

**STRATHALBYN AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY OPENING OF THE NEW
GROUNDS.**

To-morrow, Friday, Oct. 21st, is to be scored on the calendar as a red letter day in the history of the Strathalbyn Agricultural Society, and also in the records of the town and district, as marking the opening of the fine new grounds and premises of the Society and at the same time evidencing the prosperity and progress of the town. The Agricultural Society has had a long and somewhat varied career, almost contemporaneous with the settlement of the district, and there are accordingly very few residents still living who can remember attending the first show conducted under its auspices, the elder members of the Rankine family, Messrs Matthew and Andrew, being the only local remnant of the pioneer gathering which assembled at that exhibition, though in other parts of the State a few others are scattered about. It is notable that both gentlemen mentioned are today members of committee and have been so right since very early in the Society's history, Mr. John Cheriton being another of the historic few. To them the comparison between the original show and its appointments and the exhibition to be conducted to-morrow, must naturally be interesting, the primitive arrangements of the initial event being very different indeed to the up-to-date provisions of the splendid grounds to be thrown open to-morrow. With the speeding of the years time has wrought many changes in the district, names once familiar as household words having dropped out of the lists one by one, but in the annals of the Agricultural Society the Rankines, the Stirlings, the Cheritons, and the Tuckers have been constant supporters and remain so today. The Society was constitutionally formed in the early part of 1865, in which year the first important Show was held, but prior to this a 'Strathalbyn Agricultural Exhibition' had more than once been held, sometimes here, sometimes at Macclesfield. The regularly constituted Society, which Mr. S. R. Bosisto was secretary of from its infancy till 1883, commenced by holding its Shows in the spring, but in 1869 the experiment of conducting an autumn one also was made, and in the following year this season was again adopted and held to for many years, a return to the spring not being brought about till 1883— a year of changes altogether in the Society's history, for Mr. W. D. Stephenson succeeded Mr. Bosisto as secretary then, and the Society also secured their own grounds. In 1873 great progress in all ways was reported, and the prize-list jumped from £120 to £150 odd; 1875 saw the amount creeping up towards £190; this year's runs-up to getting on for £300. Till 1883 the Shows were held first at one place, next at another, sometimes divided up, one year stock being shown at the Terminus Hotel yards and inside exhibits at the old tram sheds on Dry Plains road — but in that year, partly through the persistent advocacy of this paper, which year after year urged the need for permanent Show grounds being secured, negotiations for the

purchase of the recent exhibition block were successfully initiated, the grounds and hall being obtained from the owners for £600, towards which liberal contributions were made by the town. Improvements were at once made at a cost of about £400, which amount was since practically doubled, the whole of the property being made creditable in every way to the Society — a great many of the fixtures standing removal to the new grounds. The opening exhibition on the Society's home was a successful one, about 2,000 people attending and paying admission fees for the first time in the records of the Society. Friday for the only time till then being the day chosen for the year's Show. In 1884 a much-needed improvement was initiated by the adoption of a rule for early entry for stock, and also for the provision of certificates of merit, and the following year saw the inauguration of a plan which later developed to the establishment of the ladies' luncheon committees, to whom the Society owe so deep a debt of gratitude for the really splendid financial aid given by their efforts, the names of Mesdames Berrysmith, A. Caldwell, T. Brown, and C. D. McFarlane and Miss Rankine deserving special mention in this respect. In 1897 failing health compelled the resignation of Mr. W. D. Stephenson as secretary, and Messrs. H. L. Tucker and W. Frank Adams were appointed jointly in his stead, and for seven exhibitions did such good work that their record is worthy in every way of comparison with their long-experienced predecessors. In 1904 Mr. Adams took sole office, and he has since then fulfilled its duties admirably, leaving nothing to desire, his methodical style, and close attention to all details, together with energetic application to the duties combining to make the Society's working a model for other Societies to copy.

In this year, 1904, Mr. Richard Law Smith presented to the town the fine block of land known as the polo ground, to which Sir Lancelot Stirling subsequently added a further area, and it was generally understood that the beautiful grounds would form the future home for the Society, their own splendidly situated but small property being each succeeding year found more and more inconveniently inadequate for the growing shows. The proposed removal however, was opposed by a section of members who objected to parting with the grounds they had worked so hard to obtain and pay for, and by another section who objected to the recreation grounds on the score of distance from the town. On the other hand there was a strong feeling that the generous gifts of Mr. Smith and Sir Lancelot Stirling should not be rejected by the Society, and the contending emotions led to a good deal of bitterness for a time, the proposal for removal being ultimately shelved till next year, when it was again postponed. Meanwhile the need for enlargement of grounds became a pressing matter and suggestions for purchase of a block of land from Mr. Carruthers were made, receiving a good deal of support from those who opposed adoption of the recreation grounds as site for the shows, and the split threatened to become a

serious one, neither party showing inclination to yield. The strain was growing more and more tense, when Mr. Richard Carruthers cut the knot by generously offering to present the Society with a ten-acre block conveniently situated for show purposes, subsequently increasing the gift by a couple more acres and thus providing for grounds ample for all time, his only stipulation being that the grounds should be freely available for cricket, football, and other sports as well as for the shows. The situation was thus saved in the happiest of ways, and though a few members of the Society still hold to their views with regard to the adoption of the recreation grounds, the great majority showed their appreciation of Mr. Carruthers' gift by abandoning regrets and accepting 'the goods the Gods gave.' Arrangements were made for the disposal of the old grounds, which for twenty-six years had been the home of the Society, and for moving to their new permanent settlement.

Early in 1909 the transfer was completed and the ground committee at once called for tenders for fencing the new grounds and planting with trees, Mr. T. E. Adams being entrusted with the latter important task. About the middle of the year the old grounds and buildings were put under auction subject to the Society's rights of use for the remainder of the year, and realised a very satisfactory price, enabling the committee to at once go on with the preliminary work on the new group in October 22 1909. marked the goodbye to the associations which had for over quarter of a century grown between the Society and its grounds, this day seeing the last Show to be held under existing conditions.

On the successful completion of this exhibition the work of dismantling and removal of moveable fixtures was at once taken in hand, and it is pleasing to record that directly the change was finally decided on a very general determination seemed to be evinced to drop all feeling and work together heartily to make the new ground appointments worthy of the town and district, many of those who had most warmly championed the case for the recreation grounds, while still holding the opinion as to the merits of the two claims, accepting the inevitable with very commendable spirit. Sir Lancelot Stirling, who perhaps more than anyone else had cause to feel hurt at the turn of events, was himself one of the first to set good example, and it is worthy of note that while he felt it incumbent on him to give up the presidency which he held for a score of years, he did not give up his active interest in the Society, for he has accorded to his successor in office, Mr. W. P. Dunk, not only the benefit of his long experience but his still active and hearty co-operation. Of Mr. Dunk it can at once be said that he has in every possible way proved a very worthy follower of Sir Lancelot in the presidential chair, working zealously in season and out of season in this Society's best interests. When the matter of buildings on the new grounds came up Mr. Dunk was firm in impressing on the members of committee the desirability of not considering merely the present, but posterity, and it is

principally to his energetic and indefatigable canvass amongst members that the spacious, solid, and creditable stone pavilion has place on the grounds instead of the mere tin shed which was at first authorised by the general committee, he and a few members of the ground committee succeeding in delaying the final settlement of the matter in order to secure promises of support sufficient to warrant the committee in substituting stone walls for galvanised iron, Mr. William Richardson, though not a member of the ground committee, being one of the most prominent of the advocates of and workers for the better building. The ground committee consists, of Messrs. M. Rankine, P. McAnaney, Sir J. L. Stirling, J. Bell, J. W. Elliott, E. J. Tucker, J. Cheriton, J. Richardson and W. Johnston, the last two in particular having done very loyal service to the Society, superintending all of the fencing and building works and attending generally to the fitting of the grounds. Mr. Adams, the secretary, has as usual devoted a great deal of attention to all of the many matters which have come under his care, not only with regard to the change of venue, but in connection with tomorrow's important Show, which is to mark the opening of the new grounds.

As mentioned above, the area of the property which has been donated to the Society is twelve acres, valued at roughly about £1,000, the block being situated within the corporation boundary, at the west side of the town, with frontage to the Ashbourne main road on north side, entered from Sandergrove road by private road on the south, and from West Terrace by similar road on the east. At the eastern entrance (the main one) ingress and egress is provided for by a set of three handsome steel gates— a wide central carriage pair being flanked by single gates on either side with approaches of fancy steel railing mounted on painted brick foundations. The gates are very handsome in appearance, artistic in design, and form an imposing entrance way quite in keeping with the rest of the grounds. They were the gift to the Society of members of the Richardson family, Messrs. W. J., and J. S. Richardson inspiring the donation, and they will be known as the Richardson gates. At the west of the main gates stock entrances are provided, and for the Ashbourne road service another fine pair of gates, given by Mr. Geo. Borrett, has been set up, the ornamental posts for which were a contribution from Mr. B. Castle. Provision for issue of tickets is made, at each entrance, but the main ticket office is situated close to the chief gates, and is a neat little structure, 10x10x10, with pointed roof topped by iron finial, with sliding doors opening to the roadway outside the grounds. The interior is conveniently fitted for its purpose, and plenty of light and ventilation is provided. Just beyond the entrance, sufficiently far from the fence to allow vehicles passing to and from, and parallel to it, stands the main hall, a handsome stone building, 90 x 40 in the clear, with the secretary's office and lavatory and cloak room connecting with it, these rooms being 12x12x12, with doorways to the hall and to the verandah which runs across, the

rooms being situated one on each side of the hall front. They are ceiled with fine corrugated iron with neat scotia bordering and floored with Portland cement. The hall is at present un-floored, but it is intended to shortly put down either a kauri pine or slagite floor suitable for rinking purposes. The walls inside are rough plastered and a couple of picture rails run along the full length of either side.

The louvre roof, - which is some twenty-five feet above the floor level, gives plenty of ventilation which is further provided for by shutter draught openings at each end of the hall over the central doors. From floor level to eaves there is a clear height of over sixteen feet.

Lighting is amply effected by means of eight large windows, three-pane oblongs, so placed that their tops reach the eaves, while the bottoms are fully nine or ten feet above the floor level. Good diffused illumination is thus secured without any of the objectionable features of low windows with their attendant mixture of glare and hard shadows. There are four large sliding doors 8ft. x 8ft. 6in. situated one at centre of each end of hall and one each at centre of sides, and two tables are fixed on each side, while large double ones with elevated centres occupy place in the middle of the room, more than double the space being available than was provided in the old show hall. Near the front doorway a marble slab has been inserted bearing the following inscription: "This Pavilion is erected on grounds presented to the Strathalbyn Agricultural Society by the late Richard Carruthers. Opened. Oct. 21 1910" Just away from the hall, neat brick sanitary conveniences for ladies have been put up, which will eventually be sheltered by trellis of evergreen creepers. Similar conveniences, less elaborate, have been provided in various other parts of the grounds. To the west of the hall the poultry sheds which were so well designed for the old grounds have been re-erected, and provide show space for a very large collection of birds, with the best types of coops throughout, forming perhaps the best poultry room of any country society in the State, and much appreciated by exhibitors and spectators.

Beyond this edifice the publican's booth — a galvanised iron shelter, 25 x 17, has been put up, and to the north of that the large luncheon room has place. This is of galvanised iron, 70 x 30, of sufficient height to be cool and airy, and it has been divided by central partition so that the judges' and stewards' luncheon can be served apart from the general public's department, and so that afternoon tea arrangements can be facilitated. At rear of each department there is a carving and washing up room, and outside the main structure, but communicating with it by doorway, there is a fire room in which are set up in brick furnaces the three coppers given by Mr. W. Richardson for the ladies' and committee's use. The whole of the arrangements for the luncheon both have been well thought out and well arranged, and an ample supply of water has been made available, which feature will be evident at each of the buildings, as the

committee have had tanks put up at each place. Beyond the poultry shed the cattle yards begin and run up to the top south-western corner. There are 28 cattle yards for mixed lots. 26 cow or single beast pens, and ten bull pens, all strongly constructed on latest designs, experts considering the arrangements here unexcelled in the States and more than creditable to the committee. The sheep pens, of which there are 70, have place along the western fence, and these too are well and strongly built to stand the wear and tear of many years' shows. They are succeeded by the pig yards, 30 in number, which are equally well built and which will give ample shelter for the animals from the heat of the October sun. The stallion's reserve is situated at the north eastern corner of the grounds. The grand stand which has place on the western side of the ring has been practically doubled in size and will now seat about 500 spectators. It has been brought close to the ring so as to give to patrons best view of the proceedings engaged in therein. The ring itself is 180 x 150 with sawn and painted timber fence — the finest show ring in the State — and white fence divisions radiate from it marking off the members' carriage reserve, the side show reserves, and other enclosures, with plenty of available openings for any emergencies. For side shows and machinery exhibits, ample space has been set aside, and indeed provision has been made for almost every possible contingency, the arrangements, considering the short time that the committee have had at their disposal, being surprisingly complete. The contract for the buildings has been most satisfactorily carried out by Mr. A. Caldwell, the total expenditure running into about.. £

This however represents but a comparatively small proportion of the capital value, so much of the material having been given by various donors, the stone for the building, the lime, sand, and carting all having been freely contributed by supporters of the Society, the donors in this direction being numerous.

The grounds will be opened with less than £100 debt, and it is expected that this will be quite wiped off by the day's profits. For tomorrow's Show luncheon and afternoon tea, a ladies' committee has again generously undertaken to provide; Mrs. A. Caldwell with the assistance of Mesdames J. Richardson and W. Johnston taking charge of the luncheon, and Miss Rankine with the aid of Mrs. E. A. Dunk and Miss Dunk of the tea, the luncheon being guaranteed for judges and stewards only, though it is likely that there will be plenty of provision made for serving a limited number afterwards with a substantial meal. Mrs. Evans, of the Corio Hotel, Goolwa. has secured the publican's rights, and Mr. L. Meredith, of Mylor, the fruit and lolly stall stands. The Strathalbyn Town Band has been engaged for the afternoon and will play at intervals, and in the evening in the Institute Hall a capital entertainment will be given by a company of city performers under the management of Mr. J. W. Elliott, who, by the way

has had charge of this part of the Show proceedings on 24 of the last 27 years' occasions.

The judges and stewards for tomorrow's proceedings will be as under: —

Draught Horses — Mr. Geo. Burton.

Steward — Mr. Geo. Borrett.

Light Horses — Mr. Mayor Miller.

Stewards — Messrs. G. J. Reed and V.

G. Nicholls.

Measuring Steward Mr. V. L. Leupriere.

Section Fours — Lieut. Y C. N. Waite.

Longwool, and Shropshire Sheep

Mr. W. Reynell.

Steward — Mr. C. H. Dunn.

Merino Sheep — Mr. W. G. Mills.

Steward Mr. Jno. Cheriton, jun.

Breeding and Dairy Cattle — Mr. A.

Gordon.

Steward— Mr. W. M. Rankine,

Pigs and Fat Stock — Mr. T. Yates.

Steward — Mr. E. J. Tucker.

Poultry — Mr. Jos. Smith.

Stewards — Messrs. A. and J. Caldwell.

Grain and Farm Produce — Professor Angus.

Steward — Mr. W. Watt.

Dairy produce, dried fruit and preserves,

Mr. F. J. Stevens,

Steward. — Mr. G. M. Meikle,

Fruit and Vegetables — Mr. J. E. Rowell.

Stewards — Mr. A. H. Jordan (Fruit),

Mr. H. H. Butler (Vegetables).

Flowers — Mr. A. W. Howard.

Steward — Mr. C. E. T. Hameuce.

Fancy Work and Miscellaneous—

Misses N. H. Colman and M. F. Prosser.

Steward — Mr. Jas. Bell.

Paintings, Drawings, &c,- Mr. Hans Heysen.

Woodcarving — Mr. E. J. Mathias.

Stewards — Messrs, E. J. Tucker and J. W. Elliott.

School Work — Mr. M. J. O'Shaughnessy.

Arranger — Miss Vohr.

Arrangers of Fancy Work — Mesdames E. J.

Tucker, Jas. Bell, J. W. Elliott, and Miss L. I.

Graham.

The opening ceremony will be performed by the president as soon after noon as possible, but will not be a very lengthy formality, as the big list of stock entries will demand earliest possible attention by spectators, who should have no reason to complain of the number or variety of exhibits that will be provided for their inspection.

In the livestock classes the entries, save those subject to late fees, closed on Tuesday, and the lists show that in nearly every line there will be advance on any previous years records, the figures for the principal classes reading very much above the average, particularly in the horses in action sections and the jumping events as follows:

Draught stock, 50; light stock, 218, including — roadsters in saddle, 24, roadsters in harness, 18,

roadster pairs, 8,

harness ponies, 31, pairs, 11,

saddle ponies, 32, polo ponies, 8,

lady's hacks, 8,

tandem teams, 5,

hunters, 22,

jumping ponies, 18,

hurdle jumpers, 16, and section fours, 4; sheep —

long wools, 9,

Shropshire, 20, merinos, 37,

and farmers' classes, 27 ;

cattle, 42 (including 12 dairy cows);

pigs, 20;

fat stock, 42;

and poultry, 145.

Late entries, closing to-day at noon, will add to most of these totals.

The parade of stock is to be made at one o'clock tomorrow, after the opening ceremony.

**STRATHALBYN AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY.
A GENEROUS GIFT.**

The disagreement between members of the above Society as to the sale or retention of the present Agricultural Society's show grounds and either moving on to the recreation grounds (which so many consider too far out of the town and too inconveniently situated) or a site in Mr. Richard Carruthers' paddock, has been ended in a very happy way by Mr. Carruthers, who had previously offered the Society a piece of land 15 acres in extent in exchange for the Society's grounds of six acres, but who has now made the following generous offer:

Strathalbyn, March 11

To Sir Lancelot Stirling, Messrs. John Cheriton, and E. J. Tucker, on behalf of the Strathalbyn Agricultural Society —

I hereby offer to vest in your names forthwith, on behalf of the Strathalbyn Agricultural Society, twelve (12) acres of land, portion of section 2611, hundreds of Kondoparinga and Bremer, near my house, as verbally pointed out to you, which will have a frontage to Finniss Flat road, with a half chain road on the west side of it and a three quarter chain road on the south side of it leading from Mr. John Martin's, and the dimensions of which land will be approximately 1,241 links by 960, on the following conditions : —

- 1. That you take steps to incorporate the Strathalbyn Agricultural Society and vest the property in the name of the Society on rules and regulations to be made.*
- 2. I wish your committee of management to treat the various clubs, such as football, cricket, tennis, and other clubs, on liberal terms, not charging any of them any more than they have hitherto paid for the present grounds of the Society.*
- 3. That the Society pay the costs of survey of the particular block I am giving. I am having the other part of the section surveyed at my own expense.*
- 4. As Mr. Tucker, who has had the sale of my land in his hands has waived any claim to commission in Respect thereof, there will be no charges except for the survey and the transfer of the block.*

Richard Carruthers.

A special meeting of the Society is called for Friday. 26th inst. when the offer will be submitted, and it is a foregone conclusion that it will be accepted gratefully and the donor's generosity fully acknowledged.

Mr. Carruthers is one of the few remaining pioneers of this district, and indeed one of the old settlers in the State, having come to South Australia in 1852, settling on the Angas Plains shortly after his arrival. He was very successful in his farming and stock business, amassing a competence, and coming to reside in Strathalbyn in 1870. purchasing the beautiful residence, Brjgend, built by the late Mr.

W. Colman for his son Mr. C. W. Colman, who just about this time left the district for Port Elliot, where he still, resides.

Mr. Carruthers was for many years connected with the district council, and later on served as councillor in the corporation, subsequently filling the mayoral chair for two years. With nearly all the public institutions of the town, Mr. Carruthers has at one time or another been connected, and he owns a number of valuable properties in, and near the town, his large section at the west side, from which he has now donated the Agricultural Society's block, having long been coveted as a recreation area.

Mr. Carruthers' gift is a very handsome one, representing between six and seven hundred pounds, and it is one that will cause his name to be honoured not only by the present but by succeeding generations; and there is no doubt that either by connecting his name with the grounds, or erecting a suitable tablet, his generosity will be recorded for all time, and his memory kept green when he himself shall be no more. Mr. Carruthers has long since passed the allotted span, being over 83 years of age, but he is remarkably strong and healthy, and we but voice the sentiments of the townspeople generally in expressing the earnest hope that he may be spared for very many years to witness the practical appreciation of his public spirited and generous gift to the town.