

**OPENING THE 2012 ROYAL LAUNCESTON SHOW BY THE  
HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR OF  
TASMANIA, THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012.**

It is once again a great pleasure for me and my wife to be here to open the Royal Launceston Show.

The Launceston show provides a rare opportunity for city bound people to reconnect once a year with their contemporaries in the rural sector and to appreciate the skills and efforts of the people who grow the produce and raise the livestock that they consume on a daily basis. It also provides a working classroom for parents and teachers to explain to children the importance of farming to the community and to discover that meat actually comes from cattle and not from a polystyrene packet at the supermarket.

Agricultural shows are an important tradition in Tasmania because they not only showcase Tasmanian industry but they also provide an opportunity to witness the great diversity and breadth of our primary industry sector. Visitors to this year's show can view everything from alpacas to yard dogs, visit animal enclosures to see the finest examples of animal husbandry, admire the handiwork of craftspeople, talk to farmers and handlers, even investigate opportunities to move into the burgeoning Tasmanian cottage industry, or just grab one of those curiously named icons of the show circuit a dagwood dog and sit and watch the events in the main arena.

We all have memories of attending past shows and we can nostalgically recall happy moments, whether they were being

amazed at seeing for the first time the enormous size of a prize winning bull, or that mixture of fear and excitement experienced riding the latest white knuckle side show thrill, or just watching the sheepdog trials and marveling at the skill and rapport that exists between the dog and owner.

Although I must say as a novice in these matters it always seems to me that the dog's chances of success depend not so much on their ability to herd the sheep, but more on how cantankerous and defiant are the sheep that they were allocated.

The Launceston show has been creating memories for people for many years as it first began way back in 1833. The first meeting of the show society, or as it was then called the "Cornwall Agricultural Association" was held at the British Hotel in Launceston. The Society has undergone a few name changes since then and also moved location a couple of times until settling here at the Inveresk Showgrounds.

So the Society can rightly assert that it has been very responsive to the challenges that it has faced and has been able to adapt and re-establish itself when required, to ensure the continuity of this long running Tasmanian institution.

But some traditions don't change and if you were able to be transported back one hundred years to the 1912 Launceston Show you would still see exhibits of cattle, sheep and horses and could witness the Grand Parade. The Examiner newspaper report of the 1912 Show waxes lyrically about the merits of the exhibits; *"The stock was a great feature, and the parade, which put the show into spectacular*

*form, was unquestionably the best in the history of the society. In the march past was the aristocracy of the state's cattle and horses."*

A report about the 1912 Show in the Mercury referred to a Hunting event - the modern equivalent of Show Jumping, and an unfortunate accident that befell a young lady from Victoria; a Miss Renfrey, riding a local horse called Honesty and provides a rather interesting insight into the social mores of the day. According to the report after making an energetic start "*between the second and third obstacle the horse worked up to excessive pace, and in the effort at the fence struck the top rail with such force that the animal came down, throwing Miss Renfrey awkwardly from the saddle, and appearing to roll over her. The horse struggled to its feet and moved off, and a thrill of horror passed over the crowd when it was seen that Miss Renfrey lay motionless.*"<sup>ii</sup>

Fortunately Miss Renfrey survived with only slight concussion but she would have been quite chastened by the patronising advice offered by the Chief Inspector of Stock who offered the following very frank and fearless advice; "*hunting is too dangerous a pastime for ladies to indulge in.*" Now I mention this particular incident not only for its historical quaintness but also because only a handful of years later it became apparent that horse riding is also too dangerous for Governors.

The 1918 Launceston Show was opened by Lady Newdegate, representing the Governor, who was confined to his home as the result of a riding accident. The Examiner reported that on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1918 the Governor, "*who has evidenced a keen interest in the soldiers' memorial avenue, was riding in the Domain to make his final*

*inspection prior to the planting ceremony. He stopped at one of the tree holes, and his horse, which was standing perfectly quiet, suddenly plunged, and Sir Francis Newdegate was thrown clear on to some stony ground. Dr. Sprott was quickly in attendance, and had him conveyed to Government House on a stretcher, where he was found to be suffering from a fracture of the left hip joint.<sup>iii</sup>*

In the light of that intelligence I decided not to enter the show jumping today thank you, but I do offer my warmest congratulations to the Royal National Agricultural and Pastoral Society of Tasmania in mounting yet another successful Launceston Show you and also congratulate the thousands of staff, volunteers, entertainers, exhibitors, contractors, service clubs and sponsors involved with the Show who make it what it is, and welcome the thousands of visitors who make their efforts so worthwhile.

So I have much pleasure in declaring the 2012 Royal Launceston Show open.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50673159?searchTerm=launceston show 1912&searchLimits](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50673159?searchTerm=launceston%20show%201912&searchLimits)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50673159?searchTerm=launceston show 1912&searchLimits](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50673159?searchTerm=launceston%20show%201912&searchLimits)

<sup>iii</sup> [http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50993499?searchTerm=governor newdegate riding accident&searchLimits=l-title=68#pstart3169053](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/50993499?searchTerm=governor%20newdegate%20riding%20accident&searchLimits=l-title=68#pstart3169053)