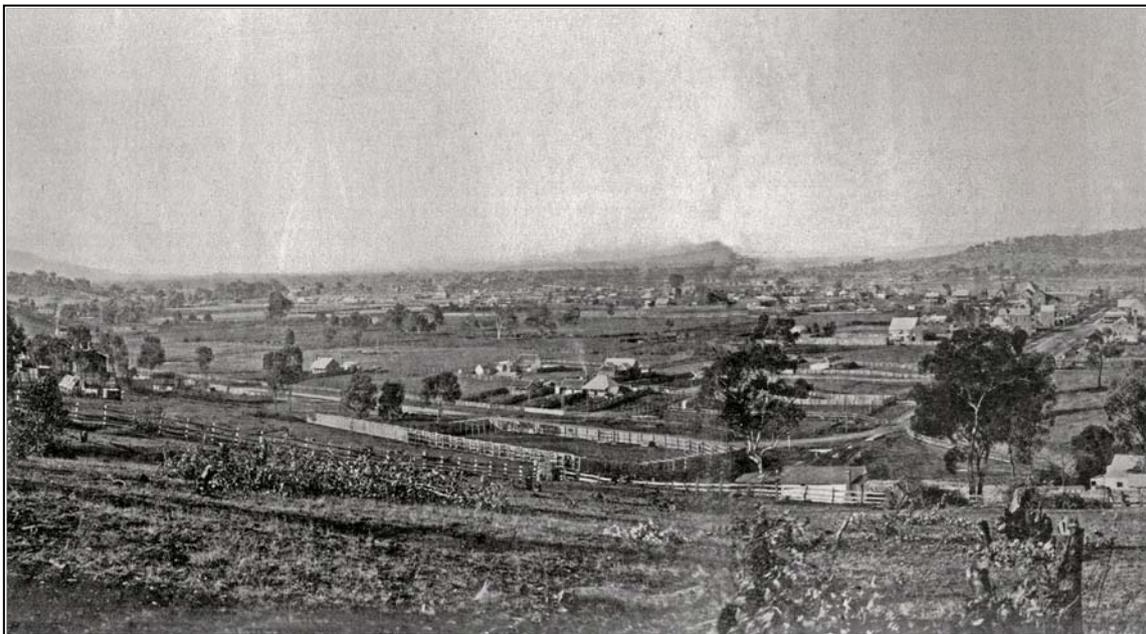# Celebrating 160 Years of the Albury Show

Greg Ryan

In January 1857, Robert Brown, the first European settler in Albury, called a meeting at the Criterion Hotel in Hume street that resulted in the formation of the "Albury and Murray River Agricultural and Horticultural Society."

On April 13 the society held their first show and ploughing match. The show exhibited "farm and dairy produce, vegetables, fruit and wine" at Layton's Hotel (now Sodens). The *Border Post* told its readers that "the wine exhibited was of a superior quality ... the first prize to Mr Frauenfelder and creating an extra prize to Mr Rau of equal value."

The ploughing match was held at "Mr E Crisp's paddock at the north end of Kiewa street" (opposite what is now Albury High School). Three horse teams and two bullock teams competed for £20 in prize money - the *Border Post* reported "that notwithstanding the fact that all ploughmen carried away prizes, we feel bound to confess that the work was not well executed."

In November a stock show was held, with farm produce and agricultural machinery also on display.

In 1858 three acres were granted to the Show Society on the western side of what is now Thurgoona street. The yards were completed at a cost of £475 and the first show held at the new site in March 1860. Exhibitors competed for gold, silver and bronze medals, but it was reported that "in February 1861 the medals were still not forthcoming, though there was £144 to credit in the bank."

Looking north-east over Albury's first Showgrounds on what is now
Thurgoona St at the base of Western Hill, Dean St is on the right

The following year the show was held in Wodonga. A depression followed and the next show in Albury was not held until 1868, then in 1871 with poor entries and attendance in both years.

In October 1875 a new committee was elected. The society now became "Albury and Border Pastoral, Agricultural and Horticultural Society" and their next show in August 1876 was very successful, resulting in a profit of £50 after £130 in prizes was awarded.

The Showgrounds on Western Hill were found to be unsuitable and the society started to look for a new site. In 1878 the last show was held at the old yards.

A five-acre site at Alexandra Park on the north-east corner of Guinea & Young streets became available. The first stock show was held there in 1879, with produce exhibited in the Mechanics Institute. The Alexandra Park site remained Albury Showgrounds until after World War II.

For more information, go to 'Albury Show Society' at
https://alburyhistory.org.au/resources/history-topics/