

WILLIAMS GATEWAY EXPO

10th April 2010

In fantastic autumn conditions, the 11th Williams Gateway Expo was held at the Williams Sportsground on Saturday the 10th April.

Mr Hugh Harding, a former Williams resident and now Vice President of the Royal Agricultural Society of WA, officially opened the Expo and wished everyone a successful day. Hugh spoke about plans at the Royal Show, via the Yellow Brick Road concept, to enlighten our city counterparts as to where their food and clothing products really come from.

Once again the crowd at this year's Expo exceeded that of the previous best attendance in 2009 and it appears that the Expo continues to grow. There were increased numbers of stall holders with many expressing they were happy with the day. Stall holders reported pleasing sales and indicated a desire to return. There were many positive comments from both locals and visitors about the success of the day.

The Committee deserves a **HUGE** thank you for their untiring efforts to "bring together" a great family orientated day, where all ages were catered for and entertained. Special thanks to Jen Cowcher, Trade Secretary and Steve Hyde, Grounds person, for a superb job. Thank you also to all other committee members for your efforts throughout the past twelve months. A sincere thank you to those community members who helped set-up and / or clean-up for the event, without your support, the small committee would have certainly been exhausted!

The Art Exhibition, with its theme "Rustik Memories" was ably organized by Hazel Hewitt and her helpers. The Exhibition was previewed on Friday 9th April at Rustik Rainbow. Art enthusiasts were treated to some outstanding art which adorned the walls of this heritage building. Numbers were similar to last year with new artists being involved for the first time. Once again the standard of art was very high and the judge, Chris Davis, from Narrogin, found it very hard to make her final decision. Chris was judging the rural winner for the Royal Agricultural Art Award for this year. A crowd of nearly fifty loudly applauded and congratulated local artist/sculptor Heather Higham and her art piece entitled, "Rustik Memories", as the winner for this year. Heather's unique 3D sculpture, which was set inside an old wheel depicted many items used in the early days. Heather's art now goes on to represent our show, against other rural artists, at the Perth Royal Show in September. Thank you to Rennae Martin and staff, for the making the Rustik Rainbow available for the art exhibition and preview. It was great to have young talent on display and art works by Laura Hewitt, Aphra Higham and Lindsay Woods all received highly commended by the judge.

A Photography Exhibition, with the same theme as the art, organized by Heather Hyde and Michelle Atwell attracted nearly 100 entries. The photography categories, which created some interesting shots for the astute photographer, were on display at the pavilion. Congratulations to winners in the various categories.

The events of the day began early with the sheep judging in the Ram Pavilion with entries similar to the previous year, and once again the standard of sheep on show was exceptional. Over 300 sheep from Prime Sire breeds and Merinos were penned in the shed. This aspect of the Expo continues to prosper and participants continually praise

the Williams Stud Breeders' Association for organizing such a friendly, relaxed show. Exhibitors came from many locations around the State to compete in this one day event which puts minimal stress on both the animal and the owner. Competition in the Merino section was once again very competitive with two studs vying for the major honours. East Strathglen (Sprigg family, Tambellup) won the Supreme Champion with a Ewe.....a first for the show that a ewe has won this prestigious award. The Angenup Stud (Norrish family, Kojonup) won the pairs while East Strathglen took out the most Successful Exhibitor on a count -back from Angenup. The A & M Rintoul Memorial Trophy for the Best Ram was won by Angenup and the Toorackie Trophy for the Best Ewe was won by East Strathglen. In the Prime sire section, the Brimfield Poll Dorset Stud from Kendenup had a clean sweep in the major awards by winning the Interbreed Group, Interbreed Ram and Interbreed Ewe. Locals to perform well were the Tilba-Tilba Merino Stud, Auburn Valley Merino Stud and the Iveston South Suffolk Stud.

This year, a shearing display was held and thanks you to Gavin Fowler for being supportive of this initiative. Gavin machine shored sheep while Jon Dellar (South Australia) did blade shearing. Rumour has it there are some keen folk interested in doing a shearing competition.

The Home Brew competition, organized by Heather Hyde, was back in force this year with over 30 entries. This is an area of the Expo which has potential to grow so if you are a brewing guru here is your chance to showcase your wares. Steven Foy was crowned "Champion Brewer" for the day.

Throughout the day, visitors to the Expo were entertained by a host of different activities. Entertainment abounded throughout the day for one and all.....from the Sci-Tech Roadshow and interactive display, Old MacDonald's Farm, Sparkles and Charlie Clowns, the puppeteer, Mobile Laser Skirmish, zorb ball, kite making, donkey display, camel riding, pedal sports, helicopter rides, the reptiles from the Peel Reptile Zoo. the Gybus, bouncy castle, rides and show bags.

The Cuby K9 group proved popular with spectators, as the dogs were put through their skills.

The awesome display by the ever talented Hillman Skydivers, with their precision skills, caught the attention of many. The Pipe Band certainly created a great atmosphere throughout the day.

A great attraction at the "Things on Wheels" was the Napier-L48 "Samson"1904. This car was the first British Car to reach 100mph and be a world record holder. There were several other cars showing their skills and the Expo is indebted to Peter Briggs and the York Motor Museum for giving the Williams community an opportunity to view these fabulous vintage cars. The opportunity to have these cars do exhibition laps around the Trotting track is a real bonus to the Expo. Mike Thompson and his enthusiastic car team are truly valued supporters of the Expo and the committee waits in awe as to what "special" car will be on show. Thank you for your great support. Other car enthusiasts had their vehicles on display for the avid car buff to view.

Radio West's on-ground broadcast and interviews created a great atmosphere for the morning.

Thank you to the sponsors of the gate prize.....Great Southern Radio (weekend away) and Roadwise for the new car restraint prize for the competition on car restraints.

The gourmet marquee was filled with a great variety of foods from cheeses, wines, dips, yabbies, preserves, pickled onions....a little something for everyone. There was an increase in market stalls with most reporting good trade for the day. Most food vendors who stayed for the evening programme sold out and are very keen to return!

Throughout the day, local talent was on show. The Bright Sparks Talent show organized by Chrissy Gillett, saw an increase in numbers and hopefully this component of the Expo will continue to develop. One cannot forget the ‘darlings’ of the Expo, our up and coming dancers. What a wonderful performance by the young dance troupe who are trained by the talented Karin Hitchcock. Well done and thank you all for your performance. Peter Cowcher and his mates with their band “Something Without Mary” again proved a real hit, along with an additional singer at one point of time! Cheese and nibble platters, catered for by the Netball club, proved a hit among the crowd, as they relaxed and enjoyed the band.

In perfectly still conditions and a wonderful crowd, the Fireworks Spectacular lit up the sky above the oval. The committee appreciates the great show put on by the pyre-technicians, as we certainly do get value for money. This was a truly great way to end what had been another very successful 11th Expo, where family was considered a priority. Following the fireworks, a young songwriter/singer Sophie Jane Thompson, from Kojonup, entertained the crowd with some relaxing tunes.

The Expo is not only an event to entertain and showcase what our community can do, but it is a great way for clubs /organizations to fundraise. This year 10 clubs/organizations were involved and between them approximately \$6000 was raised. Well done and thank you for your part in the success of the Expo.

Finally, an event of this nature is not possible unless there is some form of sponsorship. The Williams Gateway Expo Committee acknowledges the wonderful sponsorship afforded by all sponsors both local and regional.....***a most sincere and appreciative thank you to all sponsors for your contribution to this event.***
Special acknowledgement must be made to Lottery West, Healthway - Act, Belong and Commit and Roadwise for the continued support afforded to this event.

Looking forward to celebrating the 12th Williams Gateway Expo in 2011. Planning ideas for the 2011 Expo have already begun but it would be great to have some new faces and new ideas to make the 12th Expo even bigger and better. The committee is keen to hear your thoughts on how the event can continue to improve. Look out for the AGM date ...in June!