

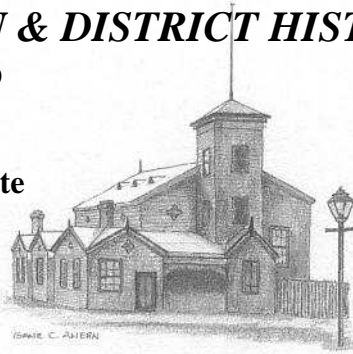
YARRA GLEN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

A0030684D

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NEWSLETTER

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2006 Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 8 October 2006

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT 2006

We have had another interesting year, with new members keen to share and learn about Yarra Glen and district.

Our speakers have been interesting and informative. Margaret Cooper spoke on Gulf Station's present and future plans, which helped us better understand the management situation. Sandy Ross gave us a different look at Lilydale history through his interest in photography over the years. Helen Mann told us about a branch of her family, the Wollastons, about whom she is writing a book. Bruce Nixon talked of his association with pioneer families in the Kangaroo Ground area that led to his lifelong interest in historical research

Our informal meetings have helped us get to know each other better as people contribute some of their history.

The 'Break Up Meeting' in November will be held by kind invitation of Nelson Wilson when we will again see his restored historical aircraft and cars.

Helen Mann has continued to produce an excellent Newsletter featuring local people, buildings and streets. The Newsletters have drawn many favourable comments.

Eric has set up photo displays at Gulf Station and the Memorial Hall for Anzac Day. He is ever ready to help other people with information regarding family history.

Thanks to Leigh Ahern we have produced four books during 2005/2006:

Recollections and records of mining at Steels Creek, by Eric Tetlow

Steels Creek as I knew it, by Ivy Arney

Steels Creek – a social history, by Vera Adams

My reminiscences of Yarra Glen, by Fred Sadlier

All these publications have sold well.

During 2005 our member Kristin Otto published her book on the Yarra.

Some of our members are recording changes to the local businesses and the streetscape as everything changes so rapidly.

Happily the Society is in a sound financial situation.

Brenda Cawte.
PRESIDENT

Office Bearers 2006/2007

President Brenda Cawte

Vice President Helen Mann

Secretary/Treasurer Eric Tetlow

Committee Members

Kristin Otto

Jill Sheffield

Leigh Ahern

Subscriptions

Because the insurance premium has been reduced for this year we are in the happy position of being able to reduce membership fees. The new rates now are:

Ordinary Member \$ 12.00

Family Member* \$ 16.00

Service Member** \$ 10.00

* *Two adults living at the same address*

***A member who lives too far away to attend any function of the Society.*

REMINDER:

Membership subscriptions are now due

YARRA GLEN SHOW – THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

The first Yarra Glen Show was organized by the Yarra Glen Horticultural & Fruit Growers Society in 1901. The President of the Society in that year was Nathaniel Ellis (1849–1930) and the Secretary was Edward Charles Morris (1858–1933). Both men took an active part in the development of the Show during the next twenty to twenty-five years. Wednesday 17 April was the day selected, probably because Wednesdays were a half-day holiday for the town and by mid-April the fruit had been harvested. The Classes selected naturally reflected the interests of the founding Society: Fruit (27 sections), Vegetables (28 sections), Flowers (17 sections), and Miscellaneous (22 sections, which included dairy produce, needlework and schoolwork). The Fruit sections were Apples (15), Pears (3), Grapes, Plums, Lemons, Oranges (no entry), Passion Fruit, and Quinces. Two additional sections were for a half case of dessert apples and a packed case of apples for the Melbourne market. The major prize winner was William Hubbard (1859–1934) who would continue to feature prominently in the Fruit Class, particularly with his apples, for many years. The Vegetable Class had a wider variety of produce including Potatoes (3), Melons and Mangolds (a beet, also known as mangel-wurzels, used for cattle food). The Miscellaneous Class was well named as it included butter, bread, bottled fruits, jams and jellies, mushroom ketchup, tomato sauce, scones, eggs and honey, schoolwork, and needlework. The latter included ‘Best dozen buttonholes worked on cotton by girls under 13 years’, ‘Best darned cotton sock by girls under 16 years’, and ‘Best dressed gentleman’s white shirt and collar’.

The prizes, provided by various organizations and local residents, included cash amounts of about 5 or 10 shillings for First Prize or gifts in kind such as a 50 lb bag of flour for home-made bread. Judging was undertaken during the morning after which the Committee, judges and VIPs adjourned to the Burgoyne Hotel for lunch. The Show was officially opened by Mr Robert Harper MHR in the early afternoon. Because of the static display of all entries the Victoria Hall provided an appropriate venue. In the late afternoon the Hall was cleared and a Concert was provided in the evening to a full house.

The second Show was held on Wednesday 16 April 1902 and followed the lines of the first. William Hubbard was the new President. The Presidency of the Society changed annually, but the Secretary, Mr Morris, held his position until 1920 and was highly commended for his contribution to the success of the Show. A list of the office bearers over the years is given at the end of this article.

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There were 354 entries in the second Show but the produce in some sections was not of the same standard as the first Show because of a bad season. A new Class for Poultry was included and they were exhibited in a yard behind the Hall. In the Fruit Class a section for Walnuts was added (won by William Friar) and another for Persimmons (William Hubbard). Following the luncheon at the Hotel the Show was opened by Mr E. H. Cameron MP who would perform this function each year until 1912.

The third Show was held on Thursday 16 April 1903. There was a substantial increase in the number of entries (550) with a better quality of exhibits. Entertainment for the Show patrons included a guessing competition (a lemonade bottle filled with 529 ½ beans!) and a ‘Tilting at the Ring’ competition.

The success of the Show was evident in the increase in the Classes and number of entries for the fourth Show which was held on Wednesday 30 March 1904. The Miscellaneous Class was split into separate Classes for Dairy produce; Jams, jellies, preserves etc; and Needlework, schoolwork, etc. A major change was the addition of a Class for Horses although it had only three sections for horses and two for fodder (oats and maize). There were nine entrants for best spring cart mare or gelding driven in harness. This event took place on Bell Street where the animals were driven several times up and down the road between the Burgoyne Hotel and the railway gates. The other horse events took place *in a paddock alongside the railway line, the embankment of which formed a splendid vantage ground for the spectators to watch the jumping.* (HG 9 Apr 1904)



The site of the harness event in 1904. Victoria Hall is in the foreground, the Hotel is at the top of the rise on the left.

Cattle were included for the first time in the 1905 Show. This was held on Wednesday 22 March, much earlier than previously but the practice of holding the Show during the third week in March was not fixed until many years later, the sixth Show being held on 4 April 1906. In the 1905 Show the number of horse events increased to five with a section for Pony Hunters and another for a Pair of Farm

Horses. There were two sections for cattle: Dairy Cow (won by Frank Bell) and Three Dairy Heifers (won by the Williamson brothers). Mangolds were moved to this Class which also included oats, wheat, green fodder and maize. The largest number of entries in any Section was in Class D (Dairy produce) for 3 lbs of butter. The prize was won by Mrs G. Fletcher against 18 other contenders.

As the number of sections for horses and cattle increased the railway reserve was no longer adequate and in 1906 these events took place on the lower end of the cricket reserve. This created some problems because the patrons had to move quite a distance between the displays in the Hall and the field events. A further attraction in the sixth Show was an exhibition staged by the Department of Agriculture and a display of farming implements by a Melbourne firm. The Fruit and Vegetable Classes were attracting exhibitors from other districts and A. B. Herbert of Diamond Creek was providing stiff competition for William Hubbard and Joseph Smedley. Members of the Lorimer family of Dixons Creek were having considerable success with Vegetables including the 'Collection of vegetables (9 varieties)' which was won by the Misses Lorimer against five other entries. Other local prize winners in this Class were John and Jonathon Scott, C. Ellis, and C. G. Rhimes.

The crowd of people filling Victoria Hall to see the exhibits was becoming a problem by 1907. When Mr Cameron gave his address to officially open the seventh Show the newspaper reporter was irritated when Mr Cameron '... could hardly be heard above the din of conversation persisted in by those in the body of the hall.' The increasing fruit and vegetable exhibits meant that the craft work had to be crammed into the small rooms off the main Hall and were not shown to advantage. A new show ground and pavilion was being proposed for the Reserve on the river. The cattle and horse entries were still small in number with Mr W. G. Macalister a major prize winner in the horse events and Frank Bell taking the dairy cattle awards. A special prize in the Fruit Class which was to become keenly sought in later years was provided by Mr L. C. McKinnon for the first time in 1907. Mr McKinnon was President of the Yarra Glen Horticultural and Fruit Growers Society for several years. His prize was 'open to all comers within a radius of 20 miles, for best 12 dishes, 6 of apples and 4 of pears, half culinary and half dessert'. There were four entries with Mr A. B. Herbert taking first prize and J. Smedley taking second. Mr William Hubbard won the coveted award in 1909 and Mr J. Smedley in 1910.

There were about forty sections in the Poultry Class in 1907 but a very small number of entries in each, often only two or three birds. The most in any section was eleven entries for Silver Wyandotte Pullets. Metropolitan poultry exhibitors Mr G. E. Brown and Mr P. E. Harman took many of the prizes. The competition in the Classes for Dairy Produce and Jams, Jellies & Preserves was creating a high standard for bread, butter, preserves and cookery and local women were becoming regular contributors. Mrs Alf Hubbard and Mrs Anthony Scott vied for the best butter for several years.

The tenth Show, held on Friday 8 April 1910, was hailed in the press as '... the most popular show in the district' although the reporter went on to say that the number of exhibits was less than in previous years as was the attendance. Mr Cameron's

late arrival in a motor car, which had occasioned some delay on the route, was the signal for a spontaneous round of cheering (HG 22 Apr 1910).

It is not clear whether the cheering was because he was late, he arrived in a car, or just because he was a popular member of Parliament. He was accompanied by the Hon. W. H. Edgar and Mr Duffus, Secretary for Agriculture. There were now nine Classes: Fruit (38 sections); Vegetables (22); Flowers (15); Dairy produce (9); Jams, Jellies, Preserves (11); Needlework, Schoolwork, etc (13); Horses (10); Poultry (17); and Farm Produce (2). The best contested sections overall were for Jonathon Apples and for Peaches (10 entries each) followed by 9 entries each for Rome Beauty Apples, Culinary Pears, and home-made White Bread. There were 8 entries for Quinces, Butter (2 lb in 1 lb rolls) Plain Scones, and the Best Written & Kept Exercise Book. Cattle were noticeably absent this year.

The eleventh Show in April 1911 saw a big improvement in the variety and quality of flower exhibits which included hoyas, delphiniums, lasiandra, pansies and cactus daisies.

Pot Plants brought together two fine clumps of Aspidistra, two shapely Begonias, a Coleus of some merit, and a Rattan Palm, which gained the prize, more for peculiarity than for beauty probably. (HG 21 Apr.1911).

Miss Russell Ross of Kincairg and Mrs Joe Smedley were prominent among the prize winners. Previously this Class had been dominated by entries from other districts.

The twelfth Show was notable for a decrease in the number of sections in each Class and the number of entries. The exception was an increase in the number of horses entered. There were fourteen entries for the jumping event, 'Best horse over hurdles', which was won by Mr F. B. Lithgow. However it was the thirteenth Show (Wednesday 2 April 1913) that brought the greatest advance for many years. The entire Show was held at the Recreation Ground where a new spacious exhibition building had been built. Attendance was in excess of previous years and the gate proceeds reached £16. The horse competitions were keenly contested with Mr Lithgow and Mr McIntyre being major prize winners.

The 1914 Show (Wednesday 25 March) was only briefly reported in the newspapers.

The usual press courtesy not having been extended, a representative from the Lilydale Express was not present. The Show suffered from a lack of advertising. (LE 27 Mar 1914).

This oversight did not seem consistent with the style of the hard-working Mr Morris who was still Secretary. The reason may have been the bushfires which had been burning for several days early that month in Christmas Hills, Kinglake and Steels Creek. Mr Morris had lost fences as had Mr E. Hubbard, P. Downer, J. Hunt and others.

During the First World War the Show appears to have gathered strength and good attendances were reported. Improvements to the Recreation Reserve were paid for and the net proceeds for the 1916 Show were able to be donated to the Wounded Soldiers Fund. Mr McIntyre augmented this by donating a fat heifer to be raffled for the Fund. The Cattle Class was re-introduced in 1915 and Mr Towt of Devon Park took prizes for his Ayrshires. In 1916 a record 850 entries were received in thirteen Classes. The Farm produce Class had increased to six sections and a Class for dogs was added. The fruit exhibits were highly praised but it was noted that the marketing of fruit was affected by the War because exports could not get through to Europe and the United Kingdom. Mr James Rouget MLA opened the Show on this occasion and said that 'the only thing to do was to grade, pack and advertise their goods so that homes which never saw fruit would become consumers.' The problem was exacerbated by a bumper crop in 1916.

From 1917 the organizing body for the Show was the Yarra Glen Agricultural and Horticultural Society. This reflects the increasing interest in the horse and cattle events. The ring events were becoming very popular especially the 'Walk, trot & gallop'. Two heats were required because fifteen entries were received – the final winner was Miss Ada Scott on 'Rebel'. Ayrshire cattle were still the main exhibit and William Bell of Gulf Station and W. F. Hall contended for the prizes. There were some interesting new sections in the craft exhibits: 'Best pair of knitted socks' (to become the property of the Society and to be given to the local Red Cross); 'Best sloyd model by a schoolboy'; and 'Best collection of articles made from kerosene tins'. The traditional lunch for the Committee, judges and VIPs was held at the Show ground for the first time, the catering undertaken by Mr Tom Albert. The evening concert was still held in Victoria Hall.



Gulf Station Ayrshire cattle in the 1920s

The eighteenth Show on Wednesday 20 March 1918 was another successful event but William Hubbard and Joe Smedley were noticeably absent from the list of prize winners. There appears to have been a rift in the Society and a breakaway group formed consisting of several members of the former Horticultural & Fruit Growers Society. In January 1919 the *Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser* reported that Mr N. Ellis had been elected President, and Mr C. Ellis elected Secretary, of a

newly formed Yarra Glen Horticultural Society. Shortly afterwards Percy Downer sent a letter to the Editor protesting against his name being included in a list of patrons of the new Society. He said he was proud to be a member of the Committee of our flourishing Agricultural & Horticultural Society and ... quite out of sympathy with the holding of a rival show.

Nat. Ellis responded a week later saying that it had been thought that Percy Downer, a returned serviceman who worked hard for the Repatriation League, would be equally energetic and pleased to assist with the new 'Repatriation Show'. He went on to say that *the Committee of the decadent Society black-balled many of the best men who had exhibited largely and who had been experienced Committeemen. This necessitated forming of the new organization and everyone who had the Repatriation of returned soldiers at heart will exhibit and attend.*(EWSA 28 Feb 1919)

The Horticultural Society held its first Show on 12 March 1919. They received permission from the Eltham Shire Council to declare a Show Holiday and to have use of the Reserve. A lunch was held at the Grand Hotel and a concert and dance in the evening at the Victoria Hall. The show was opened by Mr Leckie MHR. The eight Classes of exhibits reflected those of the very early Shows: Fruit, Vegetables, Dairy Produce, Farm Produce, Bread, Jellies & Preserves; Fancy Work; and Flowers. The names of exhibitors included William Hubbard, Nat. Ellis, Joe Smedley, A. Walters, Harvie, Holding, Scott and Macalister. The net profits of £38 were given to the Repatriation Fund.

The old Society showed little signs of 'decadence'. The Committee for 1919 was Charles Bath (President), Edward Morris (Secretary), W. F. Hall, R. G. Todd, J. W. Lawrey (Vice-Presidents), and Mr Alf Hubbard (Treasurer). The nineteenth Yarra Glen Agricultural & Horticultural Show was held on Saturday 22 March 1919 with a record 900 entries and a gate of £24.4s.6d. The number of Member Tickets had also increased to more than 100.

In December 1919 the Yarra Glen & District Horticultural Society applied to the Shire Council for permission to hold its second Show on 10 March 1920. It appears that this never transpired and the rift was healed. William Hubbard was again among the prize winners of the twentieth Agricultural & Horticultural Show on Wednesday 24 March 1920. His entries beat exhibitors who had been the champion exhibitors of the Diamond Creek Show.

A significant event occurred in 1920 when Mr Morris resigned as Secretary and his place was taken by Mr Ernest Arthur Cary. Mr Cary held the position until 1950 and was widely respected for his work in this role. From the 1920s Agricultural Shows gained in popularity across the country and Yarra Glen was no exception. The 1922 Show on Wednesday 15 March saw more records broken. It was estimated that 1000 people watched the ring events in the afternoon. The judges were impressed by the horse events, especially the way the horses were ridden and

handled by the ladies. A new 'Walk, trot & gallop' event for children under 15 was won by Mr H. Beach.

... the final gallop by the juveniles, who entered into the spirit of the contest, seemed to exhilarate the large crowd who witnessed the performance.

Secretaries

1901–20 Edward Charles Morris

1921–50 Ernest A. Cary

1950–63 C. Brian Gibbs

1963–71 Mrs Ina G. Henderson

Their successors included **Val Walker, Lorraine Leach, Gwen Scott, Jeffrey Johnstone** and **Zoe Havers** among others.

Presidents

1901 Nat. Ellis

1902 W. Hubbard

1903 J. Smedley

1904 L. C. McKinnon

1905 W. Hubbard

1906 S. Scott (Vice President)

1907 S. Scott (Vice President)

1908 L. C. McKinnon

1909 W. Hubbard

1910 L. C. McKinnon

1911 L. C. McKinnon

1912 L. C. McKinnon

1913 Mr McLeod

1916 L. A. McIntyre

1917 L. A. McIntyre

1918 W. F. Hall

1919 Charles Bath

1920 Gordon Todd

1921 J. W. Lawrey

1922 C. White

Sources: *Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian*
Lilydale Express
Eltham & Whittlesea Shires Advertiser
Fred & Gwen Sadlier
Gulf Station (photo of Ayrshire cattle)

Yarra Glen Roads & Streets

a series about their history

Several roads in the district bear the names of some of the people who contributed to the success of the Yarra Glen Show. The names were chosen by the Council when the land was subdivided in the 1970s because these people had been landowners in the vicinity, but no doubt their civic contributions also influenced the choice.

Hubbard Road

Henderson Road

Gibbs Road

These roads run east off Steels Creek Road

Alf Hubbard (1868-1941) lived on what is now the corner of Hubbard Road and Steels Creek Road. The name of the road may also be intended to commemorate the Hubbard family headed by Alf's father William Hubbard (1837-97) who lived at Steels Creek. He and his wife Elizabeth had twelve children including William (1859-1934) who won many prizes with his fruit at the Show.

Vic Henderson and his wife Ina bought Alf Hubbard's former property. Both Mr and Mrs Henderson belonged to the Show Society for many years.

Brian Gibbs and his family farmed just north of Gulf Road on Steels Creek. They moved into Symond Street in the 1950s. Brian was Secretary for twelve years.

Lawrence Lane, Steels Creek

This road is at the northern end of Steels Creek. It is named after William (Bill) Lawrence (1908–89) who owned adjoining land. He was a very active member of the Show Society from the 1930s and was President from 1966 to the early '70s.

Surely there should also be a Morris Road and a Cary Road.

“The McPhersons of Yarra Glen”

Muriel Watson

The McPhersons of Yarra Glen was originally published privately by the author, Muriel Watson, in 1992.

Although well recognised by local historians as a key contribution to the story of European settlement in the Kangaroo Ground – Yarra Glen area, Muriel Watson’s book has, to date, remained somewhat of a ‘secret treasure’. Being a private publication, copies were never abundant and the work has therefore not received wide public exposure.

Muriel tells the story of one of the most important pioneer families of the region. The name *Yarra Glen* was bestowed by James McPherson upon his original 640-acre land claim abutting the Yarra River at Kangaroo Ground South (near Christmas Hills), about 1851. The thriving nearby township of Yarra Glen today bears this name.

A large number of other local family names appear throughout the work and are placed in clear genealogical context. A surprising number of local lineages are shown to intertwine with the McPherson family line. Moreover, the author shares with the reader details of numerous relationships of McPherson family members with friends, neighbours and townspeople.

These features, coupled with the author’s pleasant writing style, combine to create a stimulating family saga, as well as a valuable historical work. The Yarra Glen & District Historical Society was therefore delighted when Muriel kindly agreed to our proposal that *The McPhersons of Yarra Glen* be republished as part of the Society’s current Publication Series.

A very comprehensive index, compiled by YG&DHS member Helen Mann, has been added in this edition and will greatly aid any reader or researcher in accessing the abundance of local references contained in this work.

Copies can be obtained from the Secretary, Eric Tetlow,
29 Henderson Road, Yarra Glen 3775 * (03) 9730 1445 * etetlow@alphalink.com.au

R.R.P \$ 20 + p & p \$ 4

Other titles in this series:

1. *Recollections and records of mining at Steels Creek, Victoria*. Eric Tetlow. May 2005
2. *Steels Creek as I knew it*. Ivy Arney. July 2005
3. *Steels Creek – a social history 1946–1995*. Vera Adams. September 2005
4. *My reminiscences of Yarra Glen since 1915*. Fred Sadlier. August 2006