Northern Kaipara Agricultural Association

Centennial Show 24 January 1976

A History of a Show

With the compliments of
S. E. GREGORY
in memory of many happy days and firm friendships.

HISTORY OF THE NORTH KAIPARA AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

by S. E. Gregory

The North Kaipara Agricultural Association is the pioneer society of its kind for many miles around. It originated in 1876 when the first show was held at Pahi with Mr Edward Coates as President and Mr Ariel as Secretary. The second Show was at Matakohe, near the wharf, at Reece's Store and the third at the old Paparoa School. The inside exhibits were housed in the old school buildings, the stock in Mr Skelton's paddock adjoining, while the horse events were held along the Main Road. The Shows afterwards rotated between Paparoa, Maungaturoto, Pahi and Matakohe. The Show then lapsed for several years, recommencing in the middle eighties.

On pages 317 and 318 of the "Albertlanders" there is an account of the first Show which is said to have been held at Paparoa and not at Pahi in 1876. Mr William Chadwin came to the first Show at Paparoa and remembered Mr E. Coates taking the first prize for the best pair of working horses.

In the eighties the Shows were held on the old show grounds, on the flat immediately adjoining Cliff's Hall, but as the Hall had not yet been built, a large tent or marquee was erected just in front of where the Hall now stands. A list of the Presidents and Secretaries follows this note, but after Mr E. Coates, Captain Colbeck (father of Captain F. Colbeck) was President with Messrs G. Skelton and G. Tibbitts as Secretaries.

On the Pahi Road there were 79 acres belonging to the Crown. This was used by the Mounted Rifles as a drill ground. The Agricultural Association purchased 20 acres from Mr Ned Fenwick alongside Mr Cliff's Hall and bordering the Main Road for Show purposes. The price of this land was £250 which was raised by a mortgage from Mr Blackwell at 5% per annum. The Mounted Rifles then used this land for drilling and the Crown transferred the Pahi land to the Agricultural Association. Cliff's Hall was built in 1890 and gave an impetus to the Show, which had lapsed in the eighties. In 1891 the Shows started again on the old ground and using the Hall for the inside displays. It has continued right through to the present day with only a break during the influenza out-break and for one of the war years when Patriotic events took its place.

The sheep pens adjoining the Hall were bought by the Auckland Farmers' Union in 1905 for £10 and leased for 999 years at a peppercorn rent. Mr G. Tibbitts proposed in 1912 that the sheep pens should be bought back with the proceeds of the sale of the Pahi property but the Association were unable to do this. In 1953 a small section was sold to Mr Neil Fenwick for a residence and in 1958 a proposal was advanced that the ground should be handed over to the County Council for development as a Sports Ground.

Mr Tibbitts was Secretary for 1890-1901, when Mr Wm. Hook took over in 1892 for four years until 1896. During these four years Messrs Richard Smith and G. Skelton were Presidents.

The Paparoa Brass Band was started in 1890 and always played at the Shows. The bandmaster was Mr H. C. Nutsford and he turned it into a first class band.

From 1896, the Secretaries were Messrs M. N. Skelton, Wm. Litherland and O. C. Hames, who brought the year down to 1900. Mr R. Smith was President for a time during this period.

When Mr Blackwell's mortgage fell due the Pahi land was put up for tender and was bought by Mr New for £150. Mrs Elizabeth Cliff advanced £100 on a mortgage and this with Mr New's £150 released Mr Blackwell. It was proposed then that Life Memberships should be given for £5/5/- to wipe off the mortgage, but no action was taken on this.

Over many years the Association has supported, encouraged and helped by working bees and, financially, all the Sports bodies wishing to use the ground. In 1911 Mr W. Davis was given permission to lay out a cricket pitch and cricket has been played intermittently since then. Seven distinct appeals from them for assistance over that time have been generously answered. The Football Club under Mr Simpson in 1914 was given leave to play and seven appeals for help from them have been granted. The Tennis Club was formed in 1910 and was helped considerably both in time and money, 20 appeals being made for help. The Hockey Club played for several seasons after 1914.

The Bowling Club has developed a splendid site and has attained considerable success. It has been in existence since 1924 and is still going strongly. Bonfires for the children were held on November 5th, 1925. Sports days were held in 1927 for the combined schools and were a great success. In 1909 Ploughing and Wool Sorting competitions were got under way. In 1920, and after, the Defence Department used the grounds for a rifle range. On the ground also the Otamatea Jersey Breeders' Club had built a very fine pavilion for the use of its members on sale days, and in 1950 a large Cattle Pavilion was erected for the use of breeders at Show time.

All these activities proved a great drain on the financial resources of the Association and various means were conceived to carry out their schemes. A fete was held in 1912 which yielded £112 and a flower show in 1933. In 1924 a Gymkhana was held and gave £20. A Bazaar in 1929 was held. In 1917, a great effort was made and a Patriotic Show was held. This proved an outstanding success, no less than £359 being shown as net profit. Taking that figure at present day values, it will appear astounding.

All through this however the Association was struggling to keep alive financially. In 1911 the bank had to be approached for an overdraft to pay the prize money. The assets were against a mortgage of £129. In 1916 there was a deficit of £48 and in 1922 a deficit of £130. In 1923 an overdraft of £50 was required and in 1924 an overdraft of £60 was asked for to pay prize money.

A proposal was put forward in 1915 for the amalgamation with a Show at Maungaturoto Railway Station but no further action was taken. At various times it has been suggested that the name of the Association should be changed to the Otamatea Show. This may come in time.

In the past the Association was a strong pressure group and influenced the growth of the district considerably. In 1950 an effort to have the hotel moved to Paparoa was made and in 1933 their influence was used to prevent the Nurse Cavell Hospital from being closed. In 1912 their voice was heard among many for the siting and naming of the new railway station and a slight tone of sarcasm crept in when it was proposed to write to the local manager of the National Bank of New Zealand pointing out that the time had now arrived for more suitable premises to be built.

Considering that the Bank was holding a considerable overdraft at that time, the bank authorities might have thought that rather humorous.

The great day of all these occurrences was, however, when Mr Coates congratulated Mr Jackman with the success he had achieved with the route to be adopted by the North Auckland Main Trunk Railway in 1909. In 1912 a supper was given in Mrs Nield's Boarding House at 2/6 per head for 45 guests. A splendid evening was had by all. Mr Jackman was presented with a purse of sovereigns and the guests consumed 3 tins of cigarettes, 1 case of wine, 2 doz. quarts of beer, 4 bottles of whisky and 1 doz. bottles of lemonade.

The County Council has stood behind the Association gallantly and has realised the good work done and what a beneficial influence it has been for the district generally. Whenever help has been asked for, it has always been very freely given. On 15 occasions the Association has asked for a remission of its rates and generally this has been granted in some generous way.

In writing these memoirs one event must not be forgotten. In 1910 the district was served by water. The Sellar-Allen S.S. Co. were especially asked to run their steamer to suit the convenience of the Show, returning late at night. They were also asked as their contribution to the funds to carry the judges free of cost. This they were only too pleased to do. Help in those days was always freely given.

In 1919 the committee were getting older and a proposal was put forward that during the winter months, committee men should adjourn to Mrs Parson's Boarding House where winter fires could be had.

1925 was remembered by many of the older patrons. Mr Bartlett was allowed to erect a tent and to give away free samples of Australian wine ("to those who cared to partake of the same"), as the Minutes state, with of course the idea of obtaining orders.

There are many other memories to recall the early days; the struggles, successes and sadnesses, their small disagreements and their strong bond of comradeship. Before closing this record it would be well to recall the strong note of condemnation issued to one competitor for borrowing somebody else's horse and buggy for competition purposes and the astonishment of the good committeemen on waking one morning to observe a stag quietly grazing on their Show Grounds. That was in 1923. No one wanted the animal and although it was widely advertised no one came forward to claim it and the management committee were called upon to dispose of it. It does not say who had the meat.

To return to more mundane matters, it is reported that in 1909 £12/10/- was asked for printing 600 schedules. The cost (1958) £70. The President's entertainment allowance was given as £2/10/-. In 1958 only £10. To be fair and proportionate this allowance should have been £80.

It may be of interest to give the names of Committeemen from the earliest records available. In 1909 the following were appointed: Patron, John Stallworthy, M.P.; President, Gordon Coates; Vice-presidents, G. Skelton, H. Winser, I. B. Ariell; Committee, J. C. Allen, F. Blackwell, J. H. Cartwright, J. R. Cliff, G. K. Cliff, J. Dodds, E. Evans, N. Fenwick, M. Finlayson, I. Gibbs, E. Goodall, O. C. Hames, H. C. Hemphill, C. H. Jenkins, A. Martin, D. McCarroll, I. V. Nutsford, E. Stephenson, S. Stephens, E. A. Wilson, T. Wilson. The Ladies' Committee consisted of Mesdames Cuttle, Stephenson, Cross, E. Goodall, Jenkins, Latter, D. Hill, S. Stevens, Trounson, A. H. Tibbits, T. Wilson and Misses Coates, Cooksley, Nutsford.

In 1910 the Patron was still John Stallworthy and President Gordon Coates. Vice-presidents, T. Wilson, J. R. Cliff, and R. C. Cliff. Committee, W. J. Smith, J. H. Cartwright, C. Gallie, F. Pheasant, H. McCarroll, T. V. Nutsford, G. L. King, H. Winser, E. A. Evans, W. F. Gibbs, G. New, F. Parker, H.

Burch, G. K. Cliff, O. Hames, C. A. Wilson, J. Dodds, E. Fenwick, C. H. Jenkins, A. Martin, E. Stephenson, S. Stevens, H. C. Hemphill, D. Ariell, D. Hill, E. Goodall and Russell Smith.

In 1911 Mr A. O. Metcalfe was included on the Committee and in 1912 a change was made. Gordon Coates became the Patron, T. Wilson President and Vice-presidents, R. C. Smith, J. R. Cliff and G. L. King. Committee, W. J. Smith, J. H. Cartwright, D. McCracken, G. Smith, H. S. McCarroll, T. V. Nutsford, E. O. Evans, F. W. Gibbs, G. K. Cliff, O. C. Hames, C. A. Wilson, E. Fenwick, C. H. Jenkins, A. A. Martin, E. W. Stephenson, G. New, D. W. Ariell, R. Smith, I. T. Boyd and H. C. Hamphill and in 1913 Messrs C. Ball, N. Skelton, A. Metcalfe were added. In 1914 L. Wallis became a Vice-president and E. Smith, W. J. Erne, C. Fenwick and W. H. Stevens came on to the Committee.

If a further list of names is desired and expressed an addendum will be added at the end of this booklet and finally here follows a copy of one of the earliest Minutes in existence.

> **July, 1886** At the annual meeting of the North Kaipara Agricultural Association held at the Paparoa School House, 1886, Mr R. C. Smith presided.
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> The report showed receipts for the year amounting to £94/13/5, expenditure £89/10/2. Each prize taker was presented with a very handsome illuminated card. Two silver cups were presented to Messrs Rogers and Tibbits for the "Best Heavy Draught Horse" (Entire) and "Best Leicester Ram."
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> On the motion of Mr Wilson, and seconded by Mr Snelling, the report was adopted. Capt. Colebeck was elected President, and Messrs Coates and A. Colebeck Vice-presidents.
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> Committee, Messrs E. Coates, R. C. Smith, Jos. Ovens and Jas. Smith for Matakohe, Messrs Wilson, Cliff, Tibbits, Thompson, Gerrand, Blackwell and Skelton for Paparoa, Messrs McMurdo, Haines, A. Colebeck and Capt. Colebeck for Pahi, Messrs Snelling, J. Smith and G. Rogers for Maungaturoto, Mr F. Bradley for Wairoa, Mr F. Clark for Kaiwaka and Mr D. McLeod for Waipu.
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> A vote of thanks was given to all donors of the Special Prizes, also to the Hon. Secretary, Mr Skelton, for his services during the year.
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> Mr Tibbits was appointed Hon. Secretary and Treasurer for the current year. Mr Coates stated that the Show was held at a bad time of the year, that all livestock was in bad condition in March, and that the country being dried up had a bad appearance to strangers, and he suggested that a show of livestock be held in December.
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> *Indocti discant, et ament meminesse periti*
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> (Let the ignorant learn, and the learned take pleasure in refreshing their remembrance).

In July 1963 The Advance Aviation offered a trophy for Romney Flocks and in November the public address system was bought from Mr Nicholas. The Tetzner Cup was awarded to a Flock Romney Ram in 1964. In August 1968 Mr G. A. Jenkins sent $30 for the purchase of a trophy for a memorial to the late Mr D. Withers. This was to be awarded to most entries in the Horticultural Section.

A new Shearing Pavilion was built in 1969. In 1972 a section was arranged for Milch Goats and the Scott Challenge Cup for Fat Sheep...