

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BELL SHOW SOCIETY

Key points:

- ◆ Bell turned 50 in 1956. Golden Jubilee celebrations were held to commemorate this occasion.
- ◆ Farmer, John Mulcahy, coordinated the building of a new Pavilion (See separate story).
- ◆ A Sports Day and Flower show was held in 1958 to celebrate opening of the JD Mulcahy Pavilion.
- ◆ Bell's first show was held in April 1959

In 1956 'Back to Bell Celebrations' were held to recognise the Golden Jubilee (50 years) of Bell. It was here that the support for a Show Pavilion at the Recreation Reserve was mooted. George Gordon, local butcher and President of the Celebrations Committee, proposed that a fund be opened towards the building of a Pavilion to advance the vision for a Bell Show.

A sum of £200 was donated on the Opening day of the Celebrations towards the Appeal Fund to build a Show Pavilion at the Bell Racecourse Recreation Reserve.

A generous donation came from Committee member John Mulcahy, a farmer, to provide timber that would be needed for the building. The concept to hold a town and district Show to showcase this beautiful area in the foothills of the Bunya Mountains was strongly supported. A Show sub-Committee was formed under the auspices of the Bell Campdraft and Rodeo Committee with GL Gordon as President, JW O'Keefe, the Bell School head teacher, as Secretary, and JA Sorley, a farmer, as Treasurer. A Ladies Committee was also set up in support.

The Bell Campdraft and Rodeo Celebrations Committee of GL Gordon (President), Bob Armstrong (Secretary) and Mrs HL Ensor (Treasurer), with an enthusiastic band of volunteers from business, professional, farming and town people and with great support from surrounding areas, had planned and co-ordinated the successful 'Back to Bell Celebrations'.

The Bell and District Sports Association, Campdraft and Rodeo Committee of GL Gordon (President), George Rashford (Secretary) and N Hicks (Treasurer) threw their support behind a Sports Day and Flower Show in 1958 to acknowledge the completion and opening of the JD Mulcahy Pavilion. This successful day advanced funding needed to prepare for a Show.

The first Bell Show was held in 1959 with GL Gordon, President, JW O'Keefe, Secretary, and JA Sorley, Treasurer, heading a strong band of volunteers. The first fully sponsored well supported Show Schedule, with a programme of ring events, sheep dog trials, dairy cattle and dog events, machinery, trade displays and Pavilion classes featuring cooking, horticulture, fancywork and children's classes and amenities were established.

Life membership was awarded to John Mulcahy, the Ringmaster, for his generosity and great support with building of the essential infrastructure for Bell and District's first Show.

A much anticipated Vice-Royal visit by the Governor of Queensland Sir Henry Abel-Smith and other dignitaries to the inaugural show in April 1959, the Queensland Centenary Year, heralded the beginning of a great community event that is now well established in the wide community of events of the Region.

To all who have advanced this event since the initial first show, we owe a great debt, for their foresight, courage, support and perseverance through the generations since then.

All who continued their commitment are vital to the ongoing development of our home show.