



## ILLAWARRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# "The Story of the Illawarra Breed"

THE MONTHLY meeting of the Illawarra Historical Society was held at Central Chambers, Wollongong, on 7th June, 1945. In an interesting address, the speaker, Mr. George Grey of Kiama, traced the development of the Illawarra breed, which originated largely in the hands of the Evans and Musgraves at Dapto; and the McGills, Russels and Moles of Albion Park. All the dairybreeds of Europe were imported but the chief were the Milking Shorthorn, the Longhorn and the Ayrshire. In the forties under the Clearing Lease System, a man could take up a block of land on condition that it was cleared and under grass in five years. As dairying replaced wheat and became more popular, "Market Day" (Tuesday) became an important event at Kiama and many hundreds congregated, cattle coming from far and wide.

The speaker paid an eloquent tribute to the work of the Agricultural Societies in fostering interest in the breeding of cattle; the first Kiama Show being held in 1854. In 1879 herd testing was introduced on a 24-hour basis, milk being set in pans and skimmed by the supervising committeemen. Later Mr. H. Colley offered the use of a paddock, and under his control a seven-day test was instituted. Later still the society purchased a small separator. Then came the Babcock Testing Machine and now the Government Herd Testing Scheme.

Mr. Grey traced the history of a number of interesting bulls and dwelt on their influence on the herds of the district. Some individual cows were also mentioned, including "Honeycomb," owned by J. Lindsay of Dapto, which gave 80 lbs. of milk in 24 hours.

About 40 years ago, the prize for the best dairy cow went to a black and white Friesian-Ayrshire cross, whereas it had previously been awarded to an M.S. type. This caused much discussion and it was decided to form the Milking Shorthorn Society of Australia with its own stud-book.

Then the New South Wales Government imported cattle of many different breeds and local studmasters realised that local types did not conform with imported types and so a new Illawarra Dairy Cattle Association was formed. There was much rivalry and confusion between the two breeds both here and in Queensland, but efforts to fuse the two failed.

However in 1929 Mr. Hindmarsh, President of the A.M.S Society, and Mr. George Grey, President of the I.D.C.A., under Dr. Kinross, President of the Guernsey Society, met in Brisbane and both Societies were amalgamated under the title Australian Illawarra Shorthorn Society. This ended the long controversy and ushered in a happy union.

The breed is now the most popular in Australia and deservedly so. One cow, "Melba 15th" of Darbalara, holds the world's record, producing 1,614 lbs. of butterfat in 365 days. In 1935 a Federal competition had 841 competing cows and even to-day the breed is extending its popularity and its prices. We can be very proud of our Australian breed of cattle which has been developed in Illawarra the beautiful.

In moving a vote of thanks to the speaker, Mr. Weir stated that Mr. Grey had not been fair to one breeder who had played a notable part in the development of the breed—and that was Mr. George Grey himself.

---

A. P. Fleming, Hon. Secretary.