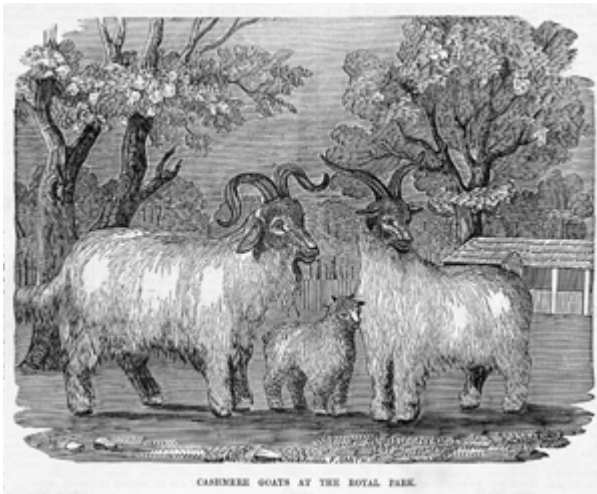


The Victorian Acclimatisation Society

Many Europeans at first felt uneasy in their new land. They spoke of 'the savage silence, or worse' of the bush. They introduced plants and animals to make the alien environment feel more like home, to beautify their gardens, provide sport for hunters and 'aggrandise' the colony. But above all, they wanted to make the land economically productive.

established by the Acclimatisation Society to house imported animals prior to their release. At the same time, government botanist Ferdinand von Mueller focused on the introduction of plant species from other parts of Australia and elsewhere in the world. Some, like blackberries, initially proved productive, but became noxious weeds or pests.

Many of the specimens collected or acquired by the Acclimatization Society later became part of Museum Victoria's collection.



Cashmere goats at the zoo in Royal Park, Australian News for Home Readers, 1863
Source: State Library of Victoria

The Victorian Acclimatisation Society was founded in 1861 by Edward Wilson, a private collector whose motto was 'if it lives, we want it'. The Melbourne Zoo was



Acclimatization Society medals, 1868
Photographer: JS & AB Wynon (mint), Source: Museum Victoria

Visitor Information

Several of the original specimens collected or introduced by the Acclimatisation Society can be seen in *The Melbourne Story* exhibition, now showing at Melbourne Museum.

Further Reading

Gillbank, L., 'The Origins of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria: Practical Science in the Wake of the Gold Rush'. *Historical Records of Australian Science*, vol.6, no.3, December 1986, pp. 359-374.

Annual reports of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, from 1862.

The Rules and Objects of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria, 1861. William Goodhugh & Co., Melbourne.

