

1985 The Society's New Home

Since 1909 the Society had an itinerant existence with the Show taking place on various local sites. In the 1980s the Society decided the time had come to realise a long standing ambition and find its own home; various locations were considered. The opportunity arose to acquire 132 acres at Chieveley from the Eling Estates. The site was an ideal choice, being at the crossroads of southern England with the ability to attract both exhibitors and visitors from far and wide. Moreover the land was firm and dried out very quickly.

The purchase, made possible by support from members and the bank, took place in late 1984 and it was decided to hold the inaugural Show at Chieveley in 1985. Three people who were instrumental in this were the first Trustees of the Showground: Peter Carter, Roger Chapman and Clem Cooper.

Overall in 1985 it took particularly outstanding teamwork, under Chairman Stephen Bur-

man, both to manage the set up of a new Showground and also to arrange another successful Show; more so since in April that year Lew Spencer, the secretary of the Society, tragically and suddenly died. In the words of the 1985 President, now Sir Philip Wroughton KCVO "Stephen has been a tower of strength and totally indefatigable in his quest for perfection over these two days. He has found a successful solution for each problem in his quiet and resolute manner". The Society was most fortunate to have Sir Philip as it's President that year and is enormously grateful to him for his continuing generosity and wise guidance in many matters over the years.

The site acquired was basically a field of stubble. Considerable thought was given to the design of the Showground which was modelled on the one which had been used successfully at the former Showground site at Shaw. With few major exceptions the design remains the same today. Work included putting in place fencing and roadways as well as arranging

adequate entrances. Various large holes had to be levelled out. Many local farming families assisted in different ways, in particular David Rabbits, including the provision of grass seed, fertilisers, machinery and, very importantly farm staff. Derek Smalley as Showground Director was, as usual, keenly involved in the set up. The budget for improvements to the site that year was £30,000.

Since then the facilities have continued to be improved, financed mainly from Show surpluses. Moreover additional land has been acquired to accommodate further car parking.

The subsequent provision in 1988 of the Show Offices, through the support of John Norgate of Trencherwood, has been beneficial, providing excellent office accommodation, a location for meetings as well as avoiding the need to transfer records from the old office to caravans for the weekend! The Showground is now regarded as one of the best there is and is sought after by many organisations, not least for The Show-

man's Show.

The 1985 Show proved to be a huge success attracting around 70,000 people. Highlights were the Festival of Transport, the Red Devils parachute team coming down and hot air balloons going up, top riders including Harvey Smith competing in Show jumping competitions. The Royal Navy Display Team gave memorable performances; it is fitting that we welcome back the Royal Navy to this year's Show. A record number of over 400 trade exhibitors packed into the new site. For many the greatest attraction was of course the livestock with Grand Parade of Cattle and Sheep on the Saturday afternoon. This has since been extended to include other livestock with a further parade on the Sunday.

At the 1985 Show Lunch Sir-Philip Wroughton said, "I am in no doubt that the Society's decision is a real coup and will be vindicated for many years to come." It certainly has for the last 24 years and undoubtedly will for many more!

1909 - 2009

The Herald Centenary Edition

THE NEWBURY AND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

December 17th 1908 PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY For Newbury and District - Reproduced by kind permission of the Newbury Weekly News

The committee met on Thursday last, those present being Mr Fairhurst (Chairman), the Mayor of Newbury, Commander Charrington, Messrs. R. Osmond, T.A. Huband, James Brown, A.G. Troup, Fowler Thatcher, H.J. Luckes, J.Weaver, H.A.Pearson.

Mr Fairhurst having opened the proceedings, the committee proceeded to organise the society. Mr James Brown, of Shefford was urged to become one of the secretaries, but pleaded that his engagements were already too numerous to warrant his taking any



further appointments. Mr Troup was next approached, and he having consented was appointed, in conjunction with Mr H.A.Pearson as Hon. Secretaries. A unanimous resolution was next passed that Mr. J.A. Rutherford should

be requested to become the treasurer.

Without definitely committing themselves to any time, the committee was of opinion that the latter end of September or the beginning of October would be best suited for holding the meeting of the proposed society, which would include prizes for ploughing, rick-building, sheep breeding, horses, cattle, sheep, etc.

A conversation then followed with regard to the radius which the operations of the society should cover, and after careful and exhaustive consideration of the whole question, it was unanimously resolved that it would be better to specify the parishes which should be included in the association as less open to ambiguity and uncertainty. These parishes - to be subject to modification or addition should occasion arise - are as follows:

- Aldermaston, Ashmansworth, Avington, Beedon, Boxford, Brightwalton, Brimpton, Bucklebury, Burghclere, Catmore, Chaddleworth, Chieveley, Chilton, Cold Ash, Compton, Combe, Crookham, Crux Easton, Eastbury, East Garston, East Ilsley, East Shefford, East Woodhay, Enborne, Frilsham, Greenham, Hampstead Norreys, Hamstead Mar-

shall, Highclere, Hungerford, Inkpen, Kingsclere, Kintbury, Lambourn, Leckhampstead, Litchfield, Midgham, Newbury, Newtown, Peasemore, Sandford, Shaw-cum-Donnington, Speen, Stockcross, Thatcham, Wasing, Welford, Westbrook, West Ilsley, West Shefford, West Woodhay, Wickham, Winterbourne, Woodcott, Woolhampton, Woolton Hill, Yattendon.

The committee next turned their attention to the sinews of war. It was felt that until some idea could be formed as to the funds likely to be available that no progress could be made, and it was resolved that each member of the Committee should avail himself of his opportunities at command to appeal for subscriptions, and bring in their lists at the next meeting, to be held today (Thursday). A small sub-committee was also appointed to draft the rules and prepare business for the meeting in question.

[We hear that satisfactory response has been received to appeals already made, and that the Committee, when they meet to-day, will not be without encouragement that their efforts in launching the society are meeting with warm and general appreciation.]

"Seeing Double" 1976 - The First Two Day Show

On looking back over the last 100 years the staging of the first two-day Show was undoubtedly a major step forward for the Society. For some years the Society had found it difficult to present all the activities it wished on a single day. Consequently consideration was given to extending the Show to a second day. There were some people who were against it, concerned that it would add to the costs without a compensatory increase in income.

The first two day Show was held in 1976. The Chairman of the Society that year and therefore the person who had the ultimate responsibility for ensuring its success was John Bowden of Brimpton whose grandfather had been a founder member of the Society in 1909. People who work on Saturdays and had children com-

mitments were delighted to have the opportunity to attend the Show. It has to be remembered that this was before there was so much Sunday trading. The Show started at 10am on the Sunday.

Major attractions that year included Motorcycle Madmen, the Berkshire Area International Trial jumping competition. There were people who wondered whether the Society had made the right decision. However the decision was entirely vindicated with about 29,000 people attending over the two days, an increase of over 40% on the 1975 Show.

In recent years the Society has considered extending to a Three Day Show but so far has decided to keep it as a two day Show. Considerations being significantly increased costs, whether all livestock would be there for the three days and also the need to recruit additional volunteer stewards.



Newbury and District Agricultural Society Centenary Dinner 2009 for Past Presidents and Past Chairmen 24th April 2009 Woolley Park

Chris Saint C 1982 • Richard Liddiard C 1989 • Chris D'Oiley C 2007 • Peter Alder C 2001 • Mick Crockford Vice Chairman 2009 • Alan Cooper C 2003 • Alistair Cooper C 1986 • Charles Legerwood C 1998 • Michael Bowden C 2002 • Mike Harwood C 1996 • Jim Balsdon C 1984 • Chris Boreham C 1997

David Gardiner P 1993 • Lady Eliza Mays-Smith P 1999 • Diana Amesbury C 1999 • The Hon Mrs White P 2007 • Richard Fuller P 2008 • Duncan Hodge C 1973 • Nick Galbraith C 1991 • Nigel Fleming P 2003 • James Puxley C 1998 • Mike Kimber C 1983 • Suzanne Kimber C 2004 • Rosemary Balsdon C 2008 • Becky Elvin General Manager

Ian Brown C 1993 • Mike Farmer C 2000 • Geoffrey Wallis C 1998 • Richard Howard P 1986 • Alan Holland C 1990 P 2000 • Stephen Burman C 1985 • Earl of Carnarvon P 2004 • Richard Benyon MP P 2002 • Harry Henderson P 2006 • Ian Freeland C 2006 • Michael Bissell C 1994 • Desmond Barton C 1964 • Hugh Berry C 1970 • Clive Povey P 1997

Major Cole P 1971 • Jamie Gladstone P 1980 • Peter Carter C 1979 • Sir Philip Wroughton P 1985 • Simon Carter C 2009 • Charlie Mayfield P 2009 • Simon Pallet C 1987 • Clem Cooper C 1968 • David Liddiard C 1963 • John Goddard C 1992 • David Rabbits C 1981

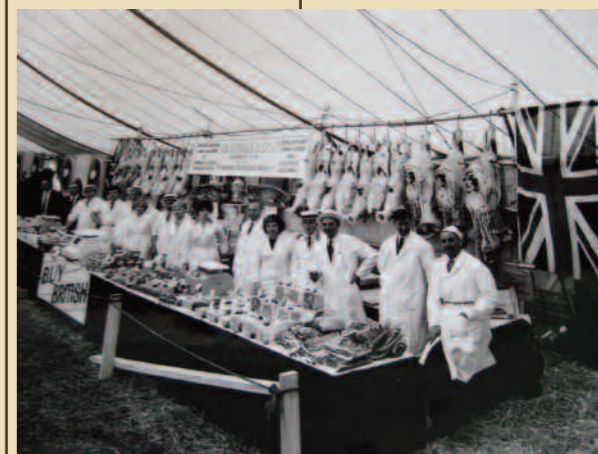


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Society Connections

Commitment and dedication to the Society by countless volunteers have been the underlying root of its success. When looking through the press cuttings over the years recurrent names occur showing commitment from families not just individuals.



1970 - Clem Cooper, Winner of the best run farm for the third successive year, with Margaret.

Take the Cooper family, for example. Clem Cooper was Chairman in 1968. His main interest was with the Ayrshire breed of cattle and he has been on the Cattle Committee for over 30 years. His brother Geoff showed Ayrshire cows taking over from his father, Wilfred, and now Geoff's daughter, Judy, shows the Ayrshires. Clem showed his farm several times and won the large farm competition on six occasions. Alistair, his son, was Chairman in 1986 and also showed Ayrshire Cattle.

It is too easy to say "was Chairman" in an article about commitment and volunteers. Being Chairman of the Society involves countless hours of unseen work ensuring that everything is in place for the eve of the Show. The individuality of each Chairman brings a different emphasis each year and this enhances the strength of the continuity of the Show. In Clem's year as Chairman, the Cattle Committee recommended to the Show Council that "only cattle from herds that are accredited or supervised/controlled under the Ministry of Agriculture's brucellosis (contagious abortion) eradication scheme shall be allowed on the Showground". The Newbury Show (as it was

then called) was believed to have been the first Agricultural Show and Society to take this bold and progressive step.

Stan Cooper, Clem's brother, was Chairman in 1974. Rolling up the sleeves and sorting out the problems was always needed and when the water jump was leaking on the morning of his Show Stan and Ivor Gore sorted the leak that morning! Stan was always involved with the Heavy Horse section. Stan and Iris bred one of the Queen's Drum Horses and this horse came twice to the Show as a main ring attraction with the Cavalry. Iris can remember many different families helping dismantle cattle sheets and ropes at the end of the one day Show each year. Iris started the School's Tent with Joan Simmonds. In 2009 we have the annual Ploughing Match at Folly Farm, West Ilsley – the home of one of Stan and Iris' daughters, Jane, and their son in law, David. Jane Carlisle's Godmother is Margaret Wilson whose late husband, Robin was Chairman in 1978. Robin and Margaret also gave tirelessly of their time.

The Browns have been in evidence since the first reported gathering to discuss the possibility of starting an Agricultural Show. James Brown, Ian Brown's Great Grandfather, of Manor Farm Great Shefford was one of eleven individuals who met and decided to progress the Show. He was asked to take on the role of Secretary but is reported as saying "my engagements are already too numerous to warrant taking any further appointments". However, he would have been hard at work as it fell to that original group to organise the Show as there was no supporting office or even a Chairman. There was a President from the outset while the role of Chairman began in 1925. James' grandson, another James Brown (Jim), was a Guernsey steward for 20 years. He was recently given recognition at the Ploughing Match for 65 successive

years of combining. Jim's son, Ian, of Chapel Farm, Leckhampstead, was Chairman in 1993 and currently looks after all matters ecclesiastical with the Society. He masterminds the Rogation, Show Harvest Festival and Carol Services throughout the year. He also sits on the Events Committee. The maternal Grandfather of Mary Ann (Ian's wife) was Chairman in 1926. He was E W Slade of New Farm, Compton. Donald Brown, of Trumpletts Farm Hampstead Norreys, is a second cousin of Ian. He and his wife, Ali, are always at every social event supporting the Society. This year Ali produced a wonderful replica of the new Society logo in natural products which was exhibited at the South of England Show. Cecil, Donald's father and Heather have also been great supporters of the Society with Heather currently being Chief Steward of the Membership Enclosure.

Another family who have roots in the first Show are the Carters. Paget Carter, Peter's father, attended the first Show with his own Father in 1909. They exhibited products for agricultural use – ropes, waterproof sheets, sacks, horse nosebags, hay rick covers etc. They established a custom that each year at the Show their farming customers would pay their annual account and be refreshed with a pint of real ale and a good scoop of stilton cheese. The stilton cheese and alcohol of most kinds are still available each year but no annual account is settled! Paget was unable to be a Chairman as there was a rule in the early years that you had to be involved directly with agriculture. His son, Peter, went on to be Chairman in 1979, and a Trustee and Governor. He has been on many committees and currently is Chairman of Benefits and a member of the Showground Committee. Now, in 2009, Peter's son, Simon, is Chairman having only missed two Shows in his lifetime! He has sat on Sponsorship, Events,

Herald and PR Committees.

The Events Committee was a 'family' in itself during the 70s and 80s with about 40 members on the Committee. The Wallis family have several entries in the list of President and Chairman. G W Wallis, President in 1972, was suggesting to a meeting that the Society should be wound up when a voice from the back, Peter Carter, said not enough was done with the members and that a Social Event should be organised, The feeling of the meeting was in favour and the President voted Peter should take it on as he seemed to know something about parties! The annual Summer Party became one of the events of the year with one party having 700 people attending. The famous Wine and Cheese was established and many happy tales abound when the drink drive law was not even dreamt of!

An article without mention of the Dreweatt Neate 'Family' would not hold any credence. Dreweatt Neate is a firm formed by the merger of two long established Newbury firms, Dreweatt Watson & Barton and A W Neate. How many people have heard various speeches from Dreweatt Neate individuals who remark fondly of starting at Neates and being told they will be involved with The Newbury and District Agricultural Society; car parking is where they "cut their teeth". Once they mature through their early years many of them become Heads of Sections and Show Chairmen. Our current Chairman of the Board is Simon



Col. James Fairhurst who was the Society's first President in 1909

Pallett, a partner with Dreweatt Neate (now Carter Jonas). Simon's father, John, was



David Liddiard, Alfred Bayliss, George Bayliss and Paget Carter

Chairman in 1966. F W Neate was Chairman in 1946 and President in 1961. The following were all Chairmen F W Neate, S Hagger, C W Barton, F H Cole, D H Barton, R H J Berry, I Scull, C J E Saint, S R Burman, R S W Liddiard, C J Boreham, and C D'Olley.

Richard Liddiard was Chairman in 1989 having attended the Show since an early age following his father, David, who was Chairman in 1963. David has been responsible for the wonderful spectacle of Hot Air Balloons that the Show has become renowned for and his hard work and wonderful sense of humour will be long remembered. Richard progressed from Car Parks on to the Showground Committee and has been invaluable in the Society with planning projects. Richard's grandfather, Bill, who farmed at East Shefford and Great Shefford, attended regularly and Richard's brother, James, who farms at Warren Farm, Saver-nake has often won Best Farmed Farm and Best Crop prizes at the Show.

Within our Presidential Family, Colonel James Fairhurst was President in 1909 with his son, J S Fairhurst, being President in 1982. C C Clifford Kingsmill, President in 1977, is the uncle to Chris Boreham who was Chairman in 1997. C C Clifford Kingsmill's uncle, Lt Col W H Kingsmill, was President in 1958. Colonel Michael Wroughton, President in 1952, is father to Sir Phillip Wroughton, who was President in 1985. Michael Wroughton, born Michael Puxley, changed his name to Wroughton when he was 21. His brother, John Puxley was President in 1969 and his son James was President in 1998. James Puxley is cousin to

D H L Nugent who was President in 1989 and has two great uncles who were also Presidents – Sir Frederick Carden in 1921 and Major H L Archer Houblon in 1926. Harry Henderson was President in 2006, 47 years after his father, J R Henderson, was President. Harry has enabled the current Education Programme at the Society to be such a success with his extensive fund raising and active presence on the Education Committee. The Earl of Carnarvon was President in 2004 and his father was President in 1946. The Benyon family have provided constant support. Sir Henry Benyon, was President in 1949 and Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire – he left Englefield to his second cousin, the father of William. William Benyon MP was President in 1992 and his son Richard Benyon, now MP for Newbury, was President in 2002. Sir William regularly attends the Annual General Meeting taking a keen interest in the direction of the Society and Richard provides assistance whenever asked. He is currently Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Wildlife giving the Society a very useful contact within DEFRA.

When Richard was President, his Chairman was Mike Bowden of Manor Farm, Brimpton. Mike's great grandfather, Henry, won the best 3 acres of Suttons Swedes in 1912 and 1913. Mike annually organises the Society's Ploughing Match so remains actively involved with the Society. Herbert Bowden, a great uncle to Mike was Chairman in 1951 and Mike's father, John, was Chairman in 1976. In the early years of the Show a prize winner was given a sum of money to go and buy their own prize and then have it

engraved. The Bowden family have a silver entree dish and a Tantalus from 1912 and 1913.

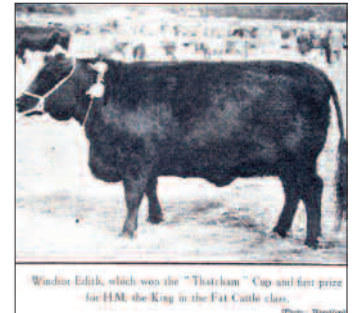
When it comes to families we must remember husband and wife teams! These have worked tirelessly for the Show. Couples who have both been Chairmen (or Chairwomen) are the Kimbers and the Balsdons but you only have to look at the list of Past Presidents, Chairmen and Committees to see husbands and wives who have given many hours of time. The Saints and the Smalleys but for fear of leaving anyone out it is unwise to mention any more names!! but there are many – all worthy of a mention.

Ladies have worked hard for the Society. Initially they were in supporting roles and being the backbone of social 'dos' but latterly one can see their names as Chair of committees, 1999 the Society had its first ever Lady President, Lady Eliza Mays-Smith and the first ever Lady Chair, Diana Amesbury. This was timely in that it came at the end of the 20th Century setting the pattern for ladies in the 21st Century. Almost a reflection of social history but we didn't produce an Emily Pankhurst! Since then The Hon Mrs Jessica White as President in 2007; Since then Suzanne Kimber as Chair in 2004; The Hon Mrs. Jessica White, whose father Lord Howard de Walden was President in 1978, as President in 2007 and Rosemary Balsdon as Chair in 2008.

Within this 'Society family' everyone's contribution has shaped the Society for what it is today. Everyone should be mentioned and remembered. As we look into the next 100 years we see many children of our 'Society family' attending the Show and enjoying all that it has to offer. Let's hope that they and their children and grandchildren will be helping to shape the Society of 2109 and continue to celebrate all that is good about agriculture and the Royal County of Berkshire.

19th September 1938 NEWBURY SHOW THE KING'S SUCCESS - Reproduced by kind permission of the Newbury Weekly News

The King was an exhibitor at Newbury Agricultural Society's Show on Saturday, and won first prize for the best steer or heifer and the Thatcham Cup for the best animal in the fat cattle class. His entry was Windsor Edith, a cross-bred heifer.



The total entries numbered 1,091, an increase of nearly 200 on last year.

Show Locations Over The Years

- 1909-1929
- Enborne Gate
- 1939-1963
- Elcot Park
- 1964-1971
- Henwick Court
- 1972-1980
- Siege Cross
- 1981-1984
- Shaw
- 1985-present
- Newbury Showground

There were no Shows during the following years

- 1914-1918 First World War
- 1928-1936 Agricultural Depression
- 1939-1945 Second World War