

Media release

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New book tells tale of 100-year-old Brookfield Show

A bunch of parochial farmers who liked a day out – that’s how the 100-year-old Brookfield Show started, according to a new book to be launched this week at the Brookfield Showgrounds.

Over the Hurdles – The Brookfield Show Society and its Predecessors, by Libby Wager, is a special project to mark the 100th birthday of the show in 2010.

Backed by the Brookfield Show Society, the Brookfield History Group and Brookfield District Museum, the 280-page paperback book reveals that an enthusiastically-contested ploughing match in a Moggill paddock is the likely birthplace of the annual Brookfield Show, to be held this year May 14-16.

Brookfield Show Society president Peter Israel said the project was one of several projects to mark the show’s centenary in 2010.

“The Show Society felt it was important to mark the occasion in a significant, permanent way that would have benefits well into the future,” he said.

“The book will have an educational aspect for local schoolchildren studying the history of their community.

“It will also complement a series of bronze plaques the society is having manufactured and placed to mark and explain the historical significance of sites and buildings around the showground.”

Author Libby Wager, a Point Lookout retiree, is the author of two previous books on western suburbs history, *Historic Brookfield*, and *Different Tracks*, was the obvious choice to pen the book.

She and her research team picked local brains, including Brookfield History Group founding member Brendan Ryan’s, talked to show stalwarts, delved into state archives, meeting minutes and old newspapers to discover the beginnings of the show.

Ms Wager said research traced the show to a ploughing competition in a Moggill paddock, with a few drinks and a trip up the river to get there – an event that’s now become a three-day event that draws more than 20,000 mainly western suburbs patrons to the Brookfield Showgrounds in May.

“It was quite the gala occasion with everyone coming up the river on boats and a few drinks,” she said.

Descendants of the show’s founding fathers are expected to attend the launch at the showgrounds on Wednesday, April 28 by Brookfield Show Society past president Andrew Stewart.

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They include Myra Rose, a direct descendant of the man who owned that first ploughed paddock, John Doyle. Brenda Ryan, a descendant of the first Brookfield Show president (1910-1917), George P Reading, is also expected to attend.

Ms Wager, who lives at Point Lookout on Stradbroke Island, discovered that her new local doctor was a grandson of the first president in the modern era of the show, C. Graham Hughes. He headed the Brookfield Country Fair Committee in the mid-50s that eventually revived the show as we know it now.

Over the Hurdles will be on sale at the Brookfield District Museum throughout the show on May 14-16.

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Book launch: 6.30 pm, Wednesday, April 28, Brookfield Hall, Brookfield Showground, Brookfield Road, Brookfield.

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