upgraded. The roof on the Creswick Stand was repitched, and a new area of lawn was laid near the Boral Woodchop Stadium, and security improved on major buildings.

The Showgrounds continued to be used all year round for a diverse range of activities including meetings, sales, annual shows, concerts, sporting activities and university examinations. It is now the permanent headquarters of 23 businesses and another 13 companies make use of storage facilities. In addition, many long term sales were conducted on the grounds last year. During 1992 there was an increase in the use of the facilities for meetings, private parties and football training. An increased marketing effort was started to promote the key building facilities for exhibitions, trade shows and other big functions at the Showgrounds. This marketing push emphasised the diversity of the facilities, its proximity to the city, and its availability all year round except for the Royal Show period.

The Computer Services Department oversaw the installation of a new financial management system for the Society. The information provided by this new system was more readily accessible and available in more useful formats than was possible with the previous system. The desktop publishing operation was growing and most of the Royal Show schedules, catalogues and entry forms were now produced in house. Breed societies' typesetting requirements provide additional work for the system. During 1992-93 the RASV provided secretarial services for 25 breed societies and associated rural organisations.

are fast growing and produce tender, low cholesterol meat. Mandalong Specials, an Australian developed breed, are a cross of Brahman, Shorthorn, Charolais, British White and Chianina breeds.

Spotted Mist cats made their first appearance at the 1993 Royal Melbourne Show. An Australian breed, it was developed in New South Wales in the mid 1970s and was a result of selective breeding between Burmese, Abyssinian and the humble pet tabby. The result is a marked and spotted cat with excellent temperament.

Three new stock competitions had been added to the Show, a handlers competition to help educate and encourage alpaca exhibitors, with points awarded for grooming, cleanliness and tidiness of stalls, and the exhibitor's attendance and communications skills. Also, in a move towards matching showing performance with paddock value, the White Suffolk breed of sheep has an Objective Measurement class to determine the shorn ram with the best fat to weight ratio. The final of the Victoria-wide Sheep Counting competition was decided on Farm Sunday on the Main Arena. The winner represented Australia in the World Championship in South Africa in March 1994. Heats of the competition were decided during the year in Swan Hill, Jerilderie, Gippsland, Hamilton and Wedderburn.

Feature breeds listed for the 1993 Royal Show were Dorsets in the sheep breeds, and Santa Gertrudis in the beef cattle. The Dorsets, including Poll Dorsets and Dorset Horns, were the Dalgety Farmers Feature Sheep Breed and the judging panel included Canadian, Mr. Dwayne Acres, from Ontario, judging the Poll Dorsets, and Mr. Doug Mitchell from Queensland, judging the Dorset Horn classes. Santa Gertrudis were the Elders Feature Beef Cattle Breed, judged by Mr. Roderick Murchison from Barraba in New South Wales, whose judging commissions have covered most Australian Royal Shows and Johannesburg in South Africa.

Special exhibits mounted for the Show included: The Weekly Times 'Our Agriculture on Show' feature in Centenary Hall, covering the story of wool from shearing to fabric; the VASA produce display 'From Paddock to Plate', also all the prizewinning exhibits of grain and fodder.

The Australian Dairy Corporation's Dairy Foods Pavilion; the Australian Meat and Livestock Meat Promotions Centre; Harvest Hall, featuring displays by apiculturists, rice growers and the Sunraysia Development Corporation, all staged excellent exhibitions and demonstrations. Added to all these the ever popular competitions and attractions such as the Stock and Land Farm Inventions Competition, the Victoria Police Exhibition, the Victorian Government Departments and Authorities displays, the Horticulture display, Arts and Crafts Competitive classes, the Animal Nursery (coming up to its 30th year), the Farriers' Forge and the educational Animal Expo; and it can be readily seen why the Royal Melbourne Show was recognised as such a favourite among the capital city shows for interest and knowledge.

Planning over the twelve months had also put in place many other features, some to be seen for the first time and others returned by special request. New exhibitions to be seen for the first time included the Pigs and People display. Designed to show the public, particularly the city dweller, what pigs and the pig industry is all about, it was aimed at involving children in the presentations, giving them the chance to pat and even wash a piglet. A large exhibition of alternative farming methods, animals and food, from ostriches to aquaculture, title 'Farming - The Future' was set up in the new Rural Pavilion, previously the Pig Pavilion. The area behind the Administration Building carried a colourful collection of street stalls selling everything from astrology to kitchen knives and jewellery, a true recreation of the historical Petticoat Lane.

An old favourite to return were the wool fashion parades. Sponsored by Elders, and supported by Channel Ten Television, the Elders Wool Fashions were appreciated and drew full houses in Centre Point. The garments on parade, commissioned by Elders Limited for their

At the time of this announcement it was advised that the admission prices for the 1993 Show would remain unchanged from those of 1991 - thus the Society considered it was doing its part in keeping down prices in the continuing depressed economic conditions.

At the July meeting of Council Mr. J. M. Burston was appointed a Life Councillor of the Society in recognition of his 20 years service to the Council. Mr. B. M. Crotty of Moorooduc was appointed to Council at the same time to fill the casual vacancy arising from Mr. Burston's appointment as a Life Councillor. Mr. Crotty, an enthusiastic promoter of stud cattle showing, was originally a breeder of Beef Shorthorns but now breeds Poll Shorthorns. He had been an exhibitor at the Royal Melbourne Show for 18 years and was involved with the Poll Shorthorn Society. He was Managing Director of a company which works with the direct mail and advertising industry.

The attitude of members of Council and staff leading up to the 1993 Royal Show was one of confidence and optimism, the injection of the big St. George Bank sponsorship seeming to add an extra dimension to the efforts of the Show preparations.

In his message to members, President Keith Buchanan AM, said:

The St. George Bank will be making it possible for our patrons to see some new entertainment which will be enjoyed by both young and old alike.

*The St. George Bank's involvement gives the Society great assistance with its advertising and publicity programme, enabling more people to bear about the Show. Also, St. George has added to the free entertainment by supplying its mascot, Happy Dragon, the costume characters from Australia's Wonderland, and the Wonderland Dixieland Jazz Band. The Society is also fortunate in gaining through the St. George Bank, the services of Julie Anthony AM., OBE, as official ambassador for the Show. Miss Anthony will be appearing in all Show advertisements on television, radio and print as well as making appearances at the Show.*

There was strong support in entries for those sections judged pre-show such as the Royal Melbourne Wine Show, the Royal Melbourne Dairy Show and the Grains Competition.

The strong move towards premium bottled wines by the Australian wine industry resulted in a record number of exhibitors in the 1993 Royal Melbourne Championship Wine Show with 262 wine companies exhibiting 2,455 individual wines. American judge, Mr. Joel Butler, Master of Wine, joined the Australian judging panel this year. He was the only American resident to pass the rigorous Master of Wine examination.

A record 634 entries were received for the 1993 Royal Melbourne Dairy Show. (It was formerly known as the Dairy Produce Section of the Royal Melbourne Show and incorporated the National Cheese Show). This entry exceeded the Society's expectations and made it the largest show of its kind in Australia. The range of exhibits was expanded this year and for the first time, classes for chocolate manufacturers were included in this Section.

The 1993 Royal Melbourne Show Grains Competition including classes for varieties of wheat, oats, barley, oilseeds and grain legumes, was again very well supported. The entries for this Section were judged in February and March and awards were presented at a special function at the Grain Academy, Department of Agriculture, Werribee Research Station on 26 August 1993.

There seemed to be no end to new breeds of animals appearing in the Royal Melbourne Show, and this year a further two breeds of beef cattle made their first showing. The Chiangus, and Mandalong Specials. The Chiangus, a cross between the Chianina and Angus breeds, are black and have exceptional size and muscling, and according to their breeders,

An innovation for the 1993 Royal Show was a different theme for each day designed to appeal to a slightly different audience or age grouping, from senior citizens down to school children. The concept was a good one and was considered favourably for future events.

Leading up to September and the Show, Melbourne's weather in late August could only be described as ideal early Spring weather. And then it happened!! A low pressure rain band from the east appeared to catch everybody by surprise, including the Weather Bureau, and within the first three days of September the average rainfall for the month had been dumped on the State. Heavy falls were recorded Statewide and particularly in parts of the metropolitan area. Unfortunately local flooding occurred in the Maribyrnong River catchment and quickly covered the low lying areas including the Flemington Racecourse where parked floats, caravans and heavy vehicles had to be quickly shifted to higher ground. Much of the public car parking area at the Racecourse was under water and this caused grave concern as it was the main car parking facility available to Show patrons.

With less than a week to the opening of the Show it was an anxious time for all concerned with the preparations. However, the weather changed slightly from heavy rain to showers and much of the surface water drained away leaving the car park area in a soft and muddy state.

A number of roads leading to the metropolitan area were flood affected and this caused problems for some of the stock exhibitors in getting their exhibits to the Show. Fortunately, within the Showgrounds, preparations were able to proceed without any undue problems, and all was in readiness for the opening day programme.

The 1993 St. George Bank Royal Melbourne Show commenced on Thursday 16 September and ran through to Saturday 25 September, and considering the problems experienced with floods, rain and other matters, a very commendable overall total attendance of 622,461 patrons was recorded, and competitors supported the Show with an outstanding total of 35,625 competitive entries.

In the early days of the Show, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, attendances were up to expectation due to the fine weather. But on Sunday 19 September, heavy rain, not only washed out the attendance but made it very difficult to conduct the big Main Arena programme.

Over recent years the first Sunday of the Show had built up a big following for the Main Arena activities of Farm Sunday where the emphasis focused on 'hands on' contact, and when children and adults had a chance to get close to the animals, farm displays, and farm machinery.

The 135th Royal Melbourne Show was officially opened on Saturday 18 September by His Excellency the Honourable Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria. In his message to members His Excellency made these points:

*The Show is one of the major events in the life of Victoria. For many it marks the beginning of Spring. The mixing and meeting between metropolitan and regional Victorians which occurs during Show time is good for all. It leads to an awareness of each other's lives, work, aspirations and problems. The Show is a great place to attend. No atmosphere is quite like it. The opportunity to see and learn about, and even touch, farm animals and other products or rural industry is unique.*

*Those from Melbourne and those from the country share enjoyment of the parades, competitions and ceremonies and the fascination of the fairground. I take this occasion to extend to interstate and overseas visitors a warm welcome from the Victorian community.*

inaugural Elders Fashion Award of Excellence, gave the patrons a first hand view of Australian designed garments made from Australian wool.

Additional free entertainment included the Blue Light Disco supervised by the Victoria Police in the Woodfull Pavilion, conducted nightly for teenagers. Robinson's International Circus, situated in the eastern end of the Showgrounds, gave free half-hourly sessions, and featured a balancing act from New Zealand, an Irish aerialist, a Czech juggler, and an aerial iron-jaw act from the United States, thus truly earning the 'International' tag, offering a good balance of entertainment for all ages.

Across from the circus on the Epsom Road boundary, could be found Brophy's Original Old-time Tent Show, reviving Sideshow Alley of yesteryear. Fred Brophy, a fourth generation showman and spruiker, brought back some of the old traditional showground tent show atmosphere including the original Australian Mirror Maze, the Girl in the Goldfish Bowl, and a good old fashioned Freak Show.

Besides the Dugdale Theatre, an additional attraction was available for the younger children with the Happy Dragon Land theatre and playground situated on the Geoffrey Howell Lawn (the site once occupied by the creche and now defunct Skene Street) featuring Happy Dragon, St. George Bank's mascot and Australia's Wonderland characters.

Two more outstanding attractions were the Grand Concert Street Organ 'Australia Fair' and John Brady, chainsaw sculptor. Situated in Lennon Avenue opposite Harvest Hall, the Grand Concert Street Organ was an outstanding exhibition. The first of its kind to be built especially for the Australian market, 'Australia Fair' follows in the tradition of the great European street and concert organs. It is equivalent of a 20 piece band and can play music over a range from classical to rock.

One of the best attractions of the Show appeared on the Woodchop Lawn. John Brady, chainsaw sculptor, could turn a tree into a life-sized sculpture. Sponsored by Stihl Chainsaws this man was a true artist in wood.

With the now well established Children Working with Wood, the Edwards Family bush skills, and the Packhorse demonstrations, added to the ever popular woodchops, the Epsom Road area of the Showgrounds was regaining a popularity not experienced since it was 'sideshow alley'.

As always, the Main Arena Programme received special attention. Last year for the first time, the horse competition was split into two sections: Horses in Action at the September Royal Show, incorporating all ridden classes and the Clydesdale judging, and the Royal Summer Horse Show in January for led breed classes. This year that format was continued.

The 'backbone' of the Main Arena events - the Rural Finance Corporation Grand Parades, were well supported in the overall programme with a number of good attractions including the Main Arena regulars such as the Spectacular Fireworks; the Bridgestone Holden Precision Driving Team; T.A.B. Harness Racing; Massed Highland Bands and Marching Girls; the Pal Superdogs, and the Shetland Grand National Steeple. Added to this programme were some new and return acts such as the new Flying Gollans, the Flying Lotahs, Aerochute, the Telecom Parachute Display and many other events. With all of these, the Main Arena Programme provided entertainment for all age groups. To mark the 'Year of Indigenous People' the Society engaged award winning Aboriginal rock group Yothu Yindi, to appear in concert on the Main Arena on the evening of Thursday 23 September (Show Day).

Besides the now established Farm Sunday occupation of the Main Arena, the Society decided to further 'free up' the Main Arena on Show Day with the introduction of two and half hours of farm fun, bringing to the public activities such as horse demonstrations, farriering, billy boiling, and a concentration of 1,500 sheep on the two hectare arena area.

For the early days of the new week, Monday to Wednesday inclusive, the Weather Bureau issued a bleak forecast of wet and miserable days. Fortunately the forecast was wide of the mark, and although Monday and Tuesday were subject to an occasional shower, Wednesday turned out to be quite a good day and drew a good attendance. Thursday, 23 September (Show Day) was also a good day and 109,435 patrons attended the day and night programmes.

Despite the adverse weather conditions during the Show, (it ended up the wettest September month since 1916) especially on the Sunday and the tremendous counter-attraction of the finals series of the football - with the grand final being telecast live on the last Saturday of the Show - the general consensus was that the 1993 St. George Bank Royal Melbourne Show was a good Show, with an even balance of interest and education for those seeking rural knowledge, and an excellent variety of free entertainment and fun of the fair for those seeking this type of enjoyment.

### **Young bull and herdsman**

During the 1993 Royal Melbourne Show, Society president, Mr. Keith Buchanan AM, and Past President and Life Councillor, Mr. John H. H. Sleight AM, made an appeal to all members and friends of the RASV to support restoration work to save the Young Bull and Herdsman marble statue. This life-sized statue, situated at the Railway entrance to the Showgrounds is one of Victoria's most important and most beautiful works of art in the medium. Sculptured by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm (1834-1890), the five tonne statue was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887.

In 1888 it was purchased at the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne for 1,000 pounds (£1,000). In 1941 it was transferred from the National Gallery to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria on permanent loan. In the 52 years in situ at the Royal Showgrounds this valuable statue was now in serious structural decline, and the RASV had received expert advice that unless it underwent major repairs to correct damage and deterioration, it could ultimately be ruined.

The RASV allocated \$15,000 to cover the monument with a steel and glass canopy to halt the downward weathering effect, but around \$45,000 was needed to fund a 12 week project to restore the statue completely.

### **Plan to dump Show Day holiday**

In October 1992 the Kennett Coalition Government was swept to power in Victoria with a record majority, after a decade of the Cain/Kirner Labor Government. Written into the new Government's policy was a desire to examine the scale of public holidays gazetted in the State and Federal awards. Special public holidays to come under review were, Labour Day, Easter Saturday, Easter Tuesday, Queen's Birthday and Show Day.

Just prior to the 1993 Royal Show, the Government saw fit to draw attention to its policy on public holidays, and through Premier Kennett and Industry Services Minister Pescott 'flagged' the intention to make the 1993 Show Day holiday the last one.

The Society's Executive Director, Mr. R. E. Carr, issued a news release urging the Premier to reconsider his plan to drop the Show Day holiday from future gazetted lists. Mr. Carr said:

*The Premier Jeff Kennett's plan to axe the Show Day holiday appears to be based on incorrect and incomplete information. Since the change to a four term school year in 1987, the average Show Day attendance has been 107,413 compared with an average 66,066 on other days. More than 40,000 people could be deprived of the opportunity to attend the Show due to Mr. Kennett's action.*

*Furthermore, the RASV which is a non-profit organisation devoted to the promotion of rural industries, would be deprived of an estimated \$410,000 in revenue.*

Mr. Carr also reminded Mr. Kennett that the Show Day holiday, which was originally instituted in 1885, was not, as the Premier claimed, to allow school children to attend the Show, but to compensate the Royal Agricultural Society for not increasing admission charges. The other factor behind the granting of the holiday was the desire of the Government to promote Victoria's great rural industries by encouraging city people to visit the Show. Mr. Carr continued:

*Ironically, 1993 is the third consecutive year in which the Show admission prices have been held at the same level in recognition of the severe economic recession.*

*It is most unfortunate that the Premier should reward the Society, which receives no Government funding, by axing the foundation of the Show - the Show Day holiday.*

It was further pointed out that the Royal Melbourne Show was one of Victoria's major tourist attractions, with more than 97,000 country visitors, 16,000 interstate and 7,000 overseas visitors each year. It forms part of one of the world's great tourism packages - the Show Day Race Meeting at Caulfield with two Group 1 events, the Royal Show, and the AFL Grand Final. This tourism package is in real threat from the plan to axe the Show Day holiday; the public holiday is its cornerstone, Mr. Carr said.

Notwithstanding all the pleas for the Show Day holiday to stay, the die had obviously been cast according to the media as witnessed by this article published in the Melbourne Herald Sun on Thursday 23 September 1993 (Show Day holiday):

*'Holiday will get the axe.... When the gates of the Showgrounds close at 10 o'clock tonight, one of Victoria's oldest traditions will end. For the past 108 years, country and city have observed the Show Day public holiday.*

*Designed to promote better understanding between rural and suburban folk, the holiday will be scrapped as part of State Government efforts to bring Victoria into line with our trading partners.*

*Although no official announcement has been made, Government sources confirmed the holiday was doomed'.*

The government wasted no time in confirming this for in the same newspaper on 13 October this announcement was made:

*Holidays axed for 'new image'.... Three public holidays will be axed as part of a government drive to increase Victoria's efficiency and competitiveness.*

*The Show Day, Easter Tuesday and Easter Saturday holidays will be scrapped in a move the Government claims will help rid the country of its reputation as the 'land of the long weekend'.*

*In a comprehensive overhaul of Victoria's holiday calendar, the Government will soon introduce legislation to remove Show Day, Easter Tuesday and Easter Saturday from all State and many Federal Awards.*

A further matter concerning the Government and the RASV occurred towards the end of September when the Government sacked the Melbourne City Council and redrew council boundaries. The Royal Showgrounds now shares boundaries with the Melbourne City Council and the Essendon City Council. The area of the grounds along Epsom Road taking

homes evacuated and damaged, Baddaginnie, had to evacuate 27 people. Meanwhile at Wangaratta, the junction of the Ovens and King Rivers, 200 people had to be evacuated from 120 homes, stock losses were heavy, and 25,000 fingerling trout were lost.

In the east of the State, Sale was isolated by the flooding Thomson, Latrobe and Macalister rivers. The Princes Highway was closed for a short time and the South Gippsland Highway was also cut. Having had reasonable warning the flood damage around Sale was minimal.

By this time the Goulburn River was raging towards Nagambie and Shepparton. Heavy damage was experienced by owners of caravans at Nagambie, but Shepparton was to bear most of the devastation. The city was isolated except for one main road for a week, 15 homes, 16 shops and 16 caravans were affected in the city, but in the shires of Rodney, Cobram, Tungamah, Numurkah, Nathalia, Deakin and Rochester, 780 houses, 800 dairy farms and stock were badly affected. Stock losses amounted to 47 beef and 36 dairy cattle, 1,162 sheep and 28 pigs. These losses were bad enough but the lasting damage to orchards was yet to be assessed, and was estimated to run into millions of dollars.

As the floods moved west towards Echuca, the locals and emergency services had bought sufficient time to raise the levee banks and put in place sand bags so as to prevent what could have been a real disaster. Within the month of September and into early October, all of the main highways throughout the State were at one time closed. From the Princes and South Gippsland Highways in the east, to the Hume, Murray Valley, Goulburn Valley, Midland and Northern Highways in the rest of the State, and almost every river from the Tanjil and Mitchell in the east to the Avoca and Loddon in the west carried flood waters over this short period of time. So much falls into insignificance when compared with the devastation, hardship, loss and damage suffered by those so badly affected by the floods of 1993.

In this context if one were to superimpose the ills of the Society over those of the State at this time, the Society's problems would be indeed minute. An analysis of the 1993 St. George Bank Royal Melbourne Show surely indicated that the 'mix' was right. The blend of education, competition, entertainment and amusements were well received, as were most charges and concessions.

Throughout the annals of this Society the occasion has always produced a positive result when the situation arose, it now behove those guiding the fortunes of the Society to once again respond in a positive manner.

### **Director resigns - changes in Council**

On 10 November 1993 the President, Mr. Keith Buchanan, accepted the resignation of the Director, Mr. R. E. Carr, in accordance with the terms of his employment. At the same time a representative Select Committee was appointed to choose a replacement, and Mr. John Clifford, Corporate Services Manager, was appointed Acting Director until the new appointment was made.

During the year several changes were made in Council, with Councillors J. K. Buchanan, W. D. Crowley, J. M. Burston and A. Gibson being appointed Honorary Life Councillors. The Hon. Sir William McDonald, Kt. resigned as a Trustee of the Society and was appointed an Honorary Life Councillor. The Hon. Tom Austin filled the vacancy on the Trustees. The Hon. Bill McGrath, MLA also joined the Council in his capacity as current Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Mr. Barrie Crotty and Tony St. Clair, were appointed to fill two casual vacancies in the Council during the year.

in the Showgrounds Railway Station, the Dog Show Complex and the Woodfull Pavilion fall within the boundary of the Melbourne City Council, with the remainder of the grounds in the Essendon City Council.

In the new revamp the whole Showgrounds area has been added to the Melbourne City Council along with other key assets such as Flemington Racecourse, the National Tennis Centre, the Royal Exhibition Building and the city's knowledge, medical, and research precincts in Carlton and Parkville and the old council's parks and gardens.

Although it was early days, the general feeling was one of cautious approval of the Government's action concerning the change of council boundaries, with the vision and hope that the continuous restrictions imposed on RASV activities by the Essendon City Council over so many years may now be relaxed and a new era commenced in planning the future uses for the Society's Showgrounds. Following yet another unfortunate financial result from the 1993 Royal Melbourne Show, the Council found itself once more facing further challenges.

The weather cycle over the past three years caused great concern and without doubt had been one of the main reasons in lost attendances. In this context consideration was also given to the continuing deep economic recession - the State was still burdened with 11 per cent unemployment and prospects in all industries show little sign of improvement. The only consolation at this time was that conditions could only improve.

Further, there was no denying the fact that the AFL finals series also had a devastating effect on the second week attendance of the Show, and had it not been for the good day and excellent attendance of 109,435 on the Show Day holiday, the financial result would have been really bad.

## **Floods disrupt the state**

As already recorded, heavy rain saturated the State in the early days of September. In some catchment areas recordings reached as high as 275 millimetres in 24 hours with the result that almost every river in the State was carrying huge volumes of water and it was only a matter of time before they were incapable of holding the water within their banks.

To give some idea of the widespread effect of the heavy rains, on 10 September flood warnings were issued for the following rivers - Yarra, Goulburn, Upper Murray, Broken, King, Avoca, Loddon, Acheron and Maribyrnong. On 16 September, major flood warnings were issued for the Thomson, Macalister, Avon, Maribyrnong, Traralgon Creek, Murray, Goulburn, Werribee, Latrobe and Acheron. A day later, 17 September, a further number of rivers and creeks were added to the list including the Campaspe, the Ovens, lower reaches of the King, the Barwon, Wonangatta, and Mitchell in East Gippsland. (The list resembled an encyclopaedia reference of 'Waterways of Victoria').

Benalla was the first town to be affected. The Broken River could not be contained despite the superhuman effort to do so by all the emergency services and the townspeople. The wall of water came down so quickly that there was little chance to avoid serious damage and loss of stock. The main street became a waterway with businesses suffering losses to the value of millions of dollars. Two thousand homes were flooded, and 1,000 people had to be evacuated. Stock losses included 4,200 sheep, 210 beef cattle, eight dairy cattle, and 200 head of poultry. The Broken River continued its destruction over the low lying country towards Dookie causing further loss of stock.

Smaller towns such as Violet Town, Baddaginnie and Euroa all had problems. At Violet Town, 50 houses were damaged, the railway line was flooded and the town suffered an estimated \$2 million damage to houses and stock. Euroa, situated on Seven Creeks, had 60

- 3) Unless the RASV reclaimed some of its management and organisational rights over the Show it was likely that the positioning of the Show would be further eroded to the detriment to all.
- 4) The public was largely unaware of the free activities of the Show.
- 5) There is a genuine interest on the part of the public to learn more about agriculture and animals at the Show.
- 6) There is a strong perception that the Show is expensive and does not represent value for money.
- 7) Current communications strategies are not working.
- 8) Food available at the Show was not satisfactory.
- 9) The Show is primarily an event for children.
- 10) The Show does not change from day to day or year to year.
- 11) It was difficult to obtain information about the Show.
- 12) It was difficult to find your way around the Show.

The Society was quick to counter a number of the 'alleged deficiencies' for the 1994 Royal Melbourne Show. A new advertising agency was appointed, George Patterson/Bates, and a public relations consultancy, PR Works, retained to assist with the promotion and publicity programme. The communications campaign focused on the Show's core values, with an emphasis on animals and agriculture. These were the elements that made the Show unique and gave it a competitive edge over other major Melbourne events. The streets and footpaths were cleared of commercial vans, opening them up for patrons to walk more freely around the grounds. More seating and open space was provided for showgoers to rest and relax, and a new directional signage programme was started whilst at the same time, the Showgrounds map was revamped and simplified.

It was considered that these two things would make it much easier for people to find their way around the 27 hectares of the Showgrounds. But, a third new component further assisted visitors at the 1994 Royal Show. The Society introduced Royal Show Ambassadors, distinctly dressed and trained to assist the showgoing public. They were easily identified and helped people with their enquiries.

### **New governance for Society**

At the June 1994 Council meeting an important change was made to the system of governance of the Society, on the receipt of a report commissioned from Mr. David Crawford, containing recommendations on restructuring the Society. The meeting approved the formation of a Board of ten Directors of the RASV Limited reporting to the full Council four times a year.

The Board comprised the President, J. Keith Buchanan (Chairman); Vice Presidents, Messrs. Ian Bucknall, John Fox and Robert Potter; Life Councillor Mike Burston; Councillor Bill Forrest; Chief Executive, Mr. Peter Payne, and three members to be appointed from outside the existing RASV Council.

The Chief Executive, as a Board member, was responsible for implementing the policy set and agreed to, by the Board. Sub-committees of the Society Councillors were appointed to organise special projects and individual agricultural activities, including the competitive sections at the Royal Melbourne Show. The President Mr. Buchanan, had this to say about the restructure:

The annual elections resulted in the President, Mr. Buchanan being re-elected along with Vice Presidents, Mr. Ian Bucknall, Mr. John Fox and Mr. Bob Potter. Mr. Bill Forrest was elected to the management committee and also to the position of a Director of RASV Limited. The resignation of Mr. Ian Starritt as a Director of RASV Limited was accepted.

On 6 February, 1994 members of the Council were saddened by the sudden death of Mr. John Sleigh, a Past President and Honorary Life Councillor, also that of Honorary Life Councillor Mr. R. A. Hunter.

During November 1993 the Council made a far-reaching decision in commissioning a Market Research Survey by the PGI Group Pty Ltd. to undertake both qualitative and quantitative market research to help determine what actions needed to be taken to halt and reverse recent attendance trends at the Royal Melbourne Show. The Society provided 15 objectives to be studied by the consultants with results returnable in March 1994. Also at this time the Society engaged Mr. David Crawford of KPMG Peat Marwick to assist in some restructuring of the organisation.

### **New Chief Executive - Royal Show market research**

Mr. Peter Payne, FCA, was appointed Chief Executive of the Society on 9 May 1994. Mr. Payne 44, recently returned to Australia after some years in the United Kingdom with the Fosters Brewing Group. While overseas he was responsible for the development of strategy and marketing of the Fosters' brand in continental Europe where it has been launched in more than 15 countries, including Germany - the home of beer.

Born in New York, USA and brought up in England, Mr. Payne qualified as an accountant with KPMG Peat Marwick before moving to Australia in 1974. In the mid 1970s he worked with the impresario Michael Edgley, and travelled extensively across Australia. He joined Henry Jones IXL in 1979 in a marketing role and after the formation of Elders IXL he ran the national travel division, Elders Travel.

In 1985 he moved into the brewing arm of the company, Carlton and United Breweries and worked extensively on the internationalisation of the Fosters brand, through Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom. When announcing the appointment, the President, Mr. Buchanan, said:

*Peter Payne's considerable commercial and marketing experience will be invaluable in his task of implementing changes arising from our recent market research survey and in planning the future of the Society into the 21st Century.*

The PGI Group Pty Ltd. wasted no time in undertaking the market research to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of the public towards the Royal Melbourne Show. In January/February 1994 an extensive survey was conducted of people who regularly attend the Show, and those who do not. And the results gave the Society some very important information forming the basis for a plan to greatly improve the Show. It was proposed to make the necessary changes over about a three year period, starting with the 1994 Royal Show. In brief, results of the market research study indicated there was a perception that:

- 1) The Show was in danger of losing its focus and its competitive edge over other major Melbourne events.
- 2) Too much commercialism was seen as a major factor that was endangering the Show.



*The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited - Board of Directors as at 27/2/1997*

*Back row, left to right: J.H. (Jack) Seymour, M.J. (Mike) Burston, W.J. (Bill) Forrest - Vice President, E.M.B. (Sue) Nattrass, P.M. (Peter) Payne.*

*Front Row: C.J. (John) Fox - Vice President, R. (Bob) Potter - Vice President, J.K. (Keith) Buchanan - President, I.I. (Ian) Bucknall.*

Kath Metherall, (twice winner); Helen Heagney, (four times winner); and Vickie Lawrie, who won the event five times. In addition to the trophy, a diamond and gold stock-pin was created by the jewellery firm of Bevilles, for the winner of this 60th Garryowen event.

Still more new breeds of animals were displayed at this Show with Droughtmaster and British White beef cattle being on show for the first time; and Rag Doll cats also made their debut at this Show.

For the first time, the famous Carlton and United Breweries' Sydney and Melbourne Clydesdale horse teams were on display in the Main Arena. The Sydney team of eight horses accompanied the Melbourne team of six in all of the Grand Parades, and the New South Wales visitors displayed their manoeuvring skills in special exhibitions in the Main Arena.

As part of the plans to clear the footpaths and roadways during the Show, showbag selling points were concentrated into two main areas - The Hall of Manufactures, and an area in Gibb Street, at the Epsom Road end of the amusements area. Two small outlets continued in Plummer Avenue, opposite the Chirnside Stand, and specialty bags were still available from vendor's stands around the grounds. With the concentration of showbags confined to the eastern area of the Showgrounds, the function of the Hall of Commerce underwent a complete change. Horticulture displays occupied part of the Hall of Commerce in the biggest exhibit since the 1970s thus representing a move to once again make horticulture a major component of the Show. Centre Point in Degraeves Street was converted into a major Arts and Crafts display area, housing the Schools, Restricted and Photography classes.

*I believe the new system of management is a giant first stride in the development of a modern efficient organisation, which will be further developed to meet the challenges facing the Society.*

*It is our ambition that the RASV will move into the next century as a vibrant and prominent organisation promoting agriculture, in Victoria in particular, and in Australia as a whole. And I am delighted that the Council has voted unanimously to support this first important step.*

Under the new system, the Board of Directors of RASV Limited were responsible to the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, which in turn, was elected by the members of the Society.

## **Turnaround in finances**

The Chief Executive, Mr. Peter Payne, announced at a news conference at the Showgrounds on July 4, 1994 that the Society had recorded a surplus of \$229,637 for the financial year ended 31 March 1994. He said the Society had achieved a turnaround of almost \$1.4 million since December 1991 when it recorded a deficit of \$1.165 million. He attributed much of the substantial improvements to finances to the greatly improved budgeting and cost control, and the increasing attraction of the Royal Melbourne Show as a corporate sponsorship vehicle.

He added that ensuring the Society remained profitable and financially viable was a vital first phase of a long term strategic plan that would position the Society for the 21st Century, develop the Showgrounds, and maintain the Royal Melbourne Show as Victoria's leading public event - an event with an annual economic impact on the State of some \$104 million (PGI research March 1994).

It was determined that the forthcoming Show would be the start of a three year programme set to dramatically improve the public's enjoyment of this great annual event, and put the focus back on agriculture and animals. A good start was made with pre-show judging of wines and dairy products.

A record 294 wine producers - more than one third of which were Victorian wineries - entered a total 2,560 exhibits, making the 1994 Royal Melbourne Wine Show the most prestigious in Australia. Also, the Royal Melbourne Dairy Show continued to grow. A record 808 entries were received covering categories ranging from butter and dried milk powder to cheesecakes and chocolates, placing this event also as the largest of its kind in Australia.

Three special anniversaries were celebrated at the 1994 Royal Melbourne Show. The Country Women's Association celebrated 60 years of catering at the Show. It was back in 1934 that the State Council of the CWA decided that the Royal Show needed a place for people to sit down and have a cup of tea. The Society supplied an area of ground and made a grant of £250 (\$500), to build a facility. Now sixty years on, this service is still as popular as ever.

In 1964 the Society introduced the Animal Nursery to Victorian Show patrons and over the years this wonderful exhibit has maintained its popularity as one of the Show's enduring attractions. Now sponsored by the National Australia Bank, this popular exhibit continues to bring joy and education to an estimated 400,000 patrons, young and old each year. The format changes only slightly from year to year and for 1994 facilities were available for young children to nurse a selection of baby animals.

This Show also marked the Diamond Jubilee for the Garryowen Equestrienne Trophy. To mark this special occasion the Society was fortunate in obtaining the services of five of Australia's top horsewomen who were also past winners of this trophy, to form the judging panel this year. They were; June Bourke, (twice winner); Lynette Biesbroek, (twice winner);

The ever popular Farm Sunday programme further embraced attractions in the Main Arena, such as the Victorian Stock Agents Young Auctioneer Competition, and the state final of the Dalgety Stock and Land Sheep Counting Competition.

Entries for the 1994 Royal Melbourne Show numbered 32,842 and when the entries for the Royal Summer Horse Show (5,355) were added, a total of 38,197 entries was realised. Records were established in the classes for Alpacas; Bacon Pig carcasses; Black Simmental, Maine Anjou, Red Angus, Black Welsh and Tarentaise beef cattle; Horses in Action, and Equitation in the horses; White Suffolk sheep; and the Australian Beer awards.

In the Royal Summer Horse Show record entries were received for Arabian Ponies; Australian Saddle Ponies; Breeding Stock (over 15 hands); Competition Horses; Miniature Ponies; Pony club events; Shetland; Standard Breeds; Thoroughbreds; and Warmbloods.

In advance of the Royal Show a mob of more than 1,000 sheep were mustered through the Central Business District of the city in a memorable launch to the Show, attracting large crowds and good publicity

The 1994 Royal Melbourne Show was conducted from 15 - 25 September attracting some 660,063 people over the 11 day period. This was an increase of five per cent over 1993 - the highest attendance since 1990, despite the loss of the Show Day Holiday. The Official Opening was conducted by the Society's Patron, and Victoria's Governor, His Excellency The Honourable Richard E. McGarvie, QC, AC, accompanied by Mrs. McGarvie, on Saturday 17 September at 2.30pm.

The increased emphasis on animals and basic rural issues was considered a clear success and it was these factors that set the Royal Show apart from other forms of entertainment. Displays and demonstrations such as the Pigs and People; Farm Animal Expo; the Animal Nursery; Farming the Future; Farriers' Forge, and primary industry displays all attracted big audiences, as did the stock displays in the pavilions. And once again, the Woodchop events proved most popular with full-house attendances for just about every event.

The Dugdale Theatre was used to promote Aboriginal culture with two Aboriginal communities involved - The Western Walpiri tribe, and the Victorian Koorie community. They entertained with tribal stories, songs, dances and paintings.

The ever popular Rural Finance Corporation Grand Parades drew big crowds to the Main Arena on the eight occasions that they were conducted, and the evergreen Bridgestone Holden Precision Driving team and the Flying Gollans trick riding displays continued to hold big audiences. Israeli tent-peggers made their debut in a match with our own team, and also contested the Australian Gold Cup Competition. An addition to the arena programme this year was the Komatsu Monster, a fire-breathing dragon, especially created for the 1994 Royal Show. This attraction found a keen following with the younger show patrons.

Other new attractions and innovations included Seniors Day on the opening day; the AMP Lawn programme and the World Vision Midnight Revue; the Streets stage on the Woodchop Lawn with the Paddle Pop Lion Show for children. The St. George Bank programme always drew big crowds and in the present setting - on the Geoffrey Howell Lawn - filled a big need in a relaxing situation.

All hall displays and pavilion demonstrations were well received with added popularity of stock pavilions and other displays of domestic animals such as dogs and cats, birds and poultry. Another recent competition, the Australian Beer Awards was conducted in conjunction with the University of Ballarat and attracted an entry of 196 exhibits.



*Young Bull and Herdsman*

A major change noted was the Plummer Avenue atrium. This covered area between the Hall of Commerce and the Schweppes Stand further added to more comfort and covered space on the grounds. The shelter housed tables and chairs where patrons sat and relaxed, dined alfresco or, just through the doors inside the Hall of Commerce, additional tables and seating were available for those who preferred sitdown Italian, Asian or good old Aussie roast meals with salads and coffee.

Centenary Hall again housed The Weekly Times 'Our Agriculture on Show' display with exhibits ranging from the wool display - from the sheep's back to the finished product; the Honey Corporation of Australia Exhibits; shearing competitions; wool fashion parades; prize winning fleeces; Royal Show farm produce awards; and the Department of Agriculture main display.

The Meat Promotions Centre adopted the theme - Meat, Great Meal Ideas, and again, displayed prize winning carcasses while the Dairy Foods Pavilion had samples and selling points for all dairy products besides displaying award winning exhibits in the National Dairy Show. Harvest Hall exhibitors demonstrated how the raw farm produce ended up as food on the plate.

Feature breeds were highlighted in the cattle and sheep areas. Herefords were the Elders Feature Beef Breed, and the inaugural VACC Dairy Cattle breed was the Holstein. In the sheep section, two breeds shared the Dalgety Farmers Feature Breed. Grouped together as the 'Lustre Wools' the English Leicester and Lincolns were the chosen breeds in both sheep and fleece sections.

- 3) The RASV Limited would change its name to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited, and then seek a licence under the Corporations Law to omit the word 'Limited' from its name.

When all this had been done, membership would be of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited, ACN 006 728 785. This company would be governed by its Articles of Association, in the form of the Society's current rules and would be known as 'The Society'. It would continue to have its business and affairs managed as they were now, through the Council and the Board of Directors.

The income of the Society and RASV Limited was exempt from income tax. No capital gains tax was payable as a consequence of merging the two bodies and no stamp duty was payable on the transfer of the Society's Crown Grant land to RASV Limited; nor would stamp duty be payable on the transfer of the Society's remaining assets to RASV Limited.

Accounting and legal fees and disbursements payable in connection with the proposals were not significant, and would be offset by savings in administration and other expenses following the merger. It now remained for the Society to put into train a special general meeting for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, passing two resolutions in order to bring the merger to fruition:

- 1) The Execution of the Deed of Assignment, and,
- 2) The Voluntary Winding up.

The President expressed the Society's thanks to the Hon. Bill McGrath MLA, Minister of Agriculture, for his part in having the Showgrounds Act 1931 amended. This would eventually permit the Society much greater flexibility in its use of the area. It was further advised that the Showgrounds was now the direct responsibility of the Planning Minister, the Hon. Robert Maclellan, in matters dealing with development proposals for the site.

The Premier's request for the Society to develop a five year business plan had been considerably progressed, and assistance and encouragement had been received from a number of people, in particular Ministers and Government representatives.

In November 1994 the Board approved important changes to the structure of the Society's internal organisation. These changes focused on three main areas of responsibility:

- 1) Business Development, embracing:
  - a) Sales and Commercial Development
  - b) Marketing
  - c) Strategy
    - a) The Group Manager Sales and Commercial Development (Mr. Tim Morgan) with his team would be responsible for concentrating on the vital task of increasing overall revenue and particularly non-Royal Show income. He would be responsible for developing strategies to utilise the Showgrounds more fully year round, and managing the Customer Service Programme and Catering operations.
    - b) A new role - Group Manager Marketing - was created to provide the Society with greater focus on Marketing in general, and Sponsorship and Corporate Communications in particular. The Public Relations staff, the Events Consultant, support staff and agencies would carry out this work. This role had been advertised but in the meantime Tim Morgan continued to hold both roles.
  - c) Strategy would continue to be the responsibility of the Chief Executive, reporting to the Board.

## **Showgrounds Act amended**

During the Spring Session of the Victorian Parliament, the Society was successful in its request to have the Showgrounds Act of 1931 amended. If successful, this action would sever many restraints and would allow the Society much greater flexibility in the use of the area.

When the land was granted to the Society at Ascot Vale in exchange for the St. Kilda Road Showgrounds in 1883, the grant was made subject to strict conditions to ensure that the land was used for an agricultural showgrounds. In 1931 these restrictive conditions were eased by Act of Parliament, and the current amendment further eased these conditions and at the same time, transferred the Crown Grant from the Society to RASV Limited. The 1931 Showgrounds Act, as amended, now permitted the Society to redevelop the Royal Showgrounds as the showcase of Victoria's agricultural excellence.

For over a century the Society was an unincorporated Association, and given the size of the Royal Melbourne Show and the Society's other activities, this caused some concern in recent years. First, the liability of members was unlimited - members were personally liable for debts and other obligations incurred by the Society in its activities and secondly, it was most difficult to conduct the Society's activities in a commercial way.

In many ways the incorporation of the RASV Limited overcame the first problem, that of unlimited liability. ( In 1993 the Society was incorporated under Victoria's Associations Incorporations Act 1981). The second problem was overcome to some extent by the Society setting up RASV Limited in 1987, now registered under the Corporations Law (with Australian Company Number, or ACN 006 728785) as a company limited by guarantee. Its members were the Society's Councillors from time to time, who elected a board of directors to manage and control the Society's business and affairs.

However, the Society's incorporation could not overcome two further problems. Firstly there was a proposal to amend the Associations Incorporation Act to exclude large organisations. These changes, if enacted, would bring Victoria's legislation closer to that now in force in New South Wales and would make regulatory requirements much more expensive. The second problem was unique and concerned the Crown Grant transfer from the Society to RASV Limited, and has already been referred to.

All that remained was for the two organisations to merge. This could be accomplished by passing a special resolution at a special general meeting of RASV Limited - thus a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Law, would be the surviving legal entity.

Much of the ground work was already in place. RASV Limited had adopted new Articles of Association which were in the same form as the Society's existing Rules (with minor changes only to comply with the Corporations Law). These new articles would come into force upon the members of the Society passing the special resolution. They provided that every financial member of the Society on the date that the special resolution was passed, automatically became a member of the RASV Limited. In other words, membership in the Society would be substituted by membership in RASV Limited.

To complete the merger a number of administrative steps needed to be taken:

- 1) The Society's remaining assets (mostly land, being that part of the Royal Showgrounds not part of the Crown Grant land) and liabilities would be transferred to RASV Limited.
- 2) The Society - now having no assets, no liabilities and no members - would be wound up and cease to exist.

Following the restructuring of the Society, there was now only one organisation which was called the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited. Referring to the Financial Statement of the Society, the President had this to say:

*The year has seen changes to the Society of very great significance to enable us to more efficiently and effectively proceed into the 21st Century with confidence for continuing success in our quest for the promotion of excellence in agriculture. Our financial results for the year are considered acceptable, if somewhat disappointing, considering the many changes which have taken place during the year.*

*The nett loss for the period after abnormal items was \$252,382 (1994 profit \$229,637) with four key causes:*

- 1) A significant marketing cost in repositioning the Royal Show and reversing the declining attendance despite the loss of the Show Day holiday.*
- 2) The initiation of the preparation of the Redevelopment Plan for the Showgrounds.*
- 3) Restructuring the Society*
- 4) Additional Police Charges (\$101,298) over the previous years reflecting the Government's 'user pays' policy.*

*It is envisaged however, that next year we will have a better result and that the increase in Show attendances in 1994 will see a further improvement in 1995.*

During the year under review two further Board members had been appointed, these being:- Ms. Elizabeth Barrett Natrass, who had been General Manager of the Victorian Art Centre since 1989 and a Councillor of the Society since March 1995; and Mr. John Horton Seymour, who had extensive experience in banking and strategy, and who was elected to the Council in October 1994.

## **Strategic development**

Referring to the redevelopment of the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds in the Annual Report, Mr. Buchanan made these points:

*The Royal Melbourne Showgrounds must be redeveloped and planned in an orderly manner so that they become recognised as a major educational and community resource of statewide significance in order to facilitate their usage throughout the year. The task is not easy, and has only just begun, and it will require not only the full resources at our disposal but the support of a great many people in the community to bring it to a successful conclusion.*

Speaking on the same subject, Chief Executive Peter Payne added:

*The Society is in the early stages of a comprehensive change in the way it operates in meeting its mission to 'promote the progress and pursuit of excellence within all aspects of Victorian Agriculture'.*

*The broad strategy is to significantly improve the financial viability of the Society by:*

- 1) Ensuring the Royal Show continues to be Melbourne's major community event, promoting excellence in and awareness of, the importance of agriculture to all Victorians. The Show is a unique forum for interaction*

2) Finance and Administration.

This area would oversee Agricultural Administration - or what was previously known as part of Corporate Services and Finance, and would also assist the Chief Executive in Strategic Development. The General Manager Finance and Administration, Mr. Roger Membrey, would have both Finance and Agricultural Administration teams reporting to him. The role would provide a greater commercial focus for managers, improve efficiencies and help to develop corporate and strategic goals to further the objectives of the Society.

Reporting to the General Manager would be the Group Manager Finance, who would become responsible for computing services with Jill Hargreaves, Systems Manager. A project team was working with the RAS of New South Wales to integrate both Show Administration systems to create necessary efficiencies and future benefits. Leading the RASV team were Sue Gullick, Senior Accountant and Jill Hargreaves. Bob MacDonald, Group Manager Agricultural Administration, had three teams reporting to him and he in turn reported to the General Manager.

3) Corporate Services

John Clifford as Corporate Services Manager relinquished control of the Agricultural Administration team and concentrated on a series of important matters requiring attention. Reporting to him were:

- a) Michael Martin, Group Manager Facilities
- b) Derek Hay, Project Manager and,
- c) Belinda Drew, Office Administrator.

In December 1994 the Society agreed to join the Australian Sheepbreeders' Association in a partnership to organise and run the 1995 Sheep and Wool Show, and it was hoped this would be the forerunner to even greater successes with this long standing and important event. Also at this time, Mr. Colin Kelly was appointed an Honorary Life Councillor, and the Society saw fit to award Honorary Life Membership to eight people - four members of the staff, and four stewards, all of whom had given long and distinguished service.

**Members ratify merger**

The Special General Meeting to consider the reorganisation of the Society's operations was held at the Council Room, Royal Showgrounds on Tuesday 21 March, 1995 at 3.15pm.

Special resolutions for the Execution of the Deed of Assignment, and the Voluntary Winding Up were carried unanimously, this finalising the merger of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Inc. and the RASV Limited. In the 1994/95 Annual Report, President Mr. Keith Buchanan referred to the merger thus:

*I express appreciation to all Councillors and Members, who during the year brought to finalisation the merger of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Inc. and the RASV Limited. This merger, together with the adoption of new Articles of Association, was made a reality on 21 March 1995 at an Extraordinary General Meeting of RASV Limited followed by a Special General Meeting of members of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Inc.*

There seems no doubt that your decisions taken in 1994/95 will ensure the Society has every possible chance of continuing long-term success.

life size sculpture of a mounted stockman in memory of her late father and his contribution to the RASV. The statue was placed on the Geoffrey Howell Lawn facing Plummer Avenue).

The late K. J. (Ken) McIver, was elected to Council in 1986. He was a member of the Horse Committee and a skilled Show Jumping Course builder. He was in the forefront of running the horse events at the Royal Melbourne Show and the Summer Horse Show and his contribution to these functions and his overall dedication will be sadly missed.

Sir William McDonald Kt. first became associated with the RASV as a Government appointed Trustee in 1973, a position he held with distinction for 20 years, following which he was elected a Life Councillor of the Society. He had a distinguished career in the Victorian Government over a long period and also made a considerable contribution to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

The President went on to give this brief appreciation of the forthcoming Royal Show:

*We are continuing to improve our facilities to make the Show more rewarding and enjoyable for all our patrons. With our admission price at the same level for the past five years, we believe it is great value for money. Our showgoers will be aware of a number of changes which I am sure will appeal to most people. Nature's Way is an entirely new display featuring education on the beginnings of animal life and the early stages of growing up.*

*The National Bank Animal Nursery will have a totally new look; the Pigs and People Display will continue to attract young and old; and of course, the usual magnificent Rural Finance Grand Parades displaying the finest of Australia's livestock.*

*Feature breeds of livestock at this year's Royal Show will be - Murray Grey Beef Cattle; Jersey Dairy Cattle; and White Suffolk Sheep.*

*Our Show Ambassadors will again assist showgoers to find popular attractions and goods.*

*All in all the Society is bringing more of the country back to the Show and will continue this practice.*

## **Pre-Show competitions entries a good omen?**

Pre-judging of three of the Show's popular products gave the Society's organisers a feeling for a good Show, with increased exhibits in all produce, livestock, and other popular classes in the Show.

- 1) The 1995 Royal Melbourne Dairy (Produce) Show was judged in August. More than 750 entries were received from around Australia. It was the Dairy Industry's major event and the largest of its kind in Australia.
- 2) The 1995 Royal Melbourne Wine Show, also judged in August, attracted record entries with 2,614 different wines exhibited. The number of companies entering showed an increase of 5% on the previous year. The coveted Jimmy Watson Trophy was awarded to Leasingham Wines for their Classic Clare Shiraz.
- 3) The 1995 Australian Beer Awards, run by the Society in conjunction with the University of Ballarat, attracted a record 201 entries from Australia and overseas - altogether from 12 countries, and Toohey's Hahn Ice Beer was awarded the Grand Champion.

Early returns of stock entries gave promise of good competition. Besides the Feature Breeds, cattle and sheep entries were excellent in view of the persisting dry conditions. The overall cattle entry totalled 1,441 with the Simmental classes providing 188 entries with the

*between City and Country and over the next few years we will continue to improve standards of food, entertainment, customer service, educational opportunities, the physical environment and the commercial relevance to rural Victoria*

- 2) *Redeveloping the Showgrounds in stages, to maximise the financial returns from the Society's main asset. It is an historical site of statewide significance with unique logistical advantages. We need to enhance its traditional rural use, improve Show time facilities for exhibitors, and develop other rural based shows and, with venture partners, redevelop to provide independent income streams.*
- 3) *Ensuring year-round use of the Showgrounds. There is significant opportunity for both increased rural focus and non-rural use as a secondary exhibition, functions and sporting facility.*
- 4) *Strengthening and projecting the market presence and commercial relevance of the Society and the Royal Show.*

### **Sheep Show success**

The Sheep and Wool Show was held on the Showgrounds in July 1995 and was hailed an outstanding success. A 125 per cent increase in attendance over the 1994 event, and the maintenance of a high level of top quality livestock entries had given the combined organisers - The Royal Agricultural Society (RASV) and the Australian Sheepbreeders' Association (ASBA) - confidence for future events and a knowledge that the show is on the right track. Both organisations expressed delight with the public response - over 20,000 over the four days - and the result of the partnership marked the start of a new era for this historical and long running event.

The Melbourne Ram Sales, a traditional part of the Sheep and Wool Show, recorded an increased buyer interest, and a higher clearance rate. Average prices and top prices were greater than the previous year. The 99 rams sold for \$360,954, with the top price of \$26,000 for a Yarrowonga stud ram - this was up \$6,000 on the previous year. With more than 2,000 sheep covering 22 breeds, the breeders and general public were well served with exhibits.

The expanded commercial aspect of the Show was also appreciated by the patrons. This included such diverse elements as the Bendigo Woollen Mills knitting competition and the Kyneton School of Art Muster Pieces artworks exhibition.

### **More improvements and new attractions**

In his introductory address on the 1995 Royal Melbourne Show, Society President, Mr. J. Keith Buchanan, AM, paid tribute to three valuable members of the RASV Council who died during the year:

*It is with a great deal of sadness that I record the loss of three of our colleagues during the year:*

*Mr. D. W. R. (David) Knox, who passed away on 8 April; Mr. K. J. (Ken) McIver, on 27 May, and the Hon. Sir William McDonald Kt. on 13 September, 1995.*

The late Mr. David Knox joined Council in 1953 and was elected to Life Councillor in June 1973. He was regarded as a wonderful ambassador for the RASV and was widely known and respected nationwide in all aspects of Show and breed society functions. (His daughter, Mrs. Diana Gibson, sought and was given approval to commission and present to the Society a

This objective, called Vision 2000, was aimed at enabling the Society to fulfil its mission into the 21st Century and at securing the future of the Showgrounds and the Royal Melbourne Show for future generations. Developing multi-functional and modern facilities that could attract year-round income streams was vital to the financial viability of the Vision.

The 'Vision 2000' Structure Plan approved by the Board in 1995, divided the Showgrounds into four precincts for development, each with a distinct purpose yet integrating to enhance the Royal Melbourne Show and to form a cohesive whole around the concept of a centre for agricultural excellence.

**Precinct 1**, situated in the area covering the north-east portion of the grounds bounded by Epsom Road in the east; Langs Road to the north; Plummer Avenue in the south, and the Main Arena in the west, will be set aside for Exhibition and Tourism. Plans for the site include permanent exhibition halls, foyers and conference facilities, and basement parking for 400 cars. This precinct could also support 'infotainment' and tourist activities, such as an animal nursery, sheep shearing display, Agricultural Hall of Fame and more.

**Precinct 2**, in the south east area, bounded by Plummer Avenue in the north; Epsom Road in the east; the railway line to the south; and the Main Arena to the west; will be reserved for Agribusiness-related Commercial Development, Hotel, Function Centre, and car parking. Plans for this area - which includes its own railway station - provides opportunities for private sector participation in the development of relevant demand uses, such as a hotel, business park, carpark, function centre and themed retail space. An example for the commercial opportunities in this precinct is for business supporting the world-class Dog Shows which are held at regular intervals. This zone would also house educational and training facilities that would support the Showgrounds function as a centre for learning about agriculture.

**Precinct 3**, in the central area of the Showgrounds bounded by Langs Road to the north; the railway line to the south; Precinct 1 in the east and Precinct 4 in the west, is the redevelopment of the Main Arena, plans of which will see it upgraded and compacted to a size approximating the Melbourne Cricket Ground, to suit a year-round range of sporting events - soccer, rugby and AFL - musical events, open air entertainment in a 30,000 seat stadium, and continuing to meet Showtime needs.

**Precinct 4**, occupying the western area of the grounds, is bordered by Leonard Crescent in the north; the VRC in the south; Precinct 3 to the east and the VRC in the west; is designed for multidimensional entertainment, sporting and exhibition facility for animals and other events. Work has already commenced on the redevelopment of the precinct, to house live-stock trade events, large animal-based events and other relevant entertainment events.

Three rings with world-class facilities will be provided - a major Show and Sales Ring, covered exercise and Judging Ring, and a flexible 5000 seat modern venue for a variety of entertainment, sporting and other events as well as being used as a world-class indoor equestrian facility.

The concept of the redevelopment project was prepared by Alan Lewis, Lewis McNaughton, Project Manager; Tim Morgan, Corporate Projects RASV; Michael Martin, Group Manager Facilities RASV; RASV Agriculture Team Leaders; Peter Corrigan, Edmund and Corrigan Architects; and lots of input from RASV Councillors.

In March 1996, the Society proposed to start the five year redevelopment programme when work would commence on the first new buildings on the Showgrounds for almost 20 years. An allocation of \$3 million had been set aside for this stage funded entirely by the Society. Building was to be completed in time for the 1996 Royal Show and would, it was

next highest being the Murray Grey entry of 133. Dairy cattle classes received good support, and sheep entries came up to expectations.

The Royal Melbourne Show Dog entry continued to impress and the 1995 number being no exception with more than 5,600.

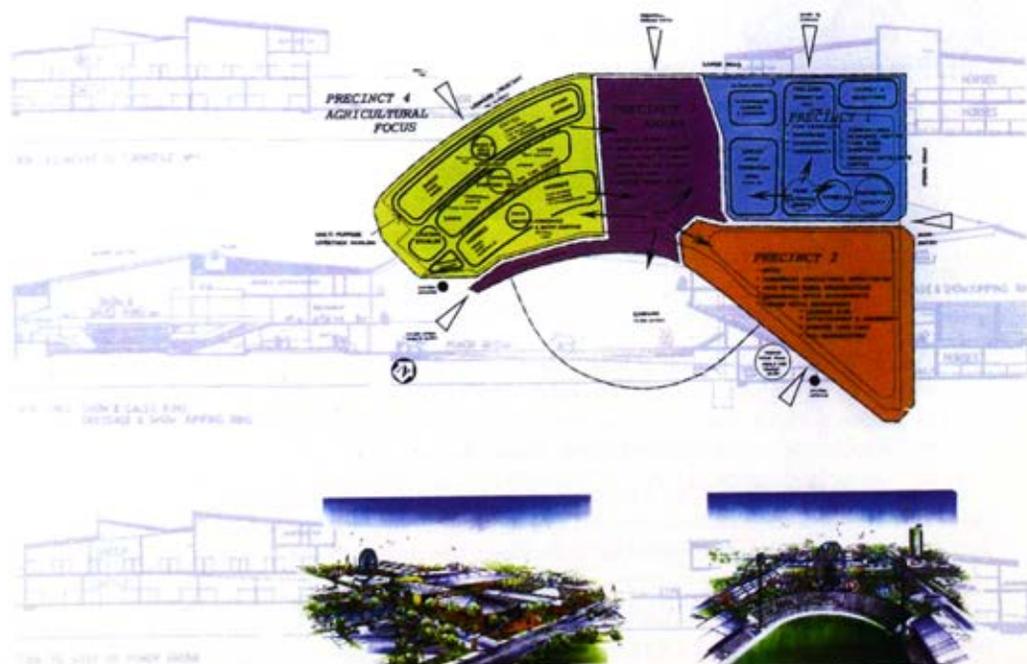
## International recognition for the Royal Melbourne Show

The Society won three major international awards for staging the 1995 Show. The awards are conducted annually by the United States based International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) in recognition of excellence in agricultural education. The 1995 Royal Melbourne Show competed in the section for shows/fairs with attendances between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people against ten fairs across the United States which included New York, California, Ohio and Kentucky. The three winning awards were:

- 1) Best overall agricultural programme for showgoing public.
- 2) Best special agricultural educational event for the showgoing public (won with our Pigs and People exhibit) and,
- 3) Best video of overall agricultural programme.

## Vision 2000

The Society continued to be committed to developing the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds as a world class showcase for Australian excellence in food and fibre production and processing, creating a focal point for Australian agriculture and attracting business to Melbourne and Victoria.



expected, provide the catalyst for support and relevant investment by other parties in both the public and private sectors.

The new exhibition hall linked two existing buildings, providing a major new trade fair and exhibition complex for Melbourne with total space of more than 7,000 square metres, fully serviced modern catering facilities, with access to outdoor exhibition areas and car parking for up to 1,500 vehicles. At showtime it was to be the 'Showcase' pavilion aimed at attracting larger corporate organisations featuring their products and services.

There was confidence that the Showgrounds could become a significant exhibition and commercial venue with features that would complement other venues in Melbourne and match State Government plans for Victoria to be the event and exhibition centre for Australia. With more secure income streams, the Society could concentrate more on its Mission of pursuing excellence in all aspects of Victorian agriculture ensuring that Show and commercial competitions were relevant and provided improved facilities for exhibitors and exhibits.

Aimed at attracting rural-based organisations to utilise the Showgrounds site with its unique logistics and history these improvements would accelerate the process of a 'Showcase' and focal point for Australian agriculture.

## **Australia remembers**

The 1995 Royal Melbourne Show was proud to announce its own celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and Victory in the Pacific. The Australian Defence Forces took over the Showgrounds immediately following the 1939 Royal Show. The Army occupied the area from September 1939 to March 1940 and then handed over to the Royal Australian Air force who remained in occupation until October 1946, but the main facilities needed in order to organise the 1946 Royal Show, such as stock pavilions, the administrative building and grandstands were cleared to the Society. Nevertheless, certain areas were retained by the RAAF for up to two years after the cessation of hostilities.

For the 1995 Royal Show the Society, in conjunction with the Department of Defence set aside programming on the Main Arena for a tribute to Australia's military history on Sunday 24 September. The exercise titled 'Your Military History' consisted of a montage of activities embracing the Red Berets Army Parachute Team; the Second Commando company; historical military vehicles including tanks, troop carriers and a display by remnants of the Lighthorse Regiment.

The 1995 Royal Melbourne Show - the 137th - commenced on Thursday 21 September, and concluded on Sunday 1 October. The entries were again outstanding with the total exceeding 31,500 and when the 'overhang' horse entries of 5,279 from the Summer Horse Show in January were added, the overall figure of 36,779 was above expectations.

The total attendance of 712,706 was an increase of 8 per cent on the 1994 Show and up 90,000 over the previous two years. During the Show the 44th millionth visitor was welcomed, and exit polls clearly indicated a high customer satisfaction rating for the Show.

The Official Opening was at 2.30pm on Saturday, 23 September and performed by His Excellency, The Governor of Victoria, The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie QC AC, accompanied by Mrs. McGarvie. All halls and pavilions were well patronised during the Show. The Centenary Hall - ever changing in displays and attractions - was again the focus for natural fibres, fashion parades, shearing and wool handling competitions and demonstrations, and on a lighter note, line-dancing (boot-scooting), in the evenings.

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS - 1939 TO 1945



THIS PLAQUE IS TO COMMEMORATE THE CONTRIBUTION MADE  
BY THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA  
TOWARDS FINAL VICTORY, IN WORLD WAR II  
BY ITS INVALUABLE SERVICE TO THOUSANDS OF MEMBERS OF THE  
2nd AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE AND ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
WHO AT DIFFERENT TIMES CALLED THESE SHOWGROUNDS HOME

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA

1995

RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE  
OF AUSTRALIA

This plaque was officially unveiled on the  
19th March 1996

by

J. Keith Buchanan Esq AM

President Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria

&

B. C. Ruxton Esq OBE

President of the Returned & Services League  
of Australia (Vic. Branch)

grandfather, Jack Allan, an international spruiker and rides operator on the Melbourne Showgrounds for decades.

As a mark of respect all rides ceased to operate on the Showgrounds at noon on Sunday while a religious service was held at the site, and family and friends laid more than 30 floral tributes on the ride that killed the young 'showie'.

During the year the Society saw fit to appoint the following Honorary Life Members; Ms. Colleen Egan, Mrs. Carol Mazurek, Miss Jill Hargreaves, Mrs. Marion Jones, Mrs. Merrill Milne, Mr. Marcus Mooney, Mr. Bob Bell, Mr. John Thompson and Mr. John Clifford.

In presenting the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited for the year ending 31 March 1996, the President Mr. J. Keith Buchanan, made these comprehensive comments and remarks on the progress of the Society:

*The Board believes the financial results for the year are acceptable and satisfactory and will continue its policy of introducing improved practices and accountability. It is very pleasing to know that the loss after abnormals of \$252,382 has been turned around in 1995/96 to a surplus after abnormals of \$121,838. Before the abnormals the result is even more satisfactory with the improvement over 1994/95 of \$529,224. This is largely brought about by increased gate revenue for the 1995 Royal Show.*

*The result has also realised a net cash improvement as at March 1996, which is particularly important as we head into increased funding needs for the new building programme.*

*The increased debt which is necessary to fund the new Exhibition Centre building as well as to the improvements to the Royal Block will enhance the RASV's capacity to earn future income. It is anticipated that this additional revenue will provide the funds to service the increased debt.*

*The Showgrounds are, however, in need of substantial capital injection to a level which is not possible within the financial capacity of the Society, and we will continue our efforts to attract financial input from outside sources to further our redevelopment proposals.*

*This year, 1995/96, has been the first full year of the Society's operation under the proposal adopted by the Council from the Crawford Report and whilst fine tuning in some areas may be needed in the future, generally speaking the changes must be seen to have been successful and have worked very well.*

*The Directors of the Society have met on a regular basis and now carry full responsibility for the business decisions taken and implemented. The Board has a full complement of ten members and has been very pleased to welcome John Watson during the year. John has had an extensive career with agriculture and rural organisations and will without doubt be an asset to the organisation.*

*Early decisions during the year - with the contract let in March 1996 - to proceed to build the new complex in time for the 1996 Show, and the employment of a consultant to assist with the renewal of our catering contract, tenders were let in both instances, and each of these projects will be important in seeing some very substantial changes to the forthcoming Show and indeed to greater use of the facilities for the remainder of the year.*

The tranquil atmosphere created in the Horticulture Pavilion, (Hall of Commerce), was far removed from the one time helter-skelter of the showbag stands and other commercial displays. Now patrons had a place to eat a leisurely meal in green, relaxed surroundings or, to sit outside and dine alfresco style at tables and chairs protected from the elements by an atrium over Plummer Avenue.

The Show again opened its gates on the first day, Thursday 21 September with a special welcome to our Senior Citizens. Super Senior's Day once more proved a great success and Seniors received concessions at just about every selling venue.

Primary Producer pavilions such as the Dairy Foods Pavilion, and the Meat Promotions Centre, were again popular and along with The Age Epicure Room, provided displays of outstanding award winning produce, including wines, beers, chocolates, cheeses - and from the Meat Promotions Centre, cooking hints for the preparation of meat dishes.

Arts and Crafts also maintained a high profile, with displays of cookery and school competitions in the Centrepoint Hall and the William Angliss Gallery, supplementing the main entries of needlework, calligraphy, confectionery, fruit cakes, decorated cakes, preserves, woodwork and metal work - still housed in the old (1904) Arts and Crafts Pavilion.

As an indication of the changing attitude towards the Royal Melbourne Show by some sections of the media - who in the not so distant past used this event as an opportunity to ridicule the Society and all that it stood for - it is worth copying part of the Editorial in Melbourne Herald Sun with title: 'The Window on the Bush':

*City life is stimulating, but it is easy to forget that the source of much of the nation's wealth lies beyond the limits of the asphalt jungle. Every year the Royal Melbourne Show brings us back to earth by opening a window on the bush.*

*This year 712,706 people went to the Show - the best attendance in five years. Among them was the 44th Millionth person through the turnstiles since 1858. They went to enjoy the carnival and give their children the chance to see what country children take for granted.*

Chief Executive Officer Mr. Peter Payne, had this to say:

*The Royal Melbourne Show continues to be the biggest public paying event in Victoria with more than 700,000 visitors and providing an annual economic benefit to the State of more than \$100 million.*

*The Society is determined to build on its unique Royal Show experience and the site's outstanding logistical advantages to develop the Melbourne Showgrounds as a world class showcase for Australian excellence in food and fibre production and processing, creating a focal point for Australian agriculture and attracting business to Melbourne and Victoria.*

## **Tragic death of young 'Showie'**

The final weekend of the Show was marred by the freak accident and instant death of George Magdziarz, 25, on the last Saturday night. It appeared that he had gone to cover a speaker, had climbed onto the ride while it was still moving, slipped and was struck on the head and crushed. The ride - 'The Music Trip' - was one of the newest rides in the country and had passed Health and Safety inspection only recently. Commenting on the tragedy, RASV Chief Executive Mr. Peter Payne, said the ride was owned and operated by Mr. Magdziarz, who was 'born into show business' with his mother, Gail (Allan) and father George, active 'showies'. His grandmother was a member of the Perry circus family, and

*Reference has already been made to our building programme, and in March 1996 the Society let a contract for the construction of the first new building for 20 years on the Showgrounds site. We have committed more than \$3 million to the construction of the Exhibition Hall, a clear indication of the Society's confidence in the future of the Showgrounds site.*

*It is pleasing to report that the six major goals set for the 1995 Royal show were all achieved or exceeded. They were:*

- 1) Increase attendance to 700,000*
- 2) Reinforce value for money.*
- 3) Maintain appropriate commercial balance, improve presentation standards.*
- 4) Strengthen agricultural education demands.*
- 5) Maintain/increase entries in farm animal events and ensure livestock and produce competitions maintain commercial relevancy.*
- 6) Enhance customer service levels by all staff.*

*Major marketing activities were undertaken to help achieve these objectives, including direct liaison with individual exhibitors and exhibitor groups, liaison with government, commercial and industrial groups, promotional advertising, public relations, direct media liaison and special promotions.*

During the year the Society carried out secretarial and administrative duties for 23 animal breed societies and kindred rural organisations.

## **New Articles of Association**

In the last five years the Society's rules and regulations had undergone more changes than those made over the past 130 year. These changes had been necessary to protect Councillors and Members of the Society against the ever changing legal upgrading of responsibilities to the public and commercial law changes.

The 1996 Annual General meeting held on Tuesday 23 July, 1996, was asked to consider, and if thought fit, to pass a resolution embracing new Articles of Association:

*That the Articles of Association contained in the document submitted to the meeting and, for the purpose of identification, signed by the Chairman of the meeting, be approved and adopted as the Articles of Association of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited, in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, all existing Articles of Association.*

An explanatory memorandum was sent to all members extracts of which are presented here:

*Until recently the Society was an unincorporated association, governed by rules drafted in the 1870s. These rules were amended from time to time as required, by the Members in general meetings. As an unincorporated association the Society was subject only to the law of Victoria, and the rules contained provisions which had become outdated or inconsistent with today's notions of good corporate governance.*

*Incorporation in 1993 allowed the Society to merge into RASV Limited. This Company incorporated under the Companies (Victoria) Code in March 1987, had been formed by the Society to carry on the Society's commercial activi-*

*Mrs. Diana Gibson, sought, and was given approval, to commission and present to the Society a life size sculpture of a stockman on horseback in memory of her late father David Knox. The Society is indeed grateful for this kind offer. The result will be seen at Showtime this year.*

*At the instigation of the Returned Services League and the Australia Remembers Committee, a plaque commemorating the role of the Royal Showgrounds in providing a home for 60,000 members of the armed forces - Army and Air Force - from late 1939 to 1946, was unveiled at a ceremony on 19 March 1996, in what now has become recognised as the Wall of Remembrance on the Geoffrey Howell Lawn. The unveiling of this plaque will be a reminder to future generations of the part played by the Showgrounds in time of war.*

*The Royal Show saw a continuation of direction previously begun, emphasising rural activities. All innovations were seen to be successful and none more so than Nature's Way, (a 'live' animal birthing display) a first in Australia, which will be enhanced for the 1996 Royal Show.*

*Other crowd pleasing displays and exhibits included - Natural Fibre exhibitions (from paddock to garment) and the new Lennon Avenue food providers (from paddock to plate). We enjoyed a much improved weather pattern for the 1995 Royal Show and this coupled with the greatly improved marketing plan and generally higher standard of exhibits and exhibitors saw a marked increase in attendance.*

*My congratulations to Councillors Bob Potter, John Fox and Bill Forrest, who were elected Vice Presidents, for the ensuing year, and thank you to Ian Bucknall who was Vice President for six years and for the contribution he made over that period.*

*The Society's well defined Mission Statement reads:*

*'The Society shall promote the progress and pursuit of excellence within all aspects of Victorian Agriculture'*

*We strongly believe that the mission is a very worthwhile cause, but we are constantly aware that it can only be achieved to a satisfactory level with the continuing co-operation of the community at large.*

In his overview of the Society's activities for the year Chief Executive, Mr. Peter Payne had this to add to the President's comments:

*The Society has completed a successful year, increasing our commitment and focus in agriculture and reinvigorating the Royal Show, whilst promoting the necessary changes and effectiveness to enhance the Society's long term survival.*

*The year to 31 March 1996 was highlighted by overall increases in exhibitors and entries at our events, a substantial increase in attendance at the Royal Show, a clarification of our vision for the Showgrounds, and the Society's role, a major financial commitment by the Society to the first stage of redevelopment of the Showgrounds, and a return to profitability.*

New classes introduced products like blended butter, low fat or salt cheddar, hard and stretched cheese, light sour/cultured cream, long-life milk and mousse, and these were judged for the first time as 'stand alone' products.

This year an allowance was made for larger commercial manufacturers' product entries in chocolate, while the Cheesecake Challenge comprised two categories for baked and unbaked flavoured and vanilla classes. Low fat and innovative classes were added to attract artistic and technical experts.

Judging of the Dairy Show entries was conducted at various venues in Melbourne in August, with the Presentation of Awards Dinner at the Melbourne Hilton Hotel on 5 September. Special displays of winning exhibits were on show in the Dairy Pavilion during the Royal Show.

### **Cattle entries hold up**

Despite tough economic times in the beef market, breeders had thrown their support behind the 1996 Royal Melbourne Show to record an increase in beef cattle entries - the only capital city Show to do so this year. A total of 1,198 cattle had been entered, this figure was 96 more than in 1995. Angus cattle were the Show's Feature Beef Breed with 139 animals contesting the broad ribbons. In another Show first, junior and senior champions from this year's Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra Royals were invited to compete in Melbourne.

The prestigious steer and carcass competition had a huge following this year with almost 270 purebred and crossbred entries received. Judging of animals on the hoof took place on Tuesday 24 September, with carcasses hung for inspection on Friday 27 September. This year the presentation of carcass winners was held in the VPC-WFI ring on the second Friday instead of at the abattoir. A further change this year was a change in venue for the beef cattle performance classes to the Woodchop Stadium on the last Sunday of the Show.

Australia's oldest dairy breed, the Ayrshire, was the Feature Dairy Breed for 1996. A new dairy cattle event, the Youth Classic, would be judged on the first Sunday.

The Society's initiatives, including later entry closing dates, a boost in prize money and more production classes, resulted in an increase in dairy cattle entries to 901, up 121 on the last year. Twenty breeds of sheep would also parade before the judges from Saturday 21 September to Friday, 27 September.

The Feature Breed was the Hampshire Down, and following last year's successful introduction of a feature fibre (lustre wools), medullated fibres - Drysdale, Carpetmasters, Elliotdales, and Tukidales were highlighted in 1996.

There were a number of important changes to judging timetables for the 1996 Royal Show. In the Horse Section, Hacks and Galloways were judged in the first week rather than the second; the Garryowen moved from Tuesday to the first Friday; the A. V. Pope Cup from Monday to the first Thursday; Campdrafting and Stock horses to the first weekend. Ponies were judged in the second part of the Show. The junior showjumping event moved from the first to the second week; Trade and Delivery Clydesdale classes moved from the first Sunday to Wednesday, while working draught horses were scheduled for the last weekend. Cat judging was carried out on each day of the Show and the venue changed from the Mitchell Stand to the IAMS Wonderful World of Pets area - near the Dog Pavilion - along with caviars, rabbits and caged birds.

The Horticulture Pavilion (Hall of Commerce) was upgraded and changes were noted with catering.

ties. The merger was approved in March 1995, and the RASV Limited then adopted new Articles of Association and changed its name to the present name, The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited (but keeping its Australian Company Number, 006 728 785). The new Articles included only the minimum requirements of the governing legislation (The Corporations Law), the reason being that the matter under consideration was the merger of the two corporations into one.

Today the Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered under the Corporations Law. Its constitution is found in its Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association.

The former has six clauses - one for the Society's name; one setting out in detail the Society's objects (which are identical with the objects set out in the rules in force before the Society was incorporated in 1993); two clauses to ensure the Society's income is not subject to income tax; and two clauses limiting the liability of Members.

The Articles of Association deal with governance and administration of the Society. They contain provisions concerning membership and general meetings of Members: Councillors and their meetings; the Directors and their meetings; as well as administrative matters and an indemnity for the benefit of Councillors, Directors and the Society's staff in carrying out their duties. Updated Articles of Association are now needed to complete the Society's reorganisation and to give it the constitution it needs to meet its goal of 'Excellence in Agriculture'.

The proposed Articles of Association are based on current practice for public companies registered under the Corporations Law, but take into account the unique nature, structure and history of the Society.

Pre-Royal Show judging for the 1996 Royal Melbourne Show, in wines and dairy products produced some outstanding exhibits. South Australian wine group BRL Hardy won the prestigious Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy for the second year in succession at the 1996 Royal Melbourne Wine Show, conducted by the RASV. The Trophy was awarded for the Best Red Beverage Wine for a one year old red wine. The winning entry was Hardy's 1995 Eileen Hardy Shiraz.

The 1996 Wine Show attracted a record number of 2,987 entries in 79 classes. And as it was also a Championship Show, two special Championship trophies were awarded, plus a special new trophy for the Best Current Vintage Dry White Table Wine.

In the Championship area, the T. C. Seabrook Trophy for the Best Sweet White Table wine, was won by Miranda Wines for its Golden Botrytis Semillion/Rhine Riesling (1994). The J. C. Fornachon Memorial Trophy for the Most Successful Exhibitor of Sherry in the Open and Commercial Sections, went to B. Seppelt and Sons. The new trophy, known as the Kubots Tractor Australia Trophy for Best Current Vintage (1996) Dry White Table Wine was won by Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd. for its 'Vat 47' Pinot/Chardonnay (1996).

A record number of 690 entries were received for the 1996 Royal Melbourne Dairy Show, with more the 100 Australian companies exhibiting (up 5% compared with 1995), and including most of the top dairy producers.

This Show is the largest competition of its type in Australia, hosted by the Society and sponsored by the Australian Dairy Corporation. Each year it attracts Australia's finest cream, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, chocolate, cheesecake, dips, flavoured milk, mousse and dairy desserts.



*The Showgrounds Exhibition Centre*

The bigger picture looking towards the year 2000 incorporated construction of further multi-functional buildings, sporting facilities, roads and car park, hotel accommodation, offices, themed shopping environments and parklands.

Another wonderful addition to the Showgrounds for that year was The Australian Stockman sculpture. The late D.W.R. (David) Knox, a former Life Councillor of the Society, was honoured by the unveiling of a magnificent bronze sculpture commissioned by his daughter, Mrs. Diana Gibson, in his honour on the first day of the Show, Thursday, 19 September. 'The Australian Stockman' work was placed on the Geoffrey Howell Lawn and took Tasmanian sculptor, Stephen Walker, AM, nine months to create. The statue weighs over three-quarters of a tonne and portrays a mounted stockman standing greater than life size at three metres tall and 3.5 metres long. The work is the first equestrian sculpture commissioned in Australia for a decade and the only sculpture created solely for the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds.

The 138th Royal Show ran from Thursday 19 September to and including 29 September, 1996 and although the weather was not ideal for the whole period - there were intermittent showers on several days - the total attendance rose to 726,800, a lift of close to 15,000 on the previous year. The total general entry also increased from 31,500 in 1995 to 32,000 this year, and these figures did not include entries for the Royal Melbourne Summer Horse Show (5,279 in 1995).

The Official Opening was again carried out by His Excellency, The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, QC, AC, Governor of Victoria, at 2.30pm on Saturday 21 September. General opinion, including exit polls, proved most satisfactory from the Society's point of view concerning this year's Show. The public acknowledgement of the efforts being made to make the Show more educational were most pronounced in the exit surveys. And many comments were made regarding the 'mix' of competitions, displays, exhibitions and entertainment. All in all it was agreed that once again, the Show provided good value for money.



*Official Opening Showgrounds Exhibition Centre 1996.*

*RASV President J. Keith Buchanan and Premier Jeff Kennett.*

All the famous Show highlights such as the Woodchopping; Farrier's Forge; Nature's Way; Pigs and People; the World of the Horse; and the non-stop entertainment on Street's Lawn, received a further boost with the return of the live milking display presented by Barry Brown and Sons, in the Nature's Way site. Older patrons welcomed the return of the Floral Clock. This historic display was situated near the Railways Entrance and had not been on view for 31 years. It covered a surface of 20 feet in diameter, and flowers specially grown for the project graced the whole area. The Engineering Department of the Victorian University of Technology in conjunction with the Society re-created the floral clock - first seen on the Showgrounds in 1930. It remained a Show attraction until shortly after the Second World War, and had a brief return in 1965.

### **Rebuilding programme gets moving**

The Royal Melbourne Show is the largest public-paying event in Victoria each year - and that is without exception. The Society's immediate aims were to firstly build on this achievement, and next to take full advantage of the site's logistical situation thus positioning the facility as a world class venue for Australian excellence in food and fibre production and processing.

The first stage of the complete renovation and building programme commenced on 26 March on Plummer Avenue near the Main Gate off Epsom Road, with construction beginning on the first new building on the Showgrounds for almost 20 years. The 2,000 square metre Showgrounds Exhibition Centre links the existing Victorian Government Pavilion and the Royal Block, creating a total integrated space of 5,000 square metres for trade fairs and expositions of all descriptions. At showtime the Showgrounds Exhibition Centre would house exciting new feature displays and exhibitions. It also gave the Society an appropriately equipped facility to present special theme displays including Guest Nation exhibits.

*fun rides are what lure families. But they depart with a greater understanding of the major contribution hard-working country folk make to the State's prosperity. The Show is an important community event. Last year it recorded its 44 millionth visitor, but the future of this colourful event is now in doubt.*

*In an exclusive report yesterday the Herald Sun published a warning from the Royal Agricultural Society that it may have to move the Show to the country from 1998. This will happen if the RAS cannot raise the money to redevelop the Ascot Vale grounds the Show has occupied for 113 years.*

*We believe this is not an empty threat.*

*The RAS wants to revamp the site for between \$55 million and \$200 million. Though the Show contributes an estimated \$102 million to the state each year, almost no public or private money has been spent on infrastructure for 60 years - none in the past 17 years.*

*The pictures we published of pot-holed paths and derelict buildings told the story. The air of decay is a turnoff. It helps explain why gates have fallen from a record 916,000 in 1972 to about 712,706 last year. Even though this was the best attendance for five years, the decline must be halted.*

*Jeff Kennett is sympathetic but he says revamping the Showgrounds is not high on his government's priorities. While the Premier is right to resist calls to throw money at the problem, this must not deter him from helping the RAS to come up with innovative solutions. This valuable real estate is used fully for only 11 days a year. A rescue plan must ensure that it is used for as much of the year as possible. Private enterprise could have a role.*

*The government has demonstrated that when it is set on a positive outcome it can always find a way. The show deserves the same determination. Moving to the country would not only be taking coals to Newcastle, it would deny Melbourne a unique and historic window on the bush.*

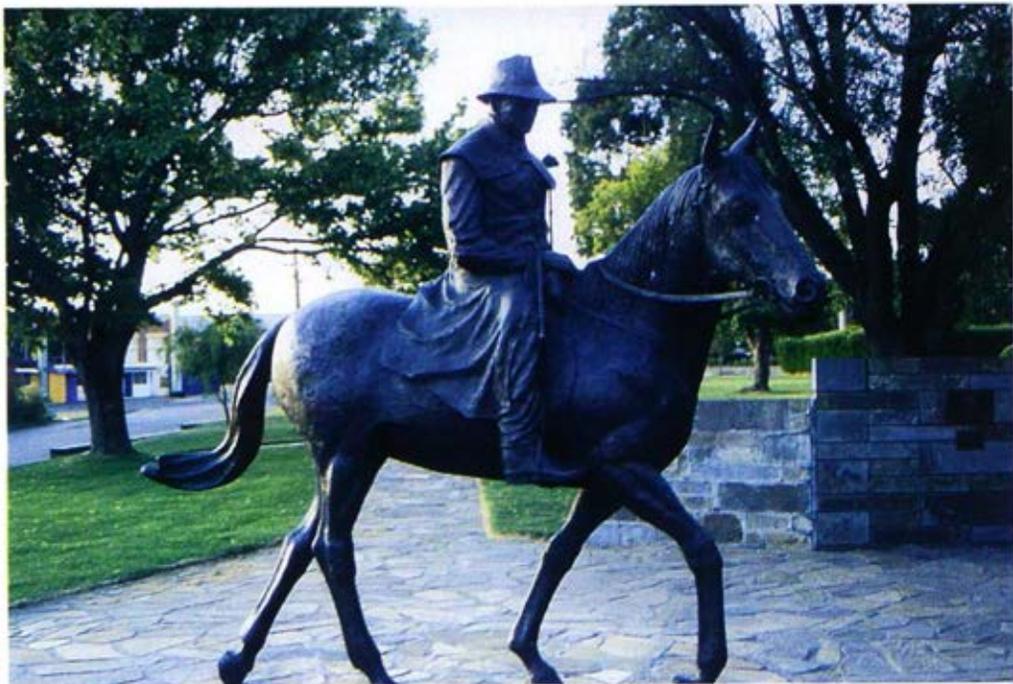
This editorial was supported with a front page lead story with banner headlines - 'Crisis for Royal Show' - and showing an artist's impression of a revamped Showgrounds with contrasting pictures of derelict horse stalls and pot-holed paths.

## **Business as usual**

No sooner had the gates closed on the 1996 Royal Show when the Society disclosed some of the improvements in capital works and stock classes for the 1996 Royal Show. In this regard livestock exhibitors would benefit the most from the improvements in facilities.

The revamp of one of the sheep pavilions and a permanent cover over the Bonlac Lawn development would be a welcome comfort to dairy cattle exhibitors in particular who boosted entries in all classes for the 1996 Royal Show with an overall increase of 14% over the dairy section. The structure was a permanent steel roof which would provide an all-weather judging ring, and was part of the latest phase of the Showgrounds' \$60 million upgrading programme which the RASV had planned to complete by the year 2000. These new improvements would further add to the changes to the Showgrounds which included the redevelopment of the Royal Block.

A further step in rural education was the reintroduction of a demonstration dairy, being organised by milk-vat supplier Barry Brown of Barry Brown and Sons. (Older show patrons will recall the outstanding display which operated from 1955 in the old Dairy Pavilion - for



*The Australian Stockman Sculpture, commissioned by Mrs. Diana Gibson.*

During the Show the Society paid tribute to the part played in the overall show scene and history by the old time tent 'showies' with the introduction of the 'Legends Avenue'. The first legend named was Jimmy Sharman Senior, and an excellent reproduction in poster form was placed in Degraeves Street opposite Lennon Avenue. A replica of the reproduction was presented to Jimmy Sharman Junior by the President of the Society at a function for award presentations during the Show.

For over a decade the Council, and recently the Board, were in a dilemma regarding the use of the Showgrounds site outside the Royal Show. Although many avenues of activity were discussed, no long term solution could be found. The loss of trotting to the Moonee Valley Racing Club was a great blow to the Society's activities and finances.

With the appointment in May 1994 of Mr. Peter Payne as Chief Executive, greater emphasis was placed on the use of the Showgrounds site. This push coincided with the realignment of the City of Melbourne boundary to include land owned by the Society under the Essendon City Council - a relationship which had never ever really been one of complete compatibility - for more than 100 years.

A policy, or mission statement was adopted to push harder for the redevelopment of the Showgrounds site. This included strong lobbying of the Melbourne City Council and especially members of the Victorian Parliament. This intense pressure was again taken by the Melbourne media, especially the print media, and resulted in articles most favourable to the Society's cause - if not quite hitting the target with the Premier, Mr. Jeff Kennett. Again we copy from the 'Herald Sun' editorial with a similar heading to that of last year:

***'A window on the bush'***

*For 138 years the Royal Melbourne Show has given city slickers a fascinating glimpse of country life. The fairyfloss, the sidesbows, the sample bags and the*

ing were offered a chance to ride in a special Junior Grand Prix carrying \$1,000 in prize-money.

Melbourne has one of the largest showings of Clydesdale horses, which is appropriate when these giants are known as 'the horse that built Australia'. And in 1997, the breed was judged by the international Scottish judge, Mr. Hugh Ramsay.

## President stands down

In handing over to the new President of the Society, Mr. Robert Potter, retiring Mr. J. Keith Buchanan, AM, summed up his four year term as follows:

*In retiring as President of the RASV I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the wonderful support and undivided loyalty I have received from both the Board and Council of the Society.*

*Together, we have seen many changes designed to help the Society continue with its important role in agriculture well into the 21st Century and advance its great 138 year tradition of serving the community.*

*Changes most significant include:*

- *The realignment of the boundary of the City of Melbourne to include the land owned by the Society*
- *The resignation of the Director in November 1993.*
- *The commissioning of KPMG to report on restructuring the governance and management of the Society - known as the Crawford Report.*
- *The appointment in May 1994 of a new Chief Executive.*
- *The adoption of a mission statement and a recommitment to develop the Ascot Vale site.*
- *The adoption of the Crawford Report with some minor changes, and the subsequent appointment of a Board of Directors.*
- *Incorporation of the Society and the subsequent merging of RASV Inc. and RASV Limited.*
- *The amendment of the Showgrounds Act of 1931 by the government.*
- *The decision by the Board to proceed with the building of the Showgrounds Exhibition Centre as a first stage of redevelopment, and firm policy commitment by the Board that top priority be given to greater year round use of the grounds.*
- *The retention of Alan Lewis to investigate and report on proposals for future improvement.*
- *The development and adoption of a business plan for use in future representations to government and others.*

These are matters already set in place during the Past President's four year term, but he also went on to say:

*It is likely that the change in governance to a Board of 10 Directors elected annually will prove to be the change with the most far-reaching effect and I am confident the Council will continue to elect board personnel of the calibre it now contains.*

many years supplying milk bars around the Showgrounds, and making available free samples of flavoured milk to school groups visiting the Royal Show).

With this new concept patrons would again be able to follow the flow of milk from the cows to the production of cheese. These demonstrations fitted in well for the dairy farmers, especially those exhibiting classes in the Guernsey Breed which was the Feature Breed of Dairy Cattle for the 1997 Royal Show. Beef Shorthorn cattle was the Feature Breed for Beef Cattle, and all major judging of the beef cattle sections was anticipated to be under cover, thus boosting animal, handler, exhibitor and spectator comfort.

Overall judging of beef breeds was condensed with more breeds being judged on the Wednesday of the second week, (24 September). A new section catered for small breeds like Dexters and Lowlines and these were judged in the first week with Special Cattle C Group breeds which included British Whites, Belgian Blues, Pinzgauers, Lincoln Reds, Highland Cattle and 12 other fascinating breeds.

Performance Class judging continued in 1997 with classes being judged in the middle of beef cattle activities to condense the time. Hereford, Poll Hereford, Angus, Murray Grey, Simmental, Limousin and Shorthorn breeds were all subject to Performance judging.

The Society had taken the unusual step in some of the Sheep sections by nominating Alpacas as the Feature Breed in the fibre producing animal competitions. To justify such a drastic change the Society defended its action by pointing out that the alpaca was chosen because it was a rapidly growing section of the natural fibres industry and breeders were demonstrating innovative farming techniques. A new class was added to the Sheep section, this being a new performance class for a group of five animals from the one sire, any age, and judges would look for consistent genetic quality within the flock.

The total judging timetable was revised for the 1997 Royal Show to allow sheep to be judged in the first week from Thursday 18 September.

## **Change of name for Centenary Hall**

From the 1997 Royal Show, Centenary Hall was called 'The Hall of Natural Fibres'. Housing major displays for the public, the Hall reflected the commercial extension of natural fibres through the theme 'Fabric Fantasy'.

Part of the Hall's attractions were fashion parades, and shearing competitions, including an interstate Team Challenge. Fleece classes included the Australian Lambs Wool Competition, Victorian Fleece Championships, Most Valuable Tested Fleece, District Fleece Championships and Mohair and Cashmere Championships. All were judged pre-Show with fleeces on display throughout the Show in the Hall of Natural Fibres.

Showjumping held a special place in the 1997 Royal Show Horse events. The Show hosted a round of the World Cup, an event run worldwide to select finalists for a championship for showjumping riders which is held in Europe or America each year. The Melbourne Show World Cup was conducted under lights on the evening of Thursday 25 September, and some of Australia's finest riders and horses aimed not only for success in this event but to qualify for the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

The course designer for this event was Dr. Arno Gego, a German and a technical delegate for the forthcoming Olympics. After consultation with riders and officials, the showjumping schedule was improved, stake money raised, the surface of the Main Arena upgraded to make the section appealing to riders and equestrian followers.

The Puissance competition was back and it was expected that the horses would jump close to 2.14 metres (seven feet), over the big Melbourne Show wall. Junior riders in showjump-

Elections held this year resulted in John Fox, Bill Forrest and Robert Lyons elected Vice Presidents. Four members of the Board, Ian Bucknall, Mike Burston, Jack Seymour and John Watson were re-elected, and two new Board members, John Russell and Gary Sheppard were elected.

In presenting the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Society to March 31 1997, the new President Mr. Bob Potter said:

*It is pleasing to report a trading surplus of \$189,382 which is an increase of \$67,544 over 1996. This has been achieved due principally to the continued increase in Show attendance and greatly improved catering results.*

*The trend of improving attendance figures should be able to be continued until we can claim to be an equally popular event in Victoria as in any other state. However, it is of paramount importance that the Society continue to make greater inroads into the unsatisfactory imbalance between Show and non-Show income. We will continue to pursue further improvements to the Business Plan and ongoing refinement of our management reporting systems with one result being our ability to demonstrate to our customers and Government that we are an efficient and accountable organisation.*

*These priorities of the Board go hand-in-hand with work being done to find ways and means to redevelop the site. The Board has adopted in principle a proposal that an equity partner or partners could be the way the Society should go in redevelopment proposals.*

*The Society with the assistance of Macquarie Bank and Lewis McNaughton is continuing to explore possibilities in these directions.*

*I am confident that we have made a great deal of progress in improving relations with Government over the last three or four years. We were delighted that the Premier, The Hon. Jeff Kennett, has accepted patronage of our International Beer Awards, and that he has endorsed The Premier's Wine Trophy for the best Victorian Wine of any colour or style - an award which will undoubtedly create great interest and notoriety.*

*We must continue to work closely with various Government Ministers and Departments and to develop our good relations with the City of Melbourne.*

*Without the co-operation and assistance of those mentioned, we are not likely to achieve our full potential. We thank Lord Mayor Deveson for his assistance and help so far. A special thank you is also due to The Hon. Bill McGrath, MLA for his encouragement and support as Minister of Agriculture, and we extend to him our best wishes in his new portfolio, and at the same time welcome the Deputy Premier, The Hon. Pat McNamara, as a new Councillor.*

*I am pleased to report that the 1996 Royal Show, which featured a number of variations, was a successful event, and it was good to see Horticulture improve and entries in Dairy Cattle reversing the downward trend.*

*We were honoured to have the Premier open the newly completed Exhibition Centre on Monday 23 September 1996. This new centre will be a feature in future Shows and we anticipate that it will be a catalyst for greater year round use of the grounds.*

*His Excellency and Mrs. McGarvie, as always, have been great supporters and we thank them both not only for opening the Show and hosting us at a*

*Decisions still to be made are not going to be easy. The tasks ahead will require a great deal of effort but I feel sure the Society is well equipped to handle the challenges ahead.*

The new President, Mr. Robert Potter, was elected to Council in 1982, and made Vice President and member of the Board in 1993. His background is closely associated with the land, and after his early years as a jackeroo in New South Wales and Victoria - working with beef cattle and sheep, he went on to manage the well-known 'Yarram Park' property of 9,700 ha at Willaura in the Western District.

He and his wife Joy now run Angus and Hereford cattle on their Caramut property 'Worriwest'. On his election to President Mr. Potter made it clear that he was well aware of the responsibilities and challenges the office presented when he described the job as big, daunting and exciting. He said:

*The Society faces enormous challenges, foremost being the redevelopment, which began in 1996 with the construction of the Showgrounds Exhibition Centre. Our commitment to promoting excellence in agriculture is stronger than ever.*

In recognising the significance of Mr. Keith Buchanan's term of office, the new President made these comments:

*I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Keith Buchanan, our Immediate Past President, for his leadership during a challenging period in the history of the Society. He has provided us with a very strong foundation to build on and further develop the Society and the Ascot Vale site as a continuing and more important cog in the the wheel promoting the importance of agriculture in the overall scene.*

*I take this opportunity on behalf of the Board, Council and staff to wish Mr. Buchanan all the best in the future and we know that he will continue to work towards promoting and supporting the aims of the Society.*

## Changes in Council

The Council members were saddened with the news of the death of Life Councillor L. G. C. (Lindsay) Nicholas, on 19 March 1997. The late Mr. Nicholas joined the Council in 1957 and was made a Life Councillor in 1977. The Jersey Cattle Pavilion bears the family name of 'Nicholas Pavilion' and will continue to serve as a memorial to this great family.

His contribution to trotting in Victoria as RASV representative on the old Trotting Control Board, and later the Harness Racing Victoria body, did much to give that sport more respectability in the eyes of the public.

Congratulations were extended to Mr. Ian Morton AM, on his appointment to Life Councillor. He was elected to Council in 1976 and served on many of the Society's committees.

Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on His Excellency, The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie AC, QC, and Mrs. McGarvie, W. K. Waddell, Elizabeth Webb, Keith Fitzgerald, Cliff Whitley, Charles Bush and Jack Hiscock for their contribution to the Society.

Life Councillor Mr. W. A. (Arthur) Angliss, who now resides in Port Macquarie, NSW, resigned on 31 March 1997. Mr. Tony St. Clair, and Mrs. Sarah Crooke also resigned on the same date.

*Government House Reception, but for their encouragement and interest. We wish them well and a very happy and enjoyable retirement in the years ahead and welcome them as Honorary Life Members of the Society.*

*The occasion of the presentation to the Society of the 'Australian Stockman' by Mrs. Diana Gibson on 19 September 1996 in memory of her father Major David Knox, was a wonderful occasion for the Society and without doubt provides a tremendous lift to the whole grounds. We are most grateful to have received this very fine sculpture.*

*Catering arrangements following the appointment of Michael O'Brien Catering Limited, as our catering managers, has provided one of the year's highlights and improved food and facilities at showtime were well received by patrons. Investment in additional requirements involving significant cost is continuing, and further improvements to facilities will be available in the forthcoming year.*

*The Society's rural activities outside of Show are continuing. Sponsorships for these important events, I am pleased to advise is on the increase.*

*The return of the Commercial Beef Herd of the Year is imminent, and the importance of all competitions and associated field days together with the dissemination of knowledge they provide, will always be an important part of the Society's work.*

*The Royal Melbourne Horse Show, held in January 1997, was extended to five days duration and it continues to increase in stature. It is now a well established and efficiently run event, and is considered the biggest horse event in the Southern Hemisphere - a record number of 6,200 entries were received representing 28 breeds.*

*The Sheep and Wool Show held in July in conjunction with the Australian Sheepbreeder's Association, whilst a very good event, did not meet its financial targets. However, projections for greater success in 1997 are promising and should be achieved.*

*The biennial Conference of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth in 1996 was held in Chester, England. The theme of the Conference was 'Agriculture in the Commonwealth' and was adjudged as being very successful. All Commonwealth countries were represented and all Australian states. Sir Rupert Clarke, Keith Buchanan and Peter Payne attended as delegates from Victoria.*

Chief Executive Mr. Peter Payne, made these comments in support of the President's Report:

*The Society has completed another successful year, increasing its commitment to and focus on excellence in agriculture and the continuing appeal and financial success of the Royal Melbourne Show.*

*The year to 31 March was highlighted by overall increases in exhibitors and entries at most Society events for the second year in succession, a further significant increase in attendance at the Royal Show, and sound financial result.*

*The Royal Melbourne Show continues to be the biggest event in Victoria, providing an annual economic benefit to the State of more than \$100 million.*

*A number of innovations were introduced to the 1996 Royal Show including:*

- *A new concept in environmental management involving the recycling-starting on site of all rubbish generated by the Royal Show. It is believed to be the first programme of its kind in the world, and was conducted in conjunction with four major Show partners: Cleanevent, Visy Recycling, Michael O'Brien Catering, and Lombard The Paper People. Approximately 47 tonnes of paper were collected and recycled as a result of this 'Complete Circle Recycling' programme, and almost 350 tonnes of waste were everted from landfill. This programme was entered for the prestigious Banksia Environment Awards for 1997 and was a finalist in the category of Resource Conservation and Waste Minimisation.*
- *The food offered was substantially upgraded.*

*A new concept in catering offered a range of high quality products as a celebration of the food chain from 'Paddock to Plate' to reinforce the quality and availability of fresh, natural produce from rural Victoria in the production of excellent food.*

- *New attractions introduced included 'IAMS Wonderful World of Pets', which was a first for any Royal Show in Australia; the 'Streets' Walk to the Animals; the World of Horses; the reintroduction of live milking display; and in the Woodchopping events, a Test Match between Australian and New Zealand axemen.*
- *The introduction of an International and Interstate Visitors' Room at the Showgrounds to provide a meeting place, and enabling the Show to offer a range of special services on an individual basis.*

*Commercial interest has been strong, and continues to grow in the new Exhibition Centre with a number of trade and business events being held there following the 1996 Royal Show. The Society moved ahead during the year in developing its Vision to redevelop the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds. A positioning paper, 'The Vision Splendid' is being finalised, articulating the Society's vision for the Showgrounds to fulfil its potential for the benefit of Victorian agriculture. The programme envisages comprehensive, cost effective redevelopment which will facilitate year round income streams for multi-purpose facilities, whilst focusing on agricultural excellence not only in Victoria but also in Australia and, longer term, the Asia Pacific Area.*

*Our membership remains a vital support base for the future of the Society. The Member's facilities were significantly upgraded for the 1996 Royal Show and this programme will continue, together with the introduction of a wider range of benefits. I would like to thank Members for their continued input and support throughout the year.*

## **Showgrounds conservation plan**

In December 1996 the Society commissioned Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd and Dr. Airlie Worrall of the Victorian Farmers Federation, to carry out a study of the Showgrounds on behalf of Heritage Victoria and the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria. The Study was undertaken with a \$15000 grant from Heritage Victoria, and the brief was to establish the cultural significance to Victoria of the Royal Melbourne Show, and the importance of the Showgrounds relative to that event, and to review the buildings on site in the context of their contribution to the holding of the Royal Melbourne Show and RASV's achievement of its mission.

## VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

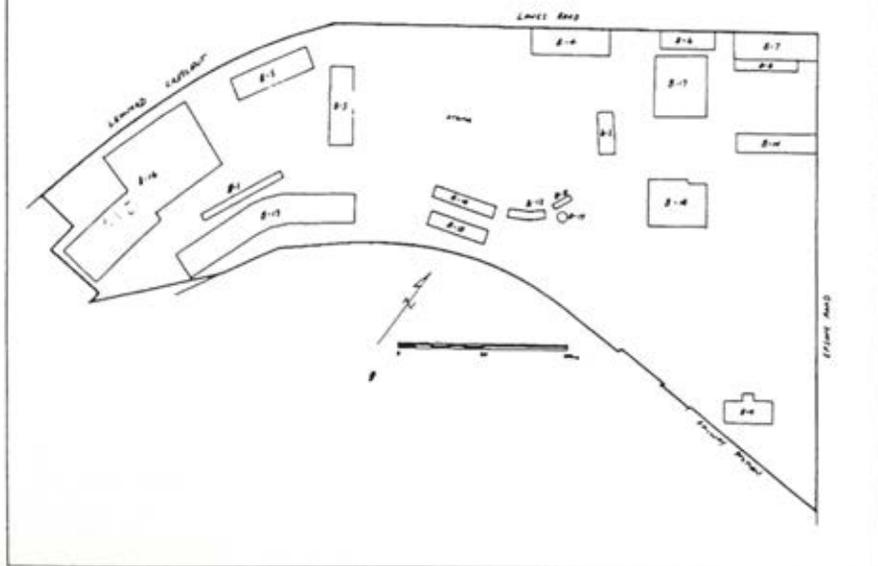
HERITAGE REGISTER NUMBER: 1329

NAME: Royal Agricultural Showgrounds

- EXTENT:**
- All of the buildings and structures marked as follows on diagram number 607190 held by the Executive Director:
 

B-1 Pig (Rural) Pavilion	B-2 Arts & Crafts Building
B-3 Cattle Pavilion Number 1	B-4 Cattle Pavilion Number 3
B-5 Cattle Pavilion Number 4	B-6 Cattle Pavilion Number 5
B-7 Horse (Clydesdale) Pavilion	B-8 Harness Shed
B-9 Woodfull Pavilion	B-10 Public Grandstand
B-11 Cliff Grandstand	B-12 Chirnside Grandstand
B-13 Sheep Pavilion and Lockers	B-14 Hall of Manufactures
B-15 Agricultural (Horticultural) Hall	B-16 Horse Boxes and Lockers (& Horse Bar)
B-17 Horse Boxes and Lockers	B-18 Royal Luncheon Rooms
B-19 Food Kiosk (incorporating meat pie sign)	
  - All of the land known as the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds as shown on diagram number 607190 held by the Executive Director and more particularly described in Certificate of Title Volume 4950 Folio 829, Volume 4950 Folio 830, Volume 3807 Folio 226, Volume 1588 Folio 409, Volume 1492 Folio 267, Volume 3227 Folio 245; Volume 3157 Folio 216, Volume 1902 Folio 325, Volume 6333 Folio 488, Volume 3859 Folio 752, Volume 3843 Folio 500, Volume 8038 Folio 127, Volume 1463 Folio 579, Volume 6826 Folio 164, Volume 2859 Folio 661, Volume 2859 Folio 662, Volume 4956 Folio 111, and Crown Allotments 28D and 28E, Parish of Doutra Galla, County of Bourke.

DIAGRAM NUMBER: 607190



*Protected Buildings and Structures, placed on Victorian Heritage Register.*



**Heritage**  
VICTORIA

File No. 607190

25 August, 1997

The Secretary  
Royal Agricultural Showgrounds of Victoria  
Epsom Road  
ASCOT VALE VIC 3032

Nauru House  
Level 22  
80 Collins Street  
Melbourne 3000  
Telephone (03) 9655 6519  
Facsimile (03) 9655 9720

Att: Mr P Payne

Dear Sir/Madam,

**ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SHOWGROUNDS  
EPSOM ROAD, ASCOT VALE**

VHR No. 1329

I write to inform you that the above place was added to the Victorian Heritage Register, in accordance with Section 46 of the *Heritage Act (1995)*, on 14 August 1997.

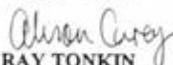
The above place is therefore included in the Register as a culturally heritage significant place.

For your information I have enclosed a copy of the notice published in the Victorian Government Gazette and the relevant material from the report to the Heritage Council. The **Extent of Registration** illustrates what is included on the Heritage Register and the **Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance** outlines the reasons why the property has been determined to be of special significance to Victoria. Also included is **Exemptions from Permits** which outlines works that can be carried out without a permit.

However, please be aware that the property owner is required to apply for a permit from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before undertaking any works other than those mentioned in the **Exemptions from Permits**. I have enclosed a permit application form and a brochure that explains the permit process.

Should you have any queries regarding either of these matters, please do not hesitate to contact Alison Carey, Registration Co-ordinator on (03) 9655 9730 or Frances Hall, Permits Co-ordinator on (03) 9655 9753.

Yours sincerely,

  
RAY TONKIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

cc. National Trust of Australia (Vic)  
Melbourne City Council

Royal Historical Society of Victoria  
Mr A Lewis, C/- Lewis McNaughton Pty Ltd

 INFRASTRUCTURE

*Notification of Registration, Victorian Heritage Council*



RASV President Bob Potter addressing assembly at RAAF wreath laying ceremony, 7 May 1997.

From the Society's point of view it was hoped the Study would produce two key conclusions:

1. By providing certainty to any future investor in the Showgrounds about which buildings would have to remain in any redevelopment, and
2. Identifying the Showgrounds and the Royal Show as a place and event of cultural heritage significance for the people of Victoria, and thereby, hopefully assisting the argument for public sector financial support for a redevelopment that would allow this site to continue as a home for the Royal Show and a focal point for agriculture.

The comprehensive Heritage (Conservation) Study was completed and tabled to the Board in April 1997, and in his covering letter Mr. Alan Lewis, Lewis McNaughton Pty Ltd (Consultants), made these points:

*The Study and subsequent policy recommendations have been negotiated with Heritage Victoria. These recommendations provide a sound basis for the future development and management of the Showgrounds, and it is recommended that the Study and recommendations be adopted by the Board. Following the Board's acceptance of the Study, Heritage Victoria will place the Study and recommendations on exhibition for a period of 60 days and people can make submissions thereto or appear before the Heritage Council prior to a final decision being made.*

Subsequently, in August 1997 the following communication was received from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria:



## VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

HERITAGE REGISTER NUMBER: 1329

NAME: Royal Agricultural Showgrounds

## STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

Developed as the base for the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and the home of the Royal Melbourne Show from 1883, the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds are Victoria's largest and pre-eminent example of an agricultural showground complex. The substantial grounds contain a large number of buildings conforming to a range of building types, many of which are of individual interest as exemplars of their type. The Showgrounds have been the sole site of the annual Royal Melbourne Show from 1883 until the present, and continue in that role. The continued presence of the Royal Melbourne Show within the showgrounds demonstrates the importance of the metropolitan area as a focus for ideas in agriculture, and also maintains a fundamental principle of the Show, the provision of access for the urban population to information about the rural areas.

The Royal Agricultural Showgrounds are of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria.

As a complex, the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds have economic, historical and cultural significance as the largest agricultural show complex in Australia, a vital part of Australia's oldest major industry, and an important location for the enactment of national identity. The site and its show are of cultural significance as the largest single public event held annually in Victoria, attracting in excess of 700,000 persons each year. They are also vital as the major interface between rural and urban populations in Victoria's calendar. These aspects of the significance of the place are intimately related to the ongoing presence of the annual Show upon the site. The fabric of the Showgrounds is the primary illustration of the significant activities of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in the past one hundred years.

The Royal Agricultural Showgrounds represents the most diverse, substantial and significant place of its kind in Australia. Within the complex, the various Cattle, Pig, Dog, Horse and Agricultural Pavilions may be considered to have great architectural, historical and social significance as the largest substantially intact group of Federation and inter-war pavilions in Australia, a significance enhanced by the complementary architecture of the Public, Cliff and Chimside Grandstands. The Arts & Crafts Pavilion and the Hall of Manufactures are of significance for economic as well as aesthetic reasons, epitomising as they do strong social movements in national development. Other buildings which aid interpretation of the place include the Royal Luncheon Buildings, the Woodfull Pavilion, the Administration Building, the Horse Boxes and Lockers, and the carnival buildings.

*that role. The continued presence of the Royal Melbourne Show within the Showgrounds demonstrates the importance of the metropolitan area as a focus for ideas in agriculture, and also maintains a fundamental principle of the Show, the provision of access for the urban population to information about rural areas.*

*The Royal Agricultural Showgrounds are of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria. As a complex, the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds have economic, historical and cultural significance as the largest agricultural show complex in Australia, a vital part of Australia's oldest major industry, and an important location for the enactment of national identity.*

*The site and its show are of cultural significance as the largest single public event held annually in Victoria, attracting in excess of 700,000 persons each year.*

*They are also vital as the major interface between rural and urban populations in Victoria's calendar. These aspects of the significance of the place are intimately related to the ongoing presence of the annual show upon the site. The fabric of the Showgrounds is the primary illustration the significant activities of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in the past one hundred years.*

*The Royal Agricultural Showgrounds represents the most diverse, substantial and significant place of its kind in Australia. Within the complex, the various Cattle, Pig, Dog, Horse, Sheep and Agricultural Pavilions may be considered to have great architectural, historical and social significance as the largest substantially intact group of Federation and inter-war Pavilions in Australia, a significance enhanced by the complementary architecture of the Public, Cliff, and Chirside Grandstands.*

*The Arts & Crafts Pavilion and the Hall of Manufactures are of significance for economic as well as aesthetic reasons, epitomising as they do, strong movements in national development. Other buildings which aid interpretation of the place include the Royal Luncheon Buildings, the Woodful Pavilion, the Administration Building, the Horse Boxes and Lockers and the carnival buildings.*

## **Strong entries for Sheep & Wool Show despite tough season**

Poor seasonal conditions and the spectre of OJD (Ovine Johne's Disease) had only a minor effect on entries in this year's Melbourne Sheep and Wool Show.

A total of 1,548 sheep - 440 less than in 1996 - were on show by breeders around the country when the Australian Sheep Breeder's Association Inc. and the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited jointly hosted this historical event at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds from 17 to 20 July.

Inclement weather experienced during the event dashed the organisers' hopes of a good public response, but nevertheless the cut-back in overall expenses assisted to bring about a 'break even' situation regarding finances.

Merino sheep continued to top the entries with 624 exhibits while the Feature Breed, Border Leicesters, made a good showing with 121 entries, 16 more than last year. The strong-wool breeds also had a good representation with 102 Corriedales and 72 Polwarths entered. And the breed favoured by sheepmeat specialists - the Poll Dorset, had a very creditable entry of 158.

Royal Agricultural Showgrounds,  
Epsom Road, Ascot Vale.  
VHR 1329, 25 August, 1997

*I write to inform you that the above place was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in accordance with Section 46 of the Heritage Act (1995), on 14 August, 1997.*

*The above place is therefore included in the Register as a culturally heritage significant place.*

Included in the communication was a copy of the notice published in the Victorian Government Gazette G32, 14 August 2105 which listed 19 buildings and structures, and 19 Certificates of Title for the Showgrounds land; and the Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance.

The protected buildings and structures are:

Pig (Rural) Pavilion (1903, 1915)  
Arts & Crafts Building (1904)  
Cattle Pavilion No 1 (1915)  
Cattle Pavilion No 3 (1920)  
Cattle Pavilion No 4 (1934)  
Cattle Pavilion No 5 (1914)  
Horse Pavilion (Clydesdale) (1923/24)  
Harness Shed (c. 1923)  
Woodfull Pavilion (1918)  
Cliff Stand (1912-15)  
Chirnside Stand (1912-18)  
Public Stand (1915)  
Sheep Pavilion & Lockers (1919, 1929, 1959)  
Hall of Manufactures (1923)  
Agricultural (Horticultural) Hall (1915)  
Horse Boxes, Lockers, and Horse Bar (Western Area)  
Horse Boxes & Lockers (Eastern Area)  
Royal Luncheon Rooms (1916)  
Food Kiosk (1976) (incorporating Meat Pie Sign)

Also on the Showgrounds but of separate ownership to RASV:

Mad Mouse (post 1946),  
Showgrounds Railway Station (1910).

The Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance is much too important to precis in anyway so is included here in its entirety:

*Heritage Register Number 1329  
Royal Agricultural Showgrounds*

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance**

*Developed as a base for the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and the home of the Royal Melbourne Show from 1883, the Royal Showgrounds are Victoria's largest and pre-eminent example of an agricultural showgrounds complex. The substantial grounds contain a large number of buildings conforming to a range of building types, many of which are of individual interest as exemplars of their type. The Showgrounds have been the sole site of the annual Royal Melbourne Show from 1883 until the present, and continue in*

## Horses come into their own

Record entries were recorded for horses in 1997. The Garryowen Trophy, always a Royal Show favourite, attracted 62 entries. The prestigious turnout event was judged on Friday, 19 September, and the winner was presented with her trophy by Lady Gobbo, wife of Victoria's Governor.

Of special interest to horse jumping enthusiasts was the course-building combination of Victoria's John Vallance and Venezuela's Leopoldo Palaceas who will design courses at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Patrons had a first hand look at their handiwork at the Volvo/K. Ritchie World Cup Qualifier held under lights on Wednesday 25 September, when the audience were invited to sit on the Main Arena close to the jumping action.

Horses for Courses was a new addition to the Royal Show livestock education curriculum, providing education in horse care. The operation had three main components:

- A demonstration ring where horse experts discussed topics such as equipment and safety riding, horse character, health and conformation.
- Different breeds of horses in stables with information on their purpose and use, showing diversity of shapes, sizes, colour and conformation.
- A display with information on horse care, and how to get information on pony clubs and other horse breed societies.

The Pony Club Association worked closely with the Society in formulating this project and assistance was also provided by the Northern College of TAFE, which runs a successful Horse Management Course catering primarily for the racing industry.

## The vision splendid

Just prior to the start of the 1997 Royal Show, the Society released a well documented and illustrated brochure titled: 'The Vision Splendid - Redevelopment of the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds'.

The foreword for the publication was shared between The Hon. Jeff Kennett MP, Premier of Victoria, and the President of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, Mr. Bob Potter and deserves to be recorded here:

The Hon. Jeff Kennett MP:

*The Victorian government and private sector developers are working on Victoria's biggest ever programme of civic projects designed to revitalise the State.*

*Projects such as City Link, Docklands, and Federation Square - based on our Agenda 21 programme - will ensure Melbourne will remain one of the world's great cities.*

*Redevelopment of the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds represents another opportunity to reinforce the cultural and commercial strengths of Victoria. Long recognised as the home of Australian agriculture, Victoria is well placed to capitalise on its advantages and become a key food and fibre centre for Asia-Pacific.*

Alpaca breeders provided one of the biggest lift in entries with 89 animals facing the judges this year. Other fleeces such as Mohair with 27 entries and Black and Coloured with 22 entries show increasingly strong interest.

Again this year the Melbourne Sheep and Wool Show embraced the VACC Melbourne Merino Classic, which is only one of six designated Merino export sales in Australia. As well as the sheep competitions special exhibitions of wool and woolcraft, workshops, market shops and cooking demonstrations presented by top butchers proved a big attraction.

Each year the Woolcraft Show and Exhibition which includes ancient crafts and new crafts, had its usual big following and featured 61 classes, including exhibits from all parts of Australia, with most interest in the special classes which included 'Most Outstanding Entry Using Australian Wool'; 'Most Outstanding Handspun Entry' and 'Best Paraded Garment'. Another popular section was the prestigious team competition in which five different articles were made by each team competing for a perpetual shield donated by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited.

The main pre-Royal Show judging commenced in June with the Liquorland Australian International Beer awards which resulted in the Grand Champion Beer award going to Lion Lager from the South African Breweries Company.

The now well established and industry acknowledged Royal Melbourne Dairy Show continued to grow in stature with just on 700 entries from 90 dairy produce exhibitors. Among the championship awards the following exhibits took pride of place:

*Champion Prize - Butter for Export* - Exhibit 7, Bonlac Foods.

*Champion Prize - Fresh Butter* - Exhibit 27, Bonlac Foods.

*Champion Prize - Dried Milk Product* - Exhibit 48, Bonlac Foods.

*Champion Prize - Cheddar* - Exhibit 164, United Milk, Tasmania.

*Champion Prize - Chocolate* - Exhibit 104, Dullo Chocolates P/L.

*Champion Prize - Yoghurt* - Exhibit 379, Murrumbidgee Dairy Products, Wagga Wagga.

*Champion Prize - Ice Cream* - Exhibit 630, Norco-Lismore.

*Champion Prizes - Most Successful Exhibitor Cheese* - Lactos P/L.

*Champion Prizes - Supreme Cheese Award* - Exhibit 233, Kraft.

All the main award winning exhibits were displayed in the Dairy Industry Pavilion during the Royal Show.

With an all time record of 3,071 entries the Royal Melbourne Wine Show was hailed as an outstanding success. Main trophy winners were:

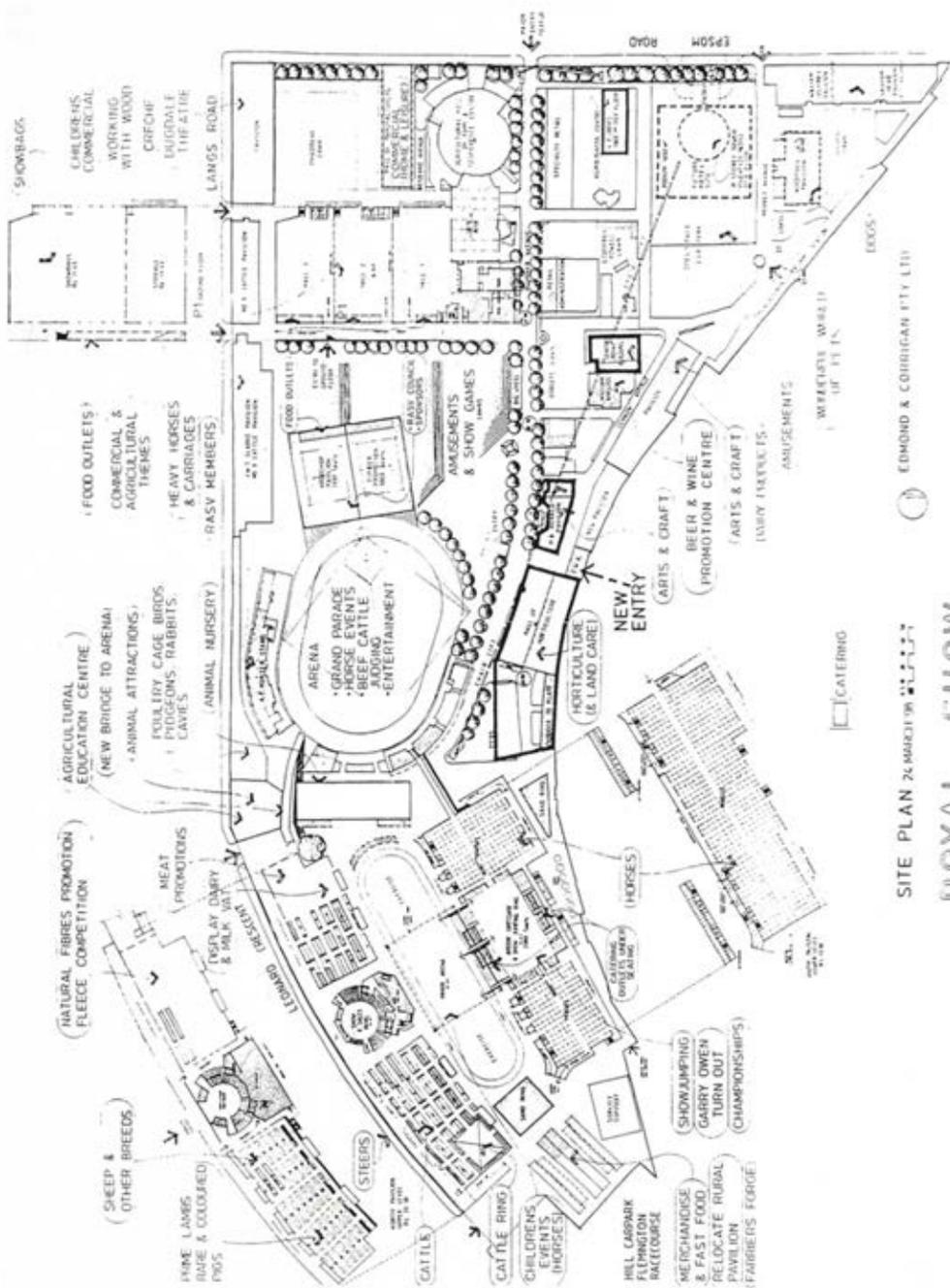
*The Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy* - Gulf Station Vineyards, Dixon Creek, Exhibit 131, Shiraz 1996.

*The Premier's Gold Trophy* - Brown Brothers Milawa Vineyard, Exhibit 18 (2) Show Muscat BL.

*The Victorian Wine Industry Association Inc. Trophy (For the Most Successful Exhibitor in Victoria Wine Classes 28-31)* Windy Peak Vineyards Pty Ltd: De Bortoli Wines Pty Ltd.

*The Vintage Cellars Trophy (For Best White in Show - Selected by Chairman of Judging Panel)* - Leo Buring Pty Ltd. Southcorp Wines, Exhibit 12, Eden Valley Riesling 1984.

*The Douglas Seabrook Memorial Trophy (For Best Red Wine in show - Selected by Chairman of Judging Panel)* - Michelton Wines Pty Ltd, Exhibit 27, Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1990.



SITE PLAN 24 MARCH 1998

# ROYAL SHOW

EDMUND & CORRIGAN PTY LTD

The proposed future Royal Show.

*The Royal Agricultural Society's vision for the Showgrounds combines the cultural and commercial aspects of Victoria's agricultural sector in achieving this objective. The redevelopment outlined by the Society is an important step towards taking full advantage as Victoria's role as a showcase for agriculture, along with our country lifestyle.*

Mr. Bob Potter, President of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria:

*For some years now, the Society has invested much time and effort in developing a plan for the future. The results of this work are presented here in overview, to provide all interested parties with the Society's vision for the future.*

*The Showgrounds is uniquely placed - culturally and geographically - for development as a centre for agricultural best practice, and as a nexus between city and country. Beyond a common meeting ground, the Showgrounds can also become a forum in which the many organisations within the agricultural sector can discuss and develop mutual objectives. This sector could then start to speak with one voice.*

*For perhaps the first time in the Society's long history, there exists a vital opportunity to pursue a united course of action for agriculture. By seizing the day, we can all play a part in what promises to be a great enterprise, and we look forward to sharing the details with all interested parties.*

The 139th Royal Melbourne Show started on Thursday 18 September and concluded on Sunday 28 September 1997 and from all indications was recognised as an outstanding success. With a total attendance of 748,864 - an increase of 22,064 on 1996 - and the best since 1990, it proved once more how vital weather conditions are to such an event.

The weather overall was favourable, only the first Friday, 19 September, provided adverse conditions, with the weather wet and cold from mid-day and continuing throughout the night. These conditions naturally resulted in cutting the Friday attendance quite dramatically.

The Official Opening, at 2.30pm on Saturday 21 September, was performed by the Society's Patron-In-Chief, His Excellency, The Honourable Sir William Deane, AC KBE, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was the first occasion in which a Patron-In-Chief had honoured the Society since 1988 when Sir Ninian Stephen, then Governor-General, performed the ceremony.

The resurfaced Main Arena coped very well with all the horse and arena attractions; and the free around-the-grounds entertainment was greatly appreciated by the hundreds of family groups attending the Show this year.

Despite the adverse weather conditions for the farming community, stock exhibits in particular were well presented and in first class condition, and all farm produce and exotic classes were well supported and appreciated by the Show patrons.

The total entries matched those of last year in spite of the worsening seasonal conditions brought about by the El Nino effect. This atmospheric phenomenon above the Pacific Ocean causes rain to move away from Australia, and was last experienced in the 1982-3 years producing one of the worst droughts on record.

The big winners in this year's Show were again the educational, agricultural and stock rearing displays in halls and pavilions, including - Nature's Way; Pigs and People; the Animal Nursery; Horses for Courses; Farrier's Forge; Natural Fibres Hall; Harvest Hall; the Horticultural Pavilion, and the Arts and Crafts. The woodchop programme - as always - main-



tained its popularity with the Australia/New Zealand Test Matches drawing big crowds. The new Showgrounds Exhibition Centre hosted the Sport and Recreation segment, including all football codes, basketball, hockey, lawn bowls and information on the Australian Grand Prix.

The Victorian Government display was also well patronised and just about every Government Department was represented.

Always a great drawcard was the Royal Melbourne Dog Show, with the huge entry of 6,200 and being recognised as the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere, a position it has jealously guarded since the 1950s. (And because of this has been able to attract new breeds such as the Polish Lowland Sheepdogs, Portuguese Water Dogs, Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers and Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers).

Exit polls indicated that in the 1997 Royal Melbourne Show, the Society's perception was correct with the overall 'mix' meeting with unanimous approval. There was an expectation that the rise in adult admission charge of \$2 - the first increase for six years - may have had an adverse effect on attendance but goodwill was maintained with the great diversity of free entertainment provided in all areas of the Showgrounds.

The Society added a further legend to the 'Legend's Avenue' this year, the old time 'showie' honoured was Jack Allan, and the poster depicted a young Jack Allan with one of the world's greatest 'exhibits' Chief Little Wolf.

As the Society moves into its 150th year of influence in 1998, all those associated with its activities should bask in its achievements. It has been the hub and a catalyst for all functions of agriculture in this state from the early days of Australia Felix through the pioneer days of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales to our present State of Victoria. It has also shown the way in research and development of all phases of agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, viticultural and stock raising.

This Society has the privilege of being the oldest, continuous functioning organisation in Victoria - and this includes the Spring Racing Carnival and the AFL Football Finals. It presents the one and only opportunity for a forum of city and country people to exchange views and compare life styles, and can truly lay title to its 1997 Royal Show theme - 'The biggest event in the event State'.

Throughout the annals of this Society, the occasion has always produced a positive result when the situation arose, it now behoves those guiding the fortunes of the Society to once again respond in a positive manner to the exciting new challenges of the redevelopment of the Showgrounds. This undoubtedly can be achieved with the assistance of the Macquarie Bank, which was given a mandate in November 1996 as the Society's economic advisors, to develop and implement a structure for funding the redevelopment of the Showgrounds with maximum private sector participation and minimum Government contribution. And the Society is continuing discussions with the Premier and the Victorian Government thus involving the public sector in this very necessary, exciting and worthwhile project.

General Jim Hughes came to the Society with a first hand association of the rural sector having farmed a property near Yass in New South Wales with his wife, where they ran sheep and stud ponies.

His first Royal Show in 1987 was a memorable one in that it created a record entry total of 40,789, and, for the first time since the Second World War, the September school holidays coincided with the Show, as a result of the introduction of a four term structure in the State's Primary and Secondary Schools.

During his term General Hughes witnessed the introduction of the Farm Animal Expo, a major display of beef and dairy cattle breeds, sheep, goats and horses, all under the one roof in the one time No 2 Cattle Pavilion. Also during this period, the Society supported the Australian Bicentenary celebrations by adopting the show theme for the 1988 Royal Melbourne Show - 'Australia - Showing Our Best' and by hosting the Bicentenary National Arts and Crafts Exhibition titled 'Art Craft '88'. Over this time more open space was created on the Showgrounds with the removal of many of the very old buildings situated in the Skene Street area, and gardens established.

In May 1989 General Hughes resigned and was succeeded by Mr. R. E. Carr.

**Robert E. Carr, B. Ec., MBA, TSTC, 1989-1993**



Mr. R. E. (Bob) Carr, took up his appointment as Director of the RASV in August 1989, just one month before the start of the 1989 Royal Melbourne Show.

His background was that of a business executive, having developed his marketing, finance and planning skills in companies such as Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., and Kemtron Ltd. His previous position was that of Chief Executive Officer of the Zoological Board of Victoria.

He took up his appointment at a time when the general economy was in recession and unemployment was heading towards an all time record high. Conditions for the primary producers and stock breeders were bad with low returns for commodities and seasonal conditions anything but good.

In this climate of restricted funds his first priority was to preserve finance reserves and endeavour to stretch or spread the limited resources over as much general works and maintenance as possible. He initiated several discussions between Council and staff to consider the medium to long term development of the Showgrounds. These discussions proved beneficial in generating ideas for using the facilities and for future improvements.

His interest in the Animal Welfare Federation of Australia Incorporated, led to his appointment by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to the government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee with the object of keeping the Society abreast with the issue of companion animals.

Bob Carr's business acumen and professional skills have served the Society well in many low profile matters such as reviewing the rules and constitution of the organisation, the rescheduling of the finances when many questions were being asked about the viability of the Society and its activities, the piloting through of the incorporation of the Society, and the constant striving for better use of the Showgrounds.

## Administrators - Secretaries and Directors

### Brian Parry 1980-86



Following Council decision in May 1980 to permit Harley Clappison early retirement, Mr. J. B. Parry was appointed to the position of Director of the RASV.

He brought 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.

He succeeded Mr. Clappison as Director in November 1980, and experienced his first Royal Melbourne Show in 1981.

During his six year term, Mr. Parry worked closely with the Council to significantly increase the level of free entertainment at the Show in addition to introducing agricultural based education programmes aimed primarily at the urban dweller, particularly students. He was successful in reducing the number of novelty stands, rides and games on the Showgrounds and achieved a higher overall standard of amusements.

He was also responsible for initiating the theme concept for each Royal Show, around which the Show's basic components of entertainment, education and agriculture are structured.

He piloted the reconstruction of management dictated by the McKinsey and Company Report in 1984, and in the same year, oversaw the Society's staging of the first international Show featuring Japan as the Guest Nation. So successful was 'See Japan at the Show' that Council agreed that the Guest Nation concept should be a regular Royal Show feature every two or three years.

Greater use of the Showgrounds and its facilities outside the Show period was a further priority of Mr. Parry and he saw this policy direction extended with the establishment of the Showgrounds Redevelopment Sub-Committee, charged with the responsibility to determine likely alternatives for the long-time use of the Grounds.

Mr. Parry tendered his resignation in December 1986 in order to take the position of President of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board.

### Major-General J. C. Hughes 1987-89



At the May meeting of Council in 1987 Major-General J. C. Hughes, AO, DSO, MC, Rt, was appointed Director of the RASV to replace Mr. Brian Parry.

Following an outstanding military career, including a Command in the Vietnam War, this highly decorated soldier spent three years as President of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board before taking up his RASV appointment. This almost appeared like a 'swap jobs' situation with the previous Director, Mr. Brian Parry, resigning his RASV position to take up that of President of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and General Hughes vacating the Fire Brigade Board appointment to take up that of Director of the RASV!

# Appendix I

## Presidents

1977-81 Robert T. Balderstone, CMG, MC.

1982-86 G. R. Starritt, AM, OBE.



- Top Studmaster in Border Leicester, Poll Dorset and Southdown sheep, and Beef Shorthorn cattle, from the Goulburn Valley Region of the State. Respected international judge of sheep and cattle, having officiated in Scotland, South Africa and most Australian Royal Shows. Has held senior offices in the Australian Society of Breeders of British Sheep, Poll and Beef Shorthorn Societies of Australia - including Chairman of the 1977 World Conference of Shorthorn Societies; and Chairman of the Victorian Prime Lamb Committee, and the Australian Meat Research Committee.

1986-90 J. H. H. Sleigh, AM.



- Grazier and stud cattle breeder from the Goulburn Valley, with farming interests also in the Riverina of New South Wales. Renowned breeder and judge of Poll Hereford cattle. Was Director of the Australian Poll Hereford Society from 1970 to 1986 and Chairman from 1982 to 1986. A top farmer, he won the Hanslow Cup for soil conservation work in 1964, and his 'Bayunga' property at Nagambie has long been a local show-piece and tourist attraction.

**Peter M. Payne, FCA. 1994 -**



Mr. Payne took up his appointment as Chief Executive of the RASV on 9 May 1994, taking over from Mr. Carr who resigned in November 1993.

Mr. Payne had recently returned to Australia following some years in the United Kingdom with the Foster's Brewing Group. His responsibility while there was the development of strategy and marketing of the Foster's brand in Continental Europe where it had been launched in more than 15 countries, including Germany - the home of beer.

Born in New York, USA and brought up in England, Peter Payne qualified as an accountant with KPMG Peat Marwick, before moving to Australia in 1974. In the mid 1970s he worked with the impresario Michael Edgley and travelled extensively across Australia.

He joined Henry Jones IXL in 1979 in a marketing role and after the formation of Elders IXL he ran the national Travel Division, Elders Travel.

In 1985 he moved into the brewing arm of the company, Carlton & United Breweries and worked extensively on the internationalisation of the Foster's brand, through Asia, United Kingdom and Europe. When announcing Mr. Payne's appointment, RASV President Mr. Keith Buchanan, said:

*Mr. Payne's considerable commercial and marketing experience will be invaluable in his task of implementing changes arising from the Society's recent market research survey and in planning the future of the Society for the 21st Century.*

The new Chief Executive and President, Mr. J. Keith Buchanan, were quick to get down to the hard work of implementing the recommendations of the Crawford Report which required a complete overhaul of the Rules of the Society; incorporation; a new governance; the redevelopment of the Royal Showgrounds, and many other significant changes.

This co-operative function was carried on under the auspices of the new President Mr. Robert Potter.

1997-

Robert Potter



- For 37 years Bob Potter was General Manager of 'Yarram Park', Willaura, for the Western District Pastoral Co. Pty Ltd.

His early training was as a jackeroo in New South Wales and Victoria.

The 'Yarram Park' property consisted of 23,000 acres and carried 30,000 medium fine Merino sheep; 2,500 Hereford cattle; besides a sheep and Hereford stud. A Showplace in the Western District, this property pioneered cropping and pasture development and was also a pioneer in the use of artificial insemination and embryo transfer in cattle.

Mr. Potter was elected to the Council of the RASV in 1982, ten years later, in 1993 was elected to Vice President and a foundation member of the Board of Directors.

He has a reputation as a very competent beef cattle judge.

Now he is running his own property 'Wooriwest' at Caramut with his wife Joy. On this 1,000 acre area they are buying, value adding, and selling steers. His community work has embraced several regional rural service organisations where he has contributed as a member and committee member.

1990-93 W. R. R. Beggs, AM.



- Western District farmer and grazier and breeder of ultra and super fine wool sheep. Deputy Chairman Marcus Oldham Management College; President Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association; Deputy Chairman Phosphate Co-operative Company (Pivot); Nuffield Farming Scholar to the United Kingdom in 1970.

1993-97 J. Keith Buchanan, AM.



- Studmaster of 'Gleneira' Ayrshire cattle stud, Flinders. This historic stud was founded by his grandfather in the early 1890s and he continued the family tradition of exhibiting Ayrshire cattle at the Royal Melbourne Show until 1983. He grandfather and father (Jack) were both members of the RASV and his father was appointed a Life Councillor of the Society. Keith Buchanan maintains his lifelong association with the Ayrshire breed through his Honorary Life Membership of the Australian Ayrshire Breeders' Association. He was appointed to the RASV Council in 1973, and has served actively on a number of Council committees. In 1984 he was appointed inaugural Chairman of the Mornington Peninsula and District Water Board which was second in size only to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for an organisation of this type - he served in this position for six years. Mr. Buchanan was created a Member of the

Order of Australia (AM) in 1979 in recognition of his services to the community. He has had a lifetime association with the dairy industry, stud breeding and the RASV.

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## Appendix III

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### Trustees 1981-1998

1968	G. P. H. Wilson, GMC
1984	G. R. Starritt, AM, OBE, (W. J. R. Clarke)
1989	J. M. Gardiner (P. B. Ronald)
1993	The Hon. Tom Austin (Sir William McDonald)

## Appendix II

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### Vice Presidents 1981-1998

1981	J. M. Burston, A. J. Fisker
1986	W. R. R. Beggs
1988	A. Gibson, R. B. Langdon
1990	I. I. Bucknall, J. G. W. Head
1993	I. I. Bucknall, C. J. Fox, R. Potter
1996	C. J. Fox, W. J. Forrest, C. R. Lyons

## Appendix IV

### Council Members - deaths and resignations 1981-1998

- 1981 21 January, F. E. Selwyn Scott, MBE (87) (Sept. 1952)  
14 November, Prof. H. C. Forster, OBE, (78) (May 1957)
- 1983 10 May, W. J. T. Clarke, (81) (1936)  
10 June, Sir Alex Creswick, Kt., (71) (1948)  
November, Brian Naylor, (1977) - Resigned
- 1985 26 February, Col. Sir Malcolm McArthur, Kt., OBE, (73) (1962)  
18 April, J. M. Buchanan, (87) (1953)
- 1987 July, Sir Roderick Carnegie, Kt., (1984) - Resigned
- 1988 19 September, Sir Cecil Looker, Kt., (1974)
- 1989 18 July, D. S. McGregor, MBE, (72) (1966)  
25 July, P. B. Ronald, CMG, (68) (1949)  
8 August, A. J. Fiskens, (62) (1975)
- 1990 12 June, A. J. Woods, (1989) - Resigned  
14 August, F. B. Langlands, (1974) - Resigned
- 1991 March, J. W. D. Ward, (1960) July, J. F. Lithgow, (1971)  
July, B. R. J. Hallows, (1984) - Resigned
- 1992 February, K. A. Drummond, (1954)  
1 June, E. W. Best, CMG, (75) (1970)  
4 October, Hon. I. M. J. Baker, MP (1991) - Resigned  
5 October, Sir Ian McLennan, KCMG, KBE. (1978) - Resigned
- 1994 6 February, J. H. H. Sleight, AM (1969)  
9 May, J. A. Hunter, (1957)
- 1995 8 March, D. W. R. Knox, (1953) May, K. J. McIver, (1986)
- 1997 19 March, L. G. C. Nicholas, (1957)  
31 March, W. A. Angliss, (1957) - Resigned  
31 March, A. W. St. Clair, (1993) - Resigned Mrs. S. C. Croke, (1991) - Resigned

## Appendix IV

### Council Members 1981-1998

1982	Robert Potter, D. E. Kent, MLC. (Hon. T. L. Austin)
1984	B. R. J. Hallows, Sir Roderick Carnegie, Kt., R. F. Haselgrove
1985	Hon. Evan Walker, MLC. (Hon. D. E. Kent, MLC)
1986	I. I. Bucknall, S. J. McIver
1987	M. T. Marriott
1988	E. Drinkwater
1989	K. A. Finnin, A. J. Woods, C. J. Fox, C. R. Lyons, Hon. B. Rowe MP (Hon. Evan Walker, MLC)
1990	R. T. Balderstone, CMG, MC, G. J. Sheppard, N. A. Edwards, W. H. Hill (resigned 16 April 1991)
1991	P. J. B. Ronald, S. C. Crooke, L. R. Latta, I. McC. Rough, W. H. Hill (Re-elected 22 October 1991)
1993	E. R. Lithgow, W. J. Forrest, B. M. Crotty, A. W. St. Clair
1994	Hon. Bill McGrath, MLA. (Hon. I. M. J. Baker, MP) J. H. Seymour
1995	E. M. B. Natrass
1997	D. G. Beard, S. Shelmerdine, K. Jordon, Prof. L. Falvey, R. Clarke, Mrs. D. Nicholas, Mrs. J. Allen. The Hon. Pat McNamara MLA (Hon Bill McGrath)

## Appendix V

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### Officials who opened the Royal Show

1981	Sir Zelman Cowen, Governor-General
1982	Sir Brian Murray, Governor of Victoria
1983	Sir Ninian Stephen, Governor-General
1984	Sir Brian Murray, Governor of Victoria
1985	Sir Brian Murray, Governor of Victoria
1986	Sir Ninian Stephen, Governor-General
1987	Dr. Davis McCaughey, Governor of Victoria
1988	Sir Ninian Stephen, Governor-General
1989	Dr. Davis McCaughey, Governor of Victoria
1990	Dr. Davis McCaughey, Governor of Victoria
1991	Dr. Davis McCaughey, Governor of Victoria
1992	The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria
1993	The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria
1994	The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria
1995	The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria
1996	The Hon. Richard E. McGarvie, Governor of Victoria
1997	Sir William Deane, Governor-General

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# Appendix VI

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## Attendances and entries

Year	Attendances	Entries
1981	802,573	37,397
1982	865,662	37,661
1983	898,293	38,031
1984	812,305	38,983
1985	873,288	39,201
1986	807,770	39,299
1987	780,222	40,798
1988	738,437	39,639
1989	808,104	38,652
1990	774,926	37,372
1991	654,343	36,455
1992	654,214	34,362
1993	622,461	35,625
1994	660,063	32,842
1995	712,706	31,500
1996	726,800	32,000
1997	748,864	32,000

## Summer Horse Show entries

1993	4,640
1994	5,440
1995	5,279
1996	5,261
1997	5,640

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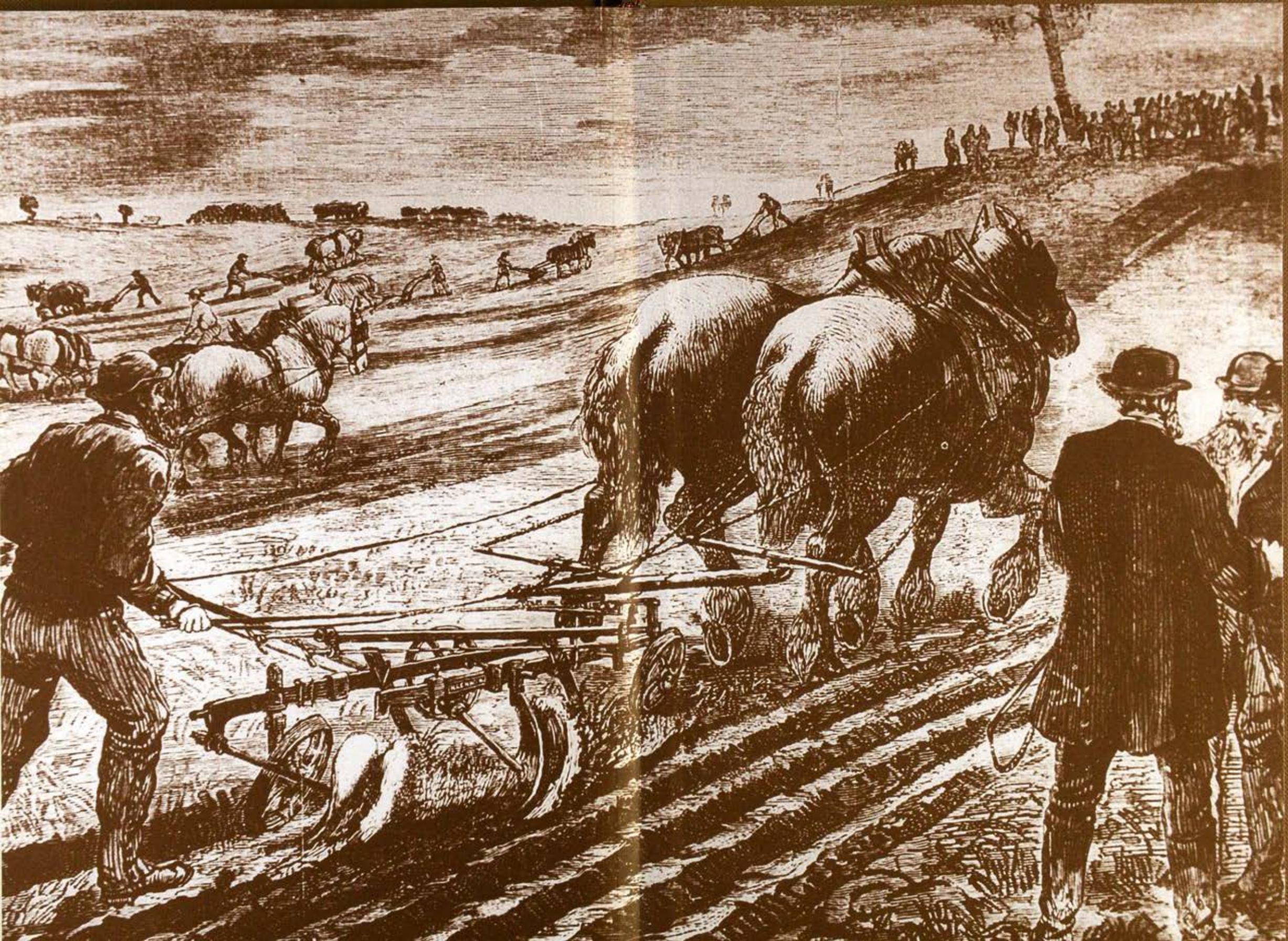
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## **About the Author Robert Morgan**

Upon discharge from the Army in 1946 - after seven years service in the Middle East and New Guinea, covering seven campaigns, including the battles of Greece, Crete, and the infamous Owen Stanley campaign - Bob Morgan took up farming in Gippsland.

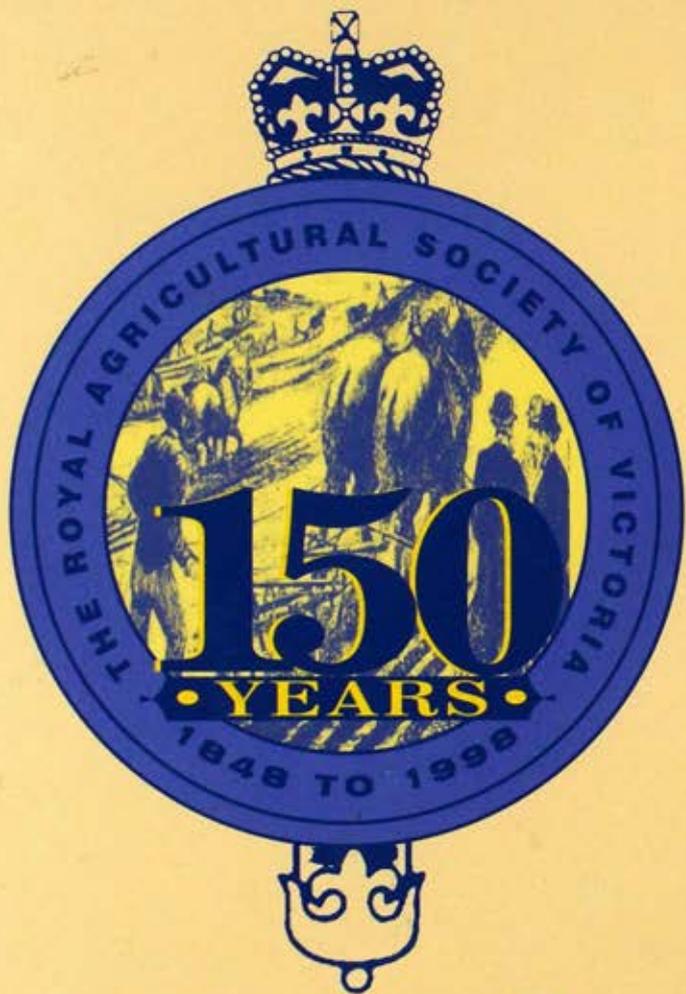
Due to war disabilities he was forced to change his vocation and in 1950 became an officer of the Victorian Department of Agriculture, an appointment he held until 1956 when he was recruited to the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria by the then Director, Mr. Colin Woodfall, to take charge of Young Farmers Clubs in the Gippsland Region.

In 1963 he was called to Melbourne to edit a number of RASV in-house publications including, 'The Victorian Young Farmer', the 'KCC Gazette', 'V.A.S.A.' and 'Feline Focus' and to understudy the then Public Relations Officer, Mr. Allan Daws.

He was appointed Public Relations Officer in 1964 and retired from the Society in October 1977 having spent the last 14 years as Public Relations Manager.

Always interested in the historical background of the RASV, he was co-author with the late Mr. Fred Noble in writing the history of the Society - the first edition of 'Speed The Plough'.

In 1995/96 he wrote and published 'The Showies'.



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