

THE MAIL. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1959.

Early History of Parish of Ringwood

(By J. K. McCaskill, J.P.)

Official Opening of the Ringwood Cool Stores on 17th March, 1911

IN the early years of pioneering development, it was found that the land was especially adapted for the cultivation of fruits, flowers and vegetables, and it soon became evident that fruit growing would become the chief industry and mainstay of Ringwood and District.

In 1896 a number of the growers formed a horticultural Society for the purpose of overcoming their many fruit difficulties such as fungus diseases, pests etc. also arrange annual shows to exhibit fruit, flowers, poultry, vegetables to stimulate growing and to maintain a regular weekly supply to the Melbourne markets.

Later, the innovation of refrigeration being applied to fruit in the form of cool stores opened up great possibilities, including the shipping of fruit to the London markets. It was decided to call a public meeting and discuss the establishment of a cool store at Ringood. The meeting was held on 18th June, 1909 and decided that this meeting is of opinion that the time has come for the establishment of a cool store at Ringwood for the benefit of fruit growers, and appointed a committee to carry into effect the foregoing resolution (Committee: Messrs McKinlay, Hann, T. Grant, R. W. Gill and J. B. McAlpin, Hon. Sec.)

The various Govt. Departments were approached on the subject and finally intimated that if the Ringwood and Districts Horticultural Society would guarantee to find 4 per cent. on the outlay and with its close proximity to the railway station there would be no difficulty in getting a cool store at Ringwood. The estimate of the required guarantee would be approx £280.

The committee after holding numerous meetings and active canvassing, reported that Ringwood growers had already guaranteed £190, leaving £90 to be guaranteed by Croydon, Wonga Park, Wandin, Mt. Dandenong and others. This amount was assured and steps were taken to secure a cool store on a railway site at Ringwood.

At the Annual Meeting held on 25th Nov., 1910, the secretary reported that the Cool Store was in course of con-

struction and will hold 10,000 cases. The membership is 76 and 51 are bona fide commercial fruit-growers. This represents 1120 acres of orchard and the following parts of the district are represented: Ringwood, Croydon, Kilsyth, Vermont, Mitcham, Bayswater. He further reported that at the recent Annual Show close on 1000 entries were staged and about 900 people had paid for admission at the gates.

The meeting decided that the official opening of the Cool Store take place immediately after the opening of the Annual Show to be held on 17th and 18th March, 1911

Ringwood and District Annual Show and Official Opening of the Ringwood Cool Stores.

By His Excellency Sir Thomas David Gibson - Carmichael, K.C.M.G.,

In the New Ringwood Hall, Marquee and Grounds.

Right opposite the Ringwood Railway Station,

Friday and Saturday, 17th and 18th March, 1911.

President: Cr. R. Henderson; Vice-Pres.: Messrs R. Gill and W. McKinlay; treas, Mr. A. Blood Hon. Sec., Mr. J. B. McAlpin.

Luncheon tickets for the official opening of the Cool Stores obtainable from Sec. on or before 11th March, 1911, 5/- each.

Sports each afternoon
Wood chopping contest (40 axemen will compete from all parts of the state). Australia's champions will give an exhibition. A string band and The Reporter District Brass Band will provide music on both days.

Trotting and driving competitions and other equestrian events.

THE OPENING

The Show was opened by the State Governor Sir Thomas Gibson - Carmichael on Friday afternoon (7th March, 1911). The weather was perfect and there was a fairly

large attendance. The President of the Society, Cr. R. Henderson, in introducing the Governor, said that the Ringwood Show was one of the oldest in the State having been established many years ago.

His Excellency congratulated the Society upon the fine display of exhibits and referred briefly to horticultural matters, and said that he had been informed that there was sufficient fruit grown in Victoria to supply the whole of the needs of the Commonwealth. He had pleasure in declaring the Show open.

The Show proved to be highly successful.

THE LUNCHEON (Cool Store)

His Excellency then proceeded to open the new Ringwood Cool Stores. He was introduced to the large crowd which had assembled in front of the Store by the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Graham. He believed that the store would be a very useful institution to the local growers. Mr. Graham, had also told him that the storage capacity was not large enough for the districts requirements. He hoped that before long that additional accommodation would be provided and that the orchard industry in Ringwood would continue to flourish. After stressing the need for greater productivity and increased markets he had very great pleasure in declaring the Cool Stores open.

Mr. E. H. Cameron, M.L.A., also spoke and voiced regret felt throughout Victoria at the impending departure of His Excellency.

A few notes about the Cool Stores Building and management will be of interest, the cost of erection by the Government was nearly £5,000, and the original plan was drawn up on 30th Sept., 1910. The refrigeration plant was installed by C. A. McDonald Ltd., at a cost of £1322, and the cost of supplying and making a metal road entrance to the store by Mr. L. B. Simpson was £81/11/8.

The storage capacity was 10,000 cases. Later on it was found that additions to the Stores were necessary to meet the ever increasing demand for space and a contract was signed on 3rd June, 1913 by Mr. W. J. May, Contractor, for £2,374/10/3 and at the same time additional refrigeration was supplied and installed by R. Werner & Coy. for £1683, also the Brine concentrating play was

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History of Ringwood

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supplied by R. Werner & Co. for £134/13/3.

In 1913 a number of growers discussed the possibility of taking over the Cool Stores and forming a Co-operative Company. Later the whole of the Cool Stores and plant was transferred to the present authority on 3rd Dec, 1915 under Revenue loan purchase for £8000. This loan was subsequently repaid in full.

The Cool Stores opened under the capable management of Mr. R. Sutherland, late of Doncaster Store. Later Mr. French was appointed Engineer, and Mr. Cameron secretary in charge. In 1914 Mr. James L. Skerrett was temporary employed as a casual storeman, and Mr. J. Trainer the engineer.

The buildings consisted of three chambers and were known as the Hercules and the Werner sections.

In 1914 owing to the drought the chambers were used for storing sheep, lambs etc. for export.

It will be appropriate at this stage to say that in 1924 the Borough of Ringwood was formed and thus Ringwood as a fruit growing district gradually diminished, and in the march of development many orchards were subdivided and a new suburban area created.

The Horticultural Society of those by-gone years well justified its existence. It was recognised as one of the outstanding societies in Victoria and it certainly has brought credit, pleasure and progress to Ringwood.

I acknowledge with thanks the appended Business Record of the Ringwood Co-operative Company by Mr. Albert J. Aird son of the late Mr. J. G. Aird, the genial and highly esteemed secretary of the Company from its inception in 1915 until his death in Sept. 1949.

Mr. Peter Vergers is the present secretary and he will,

no doubt, at the present time be busy in the winding up process of the Coy's affairs in connection with the disposal of the Cool Stores Buildings and plant from the railway site by auction on 2nd Dec., 1959.

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RINGWOOD COOL STORES, 1911



This photo was taken many years ago, showing the old horse trough



Officially opened in March 1911 and sold by public auction yesterday

—Photo by courtesy J. K. McCaskill, J.P.



Mr. J. G. AIRD
(Secretary Cool Store's Association)