



Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association

for the encouragement of industrious farm workers
and improvements in agriculture
Established 3rd December 1833

175TH ANNUAL PLOUGHING MATCH

Commemorative Edition

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: I Connell, K Clarke, C Connell, R Connell,
E Emmett, M Emmett, N Emmett, P Emmett,
T Emmett, A Farrow, M Field, D Lacey,
C Lidstone, B K Edgley, S Lidgate,
S Morris, R Randall, S Swerling, M Swerling,
J Short, F Short, J Whitby, E Williams (PJSA).

LADIES COMMITTEE: I Connell, S Emmett, T Emmett (Chairman), F Gerlach,
S Lidgate, I Lacey, E Newman, J Short, A Fifield, Fi
Short, L Dodwell.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE: I Connell, D Lacey, B Lidgate, S Lidgate, S Swerling,
J Whitby, J Short, S Morris, I Lacey, Fi Short,
L Dodwell.



Billy Emmett, with Jack Teek and George Sherriff at the opening of the, then new, Lidstone facility at Taplow - now Sainsbury's



President's message

The Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association was founded in 1833 for the Encouragement of Industrious Labourers and Servants and this year will hold the 175th Ploughing Match.

This special year I have the honour of becoming the President of an Association that I have been involved with most of my life and has become a big part of my life.

As a child I have memories of my mother insisting on buying a new hat each year to wear to the Ploughing Match and maybe a complete new outfit. Also the domestic tent was a completely male dominated environment with Gilbert Lidstone and certain gentlemen arriving with their ladies cakes sometime upside down. Much has changed since then with a group of ladies now running this tent very efficiently, with many more classes including some for children of all ages. I am proud to say that all of my six grandchildren have entered these classes and this year grandchild number seven will enter as will my first great grandchild.

One of my first memories at the Ploughing Match was seeing the two displays of vegetables exhibited by my father and uncle competing against each other while grandfather William Emmett watched with interest. I note also at that time Sir Richard Howard-Vyse was President for seventeen years - something not to be repeated I feel.

My next real introduction to the Association was a summer party held at Chisbridge Farm - home of Jim and Phyllis Connell who would later become my in-laws. So, eager to impress, I helped that evening only to be told by Jack Teek that I was quite handy and should be on the Social Committee where I have been ever since. Then progressing to organise the annual luncheon which I did for 25 years until becoming the first female chairman - a great honour. I am so pleased that Jo Short now has the position.

During this time there have been so many varied events but to me the most special one was when Her Majesty invited members of the committee and ploughmen to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party to celebrate our 150th year as she could not attend the Ploughing Match and what a great honour and magic afternoon that was. We were very grateful to Her Majesty for inviting us.

Of course there has also been sadness over the years losing many of our members, but this year is especially sad losing Andy Hall who will be greatly missed. However I am sure the Association will go on and prosper with enthusiastic young members and the great job that the committee do every year for which we are all very grateful for as we look forward to the 176th Ploughing Match

Elizabeth Connell

The History of The Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association – 1983

The Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association is this year celebrating its 175th Anniversary since it was founded in 1833. Whilst this is a statement of fact it is also true that it decided to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in 1882 and its Centenary in 1937. As the South Bucks Agricultural Association was already meeting in 1821 it may be as well, if only for future benefit of the committee preparing for the bi-centenary in twenty five years time, to establish the society's true origins. In 1813 the Rev. St John Priest researched and published "A General View of the Agriculture of Buckinghamshire for the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement", one of a series of studies covering the whole of England undertaken in the first quarter of the 19th Century which were intended to form the basis for policies to improve agricultural practices and economics.

In one chapter he observes that "There is no Agricultural Society in Bucks, nor is there a county where more benefit might accrue to the public from such an institution, because there is not one where Nature has provided richer materials for the purpose, in proportion to its size, nor which is better calculated for improvement. Such a Society would infuse a spirit of thinking amongst those who pursued certain modes of business, merely because their fathers did before them, without considering whether a change of circumstances and times may not necessarily induce changes in agricultural management."

He continues later in the same chapter: "For the encouragement of industry in the poor, Agricultural Societies might have the best of effects..... Rewards to such as are employed in Agriculture, to dairy maids and to poor men, upon different points of merit, would render an Agricultural Society of inestimable worth."

The Board of Agriculture accepted this advice and endeavoured to encourage the formation of agricultural societies in the county. It is not recorded, however, just how pleased they were with the first fruits of their efforts in this part of the county, for a South Bucks Agricultural Association was formed towards the end of 1820 whose purpose was far removed from that envisaged by the Rev. St. John Priest. The bumper harvest of 1813 had seen the price of wheat fall in one year from 117s a quarter to 69s. Then the lifting of the Napoleonic blockade and the wild post war currency fluctuations left farmers considerably worse off, despite Corn Law import barriers. With pressure building up from the cities and the increasingly powerful industrialists for repeal of the Corn Laws, agriculturalists were constrained to work together to try and form an efficient political lobby.

In these conditions societies sprung up all over the country and the South Bucks Agricultural Association met formally at the George Inn, West Wycombe on 1st January 1821 to draw up a petition praying for relief from the imperfect operation of the Corn Laws. At a further meeting at the Lion Inn, High Wycombe on 17th August 1821 a resolution was passed stating that "nothing less than an import duty of 40s per quarter on wheat can secure to us the fruits of our industry".

Under this pressure the government, in 1822, excluded foreign wheat completely until the price reached 70s, with a sliding scale of duties above that price. The

Association does not appear to have met formally after this but the Corn Laws were at the very centre of political debate until their eventual repeal in 1846 and it is certainly true that members would have kept closely in touch even after 1822, which no doubt largely explains how the South Bucks association, when it was properly inaugurated in 1833, was able to call upon so many of its founder members.

Had it been possible to ask those present at either of the 1821 meeting which event was the more likely to happen within one hundred and seventy five years – that man would walk upon the moon or that there would exist and interventionist common European agricultural policy, it may well be there would be a solid majority for the former!

So much for the embryo society, now to clear up any misunderstanding as to its actual birth date and misunderstandings there were. The 1937 “centenary” appears to have been caused by confusing this with the 100th Ploughing Match, forgetting that none had been held during the years of the Great War. Less easily explained is the noting by the committee in 1881 that “next year being the Jubilee Year of the Association and it appearing that the first Ploughing Match was held at Cippenham it was resolved to accept Mr Headington’s offer of a field at Cippenham for next year’s match with thanks”. However by September 1882 Mr J.C Ive had produced a printed record, published in 1840, of the first seven years of the society’s existence which established the true date of birth as follows:

“In the latter part of 1833, our esteemed vice President G.S Harcourt Esq and other gentlemen interested in Agriculture, feeling the great want of something to stimulate Farm Labourers and Servants to greater industry and skill in their several callings and to increase respect for moral character, met at Salt Hill, resolved to establish a Ploughing Match, and to distribute awards among the deserving, with a view to realising the great desideratum. Exertion was made and 73 of the neighbouring Noblemen, Gentlemen and Farmers came forward; the sum of £64.14s.6d was subscribed; a ploughing match was held on 3rd December in a field, kindly lent by William Nash Esq. of Langley where 19 prizes and rewards were given away; and thus “The South Bucks Agricultural Association” was formed.

“So great an interest was excited by its proceedings, that in the following year the number of Subscribers increased to 89 and the Subscriptions to £106.3s.0d, including £10 from his late Most Gracious Majesty King William IV and £5 from Her Highness Princess Augusta, who with their know condescension permitted their names to be placed at the head as Patron and Patroness, conferring upon the Association the title “The Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association”.

Progress in the early years of the Association is indicated by the number of competitors in the Ploughing Match: 28 in 1833, 51 in 1858 and 67 in 1883. The number of labourers and servants receiving awards in the same years were 19, 94 and 119 respectively. The number of ploughmen competing in the centenary year, 1933 was 36. The peak year for entrants for the various ploughing competitions was 1887 when on 5th October at the farm of Mr Stephen Pulling at Horton, no less than 77 teams competed, the Queen’s Prize being won by John Lowe of Dorney.



The Ploughing Match and Show has, of course, been the focal point of the Association's year since its inception and has only not been held during the years of the two World Wars. (Addit: and also in the year of Foot and Mouth in). Although motor transport instead of horse drawn vehicles was used to convey judges as early as 1909 it took many years for the tractor to supercede the horse as the main motive power at the shows. In 1920 it was decided to establish classes for one-man and two-man tractor outfits, but so few were attracted that after the match in 1921 it was decided that unless tractor ploughing entries exceeded four this section should be left out.

In 1934 there were still only 5 tractors to compete with 31 horse teams and it was not until after the war in 1945 that a special prize for Champion Tractor Ploughman, in addition to that for horse drawn classes, was presented.

It is surely a remarkable tribute to the importance of the Ploughing Match and Show Day to the Association's members that, having decided on 6th September 1939 to suspend all activities for the duration of the war, after VE Day a committee meeting was arranged in June, the minutes of the 1939 meeting were signed and immediate arrangements put in hand for a Ploughing Match to be held on 26th September 1945 on Mr AJ Major's farm.

This match was a great success and the following year, 1946, saw tractor entries outnumber horse teams for the first time. Nevertheless, the one and two horse drawn entries continued to give a good account of themselves and in 1951 the only entry was overall champion, beating 17 tractor teams.

Over the years the prizes and awards for farm labourers and servants were increased in scope and the categories widened, but from the first year the emphasis was on long service, good husbandry and the raising of large families without recourse to parochial relief. By today's standards some of the long service awards are startling. In 1840 one Moses Tombs, a lad of 17 received 15s as a reward for ten and a half year's continuous service, whilst in 1879 Thomas Lake aged 53 was awarded £2 for 43 year's service. The longest continuous service award appears to be that of James Lesley who received 15s in 1882 for 58 year's service.

All in all the Association was justifying its purpose, incorporated in its title "For the Encouragement of Industrious Labourers and Servants". This title was extended to include "Improvements in Agriculture generally" in 1845, when John Palmer Esq. of Dorney Court gave two cups of the value of five guineas each for the best load of wheat and the best five acres of swedes. This was the first occasion on which members and subscribers had competed for and received prizes and rewards and this was followed in 1855 by the cup presented by the Prince Consort for the best cultivated farm. This cup has been presented every year since then, first by the Prince Consort and after his death by each monarch in turn until 1937, in which year King George VI presented a cup to be competed for annually and a replica for the winner to retain. This practice has been continued by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, a certificate replacing the replica cup in 1982.

The Cup was known as the Prince Consort's Cup until the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria in 1901, when Edward VII agreed to continue the presentation of the cup. The King's Cup was presented for the first time at the ploughing match on 2nd October 1901, not without difficulty, for the Secretary had to telegraph

Messrs. Garrard & Co in the morning to ascertain if it would be possible to obtain the King's Cup, which had not arrived in time for the Luncheon. It was thereupon delivered in time, a feat of communication that may not be so readily possible today for all our modern technology. The cups valued at £20 were a different design each year and very splendid they were, as was and is, the competition for this much prized award.

In 1866 came the first of a series of prizes presented by seedsmen and other agricultural traders, initially Messrs. Sutton, soon to be followed by Messrs. Carter & Co., Messrs. Webb and Sons, Messrs. Toogoods and in due course many others, including in their time the Permanent Committees for Nitrates and for Sulphate of Ammonia. It has undoubtedly been one of the strengths of the Association that it has drawn the greatest benefit from these commercial classes by always laying down strict rules which have prevented them from ever becoming mere sales ploys. 1874 saw the establishment of classes for the improvement of the quality of agricultural horses by a prize offered by Captain Purefoy Fitzgerald and the Association has always followed an excellent policy of extending and updating competition classes to cover all aspects of agriculture and husbandry and to take account of new practices and methods.

Members of the Association can take considerable pride that over the past 175 years it has, through the vigilance and hard work of its committee members, done much to encourage good agricultural practice in its area. Those committees have over the years had sturdy independence and have sought zealously to guard it against all comers. In 1889 some farmers and others in the High Wycombe district who were thinking of forming an agricultural society suggested an amalgamation to form "The High Wycombe and South Bucks Agricultural Association". The committee replied that "this would not be beneficial to either association. The district of this Association does not extend northwards of Beaconsfield in the High Wycombe direction and we believe that to be ample scope for a new society which has the best wishes of this Association".

Within 18 months the same committee was objecting strongly to the name chosen by the new "Chiltern Hills and Southern Bucks Agricultural Association" and to the designation of its area as the whole of the South Bucks. Minor differences of opinion rumbled on until the new association was sufficiently riled in 1895 by accusations from The Royal South Bucks of "poaching members" from its district that it threatened to hold its Annual Ploughing Match and show in Slough, whereupon hostilities seemed to have ceased.

Sturdy independence was similarly shown when, in 1903, the secretaries of the Royal East Berks and the Wokingham Agricultural Associations convened a meeting to enable the various societies in the district to discuss seedsmen's prizes and arrange on what conditions they should be accepted. In this instance the committee sent a copy of the Royal South Bucks rules so that the other societies could see how it should be done, but declined to attend the meeting as they knew their method was the best and they "had no inclination to change". In fact, as mentioned earlier, their rules for commercial prizes have always formed an exceptionally good model and have been widely accepted as such.

Relationships with neighbouring associations over the years have, however, really

been very amicable and in particular have included the mutual assistance of providing judges for each other's various classes. If the measure of an agricultural association's ability to influence beneficially, good practices in its area is the amount of competition it promotes, then its success is clearly dependent upon good adjudication of the entries. It is important that the judges are fair, competent, conscientious and decisive and vital that they are seen to be so by the competitors. By the same token no prize is worth the gaining unless it is hard sought and both the attempt and the winning seen to be worth the effort involved. The history of the Association is overwhelmingly one of passionate involvement in its various competitive classes by both entrants and judges and it has been singularly fortunate in that for a century and a half it has been able to call upon well qualified men and women who have willingly given their time to that cause.

The premium placed on winning competitions by many of the entrants has been shown over the years by the occasional objections to the judges' decisions. Once again the wisdom of the early committees in establishing a formal method for questioning judgements has been apparent, as passion on the day has been safely channelled through an appeals procedure. The recorded cases mostly seem to have been ended in the satisfaction of all parties, not necessarily including the gentleman in the 1800's who, on losing his appeal, offered to provide the sum of half a guinea every year for the purpose of purchasing white sticks for the judges! The committee were "constrained to refuse this offer".

Judges have also enlivened show days with pungent comments and compliments and, whilst not hesitating to withhold an award if they considered there were no entrants of sufficient quality, could also say of one King's Cup winner that a field of mangold was "so perfect it could only have been improved by planting lobelia all around the perimeter to set it off". Astuteness was shown by the judge of bales of hay who called in the experts by offering samples to the livestock present and abiding by their preferences.

Photographs of many of the winners of the cups and trophies holding their awards often show them to be of a somewhat grim and unsmiling demeanour, a phenomenon explained by a secretary of the society as being the result of intense concentration needed, by the time the photographs came to be taken, merely to hang on to the trophy and stay in a more or less perpendicular position. Certain that it is that the ploughing matches have been convivial affairs from the beginning. For the first fifty years or so a dinner for members was held after the match at 4pm at either the Royal Hotel or the Old Crown Inn at Slough. Refreshments for the ploughmen of bread and beer as originally provided had expanded to include the provision of a light lunch for members and by 1885 the committee were worried that a fall off in the attendance at the annual dinner might be attributed to the increasingly substantial lunch provided at the ploughing match. Again in 1890 it was noted that a lessening attendance at dinner was coupled with increasing numbers expecting to be provided with a luncheon at the show and after the match of 1891 it was decided that in 1892 luncheon would be provided in the field in place of dinner. 1892 also saw the deaths of Stephen Pullen and George Botham, the last surviving founder members who had supported the association ever since its commencement.



The first full scale field luncheon was pronounced a great success and it was decided to continue with it in the future. However, the agricultural industry was going through a hard time at the end of the 19th Century and a special general meeting of the Association held on 29th November 1892 to discuss "the ruinous state of agriculture" resolved "that the first step to be taken to ameliorate the present distress of agriculture is the entire abolition of all rates and taxes on agricultural land".

ceaded to the fact that without a dinner to attend there was no longer a reason for the early end to the proceedings, 1893 seems to have seen the event well on its way to establishment as the very convivial occasion it has long had the reputation of being. Whilst history has drawn a veil over the specific roistering that took place, a somewhat chastened committee at their meeting in November that year "unanimously resolved that the caterer be instructed not to supply intoxicating liquors in the field after 5pm at the Ploughing Match".

Nevertheless the Association has succeeded over the years in establishing a (largely factual) folklore comprising such stories as the shepherd who regularly brought his flock of sheep and dog to the show, the sheep dog taking the flock and his shepherd home. Then there was the member who, when he realised he was in no fit state to drive enlisted the assistance of a lady to drive him home. Whereupon he, naturally did the gentlemanly thing by courteously driving the lady back to her house and returning home, thus completing a journey considerably longer than the one he had so meticulously avoided. That the spirit of the competition amongst members could be set aside and complete cooperation achieved when necessary is clearly illustrated by the occasion when a flock of sheep escaped from the show ground. So enthusiastically did those present combine their efforts to recover the sheep that the flock was distributed across four parishes before the objective was achieved.

The Luncheon was a matter of great concern to successive committees and each year a luncheon sub-committee would be appointed and each year would succeed in arranging a successful in all kinds of weather. The menu and toast list for the Ploughing Match of 3rd October 1929 indicated that they were never likely to be accused of frugality. When putting the catering out to tender in 1906 it was stated that the average number of persons for luncheon was between 60 and 100, including about 30 complimentary tickets. None of the organising committees over the years would have dreamt that after 150years some 360 people would partake of the Ploughing Match Luncheon in its 176th year.

There were certainly times when such an achievement would have seemed remote indeed. Agriculture has, of course, gone through some very difficult periods in the lifetime of the society and there have been frequent requests for prizes to be awarded in cash in lieu of trophies.

Funds were very low during the last few years of the 19th Century, but good management and hard work by officers kept the Association going. It was in the 1920's that the greatest difficulties were encountered. It was in deficit for the whole of the decade and beyond; indeed in 1927 the bank demanded guarantees from 20 members of £5 each before they would allow the money already collected to be paid out in awards and for the purchase of prizes. Ten percent was deducted

from the value of all awards including the King's Cup and in 1931 exhibitors were asked for the first time if their exhibits might be sold to defray expenses. Occasional dances and other fund raising events had been arranged but in January 1932 a dinner dance was held at the Adelphi in Slough, raising a profit of £19 which became the first of an annual event. During that year the deficit was finally turned into a balance in hand of £55 which was quite rightly considered highly satisfactory. Two innovations at the 1933 show were the introduction of a parking charge of 1s and the auctioning of the exhibits. Such was their pre-occupation with the exigencies of fund raising that the members seem to have overlooked the fact that it was also their Centenary year.

1983 saw the bi-centenary of the Salt Hill Society, a protection society formed by local landowners in 1783 and the 150th Anniversary of this Association. That both these organisations have survived with a successful and unbroken history speaks volumes for the beneficial effect of the mutual cooperation of those with a direct interest in the real heritage of any civilisation – its land.

Many sites of previous ploughing matches have been covered with housing or industry, yet still agriculture plays a major part in the economy. South Bucks is a successful area, absorbing changes so great that they have destroyed the economic balance in similar districts elsewhere. Long may the Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association continue to offer its members firm participation in that success.

Kindly written by Michael Crawley in November 1983.



The Chairman's recollections of the Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association

Both sets of my grandparents were involved in the RSBA and when my grandfather's William Thomas Saunders and William Curtis Emmett both served on the War Agricultural Executive Committee it is likely that they already knew each other through the Association. One set of grandparents farmed at Brentford Grange. Just down the road is Quarrendon Farm where my father's grandmother Emily Hobbs was brought up. Her future husband's family, the Healy's lived at Pennland's Farm in Hedgerley, now part of the Portman Burtley Estate. Emily's brother lived at Upper Bottom House Farm, where the Swerling family now live. Many of my family were and still are involved with the South Bucks so when I returned to the area I was keen to become involved.

As a child many of my paternal grandparents' friends were members and so I grew up knowing the Lidstone, Kimber and Teek families. George Sherriff, a previous long standing Secretary, was a regular visitor to their house. My maternal grandfather was a drinking buddy of Jimbo Connell Senior. Other family friends were the Urquhart's, Woodley's, Barker's and Purser's. Looking at the 1960 Schedule for the Ploughing Match held at All Souls Farm, George Green, Slough by kind permission of Messrs W A Lidstone Ltd all these names appear as entering competitions and as committee members.

Like the Young Farmer's Club has the reputation for meeting future spouses the same applies to the RSBA as again many of those mentioned appear to have been related to each other in some way. Going through the list of committee and general members in 1960 many of the names are familiar – their children and grandchildren still being involved today. Notably are the Morris, Randall, Weeks, Lunnon, Philp and White families. The members clearly wanted to enjoy themselves as there were sack races for members and employees and also a Tractor Trailer competition and a Guess the Weight of a pig and a sheep. In 1960 the show was on Wednesday 21st September but from 1961 it became the first Wednesday of October each year.

The Luncheon had taken off by the 60's but also firmly in the RSBA Calendar was the Annual Dinner and Dance, usually held at the Bell Hotel, Beaconsfield and I remember it as a child being one of the big events of the year for the family. In 1970 it was still going strong and tickets cost £2 10s. 0d.

Being from a family of vegetable growers it is interesting that in 1970 that there were a number of classes for Vegetables – boxes of 12 Christmas Cabbage, cauliflower, 20lbs of Brussel sprouts and 28lbs of carrots as well as a range of farm classes for potatoes. There were clearly a number of horticulturalists in the association. Until 1974 there was a price on the show schedule of 1/- (shilling) which appears to have been purchased on the day as all the entries were printed in the schedule.

1980 saw the show at Hedgerley Park Farm, Stoke Poges courtesy of RW Russell Esq. and in 1990 the show was at Widmere Farm by kind permission of GJ White and Sons. Carcasses were still being judged and there was still livestock being exhibited at the show. But in 1987 the boxed vegetables at the show were no longer classes but there was still competition for those in the field and the Vegetable display



was still very much part of the Show. The Edgely Family hosted the 2000 show at Kensham Farms, Cadmore End. This year there was livestock at the show but the following year, after foot and mouth the decision was made to not have animals on site. Foot and mouth reared its head again in 2007 and the difficult decision was made to cancel the 164th Annual Ploughing Match due to the proximity of Foot and Mouth to our area, and it was eventually held at Hall Barn Estates a year later on Wednesday 1st October 2008 by kind permission of The Honorable Jenefer Farncombe.

Our Ladies Committee is still well supported and we have a strong team led this year by Tina Emmett who regularly come up with new ideas.

Sadly we have lost the vegetable and show day livestock and carcass classes to history. I still remember a very tipsy father arriving home with a pig carcass to cut up and be put in the freezer by the end of the evening as it wasn't going to fit in the fridge whole! He had thought it a really good idea to bid for it at the Auction of produce on Show day afternoon after lunch and a few beers in the bar.

The Dinner and Dance became too expensive and finished sometime in the 1970's although a Summer Dinner Dance was held in the Jubilee year. The enthusiasm and the popularity of the RSBAA continues and in 2017 we saw 471 people sitting down in the Marquee for Lunch. Since then it has been decided to keep numbers to 400 still a figure that would have astounded members in the previous generations.

The Association is growing again and at present we have about 170 members including a number of companies and we very much appreciate the support of our sponsors and those who have offered us the use of their farms to hold our Ploughing Matches. We have sites lined up for a further 5 years including our 190th Anniversary of the Association in 2023 which we are particularly excited about.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention our most recent Secretary, Andy Hall who recently passed away suddenly in March. We have had a number of Secretary's over the years who have been extremely dedicated to the RSBAA, and without whom it would not have become the successful organisation that it is. Andy was no exception and having taken on the role in April this year along with being Chairman, I very much appreciate the complex role that it is. In his day job he was always out and about chatting to people, networking and gently cajoling to get others to agree to support us in ways that they had not previous thought about and to a greater extent than they first thought they might want to! These committed secretaries are going to be a hard act to follow but the team we have is absolutely amazing and I have had fantastic support. Thank you all.

I wish the Royal South Bucks Agricultural Association every success in the future and hope that it moves on with great prosperity in an era where Agriculture faces huge challenges again. My hope is that as food becomes more scarce that Farmers and Growers will again become appreciated for the efforts and sacrifices that they make on a daily basis.

Jo Short 2019



Show days used to start with the early morning ritual of scraping frost from the windscreen. This hasn't happened recently. Is this what is called Climate Change? Over the years we have had all weathers to contend with. The rather dry year when ploughing was almost impossible on the high ground above Chesham. Horses simply couldn't take part. An exceptionally wet year long ago in George Green in Slough, vehicles had to be towed and pushed from the Showground. One very unfortunate carter fell under a cart and his leg was broken. On another occasion we had such a downpour during lunch it was difficult to hear the proceedings and we sat with rain pouring through the marquee.

We have had Indian Summers too where we have peeled of layers of coats as the day grew hotter and had to open the marquee sides for fresh air. Many of the cookery items melted on to the tables in the Domestic Tent.

There have been several memorable show day events which the family look back on with some amusement. One highlight and finale is remembered for having a hair-raising ride across a bumpy, flinty field high in the Chilterns on a double decker bus being driven by the then Chairman, Jim Hillier. It had been used all day as a "stand". We were all quite merry and had a great view but were having to cling on!

At the West Wycombe site a hot air balloon had been brought in for the day and a number of the members were able to enjoy a birds eye view of the Show Site, Valley and Cave System.

The Show goes on hopefully for another 100 years. We have weathered BSE, Foot and Mouth, AIDS and many other issues. Following the media's drama about the latter there was much discussion about passing the King's Cup round for all to drink from. Most of us did and we are still here to tell the tale. I'm sure many of you will have other memories of South Bucks events. Please put them to paper (or computer) so that they can be shared by the next generations over the years or they will be lost forever.

Elizabeth Emmett 2019
Ex Chairman of the Executive and Ladies Committees





