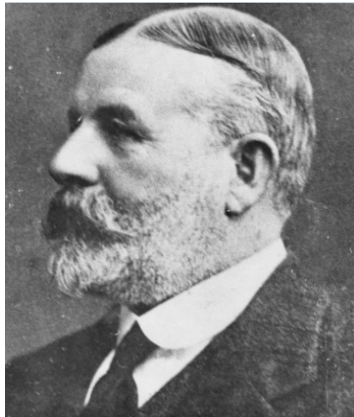


Early Moruya Shows

By Shirley Jurmann

For two years now we have not had a full Show. The 2020 show was cancelled by the bushfires and in 2021 covid regulations led to the cancellation of a full show. Equestrian events were held but other events, competitions and showings were very limited with the show struggling to survive. The article below gives a brief outline of the establishment of the Show and the people who organized it.



Ernest Montague Mort

In 1905 a journalist from the “Australian Town and Country Journal” visited Moruya and attended the thirty second Moruya A. and P. Society’s Annual Show held in the old showgrounds on the bank of the river near where the Illawarra Trust Retirement Home and the Bowling Club now stand. He was introduced by the then President of the Society, Mr E.M. Mort, to one of the oldest living members of the Society, Mr Robert Anderson. Mr Anderson told the journalist that he had been a founding father of the Society which had been established 34 years previously i.e. in 1871. At the time Moruya



Robert Anderson

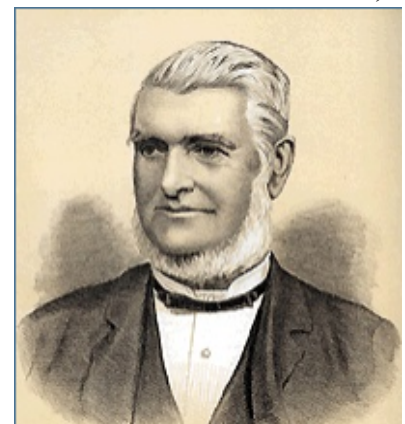
was an inconsequential village surrounded by a few farms and was dependent on these and the timber industry. However the Society was able to put on a decent show even though it did not have a proper showground. The Catholic priest in charge of the parish Rev. Father Birch, allowed them to set up a temporary showground on land where the Catholic Church now stands. A temporary pavilion was erected near the spot now occupied by the Presbytery while the cattle yards were where the Police Station now stands. The only buildings in Queen Street at that time were the Kildare Hotel kept by Mrs Kilkelly and a watchmaker’s shop occupied by Mr Knappet.

The first president was Mr Henry Clarke, the vice-presidents were Messrs T.T. Gannon and R. Anderson, while Mr Thomas Lodge, who was the post master at the time, was secretary.

The second show was held on land owned by the Church of England, known as the Glebe Paddock.

The third show took place on a block next to Emmotts Beehive store, the land also belonging to Abraham Emmott.

There were some differences of opinion between members and the Society was dormant for a couple of years. When dissensions were healed the next show took place on the corner block of land below the Commercial Bank of that time so would be approximately where the Red Rose Café stands.



Henry Clarke from
www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members

After that the show ground on the river bank came into use as the designated show ground and the site was regarded as a good one, if a little on the small side. The grounds were within five minutes walking distance of the main street.

Mr Anderson was president of the Society for many years. About 1903 advancing years forced him to retire and let younger men take over the work. In recognition of his efforts in the Society he was granted a life membership. He died in 1905.

Shows were held in the showground on the riverbank from 1878 until it outgrew its site. Newspapers regularly reported the show often giving details of winners in various sections. The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser of 3rd March 1877 reported:

The Moruya Agricultural Show of last week was equally as good as that of last year. Some of the exhibits were splendid. The wheat was very good: there were twelve samples, and the judges must have had some difficulty in awarding the prize; but the weight settled all doubt. Mr Bates onions were the finest sample ever before seen in Moruya; but when Mr Costin's were brought to compare there could not possibly be a doubt as to which should take the prize. One grown by the latter at Trunketabella, Mr Mort's estate, measured 18 inches in circumference and weighed 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. Another article worth particular notice was the skinless barley, or what is commonly called pearl barley, grown by Mr Bell. Another exhibit shown by the same gardener was an immense bouquet of flowers, which was most tastefully arranged, the colours blending very elegantly. There was also another bouquet, grown by Mr Jeffery. A stand covered with grapes was exhibited by Mr Bell.

The dinner in the evening was exceedingly well set up, and all went off as happily as a holiday occasion ought.

The showground outgrew this site and in 1912 it was proposed to move the showground to the Park and surveys were taken. The Park trustees decided to subsidise the A&P society pound for pound in preparing the ground for the show ring in the event of the Agricultural Society shifting its quarters to the Park. It was thought that the next show would be on the new ground. However the A&P Society decide to defer the erection of the pavilion in the Park and hold the next show in the old building on the present ground. Eventually the 41st Show was held at the Park.



Moruya Show C1906 -photo MDHS



Moruya Show 1909
water jump
H.J.Thompson
Jumping



Moruya grandstand 1905 at the earlier visit of the Governor.

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SHOW
FEB. 19 & 20
1965**

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Printed by Moruya Advertiser.

1965 Poster for the Show from the MDHS Archives