

**Agricultural Science
at La Trobe University: 1968–72**

The First Agricultural Science Intake



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY • AUSTRALIA

50
YEARS
1967–2017



Published by:
The First Agricultural Science Intake (FASI) students

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Summary: Agricultural Science was offered by La Trobe University in the second year of its operation. In a new university without other applied sciences, it was a special course. Designed by Prof Bob Reid, the course began as a demanding intensive four-year degree oriented to sound scientific understanding backed by practical experience during vacation times. The book introduces the history relevant to the creation and early operation of the BAgSc degree and then presents recollections and memoirs of the first agricultural science intake (FASI) students 50 years after they entered the course. It also includes recollections of some staff from the years 1968–72 and various old photographs.

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Foreword

Richard Larkins, AO, FTSE, FAAHMS
Chancellor, La Trobe University

Fifty years may seem a short time in the 700-year history of the modern university, yet much has been accomplished in young universities willing to build on the experience of their international collegium. The creation of the Agricultural Science course at La Trobe University was designed to usher in a new era in agricultural science education. It ably met this challenge under the leadership of its Foundation Professor, Bob Reid.

This collation of aspects of agricultural education at La Trobe and the assorted memories of the first intake of students and early staff from 1968 is a testimony to the value of the course. The foundation Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University, Professor David Myers, famously said in his inaugural lecture: “The true test of the university must be based on the achievement of its graduates at the height of their careers, when they have assumed the responsibilities of leadership in the solution of the wider and more far reaching problems of civilisation ... The true measure of a university’s greatness is the total effect it has on human welfare and progress”. This book provides ample evidence that the first cohort of graduates from the Agricultural Science course achieved the aspirations of Professor Myers.

Agricultural Science was the first applied science course established at La Trobe University and was viewed with a certain amount of suspicion by those in Arts and the more basic science disciplines. La Trobe University has now evolved as a balanced institution in which the sciences and the arts have become closer and the recognition of the importance of impact has become even more keenly appreciated in a world facing pressing environmental and demographic challenges. No challenges will be greater than those associated with the logistics and applied science of producing and distributing sufficient food to feed 9 billion people. The strong history of La Trobe University in Agricultural Science established at its



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foundation combined with the commitment of its current leaders to continue to strengthen this vital field of research and education will ensure that La Trobe will continue to play a leading role in meeting these challenges.

I am very familiar with the major contributions made by the primary author of this work, Lindsay Falvey, and can see its linkage to a recently published wider history of the subject of agricultural education. La Trobe University is proud to be a major player in this field.

Agricultural Science at La Trobe University: 1968-72 – The First Agricultural Science Intake is the first ‘history’ of what was the School of Agriculture under the initial La Trobe structure. However, it is not a conventional history; neither is it a simple collation of memoirs of ageing students and even older staff. It is a combination of relevant background, biography of the leading force that was Bob Reid, snippets of lives and anecdotes spanning 50 years, and insightful commentary on the value and legacy of the course. As such, it is a rich contribution to the academy, and a fitting tribute to that first intake of students and their lecturers who together established a culture that was to continue to evolve, even until today.

All useful stories of universities stimulate thought about the critical role of broadly-based higher education. This volume invites reflection on a perspective on La Trobe University. I thank our first agricultural science intake – the FASI – for this contribution to the University’s story.

Professor Richard G. Larkins AO
Chancellor

The First Agricultural Science Intake, La Trobe University: 1968–72

Introductory Note

This document began as a collation of reminiscences of the continuing students from the first agricultural science intake at La Trobe University in 1968. From that modest objective, it expanded to include entries from and about the early staff appointed to the School of Agriculture in recognition of the inseparability of students and staff in forming a pioneering academic environment. The document then grew further to include reference to the University's planning before its opening in 1967 for this flagship applied science course, and its appointment of the key figure – Prof Bob Reid – who brought the vision to reality.

With such a gestation, the product is an overview of agricultural science education on the one hand, and anecdotal – and often humorous – reflections from the first students and staff on the other. It is therefore more than the usual product of university reunions and might hopefully be of value to future scholars of the agricultural education, and to university historians.

As a heterogeneous collation, it has more than 20 authors for the individual memoirs, and as the providers of old photographs. The other four or five sections of the document are collations of information or, where appropriate, referenced research that provides a context for the personal stories. I am indebted to all contributors, and especially thank those two who were hospitalized – for reasons unrelated to their writing – during the months over which the publication was drafted. I am also most grateful to Roger Hooley – a FASI who became a professional scientific editor among other things – for correcting punctuation, grammar and spelling; he follows the great tradition of Bob Reid's frustration about poor written expression among agricultural science students.

Agricultural science may have lost some of its lustre in the well-fed public's eye, yet it remains a fundamental pillar of civilization that is here carried forward by a faithful remnant in preparation for society's future needs.

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50
YEARS

First Intake to Agricultural Science, 1968

Semicentennial

Quinquagenary

Golden Jubilee

1968 – 2018: Golden Jubilee

It was the year 1968 – the year that: The Australian newspaper cost five cents; the National Gallery of Victoria opened; the Seekers were named Australians of the Year; aboriginal Lionel Rose became world bantamweight champion; Australia beat France for the Rugby League World Cup; Rain Lover won the Melbourne Cup; Henry Bolte continued as Victorian Premier; John Gorton became Prime Minister; Indira Gandhi visited Australia; tanks invaded Czechoslovakia; US President John Kennedy was shot; 45 anti-war protesters were arrested at the US consulate in St Kilda Road ... and the Tet Offensive brought Vietnam closer. And 22 bright-eyed innocents, whose families knew little or nothing about tertiary education, committed themselves to the brand new BAgrSc degree at the nascent La Trobe University – they were the First Agricultural Science Intake (FAST).



Chapter 1

La Trobe @ 50

Agricultural Science at La Trobe University is in its Jubilee Year just as the university concludes its overall Jubilee. As a brand new institution opening in 1967, the university was part of a wider vision that had driven 1960s Australia to cater for its future. It was about education, not jobs; intellectual understanding, not practical training. The vision was initially reified through the humanities and social sciences – the arts. There were also pure sciences – but even before the university opened it had been agreed to include one of the applied sciences, Agricultural Science. At the time this showed laudable foresight, for such courses were the nearest thing Australia had produced to a liberal-arts degree.² The very statement seems incredible today, yet Agricultural Science was then the degree that included each of the pure, applied and social sciences – and it did this through an intensive course spread across four years. And for La Trobe University, it was to be a valued asset. Over the ensuing half-century, values and vision have changed.



Above: The Library and Thomas Cherry Building, 1967. **Below:** The complete University infrastructure in 1968 (Thomas Cherry, Library and Glenn College were constructed; Menzies College was under construction).³

La Trobe University emerged from the post-war conservative governance of the 1960s captured in the words of the Victorian Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, in his speech opening the university: 'We do not require education only because knowledge contributes to security, prosperity and future development of the country... we also require education to try to ensure the wisdom and goodness necessary to justify

our own survival and the survival of the free Western world'.⁴ If the social sciences were to help ensure the intellectual survival of the free world, the agricultural sciences were essential to the actual survival of the world – for this was the era of the Green Revolution that allowed what has become billions of new lives to be nourished. The integrating subject of the first year of the La Trobe Agricultural Science course, in parallel with physics, chemistry and biological science, was global agriculture taught by Foundation Professor Bob Reid appointed in 1967.

More pragmatically, it might be observed that the new university, like others, was a response to the baby boom and indeed some calculations would suggest that the new institutions were based on catering for only a slightly higher proportion of the population than that which had been served by the older institutions. Again, this simple observation may not be self-evident from the perspective of today's expectations and openness of entry. But the 1960s were different, and the requirements on the new university were to be at least as high as those of Melbourne and Monash. It fulfilled its mandate by seeking high achieving secondary students from catchments hitherto ignored by the University of Melbourne, which in some ways was in accord with its working-class neighbourhood. Perhaps a distant echo of the Enlightenment's egalitarian ideals, the university's location was embraced as part of its social responsibility to the wider community. Another ideal was to house 40 percent of the student population in colleges, and to have all day students belong to a college and attend a weekly formal dinner in gowns. It was all to change with the times, the rise of the influence of youth and the curtailing of the very generous Federal funding to universities.

The aim to integrate the arts and sciences in the La Trobe University vision was expressed architecturally with the Agora and library located centrally, and by mixing college residents across Schools. However, apart from the inherently integrated nature of the Agricultural Science course, 'the founders' missionary hope of bringing the two cultures together',⁵ was no more effective than at other Australian universities. One founding ideal that was maintained was an ethic for academic inclusion of research to inform teaching, which was accomplished largely by the appointment of active, often young, researchers. Another ideal, of basing academic units on broad Schools rather than departments and faculties was maintained for a while but ultimately abandoned – except for the School of Agriculture, which remained a School for as long as its Foundation Professor Bob Reid's ideals held sway, for he believed in those founding ideals.

The university's 50-year celebratory book does not highlight the School of Agriculture or the Agricultural Science degree presumably because the book seeks to be a snapshot of current strategy rather than a history. One author specifically mentions only four initial Schools of the university without acknowledging that the fifth School of Agriculture had already been ratified and was to open the following year. For such commentators who have not experienced the School in its heyday, it is possible to assume that Agriculture was a late addition such as Law and Education, which the book similarly passes over as poor cousins to the arts.⁶ It may be true that La Trobe has gained notoriety more for its topical debates in the social sciences than the significant advances emanating from its slow, hard intellectually demanding sciences,⁷ but it is the latter than have made a global impact. Notwithstanding sectoral opinions of the arts being the pure university, it

has been observed by an historian of the origins of the universities from their ecclesiastical origins that there has never been ‘a great university that was not firmly committed to advanced, balance and liberal scholarship and practical vocational training’⁸ – in this sense ‘vocational’ refers to such applied courses as agricultural science, medicine and engineering.

Science at La Trobe evolved over its 50 years to follow trends linking the pure to the applied sciences in pursuit of discovery informing innovation. One of its leaders not only gives due reference to Foundation Professor of Agriculture but also observes that by 1976, biochemistry had grown to occupy the whole fourth floor of the Reid Building – Bob would have approved for biochemistry was the lynch-pin of Agricultural Science. By 1994 some of the Victorian Department of Agriculture’s plant scientists would take over that floor until they too outgrew it and moved to the purpose-built Agribio Centre, thereby renewing agriculture at La Trobe.⁹ Thus it may be claimed that, while Agricultural Science was not initially within the School of Science, the integrated ethic of Agricultural Science may now be seen to be active in the maturing structure of this still youthful university.



From the Official La Trobe University history - as it was when the first agricultural science intake arrived in 1968. Buildings constructed were: Thomas Cherry, Library and Glenn College, with Menzies College under construction.¹⁰

It is not possible to discuss the establishment and operations of La Trobe University without acknowledging other local universities, most notably the now 165-year old University of Melbourne, which has offered Agricultural Science since 1905. By coincidence an official history of recent decades of the University of Melbourne has just been released and includes a scene setting introduction of the period from 1966.¹¹ Apart from providing a contrast in image and content to the 50-year books from La Trobe, it helps explain that period when La Trobe opened in the late 1960s. For example, until the creation of Monash University in 1961 the University of Melbourne had enjoyed a monopoly position, which had entrenched some attitudes and operational procedures that were questionable – and were indeed questioned in the light of the changing external environment.¹² One change

had been that ‘the number of high schools teaching to Matriculation increased from seventy-six in 1960 to 200 in 1969’¹³ and these schools represented a wider pool than that from which Melbourne drew its students. At the same time, the age profile of Melbourne’s academic staff, their attitudes to teaching and an element of elitism, may have hampered their grasping the opportunity of this wider pool of student talent, and of embracing new technologies. Whether they knew it or not, for the First Agricultural Science Intake at La Trobe, they had stumbled into an institution with a number of advantages, including: a young university, new approaches, youthful academics, small class sizes for the agriculture subjects and a complementary tutorial system. While the Agricultural Science subjects were small, the foundation science courses had such large numbers that some rural students were initially shocked. Those from suburban schools with large baby boomer classes were more at home. All felt the Agriculture I, II, III and IV defined the course and it was through these subjects that all students were to benefit from being part of a small group that progressed through a course that sought to avoid the outdated accretions of the older institution. Agricultural Science at La Trobe was to be different.

Chapter 2

Agricultural Science @ La Trobe University

Agricultural Science at La Trobe University was designed to be special. Opening in 1968, its roots can be traced back to 1959 when a quota was imposed on the number of students that could be accepted into the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Melbourne. In the ensuing years, the 1963 Ramsey and the 1964 Martin Reports considered the establishment of a third university in greater Melbourne, which led to La Trobe University being created with a Vice-Chancellor appointed in 1965. The new university was approached by the Universities Commission (AUC) to establish a School of Agriculture and its third report of 1965 reported that 'La Trobe responded promptly and co-operatively to the Commission's suggestion, which was also supported by the State Government'.¹⁴

A submission from the Vice-Chancellor to the AUC in 1966 outlined the justification for a course in agricultural science and sketched its contents and budget requirements.¹⁵ With advice from the relevant leaders of the day from the Universities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide complemented by others from CSIRO and the Victorian Department of Agriculture, a course founded on basic sciences, environmental components and farm management was outlined. It was to join with the University of Melbourne to meet a projected demand of 150 new agricultural science graduates per year.¹⁶ A university farm was deemed unnecessary as the course sought to engage directly with industry and to integrate with the other providers, including the existing agricultural colleges of the State Government. An Interim Advisory Committee was appointed in June 1967 to advise the Foundation Professor, who was formally appointed in October to begin at La Trobe in February 1968. Thereafter, a different Advisory Committee was constituted comprising some relevant senior La Trobe academics and a number of external persons connected to practical agriculture and soil conservation. Its first report to the Academic Board endorsed the general approach of earlier proposals while warily considering a request to increase intake numbers after a reduction in overall funding occurred, and made special mention of the need for the social sciences to be included in the course.¹⁷

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee in May 1968 was chaired by the Foundation Professor Bob Reid who firmed up the course content¹⁸ at the same time as preparing to deliver the Agriculture 1 subject on the context of agriculture in the world to the first intake of 22 students.¹⁹ That Advisory Committee meeting noted that 'too much attention can be given to practical work ... a course should be designed to make students think and to teach principles, rather than practice'. While a small area on the La Trobe campus was to be set aside for some of the School's field demonstrations, goodwill with the University of Melbourne led its Dean to offer cooperative use of that faculty's Mt Derrimut facilities. Two months later, the Committee's report noted progress towards three appointments in each of animals, plants and soils; it also noted a confidential report that claimed a demand for 200 graduates per year²⁰ while the University of Melbourne course remained restricted to an intake of 75. In the light of limited funding and a desire to

establish a leading course, Prof Reid agreed to only a modest increase in numbers in the years beyond 1970.²¹ The next Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for 4 September, but it is unclear whether the Committee ever met again.

The visionary creation of the La Trobe agricultural science course might well have been described in the same words as those employed in the early 1900s when establishment of the University of Melbourne's course was being considered. At that time Thomas Cherry stated that its aim should be 'to turn out philosophers and get them to go into the reason of things',²² so they could raise the quality of government employees and agricultural college staff, and thus farming. Cherry subsequently became the Victorian Director of Agriculture and the University of Melbourne's first Chair of Agriculture and embraced the breadth of agricultural science from health, through animal science to crops and soils.²³ As noted in another history, 'his legacy ... might be seen in La Trobe University's home for its School of Agriculture some fifty years later being eponymously named for his son',²⁴ Sir Thomas MacFarland Cherry, the Chair of the Academic Planning Board in the years leading up to the opening of La Trobe University.²⁵



The Thomas Cherry Building – the home of the School of Agriculture for its early years.

La Trobe's academic organization through Schools rather than faculties and departments was part of an idyllic design that also required all students to belong to a College and to attend a weekly gownned dinner. Both ideals were soon to be compromised, although the School concept was retained in the School of Agriculture under Bob Reid's firm hand, which he also applied in his recruitment of 'most of its early staff from outside the groves of academe'.²⁶ As Foundation Professor of Agriculture, he defined his course's difference from the Melbourne course in a manner reminiscent of the great Dean of Agriculture, Wadham,²⁷ although at the time more often attributed to McClymont²⁸ of the leading

agricultural science course at the University of New England.²⁹ Despite La Trobe being the newcomer and in a difficult location, those skilful staff appointments and close social interactions between staff and students enhanced an ethos of careful entry selection and standards.³⁰

Agricultural Science is seldom the prestige faculty of a university, yet the School of Agriculture was disproportionately important to La Trobe University in the absence of other applied sciences such as medicine and engineering in an era that revered science and technology. It was important to the new university as it established itself in higher education, and so it supported a more innovative approach to the course than existed in older institutions. The approach paid off from the beginning with a different staffing profile, a clear academic objective that required mastery of theory and the substitution of the vocational aspects of older courses with intellectually demanding requirements including research projects. Yet this avant-garde course was largely unnoticed in the wider university where the most conspicuous students were competing with Monash University in their rebelliousness and were mainly enrolled in humanities courses. After its first year, the agricultural science course was well established under Bob's guiding hand as he awaited the arrival of the first three academic appointments that were due to arrive in 1969 – Nick Uren, soils; David Leaver, animals and Charles Lamp, agronomy. They were handpicked to complement, and implement, the philosophy that Bob Reid had refined through his first year.



The Site for a University: The La Trobe University site prior to construction, 1965.³¹

Chapter 3

Foundation Professor Robert Lovell Reid and his Philosophy



When La Trobe University began documenting its own history across the first 25 years, it introduced Bob Reid in the following terms: 'Disregarding the thrust of the advertisement for the La Trobe post which anticipated the need for future specialist graduates, [Reid] based his application in terms of a strong commitment to a broad, integrated course in which the interrelationships between climate, soils, plants, animals and economics and their dependence on a sound basis of primary sciences – chemistry, physics and mathematics – was stressed.' He 'appointed staff in sympathy with his convictions' who retained the integrated school structure after he retired, as the only La Trobe academic unit to maintain the university's original vision of Schools rather than faculties. The demanding course matched La Trobe's student intake being 'so small that a high proportion of admitted students had listed [it] as their first preference [including] some very high quality students'.³²

Today, La Trobe University's website describes Robert 'Bob' Reid as 'one of Australia's most outstanding agricultural scientists. He joined La Trobe University in 1968 as Foundation Professor of Agriculture, a post he held for 10 years, seven of them officially but in fact throughout, as Dean. A passionate teacher, his research speciality was in the nutrition of pregnant and lactating ewes and grazing animals'.³³ He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (FRSE), of the Australian Society of Animal Production (FASAP), of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (FAIAS) and a recipient of the Medal of Agricultural Science. His peers ranked him as 'one of the most gifted, versatile and influential nutritionists this country has ever produced'.³⁴

Born in 1921 in Hawthorn, his family moved to Sydney in 1928 where, after attending Fort Street High School, he undertook a 'gap year' in an accounting office in 1940 because he wanted to please his father, but found that it did not suit him. Later he possibly spent some time on a relatives' property at Hillston, New South Wales. His agricultural science career began in 1944 with a Bachelor of Science with Honours and a University Medal from the University of Sydney. After that he became a Research Officer at CSIRO's Division of Animal Health and Production and Animal Physiology from 1944 to 1946. Attracting a scholarship, he went on to complete a Doctor of Philosophy at King's College, Cambridge, in 1949, and upon returning to Australia became a Lecturer in Animal Nutrition at the University of Sydney until 1958.³⁵ He also resumed his research position at the CSIRO McMaster Laboratory and later at the Prospect Sheep Biology Laboratory working on carbohydrate metabolism and pregnancy toxæmia. Thereafter followed his famous period in Scotland.³⁶

Establishing himself at La Trobe, his inaugural professorial lecture 'Animals in Agriculture' traced the history of animal domestication and food products and made insightful projections into the future.³⁷ The strong degree that he nurtured into existence was a unique BAgSc that drew on his experience in Scotland and the progressive courses of Australia. Scotland had brought its agricultural colleges and universities into an integrated system that serviced education, research and extension by 1904,³⁸ an innovation that was to inspire the Land Grant Colleges of the USA – that country's great agricultural universities.³⁹ Bob Reid had seen the Scottish system in its mature operation at Aberdeen and Edinburgh and drew from it the particular benefit of linking research findings into education. In Australia, he borrowed successful elements of the most farsighted university agricultural courses, one of which was the more integrated approach at the University of New England⁴⁰ created by his Cambridge contemporary, the Australian agricultural scientist McClymont.⁴¹

Various interpretations and expectations of the new course were postulated, all of which mentioned its foundation on strong basic sciences, environmental components and economics, such as the description in the AIAS' journal.⁴² But it is more appropriate to allow Bob to explain it in his own words: 'The object of the course is to attempt to present Agriculture as an integrated study, rather than to emphasize the many individual disciplines involved. The gloomy reaction of many of those who currently struggle with the organisation of courses in Agriculture is a natural one: the theory of integration of courses is easily stated, but the practice is difficult to put into effect'. In the same essay, he acknowledged the difficulty of accommodating the diverse subjects into a crowded four-year course.⁴³

Within these constraints, and those of an undeveloped university, he defined the La Trobe course in terms of the content of subjects and their integration with other subjects, an approach that placed greater demands on lecturers and curbed the tradition of student labour for research – laboratory sessions were to be more intellectual than technical work. The course shared an outward similarity to others around Australia with variations being a strong primary science base including mathematics/statistics on which further natural and social sciences were built in second and third years. Fourth year was more obviously different from neighbouring courses, with minimal formal structure – as Bob Reid said, in the

spirit of an Edinburgh course requirement that simply stated 'daily 9 to 5' – and was based around a research project, field activities and seminars with few lectures. In addition to the integration between subjects, an 'ecological framework' subject would be included in each of the four years. It was an ambitious approach that attracted its critics, to whom Reid counselled, 'remember that La Trobe graduates will not begin to make their own particular impact until ten years hence. In research at least it is not what a graduate knows at graduation which is of ultimate importance, but how, and often whether, he thinks'.⁴⁴ He was ahead of his time in his emphasis that a course cannot be judged by its graduates or even their own opinions soon after graduation as the discipline of higher education studies has subsequently shown. Some 30 years later it was to be noted of graduates in general that: 'It is often the long term effects of university education that are the most important – the research shows that new graduates tend to be critical of universities for failing to train them more precisely for work, whereas five and ten year out graduates of all courses are more inclined to appreciate the intellectual preparation and life experience they received on campus, which has underpinned everything since.'⁴⁵

Often forced to address the question of how La Trobe graduates would differ from those at Melbourne, Bob characteristically noted that no controlled comparison was possible and therefore no authoritative answer could exist! Nevertheless, he identified some obvious differences, including the La Trobe course having near complete control over third- and fourth-year teaching as distinct from relying on service teaching from other university departments, not including an Agricultural Engineering subject and requiring a greater emphasis on student reading and writing.⁴⁶

A subjective comparison influenced by staff and students suggested that the highly structured four-year courses common to other institutions can be 'somewhat shallow' and 'stifle imagination' compared to the 'scope for individualistic thought' in the La Trobe course. It concluded with the importance of 'allowing minds to develop as individuals' for agricultural scientists, as distinct from agricultural technicians, if answers to problems are to be found.⁴⁷

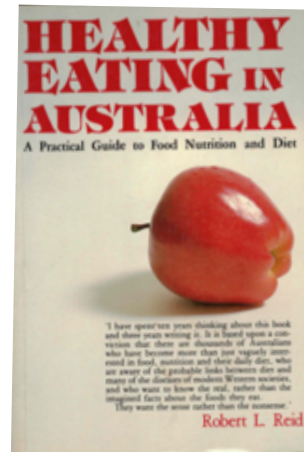


A testimony to the educational vision may be found in an erudite contribution in the joint La Trobe and Melbourne agricultural science students' magazine, *Agros71*, which was dedicated to the subject of agricultural education. An article entitled 'Should Agriculture go to Pot?' penned by Charles Lamp, Bob's first Agronomy appointment, and with an omnivorous interest in weeds and integrated understanding, treated the subject panoramically. His article ranged across the history of drug trade from spices to poisons, some of the excesses of plant-based medicine and the rise of commercial poppy cultivation in Tasmania. But the title of the article was left as an implication hanging in the air – much to the delight of rebellious bright young minds.⁴⁸ Charley was one of those initial three of Bob Reid's appointees who believed in Bob's vision and implemented the spirit of his philosophy. For example, his entertaining 'muck and mystery' lectures integrated

technical, social and economic principles that were being taught in other subjects. And in criticizing unscientific beliefs in agriculture, he remained sympathetic to the general philosophy of caring for nature; for example, in another article he reviewed Aldo Leopold's 'Sand Country Almanac' noting that the rejuvenation of Leopold's land relied on his off-farm income. Nevertheless, he concluded with the words: 'Retention of the maximum amount of nature's fabric while enjoying the benefits of modern agriculture – that is the challenge. Agriculture is here to stay and it can persist so long as nature's stability remains. We can stay when we realize and maintain our positions as members of an interdependent community'.⁴⁹ This was an apt summary of the intent of the agricultural science at La Trobe in the late 1960s – it was ahead of its time.

Bob Reid's vision was maintained throughout his tenure, notwithstanding the criticism of conservative and less-informed quarters, and it soon became 'firmly established ... as a sought-after qualification', acknowledged as such by his University of Melbourne colleagues and competitors. Thirty years later it was to be observed that 'recent developments in agricultural education trace many of their roots to the new approach which began at La Trobe University under Bob Reid'.⁵⁰

A health scare led Bob to retire in December 1977, which is recorded as 1978 in some biographies and even 1979 elsewhere, a confusion probably due to his continuing official roles at La Trobe and his having been honoured as the first of the University's Emeritus Professors in 1979.⁵¹ His wife Cath unexpectedly passed away in 1980, and after some time Bob entered a new phase teaching human nutrition at La Trobe, writing 'Healthy Eating in Australia'⁵² and twice editing the 'Manual of Australian Agriculture',⁵³ a task he enjoyed as he had earlier edited the 'Proceedings of the III World Conference on Animal Production'.⁵⁴ A stickler for correct punctuation, having written a booklet on the subject for the first intake of students after being appalled at their writing skills, it was somewhat poetic that he was also engaged after retirement by one of his first intake students to edit long consultants' reports. Later, marrying nutritionist Margaret Robinson, he moved to Canberra and among other pursuits, studied Latin and studiously exposed income tax creep in a paper published in the Australian Tax Forum.⁵⁵ Born in 1921, Foundation Professor Robert Lovell Reid FRSE, FASAP, FAIAS died in 1996, aged 75; the University named the R.L. Reid building in his honour on May 22, 1998.⁵⁶





The R.L. Reid Building, La Trobe University

Bob is remembered by his academic colleagues, staff and students alike as kindly even when insisting on precision in standards and writing. He applied his strictures to the first intake into the agricultural science course; he wanted the course to be valued. He insisted on interviewing some of the 22 who were finally accepted into the course, not relying on matriculation results alone and admitted two diploma graduates from Dookie Agricultural College apparently also achieving a rough balance between rural and urban students, at least among those who passed first year. His philosophy was one of integration – he saw agricultural science as an applied field that relied on thorough understanding of the interrelationships between the sciences and key aspects of the social sciences, especially economics, behaviour and communication. And the diverse academics he appointed ensured that Shakespeare, limericks, poetry and other literary pearls were also cast before the FASI swine. Bob saw the need for his course to be clearly differentiated from the outset from the University of Melbourne's, and so insisted in teaching the first-year subject that introduced agriculture in Australia and globally. In later years, he taught animal nutrition and physiology – always based around biochemistry. Demanding as he was, the first-year agriculture subject was his students' preferred one among the pure sciences of physics, chemistry, biological and statistical theory and analysis – it was equivalent to a full BSc course load with the agriculture subjects added on, all of which had to be passed to move into more detailed subjects in higher years.

In this young university and pioneering course, Bob Reid ensured that students were 'coping'. He entertained the cohort to his elegant house in Eaglemont, and as students recall in their memoirs, visited individuals in college when illness confined them to bed. Outdoor lectures, wide ranging conversations and encouragement to think were hallmarks of the experience in the cultural environment that he fostered. He paid particular attention to the character of the

first staff he appointed to the School, and this closeness continued, encouraged by the relative youth of some of those early academic staff. Students uniformly considered it to have been a privilege to have been a disciple of Bob Reid, an experience that was especially valued by the first agricultural science intake to La Trobe University.



Foundation Professor Bob Reid FRSE, FASAP, FAIAS

Chapter 4

The First Agricultural Science Intake, FASI

The 60s was an era when at least academic standards were absolute yet discretion was possible for non-quantified parameters such as social status. This meant that La Trobe benefitted from some students that might never have considered applying to the University of Melbourne because no one from their circles had ever considered that institution. However, the canny publicity of La Trobe through such figures as the impressive Chief Librarian Bouchard, as mentioned in at least one of the first intake student's stories, attracted some that would otherwise have been the accepted into any Melbourne course if they had not made La Trobe Agricultural Science their first preference.

All in the first intake who came straight from secondary school had sound passes in the difficult science subjects in the objective Matriculation examinations, many having achieved distinctions. In addition, Bob Reid interviewed some of the applicants to be sure they were the right stuff for his course, and he also included the top two Diploma in Agriculture graduates from Dookie College; some peers criticized this decision to take college students without the same physics, chemistry and pure and applied mathematics backgrounds, but they were soon quietened and ultimately silenced when those two both achieved honours distinctions across the whole course.

To arrive at the 1971 end point for the first intake, there had been significant attrition across the four-to-five years. In today's parlance, universities monitor their performance through a bewildering range of KPIs and other management tools, one of which is student progression and completion rates, which are reconstituted for the first agricultural science intake students in the following table.

FASI Numbers, Progression and Completion Rates⁵⁷

Year	Number of FASI Students	Progression Rate (%)
1968	22	
1969	13 [+2 transfer in]	59
1970	14	93
1971	12	86
1972	2	

Completion Rates:

- 45% (within 4 years, 1968 enrolment)
- 55% (within 5 years, 1968 enrolment)
- 50% (within 4 years, all enrolments)
- 58% (within 5 years, all enrolments)

Those who made it through first year are shown in image below, which was taken on the balcony of the Thomas Cherry Building. They were as callow a bunch as the image implies, although those who had previously been through Dookie

Agricultural College were a little more worldly wise. The group bonded well. Those who resided in Glenn College, and in Menzies College when it was completed, had an additional bond and the opportunity for a wider university experience. But as indicated in one version of the history of La Trobe's early years, most residents in colleges initially identified with those from similar backgrounds – the same town, school or sports – until after a couple of years new interests from study stimulated regroupings.⁵⁸



The Second Year FASI Cohort. Left to Right – Standing: Wilma Andrews née Ord, Graeme McGregor, Marg Bright née Christie, Lindsay Falvey, Steve Funston, Philip Noakes, John Whitford, Jim Shovelton, Ian Taylor, Roger Hooley and Neville Oddie. Sitting/Squatting: Peter Morgan, David Gillespie, Ian Hamer, Rob Irwin and Geoff Hubbard.

The structure of the course was not immediately evident from the subject titles – Chemistry 1, Biology 1, Physics 1 and Agriculture 1 for example, as indicated on the transcript for first year. Second year was no more descriptive; Agriculture 11A, Agriculture 11B, Agriculture 11C, Chemistry 11B and Biology 11C/11D.

Third year followed with Agriculture 111A, Agriculture 111B and Agriculture 111C, as did the fourth-year nomenclature with the addition of the Project. Within these general descriptors the subjects included such diverse study as statistical analysis, the breadth of practical physics, organic and physical chemistries, zoology, botany, soil chemistry, soil physics, crop and weed agronomy, animal, plant and theoretical genetics, animal physiology and nutrition, animal genetics, animal health and management and a range of others.

La Trobe University
MEMORANDUM OF RESULTS

EXAMINATION GRADES

A (80-100) PASS GRADES FOR PASS	EX	NOT REQUIRED TO SIT FOR EXAMINATION	NX	EXCLUDED FROM EXAMINATION
B (70-79) OR HONOURS SUBJECTS	SP	SPECIAL EXAMINATION GRANTED	W	WITHHELD
C (60-69) WHERE D IS THE LOWEST GRADE	NC	GRANTED CONCEDED PASS	K1	WITHDRAWN FIRST, SECOND OR THIRD TERM
D (50-59) GRADE	N	FAILURE	K2	
P NON GRADED PASS	NS	ABSENT FROM EXAM	K3	
H5 } RESULT FOR HONOURS				
H2A } YEAR WORK				
H2B }				
H3 }				

SUBJECT	RESULT
CHEMISTRY 1	B
BIOLOGY 1	C
PHYSICS 1	C
AGRICULTURE 1	B

TOTAL PASSES **4** UNIT VALUE **Pass 1st yr**

13 DEC 1968

T. S. TAYLOR
REGISTRAR

SAMPLE

La Trobe University
MEMORANDUM OF RESULTS

EXAMINATION GRADES

A (80-100) PASS GRADES FOR PASS	EX	NOT REQUIRED TO SIT FOR EXAMINATION	NX	EXCLUDED FROM EXAMINATION
B (70-79) OR HONOURS SUBJECTS	SP	SPECIAL EXAMINATION GRANTED	W	WITHHELD
C (60-69) WHERE D IS THE LOWEST GRADE	NC	GRANTED CONCEDED PASS	K1	WITHDRAWN FIRST, SECOND OR THIRD TERM
D (50-59) GRADE	N	FAILURE	K2	
P NON GRADED PASS	NS	ABSENT FROM EXAM	K3	
H5 } RESULT FOR HONOURS				
H2A } YEAR WORK				
H2B }				
H3 }				

SUBJECT	RESULT
AGRICULTURE 11A	B
CHEMISTRY 11B	C
BIOLOGY 11C/11D	D
AGRICULTURE 11A	C
AGRICULTURE 11C	B

TOTAL PASSES **YR 11** UNIT VALUE

T. S. TAYLOR
REGISTRAR

SAMPLE

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
MEMORANDUM OF RESULTS - 1970/1971

15 / 12 / 70

any special conditions specified below relating to an enrolment next year are explained in an accompanying letter.

Examination grades are set out on the reverse side of this memorandum.

The unit value for failed subjects is not shown.

Any query regarding these results should be directed, in writing, to the Registrar, La Trobe University, Bundoora 3083.

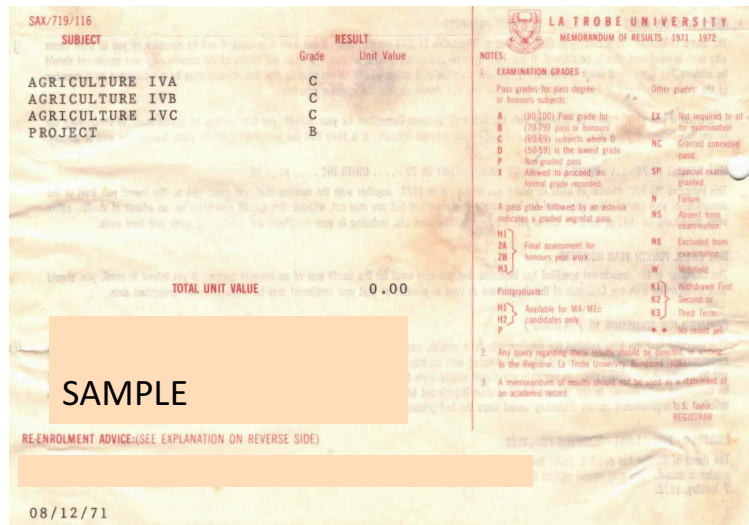
This Memorandum of Results should not be used as an academic record.

SUBJECT	Grade	Unit Value
AGRICULTURE IIIA	D	1,00
AGRICULTURE IIIB	B	1,00
AGRICULTURE IIIC	C	1,00

TOTAL PASSES **3** UNIT VALUE **3,00**

T. S. Taylor
Registrar

SAMPLE



In addition to a high lecture load in the first three years, the course also included extensive practical work; in laboratories where countless rats and a few frogs gave their lives to science from failed surgery, in taxonomic identification of plant (weed) collections from the cemeteries and roadsides of the northern suburbs and farms across three years and in mind-numbing Fortran computer card compilation. While the first intake of students might not have realized it, they were privileged to be at the forefront of not only agricultural education, but much of university undergraduate science education in Australia at the time. Laboratory exercises were ably prepared by young technicians who served as an additional bridge between the academics and students. The fourth-year research projects equipped all students with an appreciation of the rigours of research with assessments based on the viability of research project design, execution, statistical analysis and conclusions drawn from the results. It whetted the appetite for some to pursue research further in careers and graduate degrees, and provided all with an understanding of credible empiricism. Bob Reid had achieved his ambition to produce rounded agricultural scientists, and the course continued in this mould for several years.

Having rejected the compromise of the year-in-the-country component still maintained in the University of Melbourne course at the time, the La Trobe course included assessable vacation employment and relevant field excursions. Farm and other excursions were organised by lecturers for examples related to a specific subject, such as soil physics or conservation, which seemed to centre around standing in deep erosion gullies in duplex clay soils that doubled as winter wind tunnels for students sometimes less enraptured by the soil layers and geological intrusions than their lecturer. Later excursions were coordinated and accompanied by Norman Caldwell, a genial gentleman, who after retirement from ICI, became an Assistant to Bob Reid and ensured the smooth operation of countless tasks behind the scenes.



Kiewa Valley Excursion, c.1971. Left to right (best guesses): David Connor, Wilma Andrews née Ord, Jim Shovelton and Geoff Hubbard (both sitting), Nick Uren (obscured), Lindsay Falvey, Philip Noakes, David Gillespie; three unclear; Lindsay Jarvis (famer), and Victorian Department of Agriculture Extension Officer Bob Trethewie.⁵⁹



Same Excursion to 'Kergunyah' to Inspect Hillside-Irrigation aspects of Keyline⁶⁰

Vacation employment, in lieu of the Dookie College or Mt Derrimut year required of the University of Melbourne students, was assessable and so effectively lengthened the already intensive course – and was a boon to the non-farm born FASIs. Practical experience had to be more than simple labouring, could not be on the property from which one came and was to be documented in a professional manner for assessment. While the requirement might not be acceptable today, it ensured that graduates developed a clear understanding of diverse aspects of the application of science to agriculture and instilled an understanding that being part of the profession was a vocation, not a job. With the onus firmly on students to find

their vacation position that met the course's requirements, the roles accepted were often much more for the experience than payment. In the ethos of the era, it was simply seen as building character and independence.

Twelve completed the course in 1971. In an era when few photographs were taken, and in an environment where so much else was going on, it is fortuitous that the group of 12 was captured in photograph below, which seems to have been taken in front of Glenn College. It appears to be a curated pose, or as managed as a group of independent young people in 1971 could be, yet it also captures the personality of each member of FASI in their stance and attentiveness.



The First 12 Graduands, 1971. Left to Right: Steve Funston, David Gillespie, Lindsay Falvey, Jim Shovelton, Roger Hooley, Geoff Hubbard, Wilma Andrews née Ord, Marg Bright née Christie, Ian Taylor, Ian Hamer, Philip Noakes and Graeme McGregor.

Nine of the first BAgSc graduates attended the graduation ceremony as shown below – it was a proud day for graduates and staff; others graduated at the same ceremony *in absentia* having moved interstate or up country. Subsequent lives were to be diverse, as was initial employment, which included: various Victorian Government agencies; the Northern Territory Administration; farming; National Service – the Vietnam lottery allowed deferment while studying; teaching and more, while some pursued higher studies. And from that time various careers developed, ranging across; research, academia, scientific journal editorship, advisory services, agricultural college lecturing, agricultural cooperatives, agricultural supply companies, extension, company directorships, management, the French national research organisation, human resources training, international consulting, CGIAR, NGOs in developing nations, reproductive endocrinology

research; secondary teaching and administration and a range of business ventures – together spanning much of the globe. Of the 12 graduates in 1971, five went on to post-graduate studies – a high proportion for the era. Among other accolades, the FASI group contains; a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia, a Centenary Medallist, the first La Trobe graduate elected a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Science and Engineering and ranking among famous La Trobe alumni.



Academic Staff and Nine of the First BAgSc Graduates, 1972. From Left to Right – Standing: Rob Dumsday, Steve Willatt, Marg Bright née Christie, Ian Taylor, Wilma Andrews née Ord, Peter Cranwell (behind Wilma), Charles Lamp, Richard Luke, Bob Reid, Philip Noakes and Jim Shovelton. Squatting: Ian Hamer, Graeme McGregor, Roger Hooley and David Gillespie. [*In absentia*: Lindsay Falvey, Steve Funston and Geoff Hubbard.]

The reward for the four years' slog, extended to five for a couple of others from the first intake because – as one of them recently rationalized 'the course was so much fun I wanted to stay' – was the graduation testamur. As illustrated below, it was of simple design in the style of the new La Trobe University to demonstrate quality

without pretention. As captured in a description of the wider university in its 50-year publication, the objectives placed on the university and lived by its early academic leadership were to be Victoria's third university – and 'the third university it might be, but La Trobe was not to be a third-rank university, or even a second-rank one'.⁶¹

Staff were supportive not only of the course but of its graduates. One example arising from some La Trobe–Melbourne rivalry in the 1980s referenced an example of one of the FASI group as making contributions to international development because of a sound general degree rather than one oriented to a specific workplace. Nick Uren's repost to the latter suggestion was that 'if we do as [a Melbourne academic] suggests to survive then we don't deserve to survive. We can do more lasting good by maintaining standards, training people like [the La Trobe graduate mentioned] and by setting an example of scientific integrity and of how to do research of quality'.⁶²



The happy outcome of the first graduation of the first agricultural science intake was due in the greater part to the staff and the culture they engendered. The students may have been more carefully selected than was normal, and their small number might be expected to have led to a camaraderie in any case – but the outcome was more than that. It was a feeling that the group – the staff and the students – had together accomplished something special. The staff recollect some points from this time later in this document, but first memories and life stories from the first agricultural science intake at La Trobe must be allowed.

Chapter 5

Memories and Stories of FASIs 1968 to 1971/2

The memories and descriptions of the 'first agricultural science intake' (FASI) are presented in this chapter. The initial intake was 22 students coming from diverse backgrounds, and 13 progressed to second year where they were joined by two who transferred in from elsewhere. Of those 15, 12 graduated in 1971 with two others graduating the next year and one transferring to teaching. The names and origins of the 15 are in the following Table, and their reflections or stories include something about all who remain contactable; if this changes, new information can be added to the electronic version of this publication. The stories about lives of each of the FASI students indicate the diversity of opportunities provided by the La Trobe degree and the circumstances of the past half century. All have contributed to society's wellbeing, each in their own way – some conventional, others unexpected – and all reflect the benefit of the virgin ground they ploughed in the pioneering years of agricultural science at La Trobe.

FASI Student Name	Came to La Trobe from:
Marg Bright (née Christie)	Kilmore, Vic
Lindsay Falvey	Balwyn, Vic
Steve Funston	Geelong, Vic
David Gillespie	Dookie Agricultural College
Ian Hamer	Dookie Agricultural College
Roger Hooley	Warragul, Vic
Geoff Hubbard	Box Hill, Vic
Rob Irwin	Mont Albert, Vic
Graeme McGregor	Transferred in 2 nd year; Reading, U.K.
Philip Noakes	Transferred in 2 nd year; Hobart, Tas
Nev Oddie	Chepstowe, Vic
Wilma Andrews (née Ord)	Macleod, Vic
Jim Shovelton	Euroa, Vic
Ian Taylor	Henty, NSW
John Whitford	Timboon, Vic

Marg Bright (née Christie)

The last 50 years



1968... the year we started university. For me, just where I wanted to be, at University but sadly, not the course of my choice. However, agricultural science at La Trobe University turned out to be a good place to establish a 50-year career with a practical, robust foundation in the scientific method.

I have vivid memories of Bob Reid, a consummate story teller and enthusiast. He gave us a good beginning, encouraging our various pathways and capabilities.

Somewhere in our first year, David Leaver and Nick Uren ('do not refer to soil as dirt') arrived and after that Charles Lamp, Peter Cranwell, Richard Luke, Steve Willet, Bob Dumsday... my memory fails.

The high point for me was animal physiology with David Leaver. I found those pracs in endocrinology fantastic and led me in fourth year (along with Roger Hooley) to do a research project at Werribee Research Station on sheep reproduction. The methodologies used to monitor hormone levels in sheep reproduction were directly transferable to the human and so in 1972, agriculture and I parted company with my first job in cancer research. This was followed by a position in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology under Professor Jim Brown (of oestrogen fame) at Melbourne University working in reproductive endocrinology. Somewhere in there, I completed an MSc on the measurement of pregnanediol glucuronide and its use to monitor reproductive outcomes.

By then, I was married and with the first born of our five children, we moved to country Victoria with Jonathan's employment. What followed was two years in Wangaratta (addition of second child), two years in Nathalia (addition of third child), then over to Bright (two more children). We used to laugh...the Brights of Bright.

Country life as a full-time mother was fun and absorbing and it kept me fully occupied in home and community activities. I started picking up contract work when our youngest child was getting close to school age in the early 90s. For a short

four months I returned to my agricultural roots and conducted an audit of the agribusiness sector covering five local government areas in northeast Victoria. The purpose was to assess opportunities and constraints for development with a view to growing a regional marketing focus. Additionally, I developed a municipal public health plan and provided community development support within the Alpine Shire after the 1993 floods, including the development of a flood recovery plan. Somewhere in those years I provided tutoring to a group of about 15 unemployed 19 year olds through a Landcare environment action plan designed to engage these young people with an opportunity to develop skills and improve job readiness. I was a volunteer literacy tutor and contributed in other ways to community life through church, kids sports, school and other networks. It was all good fun, but I did wonder whether I would ever find my way back to a more investigative career.

In 1998, more by accident than design, we moved to Brisbane for Jonathan's employment. And some 12 months later, I picked up a full-time job in research/epidemiology in Queensland Health. I've been there ever since and have combined some specialist training with experience gathered along the way, a fantastic mentor and manager and many opportunities to contribute to the science of health. Here I am now in 2018, manager of the state chronic disease epidemiology team and although nearing 70, I feel at my intellectual peak and continue to have the opportunity and capacity to contribute to the preventive agenda in Queensland. I lead the production of the biennial Queensland Chief Health Officer report with the seventh in the series due for release in November 2018.

Being part of the initial La Trobe ag intake was fun. We really were family, not faculty. I remember the political volatility of those early years and became friends with a few of the activists. I joined the La Trobe Uni mountaineering club (LUMC) in orientation week and enjoyed some great trips over those next four years—mostly with Carolyn Layton who I'd met in O week. Those early post grads (Dave Lane and Lindsay Jolley) were friends way back then and still are. I lived in Menzies College for three of our four years coinciding with the time when Richard Luke was a resident tutor.

The rewards and challenges in life for me are first and foremost my family, also friends and colleagues, books and art, music and being productive. My job is hugely rewarding and occupies a vast amount of my working week. I adopted a life of faith in 1969 (Steve Funston was a prompt), which has endured.

Next year 2019, will be the end of my Queensland Health career, but when I move to Melbourne sometime in the next 12 months, maybe there will be new possibilities.

[Marg is also a star in La Trobe University's recent inclusion and diversity program 'Square the Ledger'⁶³ – see <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/jobs/working/diversity-and-inclusion/championing-gender-equality/square-the-ledger/profiles/margaret-bright-nee-christie.>]

Lindsay Falvey

A Providential Career



Lucrative cadetship offers from CSR for science and CRB for engineering, both at Melbourne University could not trump agricultural science on a meagre Commonwealth scholarship. I liked study and outdoors, and La Trobe's Librarian Bouchardt's accented oratory at our school had charmed me. It accorded with my ill-defined intent to 'do good' for the world, which came from the Methodist church that was major part of my life. A cocky 17-year-old, I was put in my place in Bob Reid's interview with the words, 'high marks doesn't mean automatic entry!'. Starting the course coincided with courting Jan and beginning a Preacher's course with Dr Harold Wood. Rebellious, churchy, studious, eclectic – these elements have spiced life. But my persona at university did not show all of this – or that I wrote off two cars and a motorbike in the four years.

University: I was stimulated by the course, the lecturers and the freedom – the marooned wind-swept muddy clay location hardly dulled it, although I did spend days at Melbourne Uni for its 'feel'. I expect my La Trobe experience was similar to other day-students – a wonderful space to mature in, with some staff barely older than us and all supportive. While we were remote from the bulk of the university, the student rag *Rabelais* both shocked and educated me. My two most vivid memories are marching down Bourke Street in the moratorium, and gathering at Wilma's house in 1969 to watch the moon landing and then walking outside looking up at the sky in wonder.

I took vacation employment seriously, appreciating Roger and John taking me to their farms for weekends. My ambition partially gelled around the tropics, which from Dad's war time experience focussed me on the Northern Territory. I applied for a NT cadetship during second year and missed out. Miffed, I wrote asking for vacation employment; Rob Irwin came with me – returning early after bad news from the university. Three formative months followed in a remote camp with misfits and miscreants building heavy fences against wild cattle and rounding them up – an aboriginal co-worker took pity of me and showed me how to ride without chafing. I complained to the senior agronomist about missing out on the cadetship and was

assured that I would get it next year 'because now you're the devil we know'. So I had funds in fourth year, and turned 21 with a low-key party at home to which many fellow FASIs came, and where Dad in a last remission period poured beer as fast as we drank it. I was also busy: exams for the church course finished the day before university exams started, and we married the day after the last exam – some fellow students came to our wedding. I recall little of the period. By Christmas I had the car, a homemade trailer from a crashed ute with its spare engine, and meagre possessions in Darwin. Since then La Trobe has entered my life each decade.

After: Appointed back to Douglas Daly Experiment Station I was tested by overseeing some who had overseen me two years earlier. The NT was a laissez-faire place that suited my energy, and when the 1971 A.H. Howard Award brought me to Melbourne for the III World Conference on Animal Production where Bob Reid featured, I saw a wider world; I recall Geoff Hubbard was there too with AgVic. I learned more research techniques, and designed large grazing experiments that brought me back in touch with Charles Lamp and Bob Reid when my work became a MAgrSc.

I published whatever I could; some taking years to appear, Roger helped as CSIRO's editor. I travelled widely, often alone, and learned a lot about agriculture, life and myself. We were content and in 1974 our first son Leslie was born, then on Christmas Eve, Cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin. Jan and Leslie evacuated with most of the city, and I stayed on residing in a remnant laboratory; a close friend died, several were injured and others became depressed – for me it was to be an awakening. Initially, I cobbled the vestigial house into something liveable, drove south and brought the family back. Rebuilding in spare moments proved too much, so after selling the house and moving to Humpty Doo rice station, I applied for two agricultural missionary jobs on the Subcontinent and one Australian Aid role in Thailand, the last became the first and life changed again.

By early 1976 we were in Chiang Mai where Christopher was later born. I worked in the highlands and Chiang Mai University researching alternatives to opium production. With Thai colleagues and support staff, fascinating work linked ruminant nutrition to social, cultural and economic contexts – and led to many papers. Writing suited me, and for relaxation I began writing on other topics as well. Rob and Pam Irwin visited en route to India, and visiting researchers doing similar work inspired me into a PhD, which I completed under Prof Barry Norton of UQ. I loved the country, studied the language and discovered Buddhist philosophy. My skills were more in seeing the direction of things and in organising others than continuing detailed research and so what followed, while unconventional, now seems logical for the changing times in agriculture and international development.

I had a role to return to at Queensland University, which did not suit me after five years in each of Thailand and the NT. So on spec we moved to Melbourne, saw Ian and Marg Hamer a few times, and I attended the opening of animal houses at La Trobe. I started developing MPW Rural Development – a cooperative masquerading as a company in which we each generated our own income. Long consultants' reports needed good editing so when Bob Reid, now widowed and retired, mentioned that he needed something to do, engaging his punctilious punctuation was a poetic moment! The company matured and we eventually sold

into an engineering group as it listed on the stock exchange. I became MD of their subsidiary Coffey-MPW for agricultural and international work with operations across 50 countries, and one of our acquisitions from government, Richland Laboratories, brought me back in touch with Jim who was its chief. Another part of the business was conducting courses for Asian and African professionals, which led to employing the charismatic performers John Quilkey and Stuart Hawkins. Other things in this phase included; publishing papers, chairing the AIAS editorial board and helping bright Asian students enter university by founding Victoria College in Collins St, and others in Bangkok and Vientiane. Squeezed out of Coffeys in 1993, I took consultancies until 1995. The 15 years had taken me away often and writing made me reclusive, which played a part in the demise of the marriage.

The University of Melbourne was seeking a hybrid for an enhanced Dean's role to absorb the six Victorian agricultural colleges and to revamp the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture. After declining the first overtures, I succumbed to the challenge and really enjoyed negotiating the merger and the academic stimulation; I have never really left. With 457 staff at its peak, the Faculty was by far the largest and richest, with new degrees, international links and contact with La Trobe, sometimes as a collaborator. The R.L. Reid Building 1997 commemoration brought me in touch with Neville and Jim again. David Connor was Chair of Agronomy at Melbourne and I saw Nick Uren periodically.

After stepping down as Dean, I retained the Chair of Agriculture and had more time to read, write and reflect. I had earlier written a little book interpreting the Gospels in Buddhist terms and I was now free to accept an invitation to a conference where I met the President of the World Parliament of Religions – over a whisky. This led to an invitation to the Montserrat Assembly to address global issues, two of which were agriculture/food and conflict. Conflict prevention was represented by an experienced and wonderful French woman from the Council of Europe, Simone. The University of Cambridge offered a Fellowship and we spent six months there and in 2006 we married and later moved to Melbourne. These days my roles include: chairing the International Livestock Research Institute, Hassad Australia board (finishing 2018), helping old Thai friends at their universities, supporting the Melbourne Faculty (and now La Trobe perhaps), writing and starting some prizes to encourage worthwhile initiatives. Other things are matters of public record.⁶⁴

Reflection: La Trobe helped set me on this path, it was '*a true alma mater – a nourishing mother, for it opened to me a world of learning, a love of universities*',⁶⁵ as I said in a La Trobe alumni interview a few years ago – but in fact I did not know that until decades later. Forty years contact with Asia has shaped my view of life in 12-year phases; if I am lucky, this phase has a few years left of offering experience and advice where it is useful and wanted. Thereafter it is more about deeper understanding of life with my loving companion. My rustic retreat near Kilmore among thousands of trees planted 20 years ago grows ever more attractive for the reading and writing that integrates the esoteric and scientific parts of my mind; biochemical models help. I've strayed along the way, but the 17 year-old's ambition still exists, and I hope I have done more good than harm ... but how can we know?

Steve Funston



Life at La Trobe: My lasting impressions of the Ag course at La Trobe are overwhelmingly positive from all angles. The initial grounding in the sciences was useful (even the physics!) and our lecturers appeared to be enthusiastic about their fields of interest (pardon the pun) and were most competent at passing on their knowledge in an interesting and informative way.

Some non-academic highlights come to mind.

- The field trips out North of the University
- Chasing weeds and grasses for the plant collection both locally and on trips to the country
- The day we cut up the sheep carcass
- The time Phil Noakes brought his twin brother to one of Peter Cranwell's prac classes, decked him out in a lab coat and got him to participate in the session
- The Shakespeare quotes from Rob Dumsday:

*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*

*Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a-nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.*

- Spontaneous outbursts during lectures, usually led by Graeme McGregor. These included:

By de light...of the silvery moon when Beidellite was mentioned in the soil science lectures. I think this originated from the story Nick

Uren told us of the Melbourne Uni students doing this when Professor Leeper had mentioned the same mineral in his lectures.

We are the 'Ag' Men – based on the chorus from the Beatles song 'I am the Walrus' (I seem to recall giving Wilma and Marg honorary status of 'Men' when we sang this).

I think the answer lies....in the soil stated slowly and seriously with our best attempts at a Dorset accent.

Career History: I have a certain nostalgia for the music of the 60s and 70s and when I contemplate issues of career progression I often think of a particular song – Harry Chapin's **Taxi**.

'She was going to be an actress and I was going to learn to fly'

In the song things didn't quite turn out that way but I guess that's not always a bad thing. I saw a recent article that said in the future the average person will change careers 5–7 times during their working life and approximately 30% of the total workforce will now change jobs every 12 months.

Although I have forgotten an awful lot of what I learned from '68 to '71, I will be ever grateful for the solid grounding the course gave me in areas such as researching and applying new knowledge, communication, problem solving, critical thinking and questioning. Colleagues and staff alike were exceptional role models. I spent my first year with the Dept of Ag then with a couple of 'muck and mystery' merchants before moving into secondary teaching in Adelaide while completing a DipEd part time.

We moved to my home town of Geelong around 1975 and I picked up a job teaching farm apprentices – very much a hands-on course so unfortunately, I wasn't really able to draw a lot on my Ag Science training. This lasted around 12 years. I was fortunate to make friends with a Winchelsea farmer who was also an ex-Dookie graduate and I often took the apprentices to his property to gain experience in various skills such as animal husbandry and fencing.

My next move was to Training/HR at Fords. This included initial screening of potential graduate program hires so I spent a few days interviewing at La Trobe. I couldn't believe how much the place had changed.

After approximately 8 years at Fords I moved into corporate computer training and from there into Admin/HR/Accounts/Performance reporting at the Employment Services division of a local Geelong disability charity, Karingal (now rebranded to Genu). I am still there 3 days per week doing mainly data analysis and performance reporting.

I met my future wife at La Trobe and we married at the start of 4th year. We are proud parents of 2 children and 4 grandchildren.



Left: Cherchez les herbes – looking for grasses and weeds for the dried specimen collection for Charles Lamp, 1971. **Right:** Steve and the future Mrs Funston outside Menzies College in 1969.

David and Marg Gillespie

Reflections on the Past 50 Years



Dave and I were both in the first ag student intake at La Trobe Uni. I came straight from school, while Dave was older and had completed his Diploma of Agriculture at Dookie College. It was great to be part of this small group of ag students, and we made some lasting friendships during that time.

At the end of the course Dave started as a Sheep and Wool Officer with the Victorian Dept. of Ag in Bairnsdale, and I went secondary teaching (having transferred to the School of Biology at the end of 1st year ag). After 2 years at Bairnsdale, we transferred to Ararat and spent 4 years there. However, we had both always wanted to have our own farm (and sheep) so in 1981 we left secure employment and began our adventure in real life agriculture. Land in Victoria was expensive so we moved to NSW where we bought 3200 acres of rough country near Gundagai for \$54/acre. This was very cheap even in those days. We were full of enthusiasm and youthful energy, and Dave enjoyed the hard work that it took to improve this property. We had 3 kids by then and so it was a pretty busy life. Wool prices were good at that time and rainfall fairly reliable so we were able to improve the property. But in 1990 came the collapse of the wool industry. Since our land was not suitable for cropping, we decided to sell and move somewhere we could diversify. So in 1994 we bought a place near West Wyalong that suited our sheep and could grow crops as well. This was a great area with productive soils and a wonderfully supportive community. But a series of very dry years during our time made it difficult and after 13 years we moved back east to where we are now near Boorowa.

We are still as keen as ever about our sheep and land. We enjoy improving the landscape and planting trees for shelter, erosion control and wildlife habitat.

Dave's passion for sheep breeding is as strong as ever, and with wool prices on the rise I don't see us retiring any time soon.

We enjoy our life with 'hands on' agriculture. There is always a new challenge and there is a special satisfaction working with nature and animals.



At Marg Riley's Swimming Pool (c.1969) with Dave Gillespie up high.
Others Left to Right: Ian Hamer, Lindsay Falvey, Steve Funston and John Whitford.⁶⁶

Ian Hamer

(1947–c.1990)



Ian had lived in college at Dookie as was required, but had moved back to his parents' spacious home and garden in Heathmont for his four years at La Trobe. He is remembered by his fellow students and the staff as a genial hard-working member of the cohort. Older than most of his student peers as a result of having completed the three-year Diploma course at Dookie, he was more mature – and less impecunious as a result of his salary from the State Government continuing while he studied at La Trobe. His was the newest car among those students who eventually bought old bangers of various sorts; Ian bought a brand new Hillman Hunter, similar to that in the image and cared for it in the attentive manner one did in those days. He and biological science student Marg joined social functions involving the small group of students, which ranged from activities with the handful of staff, 21st birthday celebrations, engagements and weddings. They in turn married and had two sons – and Ian died young. We wish we had been able to trace more about Ian – his time in Malaysia, with the Soil Conservation Authority and so much else.

Various partial memories floated to the surface during the preparation of this document; those about Ian included his rousing rendition with Dave Gillespie of the Dookie song – 'We are, We are, We are the Dookie Boys', which other non-Dookie students were good-heartedly dissuaded from joining, unless Ian permitted.

Ian's professional colleagues paid tribute to him in various ways, one of which is in a Landcare book where it is recorded, 'I recall from those years several Landcare field activities: a Lake Burrumbeet planting ... talks to Landcare groups and field days at Sunday Creek, Wooragee, Streatham ... Warrenbayne, Nagambie, Highlands and several visits to PFP. The LPS was promoting the catchment management philosophy, about which Ian Hamer was particularly passionate until his tragic and rapid death from cancer.'⁶⁷ His short career is well documented in his publications, one of which incidentally follows his career in library marks – his review of the 1982–83 drought published as a Technical Report of the Victorian

Department of Agriculture was lodged in the Dookie Agricultural College library – where Ian had excelled before entering the La Trobe course; the book was then stamped by the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture when it absorbed Dookie and other colleges, and thereafter stamped by the University of Melbourne when it assumed overall responsibility, and now the book resides in the Eastern Resource Centre of the Baillieu library where key parts of this FASI publication were assembled. Ian would have liked the symmetry. Some of Ian’s other publications include his 1982 Master of Environmental Science thesis from Monash University entitled ‘Soil Conservation Inputs to Land Evaluation in the Humid Tropics’,⁶⁸ his contribution to ‘Agricultural Development in Tambunan, Sabah, Malaysia’,⁶⁹ and his other works related to Victorian lands.



Left: Ian’s 1982–83 Drought Review.⁷⁰ **Right:** An approximation of Ian’s Beloved Hillman Hunter.

Roger Hooley



University life: It is said that if you remember the 60s, you weren't really there. It was the 60s when La Trobe's Ag School began, and I was there. So here are my unreliable memories of the early years of La Trobe Ag School and of some of the events that followed.

When I finished Year 12, I faced the dilemma of what to do next. What was fairly certain was that my brother would get the farm and I would get the education. This suited me as I wasn't keen on milking cows twice a day, every day, seven days a week, plus all that hard labour between milkings. The difficulty was deciding what to study. In the end, I opted for a general degree so that I could leave that decision for later. I chose agricultural science. Besides, I thought my farming background might be helpful. I figured that I could decide what area to follow after a year or two and in the meantime I could make the most of university life, especially the activities outside the lectures and practicals. I put 'LAG' as my first preference as I thought that La Trobe would be new, with lots of new facilities, enthusiastic staff and a modern curriculum. I was pretty well right, although in 1968 there were neither lots of facilities nor lots of staff. But the four or five (?) staff that were there were very enthusiastic and put a lot of effort into developing the course and educating us ignorant souls. University life was stimulating in other ways: it was the 1960s, a time of great social change, and La Trobe was one of the centres of the push for political and social action. There were many demos about the Vietnam War and conscription, although the most effective student revolt was over the food in the cafeteria. My four years at La Trobe transformed me from an insular country lad to a young man who thought he knew everything. (If only I knew as much today as I thought I knew when I was 20!)

I recall a case of student revolt in the Ag school when we persuaded Prof Reid to cancel our participation in quantum physics. I was not the only one struggling with the maths and with Schrödinger's cat and a group of us approached Prof Reid and suggested the cat wasn't hugely relevant to agriculture, especially when it was dead some of the time. The result was that the quantum mechanics lectures

ceased and, as I recall, were replaced by a very, very basic introduction to statistics for sociology students, with maths at about Year 8 level. As Charles Lamp would say, 'From the sublime to the cor blimey'.

Thinking of Charles Lamp reminds me of a friend of mine who was then a sociology student. He was a migrant and his parents had saved every penny to get him to Uni. One day he looked in great distress and said he had crashed into another car in the car park. It was an old Holden and he was worried that some poor student will have to cope with the repairs. He left a note on the windscreen with his parents' phone number (no mobiles then), apologising and offering to pay for the damage. He then went home to face the wrath of his parents. It turned out to be Charles Lamp's car. Apparently, he and Charles met, and Charles felt sorry for him and said not to worry, it's an old car anyway and a dent won't make any difference. He didn't tell him that the driver's door and handle was damaged and unlockable and would need rather expensive repairs.

I thought one of the best things about La Trobe's agricultural science course was the willingness of staff to be different and to break with tradition. In my final year, most of those dreaded all-or-nothing exams were replaced by essays on specific topics and a semester-long research project, although I have a vague memory of a six (?) hour exam. The essay approach suited me much better. For my research project, I (and Marg Bright, née Christie) spent the semester at the University of Melbourne's and the Department of Agriculture's Research Laboratories at Werribee, where I researched the effect of nutrition on sheep fertility. I really enjoyed my time in the research environment and it was then that I decided that research work would be my vocation.

Life since La Trobe: When I graduated, I was offered a research job at Werribee but it fell through at the last minute. So my first job was as a lecturer in environmental science at Geelong Teachers College, which was about to become part of Deakin University. After one year at Geelong, I was offered a technician's job at the Reproduction Research Section of Melbourne University's Physiology Department at Werribee. I immediately said 'Yes', and began studying ovarian cycles in sheep. Part of the project involved transplanting ovaries from the abdomen to the neck of sheep so that we could examine the direct effects of steroids on ovarian function. This resulted in a masters degree with the University of Melbourne. I then accepted a post-graduate scholarship from the Dairy Research Fund and worked under the expert guidance of Jock Findlay on a PhD project about the endocrine control of lactation. I studied the importance of prolactin and steroid hormones on lactation in the ewe. I also spent some time in western Queensland, near Julia Creek, at a research station called Toorak (referred by the locals as 'to rack and ruin') looking at the effect of heat stress on milk production. It turned out that poor quality feed, not excessive heat, was the main problem.

With my PhD under my belt and a wife on my arm, I moved to Weiherstephan, a Research Institute attached to the Technical University of Munich, where I carried out further lactation research as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow. The research centre had a farm (about 20 cows), a cheese factory and the world's oldest brewery and hop garden. It also had a pub, where I and many others researched which

beer to drink with which cheese. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is a tremendous program that offers post-doctoral fellowships for young research workers to come to Germany to carry out research. My wife and I were provided with a 2-month intensive language course in a quaint Bavarian village before starting work, a comfortable salary and a great workplace. I would recommend the program to anyone about to finish their PhD.

After two wonderful years in West Germany, we decided to return to Australia. However, finding secure work as a research scientist in Australia was difficult (and still is!) and so I took a career change and became an editor of the CSIRO journals *Australian Journal of Agricultural Science* and the *Australian Journal of Biological Sciences*. These journals have since lost their broad themes and have specialised into Crop and Pasture Science (AJAR) and Reproduction, Fertility and Development (AJBS). I later became Managing Editor of the *Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture* (now *Animal Production Science*).

After nine years of editing and with three children in tow, it was time for another change. The family left Melbourne's city life and moved to Tasmania, where I took on the role of Manager, Technical Services, for the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority (TDIA). This involved overseeing food safety and quality assurance of dairy products, managing a milk analysis laboratory and running a dairy herd improvement business. The job involved a lot of interaction with dairy manufacturers, dairy farmers, government and the local community. My dairyfarming background came in handy. Also, during that time I became a student again with the University of Tasmania and carried out some research on exporting cheese to Asia as part of an MBA. My job at the TDIA was diverse and rewarding, although the food safety component did have some anxious moments. However, my job with the TDIA came to an end with deregulation of the dairy industry in 2000, and in the wash-up, the herd improvement and milk laboratory sections were privatised and I became the CEO of a new herd improvement business, owned by dairy farmers, until my retirement from full-time work in 2006.

By that time, kids had left home and the dog was dead, and so Judy and I could start our new life. We spent a year exploring Europe and reconnecting with Judy's relatives in Austria, and have had the travel bug ever since. As well, I have worked part-time as a freelance science editor for OnLine English specialising in editing drafts of academic papers written by authors whose first language is not English. I find this job rewarding as nowadays English is *the* science language and it is important that the good research work carried out by non-English speakers gets the recognition that it deserves. It is hard enough to get a paper published when you do have English as your native language. I also find it stimulating to learn about new research directions and, besides, all that brain work might help postpone Alzheimer's.

Reflections on effects of my time at La Trobe: Little did I think in Year 12 that I would end up studying hormones in sheep, editing science journals and running a business, all in the field of agriculture. When I reflect on what led me down that path, one of the major influences would have to be La Trobe University's Agricultural Science course, which covered a variety of subject areas, and gave me a taste of research work.

When I asked Bob Reid about what should I do after I graduate, he said that it doesn't really matter. He said lots of students ask that question but 'it doesn't matter what they do, if they rub their nose in it long enough they'll get to like it'. In other words, with a general degree such as agriculture, there are many fields open to you. When opportunities arise and they suit, make the most of them.



Roger and Geoff Hubbard: collecting one of our 200 weeds and grasses. *'Somehow a sample of Cannabis sativa got into my collection (classified as "weed", of course) but when it was returned, part of the sample was missing along with a note pointing to the area where the leaf was not complete that stated "I smoked that bit".'*

Geoff Hubbard



Geoff is the sole FASI graduate that no one has been able to trace. The snippets that were uncovered are scant and include those presented below noting him as being a member of staff of Dookie Agricultural College for a few years in the 1970s and the author of a student report in *Agros71* about a AAAF conference. The history, 'Dookie College: The First 100 Years' contains the entry 'Hubbard, G.R. 1975-77'.⁷¹ The 1971 report of the AAAF (Australian Association of Agricultural Faculties) written in the student style of the times for *Agros 71*, the joint La Trobe and Melbourne university agricultural students magazine, is presented below

AAAF Report

Approximately in the vicinity of 30 Ags appeared from Victoria to Sydney to be in attendance for the 14th Annual A.A.A.F. conference. The theme of the conference was Agricultural Education and Pollution and several proverbial notables flashed their points of view (as they say in the classics). These notables were from all walks of life, University academics, a learned gentleman from the N.S.W. Ag. Department, the odd farmer plus the odd nature lover. The points exposed by them made us wonder what the future has in store. As the conference went on it became obvious that Agricultural education has a role to play in maintaining the environment.

Other features at the conference were the bulk turns at which copious amounts of the amber fluid were demolished. Bulk Ned Kellies had skinfats and Fricas were working overtime.

The Sydney Cup was matched by New England whose team of eight rowers were very efficient - particularly with their home-brew advantage. The Victorians narrowly defeated the West Aussies at football. The New South Wales rugby players' hair stood on end as they watched as score the odd man-of-iron from the seemingly impossible position.

The Embassy cup was won by Sydney and since we Vics were not rugby players they enjoyed imperfect competition.

Other highlights of this well oiled conference were visits to the leagues clubs where many pokers were pulled. The Cross also featured prominently but it was reported (Anon: 1971) that no student discounts were offered.

Credit must go to the organisers for arranging such an interesting week. I'm sure a splendid time was experienced by all.

In other words a bloody good turn - as they say in the classics.

Geoff Hubbard, Final Year Agriculture, La Trobe University.

Rob Irwin

FASI – La Trobe University



OMG. This is a chore, dragging up memories from 50 years ago. Being almost 70 years old now I have difficulty remembering my own name some days. I shall start off by saying that being forced to reflect on my activities from the distant past has opened up an opportunity. I now have the chance to apologize to all, for my insensitivity, immaturity and crassness during my University days and if I hurt anyone I beg forgiveness. I also have to give a monumental 'thank you' to the staff and my peers who helped me eventually get the 'piece of paper' – it was a struggle!

Why did I choose Ag Science? As a kid I had enjoyed many holidays on farms with all the outdoor activities and the interaction with nature. Also I thought there would always be a demand for people involved in food production, and that it was a worthwhile motive to pursue Agricultural Science. Over the years this morphed into interests in environmental issues and education, both of which I am still engaged in.

University Days: I realized some years later that I was no academic and passing exams was not part of my repertoire. I shall be eternally grateful to Prof Reid and anyone else who allowed me to repeat second year after a total bomb out on the exams. (I was with Lindsay F. in Darwin when notified.) Repeating the year delayed my graduation for 12 months and that was the year Gough Whitlam was elected and said no more conscription. Otherwise I would have been in the army and maybe Vietnam. I would have been a totally different person.

Being the only practical course on the University caused interesting interactions with other students. We usually had three hours of lectures in the morning and 3 hours of pracs in the afternoon. We felt superior and jealous of those who may have had 10 contact hours in the week. This created stronger bonds within the Ag Sci student community.

There were many a laugh from the reaction of other more refined students when describing internal extraction of faecal samples for worm counts.

Was it someone in this year who used a sheep intestine as a hose from the 4th floor of the Thomas Cherry Building?

Work Experiences: After graduating I worked for five years in Bendigo as a Govt. Soil Conservation Research Officer. Three of us were involved in a preliminary study of Dryland Salinity in northern Victoria. When I visited Bendigo recently there was a dedicated building and 20 plus staff working on mitigating the effects of salt on the landscape.

In 1978–79 my wife and I did two years volunteering in India. Pam worked in the medical field and I looked after Australian dairy cows that had been flown in to provide a gene pool to try to increase milk production in local cows. (Goats would have been a better investment – Australian cows don't do all that well on paddy straw.) As most volunteers will attest, living and working as a local is a life changer. Material trappings aren't necessary for a fulfilling life.

Pam always wanted to live in Canada, so in 1980 we headed for British Columbia and eventually Vancouver Island where we spent the next 17 years and raised two boys. Agricultural Scientists are very common in Canada so I occupied myself in pruning/grafting nursery plants, working on dairy farms, making cheese, consulting, selling dairy computers and then as a house spouse with the 2 kids.

Being involved with kids made me decide to take a postgrad DipEd at Monash for a year. Then back to Canada for a few years and then on to far northern New York State but teaching in Canada – the Yanks would not give me a work permit but wanted Pam as a Physio lecturer and Program Planner.

In 2002 we came back to Oz for our younger son to attend Woodleigh College in Frankston while our older son stayed in US studying at Brown Uni. I was teaching High School Science, Maths, and whatever else needed covering. Our 26 year marriage fell apart in 2003.

In 2005 I started teaching Primary English!!!! in Hong Kong and have lived there since then. Retiring age for Hong Kong Government employees is 60 so I have been doing relief teaching at two private International Schools that offer the International Baccalaureate. I keep stimulated working in these highly progressive schools where technology and educational philosophies keep changing.

Living in a 40 sq m flat in Hong Kong (50th floor in one flat) has shown me how large homes are totally unnecessary. My Indonesian wife and I spend our spare time out in the Country Parks and on the beaches. We live on a small island with no cars but only 25 minute ferry ride to Central. At the end of this year we will move to Penang where costs are about 1/6th that of Australia or Hong Kong.

Every time I visit Oz I weep at the urban sprawl and waste of good agricultural land disappearing under Monster houses. A huge paradigm change is needed re land use and materialism.

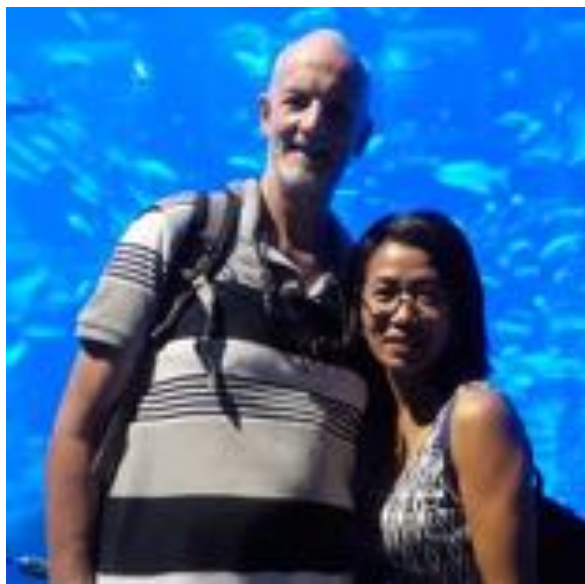
Random thoughts and Quotes (tongue in cheek):

- Those that can 'do', those that can't 'teach'.
- If you haven't grown up by 60 don't bother.
- Visual Learning example – 'Conception is where sperm have fun surfing on the waves of cilia lining the fallopian tubes'. (Would Dave Leaver like to be remembered for this??)
- 'The sign of manhood is predicated on how many beach bags of wet sand can hang off ** ***** *****.' (I had not realised Economists could think this way).
- Eek! I just thought of that bloody punch card computer. Did it have 64K memory? Every hole had to be exact, not a comma out of place. Not my style. *[In 1970, the computer had 8K of memory,⁷² Ed.]*
- I tried, with no success to find the words to 'Prize winning Hereford bull' that Graham McGregor sang. Was that an original? Something about 'two horns at the front and a goodun behind'

Overall: La Trobe taught me an appreciation of the environment and how to view things holistically. It was a catalyst to developing an inquiring mind. Many thanks and much appreciated.



Frankston 2016



Aliyah & me, Singapore, 2018

Graeme McGregor

(1948–2005)



Graeme came to join the FASI in second year, as did Philip Noakes, and both were immediately part of the group. Transferring from the University of Reading, Graeme was full of life, he sang, recited, joked and smoked a pipe – if anyone of the FASIs was thought to be sophisticated, Graeme was the one. His guitar and ballads engaged everyone – who doesn't recall listening or singing along with him as his mild Scots accent lent authority to 'and the hair that hung over her shoulder – tied up with a black velvet band'? Serious about agricultural science, he was also serious about living, which may be why in the student agricultural magazine he chose to contribute his article on the subject of Home Brewing to *Agros* 71.⁷³

A gentle yet not retiring soul, Graeme was a binding force within the group, inspiring others into the harmless mischief that we enjoyed; one example was his instigation of the note on the office door of a certain lecturer who was habitually late – headed by the phrase 'the following people called to see you', the note opened in Graeme's attractive script to which others added their own, and fictitious, names; it is represented below. When he brought Angela to the social gatherings, we were further impressed – not only was she was studying at a higher level but she was quietly one of us from the outset, as were others' girl and boy friends, many of whom were studying at La Trobe. When Graeme and Angela married, Roger Hooley was their best man.

After graduation Graeme worked in horticultural research with the Victorian Department of Agriculture, based at least part of the time at the Knoxfield research facility. At one stage, he worked in the Future Farming Systems Research Division of the Victorian Department of Agriculture. Part of his work was in berry fruits and Graeme developed a thornless cultivated blackberry (variety, 'Murrindindi'). In the absence of more information, the range of his publications provide a glimpse of his agricultural interests. His publications included:

- 'Cultivated blackberries: Varieties'
- 'Raspberries and cultivated blackberries: Pests and diseases'

The following people called to see you:

Name	Time	Topic
1. Graeme and Roger	7:30 am	opponent theory of Social Structure post - illegal.
2. Alan McDonald	7:31 am	Hungary - Cures
3. Rob. Lunn	7:32 am	The end of shelling shells.
4. C. J. Rogers again	9:30 am	Pareto Optimum Decision and time of arrival.
5. Roger Howard	9:15 am	The possibility of a negotiated quota scheme (negotiable) for the South American dairy industry.
6. Henry Bolte	10 a.m.	I want you to lower the entry requirements of this place so I can come here. (P.S. I failed the entrance exam to Mont Park).
7. W. H. Giffen	11 a.m.	With reference to certain situations otherwise considered unlikely by within sectors of the community, I wish to discuss with you the tentative proposal that such considerations be subjected to considerable scrutiny by officers of my department with a view to In any case forgive me what I have for would you repeat the question please?
8. Henry Bolte	12	I want you to put the cuts on the list of free medical goods then we'll get rid of these long haired rats here + also when did you first hide your head out?
9. ^{AGRIKATE} D's grand mother of mine	12:10	What are you on strike for? "Where?" - can I see you Friday? (LIVE LAST TIME!)

Graeme's note attached to a Tardy Lecturer's Office Door⁷⁴

- 'Raspberries: Cane management of main crop cultivars'
- 'European gooseberries'
- 'Red Bayberry - a New and Exciting Crop for Australia?';
- 'An Effective Selection Strategy for Breeding Premium Quality Pears';

- 'Resistance to Pear Scab in European and Asian Pear Cultivars in Australia';
- 'Combining Ability of Fruit Appearance and Eating Quality in Pears'; 'Breeding Pears Combining Pear Scab Resistance with Good Appearance and Eating Qualities';
- 'National Pear Breeding Project';
- 'Export of Victorian Strawberries to Hong Kong and Singapore: Report on Overseas Study Tour, November 1986';
- 'Export of Victorian Strawberries, Blueberries and Stone Fruit to Europe: Joint Report on Overseas Study Tours';
- 'Chestnut Varietal Evaluation';
- 'Chestnut Varietal Development: Optimisation of Chestnut Pollination and Development of New Selections: Final Report';
- 'National Raspberry Breeding Program and Field Management of Phytophthora';
- 'Breeding and Evaluation of New Raspberry Selections for the Australian Rubus Industry';
- 'Chestnut Varietal Development: Optimisation of Chestnut Pollination and Development of New Selections'.⁷⁵

Graeme passed away in 2005 as the following obituary details.⁷⁶

MCGREGOR, Graeme Robert

McGREGOR. - Graeme Robert. June 28, 1948 - Dec. 5, 2005 You saw "a world in a grain of sand And a Heaven in a wild flower" And you shared it with us all. Your research, your music, photography, cooking, your garden and great love of life and of your precious Angela and exceptional boys, will endure. You lived completely and died bravely, too soon. Treasured son of Margaret and Arch (dec.), adored father of Lachlan and Kieren. Much loved brother of Jenny, John and Andrew, brother-in-law of Peter, Jean and Annie, uncle of Warwick and Karen, Gordon (dec.), Lucienne and Odette, Matt, Stef, Jeff and Sam, great uncle of Thomas.

Obituaries
Published in [Herald Sun](#) on 06/12/2005



Peter Morgan



Peter disappeared from the FASI after second year, and has not been heard of, by the group, since.

Philip Noakes

Late Comer



Agricultural Science – an unexpected career choice

Those of you who remember will know I emigrated, aged 17, with my parents to Hobart; that was in late 1965 and I needed to complete matriculation to go to higher education, though I had little encouragement to do so in the UK. At an interview following a Tasmanian Schools I.Q. test I was advised I should be thinking of a university course – something I had no expectations of in England. That was when I discovered Agricultural Science was a big topic in Australia because of the value of farm produce to the nation. What a motivator this was! I had topped the whole school in UK at the end of second year in Biology in spite of 30 boys in a class above. I had found my dream option of applied biological sciences in this course and at once realised that it included a wider range of career options than I could have imagined. This information really switched me on to get the best grades to get into the course and I started my first year (1968) in Hobart – not La Trobe.

I also had to get motivated to find funding as my parents could not afford the course fees. After some searching around I found a source that did not involve being bonded to a Government Department – I wanted employment in a commercial environment. I applied for and after an interview was granted a Commonwealth Scholarship – I think I was quite proud of the potential freedom it gave me to pursue many options once I had the degree, especially when a living away from home allowance was fortuitously included.

The Hobart intake was about 25 students and it proved to be a lively group, but as my parents had moved to Melbourne in the January of the year I started, I applied initially to Melbourne Agricultural Science School to join their second year, but was refused on the grounds that there was no spare capacity to accommodate students

from other states at the Werribee [*Mt Derrimut, Ed*] campus. How disappointing, till I heard about Bob Reid's new course at La Trobe. I made contact, submitted my year one results, and was IN! Graeme McGregor joined at the same time transferring from Reading, UK.

Descriptions of the course intent that I liked – S M Wadham and R L Reid

What I saw in the course curriculum was a wide science base at Hobart – it included the basic sciences; chemistry, physics, zoology and botany and also geology, and whether the aim of the curriculum at Hobart was influenced by Wadham's vision or not it appealed to me; 'Wadham saw clearly what others sometimes forgot, that agricultural science is by nature an intensive course that relies on a strong science foundation informed by methods of agriculture within an economic and social context. He saw the agricultural science student as learning more than a science student, and being "able to think of every fresh item of knowledge from a commercial viewpoint"⁷⁷ Bob Reid's inaugural address was along the same lines; '...he also established standards in learning, and critical thinking. "Disregarding the thrust of the advertisement for the La Trobe post which anticipated the need for future specialist graduates, [Reid] based his application in terms of a strong commitment to a broad, integrated course in which the interrelationships between climate, soils, plants, animals and economics and their dependence on a sound basis of primary sciences - chemistry, physics and mathematics - was stressed"⁷⁸ I have only become aware of these foundation statements on receipt of Lindsay Falvey's book and find it a fascinatingly accurate description of what I wanted out of my tertiary education!

Annual Registration – I never did register - every registration date I was interstate (working/exploring the Australia) so my father willingly did it on my behalf – some of you may remember him. During the holidays in 1969, I worked in the Tasmanian Agricultural Dept, Launceston, cereal trials harvesting; in 1970, it was the wheat harvest and shearing on a relative's farm in Bencubbin, WA; and in 1971, I was picking apples at Stanhope, Queensland. But whilst in Queensland I did gather a fascinating collection of grasses for my course work.

I am not enough of an educationalist to make comparative comments on the two courses – Hobart and La Trobe. The Hobart year group was a very lively group that gained a reputation for goading students of other courses and some lecturers, but I had no sense of belonging to a Department – at La Trobe I discovered the FASI students were the department! Well almost – my impression was that Prof Reid and Helen van Reit were the only staff who had been on site ahead of the student intake and David Leaver, Charles Lamp were on equal terms to the year group – all others were newbies. I don't recollect when Nick Uren started, but Rob Dumsday was definitely viewed as a junior. There was a buzz of privilege in this 1st year group.

Career Experience

I must have absorbed the concept of 'a readiness to think back to basic principles when confronted with a new problem' without knowing it as I found myself aware of doing exactly that on plenty of occasions later, something that arose frequently with commercial advisory roles in animal feed and human food ingredients.

Did I have a varied career path? Most definitely

Microbiology proved to be a connecting thread throughout from my final year project, a year at Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (1973), a short spell with a hospital research doctor looking at the source of anti-microbial components in mothers' milk (Northwick Park Hospital, London 1975) and finally with the human food ingredients business (Perfecta 1988–2006) where we ran a small accredited laboratory.

Career history. I struggled to get work after graduation (economic downturn and the Whitlam government apparently) but eventually did; one year at Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. Before leaving for the UK, I was a Chemist at DHA Rural Pty, a Melbourne company in administrative receivership. I decided to try my luck back in UK for a couple of years and I'm still here. Again, I had difficulty getting into UK agriculture, firstly working for a short while in a hospital research team, but I finally got a job with a cooperative (ACT 1975–79) in its Animal Health and Feed department. My boss had a nervous breakdown and I was made redundant, but I jumped into a real feed business (Vitamealo 1979–1988) with a first-class technical team to work with. We were early adopters of least-cost food formulation on portable PCs as an extension of the office based software tools. That brought me to live in Bath, the tourist hub of the South West! Roman baths build around natural hot springs if you didn't know. My career highlight was becoming Dog Nutritionist!

This feed business eventually sold to Dalgety UK and I could see I didn't fit, so found a small family business (Perfecta Ltd 1989–2007) that traded and blended food ingredients, I was there for 18 years and was eventually appointed Technical Director as part of the family succession plan. That fell through four years later and I finished working through to retirement as a Food Technical and IT Manager for Pieminister, which made gourmet savoury pies; the tasting role was important! I also slipped in a few months' of casual door-to-door selling of lawn treatment plans (Green Thumb), perhaps there was a bit of agronomist in me after all!

Memories of La Trobe:

- Watching the Moon Landing live on Wilma's parent's television, 20 July, 1969
- Highest rat mortality rate under anaesthetic. Did three of mine really die or was someone swapping their dead ones for mine?
- Wilma's squealing guinea pigs
- David Leaver's 'magical' knot tying after stitching up
- Terrifying Neville, my chemistry practical partner, by having my twin stand next to him while I spoke to him from the opposite side of the bench
- Trying to flush water through our sheep's small intestine with Steve seeing if it would stretch out of the window, along the balcony to shower passers by three floors down



- *Feezus ruminarus* – see picture
- Sheep's heads taken to learn thermodynamics

Family history

I married Ruth in Worthing UK, aged 32, and we subsequently had a daughter, Katherine eight years later. She is now married and we have a granddaughter of 18 months (October 2018). We are in process of moving house to live near them just outside Oxford.

My twin brother remains in Melbourne and is a retired teacher.

My younger sister lives in Beechworth in an idyllic spot in the midst of 120 acres (48.6 hectares).

Conclusion

Emigrating to Australia was the greatest adventure capped by finding that I could not only get into a university, but find my life's career interest fully satisfied. I enjoyed the four years immensely and do not regret the choice I made nor the incidental switch to the exciting La Trobe school and campus. The broad science basis made the transition from animal feed to human food seasonings and ingredients quite natural and the ability to fulfil a range of associated tasks within small to medium sized business a great advantage.



Neville Oddie

A Shepherd's Life

(with apologies to James Rebanks)



I think I started life crutching sheep and I am still crutching sheep now at the age of 70. Nothing seems to have changed! I come from a long line of sheep herders – it's sort of in the blood! What on earth could life at a brand new university in Melbourne add to that? A lot, as it turned out.

Memories of my childhood and youth included farm work (lots of it); the endless cycle of seasons; a range of earthly and animal aromas (some unpleasant but at least familiar); battles with siblings; a forgetful passage through boarding school and arrival on the doorsteps of La Trobe University in 1968. This place was very raw, very young and full of the excitement of the unknown. My purpose was to complete my life's education in the 'real' world.

Why Agricultural Science? Well for a naive farmer's son, what else could I even contemplate? (I am not saying my father was naive, but he may have been). I entered this new life wide-eyed, unsure and not a little nervous. Suddenly I was on my own and totally accountable for my own actions. I had managed to receive a Department of Agriculture cadetship to help me pay my way, and they had huge expectations of my efforts!

I threw myself into this new world of academia with no shortage of hesitation, and embraced Physics, Chemistry and Biology. I still have nightmares of a first-year physics exam where the pass mark had to be adjusted for the Agriculture students so that more than a couple of us could pass! I wondered what on earth I was doing there. Then, after a while Professor Bob Reid became a larger part of our lives in his position of Dean. At last there appeared a rudder for what seemed a very shaky ship. Immediately we had leadership, relevance, motivation, inspiration and a very approachable mentor. Others followed to join his team and we all felt a sense of being nurtured.

Mind you, there were only around twenty who embarked on this journey together as the 'first intake', coming from a variety of backgrounds and motivations. We shared many experiences ranging from the social to the dangerous (try chemical laboratories for the inept), to the travails of the ever present exams in which we were fundamentally, finally, and sometimes agonisingly held to account.

Through all this, friendships were forged, causes embraced (especially around Vietnam and other social issues), ideas explored, alcohol consumed and wonderful times shared. We learnt about life, values and the importance of loyalty. I learnt first-hand of the notion of caring support when Bob Reid came to my rescue in first year. The Chemistry Department had reflected on my poor exam result and told Bob that they never wanted me to darken the doorway of the Chemistry Department ever again. He argued that I must have just had a bad day and to give me a second chance. They reluctantly relented and I subsequently sat and passed a special exam at the end of an excruciating summer holiday period, and was allowed to continue. And so my journey at La Trobe continued in fits and starts until fourth year when I somehow finished with the sort of flourish that surprised everyone including myself.

I had become a little older and a little wiser, but not yet ready to return to crutching sheep. The Department of Agriculture still had its pound of flesh to extract in exchange for my many failings. I was packed off in 1973 to the State Research Farm at Werribee to learn about research firsthand with the focus on sheep-meat production and quality. This took me into the bowels of the Brooklyn abattoirs in pursuit of enlightenment and truth, and to bump directly into the vagaries of Melbourne's industrial unions. Navigating pathways through hordes of meatworkers wielding sharp knives required some dexterity of body and spirit. I also remember, with some concern, giving a talk later to staff and students at La Trobe University Agriculture about a meat industry enquiry that had been carried out, only to find the author of the enquiry's report was in the front row of the audience! The gods had conspired against me again!

In 1975 I headed for Benalla to learn about extension in farming communities. I learnt most of all how to listen patiently and to give advice that might be vaguely useful. If you did not know, you either pretended to know (dangerous); deferred to someone who did know or promised to find out. If you pretended to know, you were bound to be caught out! I learnt that the two most important virtues were to remember names, and to keep anything you were told to yourself. Confidentiality became close to godliness.

As a fully fledged Sheep Industry Extension Officer I was consigned to Warrnambool in 1977 as the 'Sheep Industry Specialist'. I had still not returned to crutching sheep but you can see where this is headed! I was part of a team of 'Specialists' working together to help the farmers escape from one crisis and into the next. This was familiar territory because I came from a long line of sheep herders ... Right?

What I learned most about this game was about making authentic personal connections and to be able to pass on a little relevant information as required to make a difference. Sometimes survival for some was only one bad decision away,

and it usually showed. Trust, compassion and authenticity were the most valued currency. You were as good as your word. You followed up. You took the time to connect.

I was married with two young children and my own family crisis arose – my father needed help on our family farm. I did not hesitate and we packed up from Warrnambool and headed home – and fell headlong into the 1982 drought. I learnt then about despair and financial hardship for myself. I learnt how, despite your own training and efforts, nothing prepares you for staring at tragedy and that you come to question your own judgement in all things. There were many personal challenges at this time and, somehow, I muddled through as we all must. Droughts, floods, fire, terrible prices, family issues – we were being tested to the core at every turn. For me, the survival of our family farm dating back to the 1850s had become fundamentally important. Somehow, I have learnt a lot more about courage and resilience now from the tough experiences I have had and others around me have had.

I embraced many environmental causes over the years, including periods working professionally as a contractor for Southern Rural Water and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority. I have walked many waterways and traversed many landscapes and have never failed to be inspired by those who live and work there. I have tried to remain grounded, connected to country and people and to never forget my roots. Through collaborative research and on-ground action we have hoped to improve a range of environmental outcomes.

My family is strongly involved with many social causes, and we do what we can to make a difference. For me, social inclusion and the experience of our First Nations' Peoples is a particular concern and, as in agricultural extension, true reconciliation starts with a preparedness to actively listen and to make an authentic personal connection.

For the sake of the record, I was fortunate in 2017 to be awarded an OAM 'for services to conservation and to reconciliation'. This was a truly unexpected and humbling experience, and I acknowledge that it was the direct result of cohorts of people working together on important and relevant projects. [see links^{79,80}]

Looking back, there is cause to reflect that all journeys begin with the first step and one of my first, tentative, steps began at Latrobe University in 1968.

And now, many years later, after a life engaging with a range of social and environmental causes, the irony is that I find myself still crutching sheep – and loving it!

Wilma Andrews (née Ord)

Memories and Reflections of the Ag Sci Course



It was a blokey experience, and I immersed myself in course content, but I didn't have any epiphany moments of 'wow, this is where I'm supposed to be now'. The university was barely out of nappies, the campus was still being developed and there was plenty of mud, muck and slush. The academic year is short, so there seemed to be a lot of winter. I remember seeing snow falling during a first year Chem prac in September. Landscaping came a long time later; we were all gone by then. How we used to be jealous of the arts students who seemed to have all the time in the world to indulge themselves and have a jolly good time. University should be a mind-opening experience but I was stuck in the high school model of diligently doing the course and not participating in other campus activities. For heaven's sake, this was a period of turmoil in Oz (and of course in the USA), with protests against the Vietnam War and the concomitant social upheaval against the repressive order of the day and I was not adding my voice to protest the political nonsense. I concentrated on getting through the course in minimum time, and then I could start to explore the real world. For me, it was all about getting to the end line and not about the journey. Reminds me of Casey Chambers' lyrics, '*When I grow up I want a pony*'. I had a lot of growing up to do. With a BAgSc (Hons) degree, I went to work in Canberra with the Dept. of Primary Industries (as it was then called) but realised very quickly that I was not public service material. Too much of being back in school, and I resigned four months later!

What I needed was to get the hell out of Oz and be my own person. I was 22, had lived a very sheltered life with very staunch, Liberal-voting parents and had reached the point of wanting out. So off I went on a Lufthansa jet, January 1973, headed for Paris on a one-way ticket. I ended up staying in France six years. My final-year thesis for the Bachelor of Ag Science course was working with sheep, and determining if immunity could be bestowed by inoculating first with an allied, less invasive form of the virus. So after arriving in France I followed up my interest in virology and worked in a Fish Research Lab in an outer suburb of Paris where I published two papers:

- Ord, W. 1975. Resistance of chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) fingerlings experimentally infected with viral hemorrhagic septicaemia virus. Bull. Fr. Piscic. 257: 149–152.
- Wilma M Ord, Monique Le Berre, and Pierre de Kinkelin. Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia: Comparative susceptibility of rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*) and hybrids (*S. gairdneri* x *Oncorhynchus kisutch*) to experimental infection. Journal of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada. 1976 Vol 33 Number 6 p 1205–1208.

With the birth of my daughter in 1977, I said goodbye to a career and became a full-time mum. Living in a foreign country, without family or close friends around, was character building, as well as an excellent teacher of resilience and self-reliance.

Shortly afterwards a new job prompted a move to Bayreuth, Germany, where we rented the upstairs floor of a farmhouse. Our landlord was exceptionally kind—an older man who delighted in having young people sharing his house. He spoke no English, but we got on like best friends through my limited German and a lot of hand-waving/charades. He conveyed the real horrors of the war and the march towards St Petersburg, burning and killing. His nightmares bore testimony to his personal involvement in the atrocities.

Two years later, an offer of a position in the south of France at the Nuclear Facility of Cadarache was too good to pass over, so we headed back across the border. It was an easier life. My daughter went to the Ecole Maternelle, where children start school at two. I bought a moped and worked in the vineyards.

France, Germany, Saharan Algeria and the USA were all home to me for various lengths of time. Algeria has imbedded itself into my fond memories. It was a hard life because of limited facilities and scarcity of food, but I found living in a Muslim country a wonderful experience—so many beautiful memories, especially of the nomads with their transhumance lifestyle, goat herds, camel trains and many compassionate people. News of fresh milk or eggs being available in the Souk spread very quickly, it was a rare occurrence and it broke the monotony of a diet of mostly lentils, rice, tomatoes, onions and occasionally, mutton. We all lost weight and my baby boy survived only because I was able to breast feed.

Twelve years living in the USA changed me in a way nothing else has. I fell in love with their culture, their courtesy, the geography, their patience and their can-do accommodating attitude. They are a people of faith, strong national pride and so welcoming. Fortunately, I lived there long enough for these traits to rub off on me. (Was that due to age or just being surrounded by kind people?) No amount of education can teach kindness or patience. It comes only from being immersed in the wash of caring folk. I'd found my niche at last, working jobs where excellence in customer service was the key requirement.

Now, back in Australia and with too much energy to retire, I'm working in aged care (qualified Cert 111) at a local nursing home. It's given me insight into how it all

pans out when the body deteriorates, illness takes over and the not-so-pretty end-of-life stage most of us will face.

The experience of completing the BAgSc course at La Trobe University didn't lead me upwards on a career path. What I did get out of it was the satisfaction of completing a tertiary degree, an introduction to subjects which I wouldn't otherwise have been exposed to, and meeting a couple of forever friends. With or without a degree, the greatest teacher for me was living life itself, being immersed in various cultures, remaining curious and having two of the most extraordinary kids anyone could ever have.

Jim Shovelton



I had my shackles and blindfold removed when I arrived at La Trobe. I came from a conservative farming family near Euroa and had spent the previous four years at a boarding school in Melbourne. The freedom afforded by the new environment was exhilarating and challenging.

I did the standard mix of subjects in matric – maths x 2, physics, chemistry and English, to ‘keep my options open’. To say that my marks were anything but average would be exaggerating. I was accepted into La Trobe and subsequently was offered a place at Melbourne. A family friend who was a headmaster at one of the public schools strongly advised that the better choice was the new university. Consequently, I ended up at La Trobe.

I was a resident at Menzies College, which was being constructed in the second year of the University and in 1968 consisted only of the western wing. As part of a social experiment (I am not sure of the selection criteria or the results) a number of us were selected to be on a mixed floor – which was radical at the time. The bottom floor was one third male and two thirds female, the next floor was all women and the top floor was all men.

I met Ann (McCormack) in the first week and although we came from the same town we had not met until that time, as a result of different educational paths.

The University at that time was a vibrant place. 1968 was the height of the Vietnam War when numerous lunchtime meetings were convened by the Labor Club, Students for a Democratic Society and other groups to debate and condemn the government, companies associated with the war and the war itself. Votes at these meetings always seem to be delayed until after 1 o'clock when the generally conservative science students had to decamp to attend lectures or pracs, thus ensuring the unanimous passing of whatever motion was put.

There are a number of vignettes I recall from the course:

1. The response of 'ob da silbery moon' from the lecture room whenever Nick Uren mentioned the clay mineral, beidellite.
2. Being terrorised by Nick (again) when he chastised me for having a split infinitive in a paper I had submitted, and quoted from some grammar text that seemed to indicate that I had no idea what I had written about (or that's how I took it).
3. Being visited by Bob Reid at my room in Menzies, where I was recovering from pneumonia in my second year, leading up to exams, concerned about my wellbeing and what impact it might have on my exam performance. I would be surprised to learn of other Deans who had done a similar thing with sick students in their faculty.
4. Bob Reid had all the first-year students to his house in either the first or second year of the course. The next year he invited all those ag students who were living in college to his home. The advice of the family friend to go to La Trobe was certainly the right decision. How fortunate were we to have the opportunity to meet on a very individual level with the Dean and other members of staff in a small faculty.
5. Being prepped by Charles Lamp about the types of questions to expect in the Agricultural Botany exam in third year. The questions he went through were the ones on the exam, but because nobody thought he would be so stupid to tell us the questions, nobody (at least me) bothered to study those questions. As a result, I have never forgotten that sedges have triangular stems.

I was heavily involved in the Hockey Club, along with Nev Oddie and have retained many friendships from that source.

I applied for and was awarded a cadetship with the Victorian Department of Ag for my last two years. During my third year, I was requested to participate in the Australian Army. The Government graciously allowed me to complete the course, after which I spent 8 weeks at Puckapunyal followed by two weeks at Healesville. From there I was sent to Yeerongpilly in Queensland to train as a pathology technician before being transferred to Kapooka (near Wagga) where my major activity was taking blood from new recruits. I was finally liberated by Gough Whitlam when he won the 1972 election and was out within 10 days.

As I had a cadetship with the Department of Ag they were obliged to employ me, but hadn't planned on my arrival seven months ahead of schedule.

I was attached to the Pasture Branch and put into a holding pattern at Benalla for 6 weeks until they found a trainee position for me at Bendigo. After two years at Bendigo, I transferred to Wodonga and worked with Alex McDonald who had been appointed there as a beef officer. Our patch was that area between the Ovens and Murray Rivers. Fantastic area to work in, with amazing scenery.

After ten years at Wodonga, Ann and I moved back to Euroa in 1984 for family reasons and I took up the District Pasture Agronomy position at the Seymour office. Around this time the Labor Government began commercialising some of its services, one of which was analytical services. The commercial arm of the Department formed a joint venture company (Richland Laboratories) with an Irish company to utilise spare soil and plant analysis capacity at the Tatura Research Station. I was seconded to the business in 1985 to provide technical input and develop the interpretative standards.

Around this time Ann and I purchased a 7 day a week, home-style take away restaurant in Euroa on the Hume Highway, which we ran for 10 years.

When Joan Kirner was premier, there were a number of financial scandals associated with joint ventures and there was a quick decision to divest all of these joint ventures. Richland was no exception and it was bought by Coffey MPW of which Lindsay Falvey was a director.

I left Richland in 1994 and set out as a private consultant. In 1996, I joined Mike Stephens and Associates, a consulting company based near Ballarat. The company changed its name to Meridian Agriculture a couple of years ago and I am currently the Managing Director. We operate out of five locations in Victoria providing services primarily to the grazing industries.

My work has been varied, ranging from one-on-one clients, to project management, farmer group work, agricultural advice on infrastructure projects, input into technical reviews and project development.

I am currently on the Course Advisory Committee for the La Trobe Ag Faculty.

Ann and I are farming at Euroa on 300 ha where we run a merino flock joined to terminal sires. My major extracurricular activity for the last 8 years has been as a Board Member and Chair of Euroa Health, a community owned not-for-profit aged care and subacute hospital facility.

We have two sons (one in education and the other in banking) and three granddaughters.

My time at La Trobe was a fantastic period in my life. Many lasting friendships were formed in those years. The course and the University environment taught me to critically examine issues and to articulate and justify my position, which has left a lasting impact on me. As a mentor at Menzies College told me 'Universities should be about education, not learning'. I suspect this aspect, unfortunately, has been diminished markedly in the current funding environment.

Ian Taylor



Home on the farm. In 1973, the family farms were distributed to family members. I ended up with 700 acres. In 1979, this was expanded to 1100 acres. Capital ran out in 1998 and so the property was sold up.

1974–75 Returned to La Trobe to undertake a MAgSc

1976–77 Tutor in Agricultural Economics School of Agriculture, La Trobe

1978–87 Agricultural Consultant with McGowan & Associates, Albury, NSW.

Areas of interest:

- Flood studies and the effect and the results from the mitigation of flood on the inland and coastal rivers of NSW.
- The effect of soil salinity in the Murrumbidgee and Murray Valleys.

1983 Agricultural consultant as part of a team in the NSW Water Resources Commission; local work for the Australian Wool Commission and local work for Australian aid projects that McGowan & Associates ran.

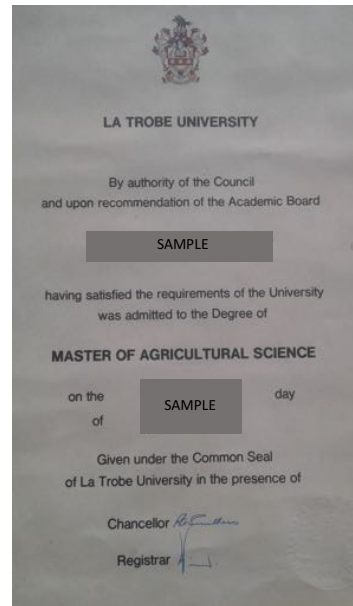
1984 Started a native plant nursery to supplement farm income. The aim was to sell plants to local farmers and, residents of Wagga. This was successful until the recession and drought of the early 1990s and the introduction of Landcare. Landcare saw the government give many thousands of dollars to any community organisation to establish plant nurseries. The result was an oversupply of 'free' plants.

1985 Member of a group of farmers that set up a self-help group in the Wagga Wagga region to increase our profitability by sharing information and ideas. I was included for my analytical skills, learnt at La Trobe University, rather than for my farming skills.

The group was successful as crop yields improved and the sheep enterprises were refined. The group refined and implemented the practical aspects of the research relating to cropping and sheep husbandry developed during the 1960s and 1970s. The issues relating to cropping included disease management (takeall), nitrogen application and minimum cultivation.

1995 The nursery was rebuilt based on plants being wholesaled on to consumers in Melbourne. The current site was established in 2005 and now there are 4 Ha in production producing grasses in cell trays and 14cm pots and native trees in 15L, 30L and 100L containers.

The GFC aftermath forced a complete change in production emphasis away from trees in 14cm and 20cm pots to the semi and advanced trees.



The plant market is in constant flux and survival requires an awareness and capacity to change to meet these changes.

1988–2014 Contract tree planting for farmers and Boral quarries (in and around Melbourne); management and rehabilitation of an EPBC listed grassland and general rehabilitation work on behalf of Boral quarries.

My choice of work has been determined by my desire to be self-employed and to live in the country (in hindsight I would advise against these choices) and having a congenital muscle disorder that has impacted on my health and capacity to work. After 38 years of searching, in 1998 I was diagnosed with an unnamed ion transport (probably), non-degenerative muscle disorder for which no remedy was provided. In 2000, I found a solution in part and in 2008 a more effective remedy; Taurine and BC amino acid supplements help control and reduce the impact of often severe muscle cramping like effects (which can take weeks to months to undo) across all muscle groups in the body. Our muscles are on the low end of the strength scale and respond very slowly to exercise, which is essential particularly when the muscles are in distress. Extreme fatigue is possibly the worst side effect. The worst period of fatigue I experienced was from 1988 to 1995 where the fatigue was equivalent to having Ross River fever. Supplementation by amino acids removes most of the fatigue and aids in muscle recovery. I have to be conscious of even the smallest physical task to ensure my physical limits are not exceeded and new types of activity or movement are restricted to short time cycles.

John Whitford



My first challenge to attending La Trobe came when I was granted a Teaching Studentship and no one had gone into an Agriculture course on a studentship. After trawling the corridors of the Education Department in Treasury place I had convinced all necessary to allow the change and so I enrolled in that first intake.

What a diverse group was my initial thoughts and as time went on this certainly came through. However, I am sure that was a significant factor in the successful development of the course and its entrenchment as a recognized University course.

Memories of those first years include:

- initially the three buildings in the paddock with a moat – Thomas Cherry building, the ground floor of library and Glenn college – administration office plus accommodation, North Wing for men and the South wing for women
- the lectures, practicals and tutorials in the Thomas Cherry building and then in the different buildings as they were built.
- the challenges in practicals with equipment and other resources
- the BBQs at Derrimut with Melbourne Uni ag students helped spread the good word about the quality of Ag at La Trobe.
- the interstate trip to University of Armidale introduced La Trobe to rest of Australia.
- Farm excursions
- April fool's day when after an hour lecture by some 'esteemed' person (later found out it was a 4th year science demonstrator) we were reminded of the date!
- Flour 'fights' invasions from Monash University
- End of year dinner and subsequently the Agricultural Ball.

I found Biology and Soil Science fairly difficult not having done Biology at High School. After failing to grasp all the nuances of the soil, I needed to change my course because at that time any failure to pass all units meant you could not proceed.

Off to Monash Teacher's College (Rusden) I went to complete my tertiary education, graduating with a Diploma of Teaching Secondary, later adding another two subjects to become Higher Diploma of Teaching Secondary.

First teaching appointment to Derrinallum High School in the middle of the Western District of Victoria. First year was similar to starting at La Trobe, a disparate group of individuals, various qualifications who were united by a desire to do one's best.

The following year, 1974, it was back to the city to establish Gladstone Park High School, in an open paddock in Tullamarine – 200 year 7 students, 6 teachers and 1 office receptionist. That was another exciting challenge. I also was married that year to an Arts/Humanities student whom I had met when I organized Orientation week at La Trobe one year.

Time to go to the country. Settled in Maryborough, Central Victoria, for 11 years while we started our family, 3 children. While teaching at Marlborough High School I was asked to be a subject consultant, firstly Maths P-10 and then Maths, Science and computers for the region across schools with teachers on new curriculum developments and government policies. This type of consultancy became the focus of the rest of my career as it was reborn in various guises.

Moving to Horsham and working from a Regional Office meant the focus was curriculum leaders in schools and then Principals. An interesting time as I thought back to my initial career intention where I was aiming at an agricultural consultant working with farmers, focusing on succession planning. To some degree that was what I was doing with teachers, now I was working with curriculum leaders and Principals. Of course, I met many farmers at parent nights with discussion crossing from curriculum to farming.

Primary School teachers had access to professional development packages with a focus on numeracy and literacy – nothing at secondary level. I was part of a team to develop a 2 hour session, once a week for 8 weeks for Maths teachers. For many teachers this was an opportunity to meet across schools, participate in activities and discussion and then take back to their own classrooms – something for them. This is fundamental to the development of anyone in a group. 'What is it for them?'

When working with leaders or Principals in schools I kept this thought in mind as to bring about change and internalization. There always needed to be something for everyone – applicable in everyday situations in any workplace.

After our children had reached Year 12 the expectation was they would go to tertiary institution away from home (probably Melbourne) and be self-sufficient. We all know that is the aim but usually requires some kind of support. They all achieved in their own field with one chemical engineer, one civil engineer and one teacher/Assistant Principal. Now, they all have their own family and the cycle continues!

My wife and I decided to try city living for a while. For the next 6 years, she taught at Pascoe Vale Girls School and I became a Senior Project Officer in Science and then in Maths at the Education Department Head office in St Andrews Place, East Melbourne. Wasn't that an intense political learning curve? Working with Project managers, ministerial advisors and sometimes Ministers, all of whom wanted to know the facts and figures around any situation, in any school at any time. Many times my network of contacts helped find people and facts.

I had certainly presented to many different groups in education at local, regional or state level, but at this stage I was 'the' person representing Victoria's view on projects and presenting to an interstate and international audience at a National Science Forum in Hobart.

While a Science Project Officer, two significant projects of which I was a member come to mind. Firstly, a family science project to involve parents with their own children's learning and secondly a major project to allow students to provide feedback to teachers on their classroom teaching. The instruments developed spread across all subject areas and became a major focus in the 5 to 8 areas.

This was a time when online 'everything' was exploding with a National Curriculum being discussed and online resource material available to all teachers. Another of my projects was to manage the development of activities (online), which teachers could download and use in class. I was offered a position to be in charge of the Australian development and implementation of this resource for teachers and declined, thinking that all this 'online' stuff would be short-lived. We all make choices in life and this certainly would have been a fantastic career move but we all would have done things differently in hindsight.

Of course, what happened to all the materials developed? There was a change of Government and a reduction in budget so it meant staff cuts and the need to move on to a new work environment. Some projects were continued in a new shape and focus!

My move was to the Northern suburbs of Melbourne, based at Mill Park Secondary College. My title was Facilitator for the Innovations and Excellence Initiative. For me this meant I worked with one secondary school and 6 primary schools developing projects and cooperation across that year 5 to 8 interface. Funds in the project allowed the release of teachers to work together and this led to career development for them with an advantage to their school of an interchange of ideas. It also provided teachers in this initiative with access to a higher level of leadership and management workshops that I was able to facilitate.

Looking back at this project, one measure of success was the career enhancement of many of the teachers with whom I worked. Some went on to be senior teachers or Principals in their own school or other schools.

This was a 3-year initiative so I could see retirement needed to be considered. After the 3-year period I announced that the project was only successful if I could move on and the cooperation continued. Although it was funded for another year I

worked as a consultant and helped in the transition, retiring at the end of the fourth year.

We moved to Bendigo, my wife continuing to teach for another 2 years. While I was working in the last few years, I completed the Civil Celebrant Course for Marriage, Funerals, etc. thinking it would be good hobby.

Since retiring to Bendigo, I have completed some consultancy work with schools with whom I had worked. That was interesting – conducting staff days with a focus on whole school operations from ‘what were their aims and objectives’ down to evaluation at classroom level. Being a member of a selection panel for senior staff and/or Principals was another window into human behaviour.

Now I chase after grandkids, conduct marriages, funerals, etc. and travel within Australia, by caravan, once or twice a year when we can.

Looking back 50 years to the beginning of the La Trobe agricultural science course, I could never imagined the diversity of people and educational opportunities I have had. My life’s course was never straight and in step. I have had to take a few sideways moves.

Although I might have had a few health issues of late, I consider myself fortunate that throughout my career I did not suffer any major health crises.

Whether I was working in a Regional Office or in Head Office in Melbourne, colleagues were always commenting on the number of contacts I had throughout Victoria. I consider this to be indicative of the people I have met in my career and my desire to treat everyone as a unique individual.

Keeping contact with former colleagues has not been a strong point of mine but I do enjoy when I do meet/contact someone and the conversation picks up from where we left off.

I certainly would enjoy reading the life and times of those pioneers who started in 1968 and to anyone else who reads our stories if it entices them to meet the challenges in their careers with critical thinking and enthusiasm then I will be pleased.

Chapter 6

The First Staff and Associates 1969–72

The academic, technical and administrative staff appointed during this first half-decade of the course joined in Bob Reid's vision and set the culture in which the FASI students grew – the culture included regular social interaction in addition to close contact through the intensive course. Beginning with Bob Reid alone, the School of Agriculture's first appointment was Helen van Riet as secretary – a role much more diverse in the embryonic unit than the simple title implies. Then followed the first two academic appointments, Nick Uren and David Leaver. These four were photographed on the Thomas Cherry balcony outside the School's part of that building.



The School's First Staff: Thomas Cherry balcony

Academic staff through this period, their years of appointment, discipline area and previous positions are listed in table below. Staff spanned areas bordering their specialties as part of the interdisciplinary ethic of the course, which had the added advantage of ensuring integrated breadth until a full complement of staff was finally achieved around 1980.⁸¹ Some additional academic inputs were made by sessional staff, most notably Dr Stuart Hawkins from the University of Melbourne for Rural Sociology, Extension and Communication, various specialist figures from the Victorian Department of Agriculture and its entities and active practitioners such as Ian Tuck for Farm Management Economics for those who stayed to enjoy the course into 1972.

**Staff and Postgraduates:
Years of appointment, discipline and previous positions** ⁸²

Staff Member	Year	Role	Previous Position
Bob Reid	1967	Nutrition	Hill Farming Research, Scotland
Helen van Riet	1968	Secretary	Waite Institute, Adelaide
David Leaver	1969	Pathology	Vet Research, Univ of Melbourne
Nick Uren	1969	Soil chemistry	University of Melbourne
Charles Lamp	1969	Agronomy	University of Tasmania
Richard Luke	1969	Biochemistry	Australian National University
Allan Lee	1970	Lab. Manager	Government Explosives Factory
Pete Cranwell	1970	Pigs	Animal Research Institute
Steve Willatt	1970	Soil physics	Agric'l Research Council, Malawi
Nell Tuininga	1970	Lab. Assist.	
Lindsay Jolley	1970	Postgraduate	University of Melbourne
David Lane	1970	Dem/Pgrad	University of Tasmania
David Connor	1971	Agronomy	University of Queensland
Rob Dumsday	1971	Economics	University of New England
Monty Foster	1971	Animal Prod.	Hill Farming Research, Scotland
John Quilkey	1972	Economics	University of New England

Memoirs: School Staff, Postgraduates and Associates

The staff in the first four or five years were influential far beyond their academic disciplines or institutional functions. Bob Reid was an accommodatingly firm father figure in many ways for the somewhat narrowly sheltered individuals thrust together as the first intake. His first appointment, Helen van Riet became the corporate memory of the School of Agriculture as it expanded, and was much more than a pleasant young face that put tentative students at ease.

Other persons who joined the School absorbed the spirit and added to the comfortable culture that did much to inspire learning. These were benefits of the very small size of the initial staff and the small, especially after the first-year cull, number of students that continued from the first intake. The intimacy born of these factors meant that staff and students socialized more than was to become possible in future decades, and it included being welcomed into Bob's gracious family home in Eaglemont. For that reason, it seems appropriate to hear first of all from Bob's daughter, Jane, who met the first intake on those occasions.

Jane Chalmers (née Reid)

Dad and the first group of students

The first intake of students in 1968 numbered 22, and Dad taught most of the course in that first year. He put a lot of thought into developing it and favoured an inclusive approach to agriculture. Importantly he wanted it to be markedly different to that offered by Melbourne University. The differences should be obvious to potential students and would encourage them to apply to this new approach to studying agriculture.

He wanted students who had excellent science results, with less emphasis on other subjects. This sometimes led to a lot of sighing from Dad, head in hand, correcting their essays. One of his favourite quotes was the 'sheep eating pasture'.

The agriculture students who had come from the country were mainly living in colleges at the university. Dad and Mum decided to invite the whole group for the occasional evening at our house, when they spent most of their time in the billiard room. They seemed to enjoy these visits, and the sound of their talk and laughter, along with the clink of billiard balls, drifted up the stairs.

Dad also gave at least one lecture to the students of Glenn College on the basics of human nutrition, always one of his interests. He devised a least cost but nutritious diet, which might have been a bit heavy on oats and liver for most people.

He sometimes also visited students in hospital who were ill or had been injured to let them know that he would arrange whatever was needed to keep them from falling behind in their studies. He also followed past students' careers. Every now and again we would hear him mention their names, what they were doing and where they were.

The staff he appointed in the early years were relatively young, and their families provided me with plenty of babysitting opportunities.

Dad retired quite early because of illness after ten years at the head of the agriculture department. A testimonial dinner was held in his honour in Glenn College on 16 December 1977. The report on the dinner in the La Trobe University Bulletin made special mention of the fact that several of the past students who attended were from the first intake. Dad could be a fierce advocate for the many things that interested him, but always maintained an excellent sense of fun. The photograph of him given to him that evening was accompanied by a deliberately inaccurate but very clever and funny biography, surrounded by the signatures of those at the dinner. It always made him smile, and I still have it. When La Trobe named the agriculture building after Dad in May 1998 it was good to catch up with a number of the first group of students who were at the event.

Helen van Riet

Memories of LTU & Biographical



Prior to moving to Victoria, my working life was initially in agricultural research and later in various secretarial roles. At High School matriculation I achieved good grades, and was granted a Commonwealth Scholarship. Due to family circumstances, I deferred my place to study science at Adelaide University and worked at Waite Agricultural Research Institute as a Lab. Assistant in the Dept. of Plant Physiology under Dr Leslie Paleg. I enjoyed the work, but the wages were woeful – £6 -19/6d per week.

In 1963 females were paid approx. ½ the male wage, whereas secretarial staff were relatively well-paid. I decided that it would be worth saving hard for a year, and then studying a secretarial course. I resigned after 12 months and enrolled full-time for an upper level secretarial course at a college in Adelaide.

John [previous name Joop] and I were married in 1967. At the end of that year John chose to leave his first profession and candidate as a minister of religion for the Presbyterian Church. South Australian theological students with a first degree were required to complete a three-year Bachelor of Divinity (BD) at Melbourne University prior to ordination. A further provision of the Presbyterian Church was that wives (there were only male clergy at that time) of theological students without children were required to provide full financial support for their husbands for the three years of full-time study. We moved to Melbourne in January 1968 and stayed with friends Nell & Fred Tuininga at Reservoir whilst we found rental accommodation and I found a job. Nell was later employed in the School of Agriculture as a general laboratory assistant.

It was urgent that I should find work immediately. Our friends were keen to help and gave me a copy of the local newspaper in which the position of secretary to the Registrar at LTU Bundoora was advertised. I applied by phone and was interviewed within a day. At the conclusion of the interview I was offered the position of secretary to the soon-to-arrive Dean of Agriculture. The position of secretary to the Registrar had already been filled several weeks prior. I began work

the day Bob Reid arrived. Our two offices were on the top floor of the Thomas Cherry Building, overlooking the car park.

We had a few weeks to get organised before the first batch of Agriculture students arrived. Bob pinned their photos behind the door in his office so we could learn their names. Bob sometimes hosted meetings with visiting academics or staff in his office. I would make up sandwiches at home before work, and buy biscuits or fruit. I was reimbursed for the ingredients from petty cash. In later years a catering service was provided by the university.

Early on we had to choose the colour for the graduate academic hood. I went off to Northland Shopping Centre, and purchased short lengths of ribbon in various shades of green. We laid them out on the desk and picked out what we thought was a good colour – Brunswick Green. This ribbon sample was conveyed to the Registrar's office and Brunswick Green was officially adopted.

I had a state-of-the-art IBM Selectric golfball typewriter. The golfballs could be changed for different typefaces. Paper was foolscap, multiple copies used carbon paper, and for many copies, there were wax stencils and a Roneo duplicator with an electric motor. It was frustratingly easy to get paper jams and inky fingers and clothes. For draft documents that needed revision, we used scissors and glue to 'cut and paste'. Typing had to be accurate, as correction was tedious – either white-out paint for paper or smelly pink corrector fluid for stencils. Bob loved trying out the possibilities of new equipment. We bought a state-of-the-art photocopier, which took a real photo on a flatbed, and then the negative was fed through an acid bath to produce a single very wet and very yellow copy. About 2 years later there was the innovation of colour printing. We purchased a colour scanner, and this cut 4 wax stencil masters. These were loaded onto 4 Roneo cylinders – red, blue, yellow and black ink cylinders, which were interchanged manually. The paper was fed through 4 times. It was less than perfect.

Bob presented his inaugural public lecture as Head of Department during his first few months at the University. We had quite a few drafts before he was satisfied. The subject was a general overview of the history of the development of agriculture and the production of food for human consumption, with reference to research and improvement including the developing world. He presented the lecture in the Glenn College Hall.

Bob's interest in nutrition was not confined to ruminants. He was concerned about the quality of student nutrition on campus and observed that they would get better nutritional value for money by purchasing apples rather than pears. Bob also had a great passion for the environment. He gave me a copy of Rachel Carson's book 'Silent Spring' – with the injunction – 'this is really important; you must read this!!'

On the arrival of David Leaver and Nick Uren in 1969, we were relocated to the ground floor of the TCB. There were fun social times – the students and staff were like a big family. The students organised a car rally on a Sunday afternoon which ended up at Marg Christie's parents' farm near Kilmore. Bob and Cath Reid were great hosts and held social events at their home from time to time. We all took the

afternoon off and drove to Wilma Ord's house at Macleod to watch the landing on the moon on her parents' TV.

Charles Lamp and Pete Cranwell joined the staff the following year. Charles was writing a book 'Weeds of Australia' with Frank Collet and began compiling the School's botanical collection of weeds and grasses. When John and I went on holidays Charles gave me a large weed press with strict instructions to collect and press anything that looked like a weed or grass. He opened my eyes to the difference between twiners and climbers and scramblers, and impressed on me that a weed is just a plant growing in the wrong place. During lunch or morning tea breaks, Charles sometimes entertained us with interesting snippets, I remember one from the poem 'Misalliance':

*Said the right-handed honeysuckle to the left-handed bindweed,
'Oh, let us get married, if our parents don't mind, we'd
Be loving and inseparable, inextricably entwined, we'd
Live happily ever after' said the honeysuckle to the bindweed.*

*To the honeysuckle's parents it came as a shock.
'The bindweeds,' they cried, 'are inferior stock!
They're uncultivated, of breeding bereft,
We twine to the right and they twine to the left.'*

Bob had a sense of fun too – he suggested that we could demonstrate the usefulness of nitrogen as a fertilizer by spelling out an unmentionable word on the large expanse of grass in the Agora. The lab work with the students was interesting on the day that Pete Cranwell (the pig man) and David Leaver arrived early from the abattoirs with a carload of variously sized fetuses for dissection.

As the staff increased, so also did my workload. I would often work back late or come in on weekends to get the work finished in time. In 1970, I contracted hepatitis A and glandular fever and was very ill. Bob visited me at home and promised that I would be covered by sick leave until my recovery. This was a great relief as John and I were dependent on my wage alone whilst he continued his studies. I was unable to return to work for about 2 months. When I returned I produced, with Bob's encouragement, a small booklet for distribution to the staff entitled 'How not to drive your secretary crazy'. Bob thought it was pretty good and had extra copies printed and distributed it more widely throughout the University.

Although I really enjoyed working at LTU, when John's studies were completed, the Presbyterian Church required him to return to South Australia for his first parish appointment. I began studying full-time at the University of Adelaide, and completed a full first year of a BA. Bob took the credit for my HD in Geography – I must have learned well from all the exposure to things agricultural during my time at LTU. Disapproval of a minister's wife studying led to me discontinuing studies.

Regular contact with Bob, Cath and Jane Reid continued for a number of years. After Cath's untimely death, and a tragedy within our own family, we eventually lost contact.

John resigned from full-time ministry after 4 years. He went back to being a land surveyor with the SA Highways Department. We bought a house, had 3 wonderful years when two of our children were born and once finances stabilized, John accepted an appointment to Tallangatta Parish where our 3rd son was born. After 7 years we moved to the Wangaratta Parish, by then part of the Uniting Church and after another 7 years moved to Benalla for 6 years. Traralgon was John's last parish until his retirement in 2003. Through these times, I knitted and crocheted articles for sale, was honorary secretary of the Uniting Church region, enrolled in a BA at the Riverina College of Advanced Education (now Charles Sturt University), became an accredited lay preacher with the Uniting Church, and worked for an alternative technology company, Brown Brothers winery, the Australian Red Cross and the Synod of Victoria. I finally completed a Bachelor of Social Welfare at Monash Gippsland in 1998.

I come from a family of gardeners. I am happiest when I can get dirt under my fingernails, and have established gardens at each of our houses. In retirement near Wangaratta I have an open garden biennially to raise money for charity. I play saxophone in two bands, do woodwork and variously lead the Australian Plants Society while continuing as a lay preacher working with John facilitating 'progressive Christian heretics'. Grandparenting five grandchildren is a delight and I enjoy many friendships and good health.

Nick Uren

Some of the Happiest & Saddest Years of My Life, LTU 1969–99



In early February 1969 I, along with David Leaver, joined Bob Reid and Helen van Reit (Administrative Assistant to the Dean) in the Thomas Cherry Building. David and I were to teach the second-year subjects of Animal Science and Soil Science, Agriculture IIA and IIB, respectively. David was a vet and I had just completed my PhD in soil chemistry and plant nutrition. John Adeney, the boy from Branxholme (Vic) joined the staff to help with the setting up and running of the practical classes.

In the next two years new staff were appointed to teach the third and fourth years. Peter Cranwell, Richard Luke, Monty Foster, Rob Dumsday, Charles Lamp, John Quilkey, David Connor, Geoff Edwards, Steve Willatt and Ray Boston are examples. People from outside LTU such as Ian Tuck, Stuart Hawkins and Jack Hosking were three external lecturers and made valuable contributions in those days. Other technical staff such as Allan Lee, Sue Leslie and Rosetta Vavala, Joe Edwards, Barry Spencer, Terry Bowes, Kevin Chandler, Gordon Butterick in the store and secretarial staff such as Rosemary MacFarlane and Margaret Thornton, Barbara Katz, Paula McGavin, Jean McCulloch Radmilla, Judy Bolton, Marie Fenton, Steve Burke, Robin Fitzpatrick, Jane Gurling and Lyn Wallace Margaret joined the team and made significant contributions. Norman Caldwell also helped with administrative matters and organised the fourth-year excursions. It was not long before the course had settled down and our graduates were making an impact.

The staff who had been appointed, if they initially were not devotees of the Reid Plan, it was not long before they were. The Reid plan was Bob Reid's idea of what an agricultural science degree should be and was based on his own degree at the University of Sydney, his experience as a CSIRO animal research scientist, his connections with Bill McClymont at the University of New England and his experience as the Head of the Hill Farming Research Station in Scotland. There were some staff changes over the years but the new staff e.g. Chris John, Alan Bell and John Freebairn were happy, as far as I could tell, although they all left in the late 1980s. The Reid plan was working in the sense that well-grounded

graduates with a broad experience in not only the sciences of agriculture but also the economics as well were the result. It would seem that the Fourth Year Topics and the Research projects were successful in the sense that all students were able to follow their closest interests – some into postgraduate careers and others into jobs. High standards of achievement had been set by the staff, and graduates were finding jobs in which their new-found talents were appreciated.

My own happiness arose out the success of our graduates as a result of the Reid Plan, which all members of staff had embraced. Joe Edwards was a great help in the running of the soil science courses as well as helping fourth year students with their projects. Grant Eggleston and Andrea Wilcox were hard-working demonstrators in soil science whose help was appreciated.

By the end of the 1980s things had changed. Bob Reid had retired and was replaced as Professor of Animal Science by Pat Carnegie. By 1988, Pat Carnegie had moved to WA and Charles Lamp had retired to his beloved Tasmania. We never thought that we could replace Charles not only as a lecturer but for his moral care and guidance to a wide range of students who had a diverse array of problems, as you could imagine!

The School's research record over the years was perhaps not as good as we all would have liked. The high teaching commitment was largely the reason. Nevertheless, our postgraduate students were numerous, 9 PhDs in 1987, and many have done exceptionally well and were mostly a source of joy. Judy Tisdall, John Jeffery, Leigh Sparrow, Harold Adam and Mark Conyers were a few under my care who have done well for themselves.

For some strange reason I was appointed as Chairman and so it was under my 'leadership' new appointments were made. Blair McKenzie replaced Steve Willatt and made good of his appointment. Similarly, Peter Sale replaced Charles Lamp and his abounding energy was launched and continued well into the 21st Century.

However, from where I sat, the new Animal Science Professor Graham McDowell was a dud! Not only did he feel it was necessary to pee on every tree like a dog but he had to do everything his way, not the Reid way. I was very proud of the resistance to change of this kind shown by the staff and particularly by the Agricultural Economists.

However, our victory was short-lived since the next thing we knew was that Professor McDowell was the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor. A position from which he was able to easily influence a succession of Science Deans (who knew very little about agricultural science) and make the changes he had wanted to. He wrecked what was one of the best agricultural science degrees in Australia.

In the early 1990s a problem arose where fourth year students had not been able to fulfil their Farm Practical Work requirements. I proposed that these students should spend a week doing a soil survey of a farm in lieu of a week's work on a farm. The alternative was accepted and in the first year a group of about ten including two staff (myself and Grant Eggleston) spent a week in April camped on the banks of the Goulbourn River near Molesworth. We surveyed a farm belonging

to one of the parents of one of the students in the group. It was a very happy and cooperative group who prepared reports of a high standard. It was also a well worthwhile exercise.

The next year a similar group repeated the exercise on a property 'Edgarley' near Willaura in the Western District. We stayed in the shearers' quarters and the outcome was much the same. For myself both weeks were a satisfactory alternative, particularly since one of the students, Jason Condon, is now a senior lecturer in Soil Science at the Charles Sturt University.

By 1998 the agricultural economists had been moved into the Economics Department. In 1998, the Agriculture Department as we had become known was told to downsize. A crushing blow since in that year the degree was deemed amongst agricultural science students as the best in Australia!

Also, in that year staff members, to make the most of our popularity, had visited schools to popularise the degree in schools. I visited Swan Hill High School, Our Lady of Mercy (Heidelberg), Camberwell High School and one other that I cannot remember while others did much the same, and some more.

I applied for a voluntary redundancy package on the condition that I could retire only after I had fulfilled my obligations to those students who had come to LTU to do Agricultural Science at our behest.

I also wanted to leave because of the declining standards in education, particularly tertiary education where the federal government was in essence paying tertiary institutions not to fail students no matter how poor their performance; the bean counters had no idea and seem to think that 'bums on seats' was the only yardstick of academic success and excellence. Such an approach was an anathema to what I believed universities stood for, i.e. the maintenance of high standards and of excellence.

I cannot remember the exact dates but a number of our earlier staff members had passed away and included Bob Reid, David Leaver, John Quilkey, Monty Foster, Ted van Steveninck and Charles Lamp. Very sad occasions. I apologise to those members of staff whose names I have omitted and whose contributions I have failed to acknowledge.

David Leaver



David Leaver graduated in veterinary science from the University of Sydney in 1955 and in 1956 joined the Veterinary Research Institute of the Victorian Department of Agriculture associated with the University of Melbourne. Having taken a MSc degree at Melbourne in 1960 and later taking a PhD, he accepted Bob Reid's offer of the position of senior lecturer in the newly formed school of Agriculture at La Trobe in 1969.⁸³ At La Trobe, David worked closely with Bob as a fellow animal scientist taking the major role in teaching metabolic pathways, mineral metabolism, pharmacology and toxicology. He accepted wider teaching responsibilities covering other aspects of animal science until further appointments were made in the School. He is remembered by the first intake of students with whom he had close contact as being quiet, kind and able to make complex matters easily understood.

David is recalled by Ray Boston (Senior Lecturer in Statistics, La Trobe School of Agriculture, 1973–85) in the words, 'I tear up recalling my wonderful mentor David Leaver who, for better or worse created and inspired me'.⁸⁴ After La Trobe, David accepted an Associate Professorship in Pharmacology at the University of Melbourne where he continued his teaching and research related to the toxicological effects of drugs and of by-products from impaired metabolic processes. Maintaining a heavy teaching load and inspiring research colleagues, he worked with Ray who created a mathematical model of these metabolic processes.

Later collaborative research also explored the sex differences in cognitive susceptibility from standard alcohol wine intake rates. While these projects were conducted in the Pharmacology facilities at Melbourne, there were instances of La Trobe–Melbourne collaboration in research as well, but regrettably, David did not enjoy the same supportive collaboration in teaching there.

In 1996, the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Melbourne noted in their history of recent years that 'Dr David Leaver and the Toxicology laboratory continue their collaborative work with St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research

and the Grain Research and Development Board'. However, it would appear that he had retired early in December 1995 after a major illness and continued as a Senior Research Associate with flexibility in his engagements with the university.⁸⁵

Charles Lamp

(1927–2007)



Charles was the third of the initial academic appointments made by Bob Reid in 1969. Born in Launceston, he had started a medical degree before transferring to agricultural science at the University of Melbourne through which he gained honours and prizes before graduating in 1955. Returning to Tasmania, he worked as an Agronomist and Extension Officer and writing his work on manganese toxicity into a Master's degree at the University of Melbourne, and then researching potassium–manganese interactions in plants for a PhD at the University of Tasmania where he continued into a lecturing role before joining La Trobe in 1969.⁸⁶

At La Trobe, Charles lectured in agricultural systems and agronomy with a strong linkage between theory and practice. He served as Deputy Dean for a period, organised a public lecture series and accepted roles on the University Academic Board and was later President of the Grasslands Society of Victoria. He is remembered by students for his engaging and kind nature. His lectures included irreverent references that enhanced their appeal, and ensured a balanced argument on contentious issues – always with a recourse to science. His lectures on plant nutrient requirements included reference to 'natural' farm advocates, which he referred to as 'muck and mystery merchants' as he demonstrated the errors of their claims that yields could be maintained by the use of green manure (by neglecting the additional land area required to produce the green manure crop). Charles insisted on substantial and thoroughly identified weed collections by each student, which the first intake duly laboured to produce without the advantage of the black market for collections of earlier students – a market he unwittingly inspired. He is remembered fondly by the first intake of student for his lectures, and by at least one as a skilled Master's degree Supervisor.

Charley, as he was known to many, always had a smile and, most often, an entertaining take on a situation. From limericks to popular poetry, he spiced lectures and conversations with anecdote and memorable examples, and wrote without pretence. Two of his articles for the student magazine *Agros* are referenced

elsewhere in this collation, and apart from scientific articles and his 'A Field Guide to Weeds in Australia' with Frank Collet,⁸⁷ he also took up challenges against unnecessary affectations. One such example was an opinion piece he submitted to the AIAS' Journal about 'mug shots'; Charley had presumably been asked for what today might be called a passport photo image to accompany an article, and he objected on the grounds that the content of an article is what counts, and claimed authority in possessing a 'mug' he did not consider fair to inflict on readers. Nevertheless, we have included his mug here.



Allan Lee

Living in The Seventies – The Early Years, 1968 to 1980



On April 1st 1970, I walked from home in Macleod, through the Mont Park mental health facility, to commence work at the School of Agriculture at La Trobe University. Over the previous 13 years I had travelled daily to work at the Quality Control Laboratory of the Government Explosives Factory, Maribyrnong, from various locations, all at least a one-hour commute. After working in a high security and sometimes dangerous environment surrounded by explosives and toxic chemicals it was indeed a pleasant change and thought to myself, how good is this. It was good, as now 48 years later I am still working at La Trobe University though not as Laboratory Manager but casually as project advisor for major refurbishment and construction of new science buildings.⁸⁸

One of my first tasks was to assist Richard Luke set up his Biochemistry practical classes and this particular class involved isolation of mitochondria from a prepared cell extract by centrifugation using the new Beckman Ultracentrifuge, an expensive and complex machine not known to me. It and I survived as well as the preparation.

This class was my first exposure to our inaugural group of students, 24 as I recall [*actually 12 in 1970, Ed*], who after commencing in 1968 had reached their third year. These students occupy a special place in School of Agriculture as they helped shape the new innovative agriculture degree designed by the forward-thinking Dean, Professor Bob Reid who was a father figure to both students and staff alike. There were advantages and disadvantages in being the first students. An advantage was the special relationship with staff afforded by the small group size. A disadvantage was attending practical classes in temporary facilities like the library and cramped locations in Thomas Cherry building. We moved into the new Agriculture Building in February 1972.

The School's first staff offices were semi-open plan and located temporarily in an isolated corner on the top floor of the Thomas Cherry Building. This contributed to

a family like environment with plenty of banter and occasional calls to 'shut up' over the partition walls.

Other new and challenging tasks for me included collection of blood and rumen fluid from freshly slaughtered animals on the killing line at the abattoirs for David Leaver's animal physiology practicals. This was indeed an eye-opening experience for a sensitive city boy.

Another new experience was collecting samples of soil from urine patches. This involved waiting and observing cattle in the Police Paddock (now Bundoora Park) with Nick Uren and, when an animal urinated, we would stake the site and return some weeks later to collect the affected soil for nitrate and nitrite analysis in Nick's soil science practicals.

In 1971, the School determined it required an outdoor facility preferably on campus for teaching and research. The University granted a small area of some 3 hectares (later enlarged to 12 hectares) in the northwest corner of the campus adjoining Plenty Road formally known as the Agriculture Reserve but better known as 'The Farm'.

First established buildings included glasshouses, equipment/potting shed and an animal house for sheep. Steve Willatt required a site for meteorological readings for teaching purposes. A Stevenson Screen together with rain gauge, evaporimeter and anemometer were supplied by the Bureau of Meteorology in return for daily reporting to the Bureau and we are still doing so. Two small pig houses for farrowing sows used in Peter Cranwell's research were built later by workshop technician Max Ellis. Nick Uren established a set of enduring lime plots and these have been relocated to a new site.

A registered flock of Suffolk black faced sheep was maintained on the farm essentially for teaching purposes.

The early planning, internal fencing and construction was organised by Frank Collet and later maintained by Steve Burke and Robert Evans.

The farm was also an important site for social functions, particularly for undergraduate students. The end of year Ag Barbecues were legendary and were well attended by all staff and students of the School as well as visitors from other Schools.

Several members of the technical and support staff deserve special mention. Joe Edwards a chemist whose knowledge of analytical chemistry methods was invaluable in practical classes and research projects.

Kevin Chandler an early graduate of the School completed a Masters Degree, supervised by Alan Bell, and became our Technical Officer in charge of animals, taking over this role from Terry Boyes. He became proficient in surgical techniques and provided valuable assistance to postgraduate students. Kevin also learned to shear sheep a skill essential for the maintenance of the Suffolks and other sheep used in research projects.

Max Ellis was our Workshop Manager. He was multiskilled in various trades and also a registered Electrician. His contribution was vital for the construction of special research equipment not available commercially.

Sue Scales and Robyn Fitzpatrick were our dedicated and caring small animals staff.

Gordon Butterick maintained our store and looked after our assets as well as providing a moral compass.

The School of Agriculture indeed came of age during the seventies – a special period and I was proud to be involved.

Richard Luke

A reflection on life in and around the School of Agriculture at La Trobe University in the early years



The reason I did not attend the (first) 50-year reunion was that I did not know it was happening! Since then I have been asked to put some reflections in writing, and I start with what for me, was the beginning!

When Professor R.L. (Bob) Reid planned the new BAgSc degree course, he wanted integration of subject matter, not the separation of material into the 'silos' that characterise(d) offerings in other places. The notes accompanying the tiny advertisement (see below) for 'at least five additional staff..... before 1971' included the statement *'the objective of the course is to present agricultural science as an integrated study emphasising those biologic disciplines which are central to a consideration of agriculture in terms of biologic systems, that is, subjects involved in a consideration of soil-plant-animal-environment interrelations. This means a substantial emphasis on plant and animal nutrition, physiology and biochemistry, taught by staff who have an appreciation of, and an interest in teaching their subject within an appropriate general framework'*. Even when allowance is made for changes in printing technology, the size of the advertisement is in stark contrast with current expenditure on advertising by universities!



At this early stage of the School's development, details of the third-and fourth-year courses were to 'depend on future staff appointments'. The intention (was) 'to have parallel courses in animal sciences, soil and plant sciences, agricultural economics

and statistical methods in the third year, with appropriate weightings for each. It (was) in this year that the real challenge, in terms of integration within the biological courses, (was to) come'. Clearly the major initial emphasis was to be on teaching.

I joined the La Trobe staff as a 'Lecturer in the School of Agriculture' at the beginning of November 1969. My initial brief was to put on a 40-lecture course in Biochemistry (more typically around 38 after public holidays were taken out), with a weekly 5-hour practical class, and to make it as interesting as I could for Ag Science students, most of whom were much more interested in the 'outdoors' than in the laboratory! I could readily identify with this last objective, as it was only well into the fourth year of my own BAgrSc degree, that I was seduced away from focus on 'an outside job', into to an academic discipline (Biochemistry) that was able to provide insight into the 'why?' behind field observations. I had been introduced to the concept and bases of 'Selective Toxicity', and one of the examples I used during lectures on the Tricarboxylic Acid Cycle (or Krebs Cycle), was the mode-of-action of fluoroacetate ('1080') rabbit poison. An equivalent example in current times might be glyphosate ('Roundup'). Why/how does it kill?

This was to be the first Biochemistry taught at the University. There were three Departments of Chemistry, and Dr John Anderson in Botany had research interests in Plant Biochemistry, but to my knowledge, that was about it. It was some time later, that Dr Roger Holmes came to the university and began what became the Department of Biochemistry. The term 'Biochemistry' did not feature among names of subjects in the BAgrSc degree, or even academic transcripts. The Ag curriculum was divided into A, B and C areas: Animal Sciences, Plant Sciences and Economics/Statistics. For Professor Reid, Biochemistry, Microbiology and Animal Nutrition belonged in 'Agriculture IIIA', the A indicating Animal Science. This didn't stop photosynthesis and nitrogen fixation being included in the biochemistry covered!

Our Foundation Professor's understanding of and empathy with Ag Students, was also evident in his strong preference for the small, concise textbook *The Biochemistry of the Tissues* by Bartley, Birt and Banks, over 'a great big textbook like (that of) White, Handler and Smith!' The book was a new one to me, but one of the authors, Professor Michael Birt, had been a major influence in my developing an interest in Biochemistry, when he gave lectures to us when we were undergraduates at the University of Melbourne. He and his staff, at the Australian National University in Canberra by that stage, were very helpful as I went about developing practical classes.

In our early days in the Thomas Cherry Building, before our new building was built, there were no laboratories set up for biochemistry or microbiology work, and my own research had to be done in a very small, windowless, storeroom, with a bottle of gas and an appropriate Bunsen burner! Outside our very open-planned offices on Level 4, in the *de facto* tea room, there was almost continual chatter: not the easiest environment for preparing lectures, but good for communication within our small, highly motivated and focused group.

Setting up nine 5-hour practical classes, was a challenge. Equipment and chemicals had to be purchased, starting essentially from nothing. The old Warburg

apparatus for measuring gas exchange would never pass a safety check these days! Comparison with what I see now in the R.L. Reid Building, as I watch practical classes in Microbiology being prepared, leaves me wondering how we coped. However, I think history has shown that what we lacked in economies of scale, was at least in part balanced by the in-person communication, and relevant focus of the teaching of basic and applied science to students of the 1970s (and later). I am sure that the four-year, integrated degree, with few opportunities to 'opt out' (or specialise), produced a very valuable and adaptable graduate 'product', for agriculture within Australia and on the wider world stage. As teachers we were fortunate that our early students were required to have Chemistry and Physics or Maths, as prerequisites for entry to the course. We also had among these students, a number of people who had already earned a Diploma of Agriculture, and wanted to complete a degree: people who were already experienced, committed, focused and well qualified.

Non-academic appointments were also important. Norman Caldwell (ex ICI) provided classic 'staff support'; Mavis Crew became a friend to many, brilliantly facilitated communication and helped with things personal and secretarial (well before the time of personal computers and efficient photocopiers!); Allan Lee came to us with a chemistry background, was appointed to assist with Biochemistry practical classes, and well and truly earned his stripes as a Technical Officer before being adjudged Lab Manager material! Initially, our Prof was firmly set against Lab Managers who simply 'sat at their desks and handed out keys'! Allan and I played a lot of cricket and squash together for La Trobe and have remained firm friends. There is always reminiscence when we meet, in the corridors of (now) refurbished buildings that we have known so well for so many years. Allan has been involved as a coordinating supervisor for the university during several of these major refurbishings, including that of the building which carries the name of our first Professor!

I remember being 'challenged' when, during the early years, I visited the University of New England in Armidale, and was told in very definite terms, that we, as academic staff, were being 'exploited' through such strong focus on undergraduates, and so little opportunity for our own research. At the time I disagreed, but with benefit of hindsight, some formal embedding in our own personal disciplines, as the university developed, might have been helpful and productive. At the time there was clear contrast with the research 'teams' in more narrowly focused Schools and Departments, and those with funding based on larger student numbers. Some of the early research, including that of David Leaver on metabolic disease, and my own on infectious disease, was supported in part by Industry funds, including those provided by the Australian Meat Research Committee (AMRC). Not uncommonly, these funds supported a postgraduate student.

So what was life like? There were long staff meetings, with plenty of tobacco smoke: conditions that certainly would not be accepted these days. Decision making was largely by consensus. La Trobe had been set up to operate democratically, in contrast to the 'great god Professor' model seen to operate in a nearby university. There was a major change when, years later, democratically elected Deans were replaced with a smaller number of appointed Deans. There

was a lot of Committee work to be done, within the School and in the wider University. There were student projects to organise and supervise, and compulsory work experience (3 different enterprises) to be monitored, recorded and assessed. Particularly in the first year of 3rd year lectures there was a lot of late-night lecture preparation: certainly no re-hashing of previously used material; no PowerPoint (plastic sheets on overhead projectors!) and not much absenteeism (from lectures). As far as I know there was no telling students in advance what was to be in the exam paper, and far less, the answers to the questions!

Social functions, those in private homes (including those at the Reid home) and those organised by students, were also part of the fabric that held us together. I seem to recall tell of a long walk home in the early hours of the morning, after an Ag Ball, by a member of staff (a favourite of the students!), who judged this to be a safer way to get home, than driving might have been! There were the BBQs on 'the farm' and elsewhere, and Friday afternoon drinks on the roof of the building. Overall, happy times!

I have been asked to include some comment on the University Colleges. Somewhat to my surprise, I found myself again living in a residential college, this time Menzies College, for my first three years at the University. During this time there was considerable debate about the future of the so-called College Union concept, on which the University was initially based. The plan included 10 Colleges in a ring around the campus, each with a thousand members, a fifth of whom were to be residents. There was to be no central Student Union. Following departure of the two Foundation College Heads (who had professorial status), there was a vacuum in College leadership. In the absence of a College Head in residence, I became deeply involved through Senior Resident Tutor and Acting Head roles. This came to an end when our Professor kindly and gently asked me about my intentions for the coming year, pointing out that my responsibilities and workload were to increase, not least because I had my first two PhD students starting work. His message was clear, I got it, and moved out of residence! However, largely unrecognised by me, there had been some take-homes. I had had confirmed for me, how valuable life in a 'good College' could be for country students, many of whom I had come to know very well. I had seen political insecurity lead to 'revolving door' College Headships (3 in 3 years at Menzies). I had seen very clearly demonstrated, differences between real 'Colleges' and 'Halls of Residence' that provided little more than 'board and lodging'. I had seen conflict between residents and non-residents, which had led me to seriously question the viability of the College Union concept, especially where architectural design contributed to, rather than diminished, problems of noise transmission. There was a classic demonstration of this when the so-called (Vietnam) Moratorium Committee took over the 'Union' area of Menzies College and kept residents awake for much of a week (as I recall)! Given this background, it was indeed a surprise when I found myself considering, then applying for and being appointed President (Head) of Glenn College in November 1979, a position I held for 16 years: but that is a subject for another day!

Peter Cranwell



At son Iaeen's graduation [BSc (Biol Sc)], 1992⁸⁹

In late August 2018, a fax appeared in my fax machine. I think it was the first one for 2018! It was from Lindsay Falvey and it read: *'Dear Peter, It is now 50 years since the first intake to the BAgSc at La Trobe University, and nearly as long since we last met. Some of us recently had a nice dinner courtesy of the University – Nick Uren and Rob Dumsday joined the dinner. At dinner it was suggested that a book be compiled about those first years including contributions from those in the first intake in 1968 and staff that were there through the next four years. I have been trying to find you, and this (Fax) number came up from one of us – I hope it is yours'*. Indeed, it was my number, but why my fax number when all you have to do is Google or Yahoo me and up comes: Postcards of Antarctic Expeditions, A Catalogue: 1898–1945..., which provides my old address and phone number in Rosanna and my current email and website addresses! If you look at <http://www.petespolarplace.com> you will see that in recent years my interests have changed somewhat. However, I still have a collection of pigs, and in fact I now have a new aortic heart valve, which also contains some pig heart tissue. So there is a little bit of pig in all of us!

Having read what has been written about Bob Reid for the book my comment is 'Wonderful stuff! It makes one so proud and very humble to have been appointed to the staff of the School of Agriculture by Bob Reid'.

I can remember receiving a phone call from him quite some time after my first interview at La Trobe in 1969. He said 'Reid here. Have you forgotten about us?' Forget! How could you forget being interviewed by Bob Reid? I will remember that conversation to my dying day.

However, I am getting ahead of myself because in early 1968 I had never heard of La Trobe University never mind the School of Agriculture. At that time, I was an impoverished Research Scientist working at the Animal Metabolism Section, Unilever Research Laboratory, Colworth House, Bedfordshire in the UK, where I had been since 1964 when I completed my Masters degree in Agricultural Science

at Massey University in New Zealand.

My first experience of pigs as a farm animal was in 1940–41, when Mum and I moved from London to a farm near Williton in Somerset to escape the Blitz (bombing of London by the Luftwaffe). We stayed at Higher Stream Farm, which was owned and operated by the Barnes family, for two years. It was a mixed farm, which had a dairy herd and an orchard, and they also grew grain and fodder crops, grazed sheep and raised chooks and pigs. They had two children, Patrick and Molly, the latter became one of Mum's lifelong friends. (See photo of Molly and me and one of the farm dogs at right, I think I was 4-years-old at the time.)



My association with pigs as an experimental animal commenced at Massey, where for my sins my Masters research topic was to explore the microbiological mysteries of the pooh of baby pigs. The official title of my thesis was a bit more scientific! It was during this time that I learnt my trade as a microbiologist. My teacher/supervisor was not an academic but a super technician in the then Department of Animal Physiology & Health. His name was Bert Reynolds and he was a brilliant microbiologist and microscopist, in fact a modern-day Antonie van Leeuwenhoek. Sadly, Bert was struck down with cancer and died not long after I graduated.

Colworth House was a great place to work. Being a Unilever establishment it had facilities for both basic and applied research in human and animal physiology and nutrition as well as many other sciences. It had a superb library and inter-library loan system. I was much indebted to one of the librarians, Norman J. Davren, who was an accomplished linguist and provided me with translations from the German and French scientific literature so that I was able to complete and publish a comprehensive review of the literature on the 'Microbial fermentation in the alimentary tract of the pig' during my time there (Cranwell, 1968, *Nut. Abstr. & Rev.* 38: 721–730). The research facilities in the Animal Metabolism Section were excellent as were the technical staff. It was here, in collaboration with some great people, that I learnt the dark arts of experimental surgery and so was able to progress a bit further up the digestive tract of the pig and explore some of the microbial activities and physiological functions taking place in the stomach and small intestine of the young pig. Notable collaborators were David Noakes and Ken Hill as well as three superb technicians, Alan Twigger, Bob Parr and Keith Lilley, together with the magical Irish operating theatre nurse, Mary Sheehy. And how could my family and I forget our good friend John Mercer in Biochemistry, who the kids called Johnny Crackernut because he was so good at cracking walnuts for them! He was a boon companion.

There were three downsides to working at Colworth, one was the salary! Try supporting a family consisting of a wife and eventually four children on £1200.00 per annum! In the four plus years I was there I never did get a pay rise. The second one was the reluctance of the Unilever management to allow us to publish our research findings in refereed scientific journals. I found this rather strange as our research didn't have any obvious commercial applications. The other downside I

shall not mention as I refuse to give him word space.

On the upside and what enhanced our social life most of all was the Colworth House Rugby Club of which I am still a life member. We started the club (that is the collective we, not the royal one) in 1964. It certainly enhanced the camaraderie of those working at Colworth, irrespective of which section they worked in or what position they held. In 2001 it morphed into the Sharnbrook & Colworth RUFC (see Figure) and in May 2014 celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a dinner at the Sharnbrook Hotel with over 200 guests in attendance.⁹⁰



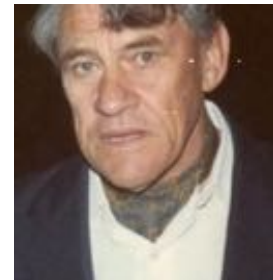
While at Colworth I joined the Nutrition Society and attended their meetings on a regular basis. It was at these meetings we were able to present some of our research findings and publish them in abstract form, and also afforded us the opportunity to meet UK and European scientists from other institutions such as Universities and Government Research Laboratories. Making such contacts proved to be of great value to me throughout my academic career and led to some very rewarding opportunities for collaborative research.

In 1968 my then wife and I decided it was time to return to God's Own (NZ). The problem was that at that time there were no suitable jobs available in NZ. However, things were changing in Victoria with regard to the Pig Industry and two very influential people had moved or were about to move from NZ to Australia. One was Dr Dudley Smith from Ruakura Animal Research Station at Hamilton in the Waikato, where he had been the expert pig researcher for some time. He had many scientific achievements and was famous for designing the Ruakura Roundhouse, which was a specialized farrowing accommodation that provided a protected area for baby pigs while they were being reared by the sow. Dudley's role in overcoming the disease problems that were holding back the profitability of the pig industry in Australia up to the mid-1960s has been described.⁹¹

The person who was instrumental in my getting a job in Australia was Tony Dunkin, who taught me about pigs at Massey. At the time he himself was negotiating with the University of Melbourne for the position as Director of Pig Research and Teaching at Mount Derrimut, the Melbourne University School of Agriculture Field Station. I had written to Tony enquiring about jobs in NZ and he did the next best thing! He passed on my enquiry to Dr Roger H Watson, who was Chief of the Division of Animal Industries in the Victorian Department of Agriculture. During a trip to the UK, Roger invited me to attend an interview at Victoria House in London and subsequently offered me a position as a Livestock Research Officer in charge of the Hypar Pig Unit at the SS Cameron Laboratory, Werribee, which I duly accepted. The Research part of the job title turned out to be something of a misnomer because while there was a small herd of pigs with minimal disease status that had been derived by the HYPAR technique,⁹² there were no research facilities. However, there was money available to build a research unit and so during the next year or so, as well as managing a small pig farm (with the help of my able assistant, Drago Curic, and veterinary advice from Dr Clive Gay from the nearby Vet School) I spent my time designing and planning the research facilities. Building of the unit commenced on the day of my farewell function in January 1970

when I left to take up a lectureship in the School of Agriculture at La Trobe University.

During my time at Werribee I had the good fortune to meet some very good scientists and pig producers who became great assets to the School of Agriculture by their contributions to the fourth-year teaching programme. They not only gave lectures in their areas of expertise but many of them assisted in the supervision of, and provided facilities for, students to carry out their fourth-year projects. From 1971 to 1976 notable amongst them were Dr Ian Cumming (Physiology of Reproduction); Dr Paul Hemsworth and Dr Graeme Mein (Animal Behaviour); Dr Ralph Laby (Production Diseases); Dr Martin Sharkey, Dr Russell Hodge and Mr Neville Chandler (Applied Nutrition). Then there was Dr Dudley Smith (Intensive Pig Production). By this time Dudley had established a 2000 sow piggery, Mayfair Farms, (four discrete 500 sow units also known as the Huntly Project) near Bendigo. He was a memorable lecturer in that he chain smoked throughout each lecture but through the clouds of smoke came so many pearls of wisdom! Like Bob Reid, Dudley was also a connoisseur of malt whiskey; they were both magic men. Dudley was also a great help in the development of the pig research programme at the School of Agriculture. Not only did he give sage advice regarding the animal facilities but he also provided us with pigs for the experimental work being undertaken at a nominal cost.



Dr Dudley M Smith
in the 1980s.

At the beginning of February 1970, I commenced commuting between Point Cook and Bundoora, an activity that continued for a number of years, despite having my first car (an Austin Farina) written off by some idiot who failed to give way in Essendon while I was on my way home one evening. My next vehicle was a Morrie Minor. In the beginning the School of Agriculture offices were on Level 4 of the Thomas Cherry (Tom & Jerry) Building and I was given an inside office. My windows looked out on to a communal area and Nick Uren's office. It was not until after we moved into the new School of Agriculture Building, now the Reid Building, that Nick had his office chair upholstered in Fitzroy colours. His memory is better than mine when it comes to remembering the early students, but there are some I will never forget! My first major duties in 1970 were to develop and teach 'Introductory Microbiology' as a component of Agriculture IIIA. It comprised 20 lectures, 14 practical classes and 2 excursions to outside Institutions. The laboratory for the practical classes was on Level 3 and here I was assisted by a most competent and able technician, Lyn Wallace and given much support from A Lee, our inimitable Lab Manager (who still seems to be running the place). In doing this you, the then third years and the staff involved made history, because as you will see in *'History of Microbiology in Australia'*,⁹³ this was the first identifiable subject in Microbiology taught at La Trobe and preceded the teaching of Microbiology by the Department of Microbiology in the School of Biological Science by 5 years! The Microbiology component in Agriculture IIIA went from strength to strength and in 1989 it was revised, reorganized and renamed Microbiology, Parasitology and Immunology. In 1994, some clown (from Gotham City) in the guise of a pseudo-academic/administrator decided it would be best taught by the Microbiology Department. It was probably the same clown who didn't support my

application for promotion to Reader/Associate Professor despite my being admitted, based on peer review, as the 117th Fellow of The Australian Society for Microbiology Inc. (FASM) on 26th September 1993. There were only two other such Fellows on the staff at La Trobe at this time and they were both Readers in the Microbiology Department!

Looking back at my 25 years at La Trobe I can say that for the most part it was a very happy time and a very enjoyable experience. Bob Reid was an amazing boss who had some wonderful ideas with regard to developing a unique teaching programme as I am sure those who graduated as Ag scientists from La Trobe will agree. Who else would hold staff meetings at the Summerhill under the guise of counter lunches, where great and constructive discussions took place in a most relaxed atmosphere. To me he was always a great source of encouragement and advice. Then there was David Leaver! Just the other day I found a couple of letters he wrote to me when he was on his first study leave at the MRC Toxicology Unit in Surrey, UK. In one of them he provided a very succinct report about a Nutrition Society meeting entitled 'Feeding the Newborn – The Comparative Approach' that he had attended and in the other were words of advice regarding a paper I was having difficulty with. I realized how much of a help and how encouraging he was during my early years at La Trobe. And who could forget Charlie Lamp, a connoisseur of good wine, a brewer of delicious coffee and along with his wife Marie a provider of delicious meals. If ever there was a friend when you needed one it was Charlie. He and Marie got me through some pretty tough times. Despite his paranoia about his beloved Blues, I will always remember my first meeting with Rob Dumsday, which took place in his office at UNE. Bob Reid thought it would be a good idea if I broadened my horizons, so at the end of my first teaching year in 1970 he suggested I go on a trip to visit research establishments and Universities in NSW, which I duly did. I knew that Rob had accepted an appointment in the School of Agriculture at La Trobe so while I was visiting such eminent rumen microbiologists as Dr Ron Leng at UNE I thought I would pop in and say hello to Rob. There hanging on his office wall was a shield with Carlton emblazoned on it. In my ignorance, as at the time I knew very little about the VFL, I commented 'I see that you support the brewery team' (I knew about beer and CUB, priorities after all!). He was not impressed and I ended up a North Melbourne supporter, remember Malcolm Blight, Rob?

While it was not much assistance (financially) to the first intake of students to study for the Agricultural Science degree at La Trobe, those who were still students and those who first enrolled in 1973 did benefit from the change in Government at the end of 1972. One of the first things the Whitlam Government did was to abolish University fees and it also established the Schools Commission to allocate funds to schools. The positive effects that this had on enrolments for the Agricultural Science degree and for University enrolments throughout the country was quite profound. It guaranteed the future viability of the School of Agriculture at La Trobe. It certainly was Time, thanks to Gough!

In the early 1990s in Canberra, where Bob Reid's wife Margaret ran the bookshop at the Botanical Gardens, my Chinese postgrads (Xu, Shuhua, et al.) and I were given a delightful and most informative tour of the Gardens with Bob as our guide. It was the highlight of the Conference we were attending, but wasn't part of the

official programme. I think it was the last time I had the pleasure of Bob's company. In 1996 came the sad news of Bob's demise. I flew to Canberra to bid him farewell and spent a few wonderful hours with Margaret and his family.

During 1994, I applied for and was granted an early liberation package from the University. However, I would never have got it if it hadn't been for the support of the then Dean of the School, John Quilkey (JJQ) and the moral support of my partner, Barbara Katz, who had been the School Executive Officer since 1986. I think John had some opposition from the 'Clown' (mentioned earlier) over this, but he stuck to his guns and I successfully departed La Trobe University at the end of the year. Thank you John and thank you for all the wonderful conversations we had over the years. He also assisted my first postgrad (Anne Christie, our first APIRC scholar) and me with some very tricky statistics in a study on the utilization of lactic acid isomers in the baby pig. On a culinary note I remember some wonderful crayfish we shared one lunchtime.

What a sad year 1994 was for me, my family and family friends as my older son, Byron, died in a motorbike accident at Philip Island on the day before his thirtieth birthday. What with this and the turmoil caused by the totally unnecessary changes to Agriculture IIIA as well as the disappointing disregard of the Bob Reid legacy and the possible demise of the School of Agriculture it was time to move on to pastures new, or in pig parlance – change troughs.

After leaving La Trobe I was fortunate to be offered the position as Scientific Editor for the Australasian Pig Science Association, a position I held until 2001. In 1995, Dr David Hennessy and I co-edited *Manipulating Pig Production* Volume **V** and from then until 2001 I was sole editor of Volumes **VI** to **VIII**. Then in 2002–03 I was the publications manager for Volume **IX**. During this time, I also had the pleasure of assisting in some pig research at the Bunge Meat Industries piggery at Corowa in NSW, where Dr Roger Campbell was in charge. By-the-by Roger's PhD supervisor was Tony Dunkin! Both David Hennessy and Roger Campbell will be well remembered by later students for the important contributions they made to the fourth-year teaching programme and the supervision of postgraduate research. The leader of the research at Corowa was Dr Frank Dunshea, a La Trobe BAgrSc (Hons) graduate who did his PhD with Alan Bell in the School of Agriculture! Like Frank and Lindsay Falvey and so many other La Trobe Aggies who went on to do so many great things, you graduates did us proud. Thanks to you all.

After this I turned my attention to Antarctica, polar philately and explorers like Ernest Shackleton, Roald Amundsen, Hubert Wilkins, Frank Hurley, Frank Wild, Douglas Mawson and many others. In 2015 Barbara and I moved to Blackmans Bay, which is south of Hobart in Tasmania. It was the closest we could get to Antarctica and when you get sunrises like the following who would want to be anywhere else!



And 2019 is the Year of the Pig!

Steve Willatt

La Trobe University May 1970 to September 1988



I joined the staff of the School of Agriculture at La Trobe in May 1970 having spent the previous seven years in agricultural research in East Africa in Zimbabwe studying the water use of maize and soy beans and in Malawi researching the irrigation of tea. It was a tremendously exciting experience to take part in a new venture with enthusiastic students and a group of staff members who had so much to contribute to the school.

It did, however, take my family a fairly long time to adjust to the new life in Melbourne and which was eventually summed up by our 10-year old's response to school in his new environment – 'But all the children are white!'

Presentation of an initial course in Soil Physics called for development of a combination of abstract physics skills with contemporary farming practice relevant to the student interest and academic abilities. Soil excursions to farm land around South Morang, now suburbia, introduced students to the logic of a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge.

A local connection established between staff of Tatura Experimental Station and La Trobe enabled staff and postgraduate students to work on joint research projects.

Study leave was taken in 1975–76. I was fortunate to be able to spend a year in the School of Agriculture at Iowa State University working with the staff on studies of soil moisture and irrigation of soy beans, a subject seen by the local farmers as important to their plant production. I returned to Iowa State in 1977 to undertake experimental work in the use of a neutron source to study roots growing in soil.

An opportunity to work at the University of Peradinya in Kandy, Sri Lanka, enabled me to supervise field work with students enrolled at La Trobe. Field studies included a new venture, the irrigation of tea. At that time Kandy, a very old city placed great emphasis on cultural and religious tradition and elephants were frequently seen in the streets. But imagine my surprise one morning when I looked out my first-floor window at morning tea time to see an elephant looking in. Was he hoping for an invitation to join us for coffee?

When the Australian International Development Programme was established overseas students took the opportunity to study in Australia and to undertake postgraduate work under the guidance of La Trobe staff. Those of us who worked with these students found an added dimension to our academic life. Visits to the students' home countries to offer short courses to these students and also to staff who were unable to travel to Australia allowed the forging in many instances of lifelong friendships.

Through the International Development Programme, I was asked to accept a secondment to the School of Agriculture at Brawijaya University Malang in East Java from 1985 to 1987. A number of the academic staff were postgraduate students at La Trobe. In East Java the soil moisture studies centred around the rice growing areas and resulted in many hours of field work knee deep in paddy fields.

Soon after my return to La Trobe I was offered the post of Professor of Physics at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, with students from nine island countries. The philosophy of the University is to enable different methods of study. Students had the opportunity to study on campus in Fiji or remain in their home countries as extended campus students. All lectures and study materials were in English. I took up this appointment at the end of 1988. During my years in Fiji, I was able to maintain contact with Australia through the various facets of the International Development Programme.

Six years in Fiji brought me to retirement and consultant work throughout the Pacific and South East Asia.

I remain ever grateful to La Trobe for the opportunities and challenges involved in being a part of such a vibrant work place. I would like to pay a special tribute to Professor Bob Reid, a man of vision, for his leadership and foresight and for setting such an example to staff and students alike.

Lindsay Jolley



I came to La Trobe University in early 1970 to undertake a full-time MAgSc, funded by the Australian Meat Research Committee. I had just completed a BAgSc at the University of Melbourne. My first visit impression was how casual the university was compared to Melbourne. The School of Agriculture started with three on-campus postgraduate students: the full-timers, Chris Penna and myself, and part-timer David Lane who was employed as a botany lecturer and demonstrator. Chris left at the end of the year to pursue other things; we have crossed paths a few times through joint work interests. PhD student and veterinarian Robert Baker joined us in the following year.

Our arrival coincided with the remaining 12 of the first intake of undergraduate students reaching their third year. My supervisor was animal lecturer and veterinarian Dr David Leaver. I have to commend him for his patience. My Master's degree determined the mineral (Ca, Mg, Na and K) status of pasture and soil in areas identified as grass tetany-free or non-grass tetany-prone for cattle and sheep. It also looked at the effect of stocking rate and fertiliser (lime, muriate of potash) use on pasture mineral content and mineral intake by cattle.

As well as the necessary library research, there were two years of fortnightly and monthly drives to north-east Victoria and just over the border into New South Wales to collect pasture samples, followed by many hours spent in the laboratory analysing the various pasture components. A Dutch lady, Mrs Nell Tuininger, spent months methodically and patiently separating each sample into its four components. I survived the continual use of carbon tetrachloride and nitric acid, and the walks from one end of the university to Menzies College late each night after laboratory work. The laboratory on the top floor of the Thomas Cherry Building was a pleasant place for looking out over the world while working.

Greetings from office staff, Helen van Riet and Paula McGovern and laboratory manager, Allan Lee, often started the day.

The school was just developing its small postgraduate group and emphasis rightly had to be on establishing a strong undergraduate course; a postgraduate student was 'neither fish nor fowl'.

I met my late wife Jeannette Brunink through her best friend, Margaret Christie, one of the then third-year ag students. Our subsequent three children have all gone on to have fulfilling careers.

After my Master's I decided that I would no longer work in laboratories and, with no clear direction for the future, enrolled for a Diploma of Education. Later after short teaching stints I worked for the then Victorian National Parks Service (investigation of park proposals, ranger training and weed management), the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (Regional Manager), the Australian Government environment agency (climate change, Natural Heritage Trust and Indigenous Rangers) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (policy). I was lucky to be able to work across a wide range of environments and to 'discover' Australia. I have always believed that my broad scientific training through agriculture provided a firm base for my varying career.

I have remained an ongoing student for much of my life. Currently I am almost half way through an online Diploma of Spanish with Deakin University. While working, I obtained a Master of Development Studies through Deakin and a Postgraduate Certificate in TESOL through Macquarie University, both by correspondence. My international interest is still there.

David Lane



I got to La Trobe University, almost by mistake. I'd graduated from the University of Tasmania and as was usual then, was to start work in my area of interest, agronomy, with the Department of Agriculture. The La Trobe School of Agriculture had a position for a demonstrator in plant sciences and Charles Lamp, who had completed his PhD in Tasmania, asked if any ag graduate from there would be interested in applying. I responded and was offered the position. I had been due to start work with the Tas Department of Agriculture the next week, but instead said I was going to La Trobe, suspecting I'd burnt my bridge.

I started at La Trobe in April 1970, when the first ag students were in their 3rd year. At this time, the School of Ag was located in the top floor of the Thomas Cherry Building. Coincidentally, I was in the 3rd group of students in the UTAS Ag Faculty, so it was interesting to experience their early years, one as a student the other as a staff member. The position included enrolment in a MAgrSc degree. This meant I was both a staff member and student. Given, that I was barely older than most of the students (and probably younger than some who were upgrading agricultural diplomas, as a number were then doing) I mixed in with groups. My role included helping set up and assist with plant and soil prac classes and delivering the Field Botany lectures and prac classes to first-year students. Pity I'd decided I'd never need my lecture notes again when I graduated and had tossed them all out. The field botany lectures were generally in the first term and at 9:00 am on Monday. Always a challenge for everyone and to my lasting shame, I did fail to turn up for one once.

I have driven past the Bundoora campus a couple of times in recent years and was surprised at how little I actually recall from the 4 years I'd spent there. I guess I tend to live in the present and often find my memories are of things that embarrass me, rather than of achievements. Perhaps that deters reflecting on the past. I could, however, put (1970s) faces to almost all of the staff and students listed in the notes and I still have great memories of the friendships I formed.

The thing I continue to value greatly, from my time in the School of Agriculture, is how I believe it developed me as a person. A great deal of this is due to the mentoring and friendship of Charles and Marie Lamp and Steve and Bev Willatt. There is no doubt that moving to Victoria was the best decision I have made in my life, having the values and perspectives developed in a cosy lifestyle challenged and expanded and being pushed to listen, observe and think, which, after all, is what education is about.

From La Trobe I joined the then Department of Crown Lands and Survey and undertook research into the ecology and management of noxious weeds. Weeds actually give you a good insight into the interactions between the environment and land use and management practices. The field work also got me into almost every corner of Victoria. I stayed with the Department, through its many manifestations and in 1994, moved to Gippsland and became involved in various aspects of land and water management. I was involved with Regional Catchment Management Strategies, Natural Heritage Trust projects, Forest Management Plans, Planning Scheme referrals and environmental issues associated with the power industry in the La Trobe Valley. (When I applied for the position at La Trobe Uni, I'd assumed it was located in the La Trobe Valley.) I was married at the time and we owned a 75 ha property at Willung South, between Traralgon and Yarram. It was hilly, with two streams, some remnant vegetation and a variety of wildlife, weeds and erosion issues. It was a great lifestyle farm(?), a sink for money, with old fencing that demanded constant attention. I was probably the fittest I've ever been, am extremely happy I was a farmer for a while and extremely happy I'm not one now.

In 2002, I took the '55:11' option and for a couple of years continued to pick up some contract work. In 2004, I moved back to Tasmania, partly for lifestyle and partly because I couldn't afford real estate in Victoria. I still do a reasonable amount of sailing. I raced, with good success, as a crew member on my brother-in-law's yacht and have my own boat, which I cruise in close to Hobart. I am still trying to correct the faults in my golf swing (don't know why, but it is exercise) and I dabble with water colour painting.

When I retired, I reflected on my working life. No great career, no particular achievements, but I came to realize I'd always managed to get involved in aspects of the plant side of agriculture which did and still does intrigue me. I reckon I've come to understand a whole lot of things I'd wanted to find out about and in the process, hope I might have done some things others find worthwhile. Guess I also hope graduates from the La Trobe School of Agriculture have also had success and satisfaction in their careers and that I may have helped, even a tiny bit.

Rob Dumsday



OK so I now realise that the La Trobe Ag (LAG) 1968 entry year started their studies only three years after I finished mine at Melbourne Ag School in 1965. No wonder that these days you look almost as old as I do. I express my sadness at the deaths of Graeme McGregor and Ian Hamer. I had hoped that they would be at your reunion – Graeme and I had many conversations about economics and politics, and I knew Ian later in his career when he was at the Soil Conservation Authority.

After graduating I spent four or so wonderful years doing postgraduate studies in agricultural economics at the University of New England (UNE). My thesis work was on the economics of soil conservation and I gradually morphed into an environmental economist.

At UNE I was surrounded by a number of geniuses and supervised by two of them – Jock Anderson and Doug McConnell. They had to be smart to get me through. They also got me the UNE D H Drummond Prize for Best PhD that year, helped by Professor John Dillon – another absolute legend. When I arrived at UNE I discovered that I wouldn't be paid my stipend for two weeks and didn't have enough money to get me through. I asked Dillon for a loan and after a pause, accompanied by raised eyebrows, he obliged. Jock has recently made it to Wikipedia and been awarded a Doctor of Science by the University of Queensland. Doug is retired but I recall that at one time he became totally frustrated with the bureaucracy in an Eastern European country that kept blocking the commencement of a huge irrigation project for which he had received funding. So he bought a bulldozer and built it himself! The staff in Ag Econ at UNE taught me the virtues of total disrespect for bureaucrats and authority, among many other things.

Unemployment came next! I had a wife and 2 kids at the time and thought that I had a good chance of obtaining a lectureship at UNE after my Teaching Fellowship ran out. But just before the deadline for applications closed Jock Anderson applied

and I was a bit devastated given his already illustrious career. For a couple of weeks I wondered how I was going to support the family. It was a terrible time and to this day I empathise with those who find themselves unemployed. But then La Trobe University came up with an offer and off I went.

The early years at La Trobe were wonderful – but very hard work as the University and the School of Agriculture were both young and lots needed doing. We were led by a former CSIRO scientist Professor Bob Reid – another very good leader. The Vietnam War came along and disrupted academic life quite a bit. I used to drink at the Summerhill Hotel with the protesters, including one I used to call ‘Jexhead’. I discovered that many of them actually were not too interested in the issues – they were getting adrenalin rushes from their brave acts – which included terrorizing aging professors. And in my first year there, which was probably your last year – 1971 – I was also trying to complete my PhD so my apologies (not) for not spending enough time helping you with your studies. But you were a special group, partly because you were our first students and partly because you were more mature than most students in those days.

Ian Tuck and I managed to get Agricultural Economics growing by attracting John Quilkey from UNE and Geoff Edwards from the Commonwealth Treasury, followed by Professors John Freebairn and Tony Chisholm, respectively. We made a good team. I achieved the Senior Lecturer position early and pretty much stayed there – partly because I wasn’t prepared to continue working as Chairman of Department for more than 3 months at an annual net additional income of \$1,500. The Vice-Chancellor carpeted me and we agreed to disagree about the attractions of the post. A few weeks later I was given a private consultancy on Australia’s Textile Industry which paid \$15,000 for two weeks work. The ‘Gravy Train’ has always appealed to me more than the ‘Glory Trail’.

While at La Trobe we were allowed to take study leave for up to a year every six years and do consulting work for an average of a day a week. These conditions allowed me to work for a year at IITA in Nigeria, a year in the US at the University of Illinois, 18 months at AVRDC in Taiwan (plus earlier stints doing external reviews, one of which was with one of the founders of the ‘Green Revolution’), three months each at ICRISAT in India and the ANU, and shorter periods in Indonesia, with the FAO in Brazil, with the OECD in New Zealand, with an Environmental Consortium in Washington DC, USA, the Philippines and Malaysia.

Indonesia was my first overseas project, back in the 70s, and quite a culture shock – a bit different from how we lived in Australia at the time. A vet and I worked on beef cattle management and economics and I recall visiting the site of a massacre in Sulawesi where several thousand people were reputed to have been killed. Kids were playing soccer with their skulls.

I was pressed into going to ICRISAT, India, 25 years ago to work on ‘natural’ resource economics projects. I had never wanted to visit India but what a country that turned out to be. It was after the ‘Green Revolution’ had made its impact. The people were often poor but mostly happy that recurrent famines were no more.

La Trobe's Ag Science degree was well regarded by most people, including employers but we gradually became shafted by the University despite our graduates having the highest employment rate and our research attracting more external funding per academic than any other department, except for biochemistry which matched us. Towards the end of my stay things became quite unpleasant with teaching swamping research time and Ag Economics being moved to the School of Economics (while our Prof. was overseas), which in turn became shafted.

So I took a package, accompanied by many deep breaths because I had been there for around 30 years. That was on a Friday and by the following Monday I had accepted an interesting offer from one of those much maligned US Multinational Corporations (URS) to join them in Environmental Economics consulting work. The group was led by Neil Sturgess – one of our former lecturers at Melb Ag Science – a scholar and a gentleman.

A couple of years before I left La Trobe, the University had spent a lot of money on a software package to profile its researchers with a view to finding them external grants and projects which would suit our interests. In two years they found two projects for me, neither of which suited me. At URS I had an average of around six interesting projects come across my desk each month! I worked on everything from wind farms to gold mines to 'toxic' waste dumps, with several projects on National Parks – including the highly contentious Mountain Cattleman issue in the Alpine National Park. My last main project was on the economics of establishing the River Red Gum National Park across northern Victoria. Among other things this experience didn't say much for La Trobe's research profiling software! And it also emphasized the lack of access of University researchers to many important projects in these days of secretive governments and their bureaucracies.

My three years at URS were some of the best in my career – a wonderful way to fade out of professional life. The multidisciplinary nature of the firm suited me down to the ground. Then my wife (an Aggy from England) whisked me off to Germany for three years where she worked for Bayer CropScience while I became a Hausfrau and tourist guide. We ticked a lot of boxes on our bucket lists while in Europe but were both very happy to get back to what is easily the best country in the world to live in. Sue now holds a senior position in Bayer CropScience and loves it, which is a good thing because I am able to dispose of her income quite readily. I manage our 50 acre 'farm' and three investment properties and am currently building a library in one of our farm sheds to store all the 'stuff' that I have accumulated in 45 years of teaching, researching and consulting, including your stuff.

And my final observation – thank goodness I did a generalist Ag Science degree – I have never regretted it and sometimes feel sorry for many of the professionals in occupations that have a higher profile, some of whom I visit as my body ages. I have been fortunate to work in around 10 countries (and visit many others) and develop a good understanding of their environments and economies – but I'm still somewhat of a climate change sceptic (particularly with respect to many policy responses and despite working at one time with a member of the UNCCC) – you can blame Professor Geoffrey Leeper, a soils Professor at Melbourne University,

who taught us to be critical and sceptical scientists, and that truth is not decided by a majority.



Our Flowerdale 'Farm' – in the foreground

David Connor



Whittlesea Show 1977



Madrid 2017

Background: I joined the new School of Agriculture in 1971 then in its fourth year of operation. That was the first graduation year so my contact with the first graduating class was limited. As I recall, they were all working in their final year on reviews and projects while I was teaching agronomy and crop physiology to the second group of third year students. I had come to La Trobe from a post in the Department of Botany, University of Queensland, where I had been teaching Plant Ecology to science and agriculture students for five years after graduating from Melbourne University, PhD (1965) and before that BAgrSc (1960). Between those two periods, I worked for two years as an Assistant Research Officer in the Soil Conservation Authority of Victoria, based in Kew, Melbourne. My PhD was awarded for a study of weed ecology in the Wimmera and Mallee regions of north-west Victoria, so the move to La Trobe was my opportunity to return to agronomy and crop physiology, develop new courses for undergraduate students and research projects with post graduate students.

Memories: It was fulfilling to be with a young and vibrant group working with solid guidance from Prof Bob Reid to develop the new Faculty, not just the academic activities but also watching the new building commence and grow, developing the teaching and research laboratories and field facilities on the campus, and establishing contacts with Victorian researchers and farmers. Everyone was full of enthusiasm, not just the academics, but also the administrative and technical staff. I valued enormously, as did my colleagues, the dedication and assistance of the laboratory manager, Alan Lee, and in my case, also, a succession of two electronic technicians Graeme Hedley and Graeme Henstridge. These two talented fellows were important because an important thrust of the new School was to employ modern technologies in computing to teaching and research in agriculture, and in that we were greatly supported by John Edwards, Manager of the University Computer Centre.

The introduction of undergraduate students to computer simulation and graduate students to major modeling projects, supported by computer-controlled data collection, in field studies in crop agronomy was aided by an early period of study leave at Colorado State University (May 1972–February 1973). This was specially

granted by La Trobe and additionally supported with a Senior Fulbright Scholarship. There I worked in the Grassland Biome Project led by Professor George Van Dyne. That experience and the modeling software with which I returned was a starting point that put La Trobe in leading position among Australian universities in computing applications to agriculture. I was granted another period of leave in 1979 that I spent working on the physiology of drought resistance in cassava at CIAT (El Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical) in Cali, Colombia. That was an introduction to opportunities that existed for Australian University Staff and students in research and technology transfer to developing countries that I was able to develop at La Trobe and during my subsequent career.

There were many more undergraduate students during the years to 1983 that I spent at La Trobe. What I most remember was the way that resources were provided to develop teaching and research activities in laboratory and field. The space then available to the School on the large and relatively undeveloped campus was a special bonus. Important, too, were the following post graduate students who provided additional links and value to La Trobe undergraduates as well as to agricultural practice in Victoria and beyond. Our projects included major field studies at Myrtleford (tobacco), Tatura (sunflower and peaches), Horsham (sunflower and wheat), Kyabram (irrigated dairy pastures) and extended to water relations of mountain ash forests (*Eucalyptus regnans*) on the Black Spur Range near Healesville, Victoria.

Ron Cawood PhD
James Whan PhD
Garry O'Leary MAgrSc
Jim Goutzamanis PhD
Murray Martin MAgrSc

Des Whitfield PhD
Jairo Palta PhD
John Denholm PhD
Nick Legge PhD

Ron Cawood, Gary O'Leary and Jim Goutzamanis were previously undergraduates in the School while Jairo Palta was an overseas student from Colombia. Ron Cawood, James Whan, Murray Martin, Garry O'Leary and Des Whitfield were officers of the Victorian Department of Agriculture.

Future: The stories of the first graduates from La Trobe School of Agriculture are now preparing will continue with descriptions of how their lives have unfolded and the importance to that of their experiences at La Trobe. But the same applies to me and other staff members. My time at La Trobe from age 33 to 45 was also one of intense formation from which I have continued to benefit. I was fortunate in my subsequent post (1983–2002) of Professor of Agronomy at The University of Melbourne and the opportunities it gave, as had La Trobe previously, for personal development, research support, collaboration with postgraduate students and visiting scientists, and international projects and travel. Since I left The University of Melbourne I have lived mostly in Spain. First taking a long-delayed post-doctoral appointment of two years at the University of Córdoba, and then working as a consultant as possible, while collaborating part-time with a group at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid on canopy management in the new system of intensive olive production in hedgerows. I have always benefited from ideas flowing from work with a range of crops at La Trobe and other places. Particularly valuable have been crop models at various levels of complexity and comparisons

of growth and yield-forming processes between crops and useful experiences in deciding what to measure in the field and how. More recent advances in computing and automated field-measurement technology are impressive but good choices in individual research projects rely on understanding how agricultural systems operate and how socio-economic constraints determine adoption by farmers. Such a systems approach was an important feature of the course design at La Trobe School of Agriculture.

John James Quilkey

(1930–2001)



‘Muhammed Ali once said that “Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven’t learned anything”. John Quilkey was a friend to everyone.

Dr John James Quilkey was also one of Australia’s best agricultural economists. He should have been Professor John James Quilkey but was known by most of us simply, and affectionately, as Quilkey, Quilks, JJQ or JJ.

I met John many years ago in Armidale, NSW, where we were postgraduate students at the University of New England. He came from the Reserve Bank of Australia and thrived in his new environment. He used to boast that his previous education had been at Kumbalumba D Grade High. In fact, he had been to St Joseph’s at Bulli, completed his schooling as a boarder at St Stanislaus’ in Bathurst, and was an economics graduate from Sydney University. He was awarded his PhD by the UNE in 1974 for his thesis on The Demand for Rice in Australia and its Relevance for Price and Promotion Policies.

There are many stories that I haven’t time to tell. Like the time when I persuaded him to take a flight over the NZ Alps in a single engine Cessna and he threw himself prostrate on the ground upon our return. Or the time when the wind blew all his notes away in the middle of his presentation at a conference. He didn’t bat an eyelid and continued on as though nothing had happened.

John used to claim that his pheromones attracted women to him like bees to honey. But it wasn’t the pheromones that attracted Brenda, it had more to do with her inability to run. They met while playing cricket against each other in Armidale. Brenda had batting pads on and found that she wasn’t very mobile. John always possessed a certain amount of rat cunning and moved in on her. They were married in St Mary’s cathedral, although a flock of sheep blocked the road and nearly prevented John from getting there on time.

John was not mechanically minded. I was telling him about all the things that we were going to do to his honeymoon car, including putting eggs on the engine block and stones in the hubcaps. "Hubcaps?" he said, "what are they?".

John loved his time in Armidale and he had many wonderful friends and colleagues there. However, after I joined La Trobe University in 1971 I suggested that he should follow suit, which he did in 1972.

We needed someone with wide experience in agricultural economics research who could also communicate with industry people. He was excellent at both. His research focussed on agricultural marketing and policy, and included projects on rice production and marketing, and advertising and promotion of agricultural products. He also did research into tourism, the textile industry and the contribution of immigration to the Australian motor vehicle industry. He worked on dried fish production in Indonesia. The Indonesians loved him and he loved going there. He was often to be seen wearing Indonesian shirts.

He was a brilliant after dinner speaker, even though many of his talks were prepared only minutes before – usually on paper serviettes. He gave upwards of 50 invited talks to various industry and professional conferences while he was at La Trobe. He made a big impression on people from rural industry and contributed to the School of Agriculture and its graduates becoming widely known. And he helped to develop one of the strongest agricultural economics units outside Armidale.

John was a wonderful teacher of undergraduate and postgraduate students. In my view, this was his biggest contribution to the profession. He was a gold mine of research ideas and often supervised 10 postgraduate students at a time, together with several undergraduate research projects. Many of his students went on to take senior positions in Australia and overseas, and they often came back to visit him.

John became Dean of the School of Agriculture at La Trobe University and was one of our best. We all wanted him to be awarded the Chair in Agricultural Economics but it wasn't to be. However, he received other honours, including being made National President of the Australian Agricultural Economics Society, and more recently, a Distinguished Fellow of the Society, honours he cherished.

John was a smoker. He made John Elliot look like a beginner. When the University brought in regulations about not smoking in buildings John quickly found a solution. A disused fume cupboard became his second office while he was Dean. He would sit there with his head in the cupboard, surrounded by his work, while the exhaust fan did its work.

Above all else, JJ was one of nature's gentlemen – an endangered species these days. He didn't have a bad word to say about anyone. He was always ready to help people and gave his heart and soul to the University and its staff and students. Needless to say, he was, and is, widely respected in the University and wider communities'.⁹⁴

... and others, including:

Nell Tuininga



Nell joined the School as a laboratory assistant around 1970. She spent a lot of time sorting out grasses into various categories for the academic staff. Nell was a cheerful presence in the School, often listening to the radio or singing to herself. She came to the role through her friend Helen van Riet's husband. Continuing at La Trobe for quite a number of years, she was in contact with Helen after retirement, and lived into her 90's.⁹⁵

John Adeney



John Adeney, 'the boy from Branxholme (Vic)' – as Nick Uren referred to him – joined the School of Agriculture in 1969 to assist with the setting up and running of the practical classes.

Monty Foster

Monty was a veterinarian with experience in combatting and controlling infectious diseases in east Africa; he didn't do much research but developed a heavy teaching load, especially in the first-year introductory course, and became a favourite with the students. 'Communicating with him was always a laugh a minute'.⁹⁶

Norman Caldwell



Norman Caldwell had retired from ICI and was engaged to provide 'support' for whatever came up with the new born School. He later coordinated and accompanied excursions

Ian Tuck

Ian Tuck taught Agricultural Economics in parallel with Rob Dumsday in 1972. Engaged in everyday farm consulting with Aberdeen, Hogg & Associates, his practical experience added a dimension; he later became Managing Director of ACIL Ltd.

Stuart Hawkins (1932–1997)



Stuart was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne who was brought in to cover the non-economics social sciences, a task he conducted with aplomb. His background had included an honours degree from the University of Adelaide, being a research agronomist in Argentina, a doctorate from the Michigan State University and lecturing at the Agrarian University in Peru before he joined the University of Melbourne in 1970, where he remained for the next 25 years. Stuart introduced communication theory and practice, rural sociology and agriculture-specific extension training into Australia, and 'it is doubtful if anyone has done more than Hawkins to improve the effectiveness of local agricultural services'.⁹⁷ Upon his arrival at Melbourne, Bob Reid soon enticed him to contribute the new approach to the first intake at La Trobe – contributions that continued for years. An engaging spirit, he appealed to the young cohort at La Trobe, shared in social events and maintained contact with some of the first intake through their involvements in local extension services, farm consultants and international development training courses in rural extension.



Staff-Student Cohesion

These diverse perspectives and memories of staff overlap with those of the first student intake into the BAgrSc course, not only because some sat in on some classes or were otherwise students at the same time as fulfilling support roles in the School but also because they were comparable in terms of age. Those who had recently completed their doctoral studies were barely older than the two FASIs who had previously completed the Dookie Agricultural College diploma. These factors, combined with the University itself being brand new and the smallness of the cohort of the first intake that survived into second year of the course, led to interactions between all in the School being casual when appropriate, sympathetic without compromising on stressful academic matters and variously enduring over these 50 years.

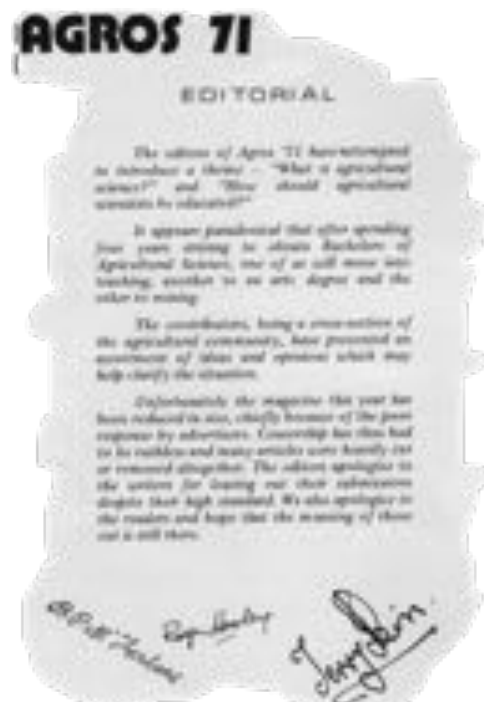
Having allowed the memories of the students, staff and associates who established the culture of the School, it should now be easier to understand some of the images peppered through this document and in the following section of miscellaneous comments and allusions, mainly from the first agricultural science intake – the FASIs.

Chapter 7

Nostalgia Images, Quotations and Unattributed Memories

Memories of staff, students and associates alike are imperfect. Notwithstanding their attempts of their calling to instil the high levels of objectivity demanded by the University's tradition, some anecdotes seem to be matters of record and some apocryphal. This chapter presents a mix of both to enhance the flavour of the era and the course, since there is an element of truth behind everything, even when the details may have become embellished.

It is true that the 1971 edition of the agricultural science student magazine, *Agros*, was a shared effort between students at La Trobe and Melbourne Universities. Behind its integrated contribution to bucolic art on the cover, its editors including Roger Hooley describe their professional editorial policy within the prescient rationale of media advertising. Yet its content, which has been variously referenced in the preceding chapters, includes the flavour of agriculture, youth and a preponderance of male over female students – an example might be its re-printing of the 1960s 'The Disgruntled Cow' poem – a tradition continued here in this 50-year collation. Among the reminiscences of the FASIs are a line from the poem that has entrenched itself so deeply that the words still come to mind whenever nostalgic farmer talk recalls a 'Fergie' tractor, which while not quite a homophone, presumably has some neurological link to 'virgo' as in ... *'like farmer Brown's tractor/ I'm virgo intacta'*.



Some other memories include:

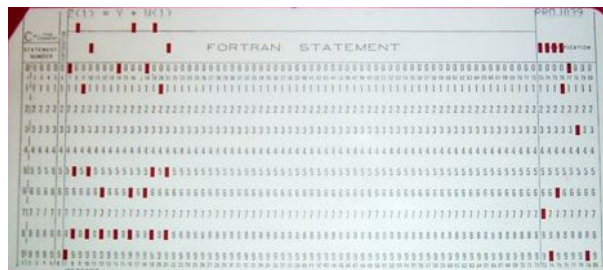
'three buildings in the paddock with a moat – Thomas Cherry building, the ground floor of library and Glenn college' [the complete University infrastructure in 1968]

'my first visit impression was how casual the university was compared to Melbourne'

“the answer lies in the soil” stated slowly and seriously with our best attempts at a Dorset accent'

'when Ian Hamer bought his brand new car, I struck a deal with him to take his used oil each time he changed it for my old Holden FC ute ... '

'eek! I just thought of that bloody punch card computer. Did it have 64K memory? Every hole had to be exact ...' [on learning to use Fortran]



'from an insular country lad to a young man who thought he knew everything'

'the “Gravy Train” has always appealed to me more than the “Glory Trail”'

'In the basement of the TCB was a new computer, which took up the whole of the basement. It was a tangle of wires and reels of tapes. It needed regular maintenance and broke down quite often. It was used by academics and research students who booked time on it – one user at a time'

'those that can “do”, those that can't “teach”, those who can't teach “research”, those who can't research “write”'

'there were some couples that just looked right, Dave and Marg (Riley – as in the car Dave always drove!), Graeme and Angela, and Ian and Marg, and others as well – we saw them all at social events including at Prof Reid's place, and we also partied at Marg Riley's more than once!'

'do you remember being the unwitting participant in a practical joke played by Graham Henstridge (Ag School electronics expert) on Monty some time during the early 1980s? This involved a penny bungler being detonated under Monty's office chair after he sat down to talk to you. The possibly apocryphal story has it that after the smoke cleared, Monty said “As I was saying, Lindsay...”' [staff a decade later, Alan Bell, recalling an incident when Lindsay was visiting back to the School]

'the thing I continue to value greatly, from my time in the School of Agriculture, is how I believe it developed me as a person'

'Phil Noakes brought his twin brother to one of Peter Cranwell's prac classes, decked him out in a lab coat and got him to participate in the session'

'conception is where sperm have fun surfing on the waves of cilia lining the fallopian tubes' [memories of David Leaver's class]

'Somehow a sample of Cannabis sativa got into my collection (classified as "weed", of course) but when it was returned, part of the sample was missing along with a note pointing to the area where the leaf was not complete that stated "I smoked that bit"'

'I used to drink at the Summerhill Hotel with the protesters, including one I used to call "Jexhead" [not ag students, Ed]. I discovered that many of them actually were not too interested in the issues – they were getting adrenalin rushes from their brave acts – which included terrorizing aging professors'

"We are the Ag Men" – based on the chorus from the Beatles song "I am the Walrus"

'the willingness of staff to be different and to break with tradition'

'muck and mystery merchants' [Charles Lamp's famous lectures on ag scientism]

'it doesn't matter what [graduates] do, if they rub their nose in it long enough they'll get to like it' [Bob Reid's career advice]

'Steve Willatt's detailed specifications of his lysimeter in Malawi – I admit it was interesting, but it was his Malawi references that motivated me'

'the sign of manhood is predicated on how many beach bags of wet sand can hang ... ' [an unnamed economics lecturer]

'I had my shackles and blindfold removed when I arrived at La Trobe'

'the response of "ob da silbery moon" ... [whenever Nick Uren mentioned beidellite]

'being visited by Bob Reid at my room in Menzies, where I was recovering from pneumonia in my second year, leading up to exams, concerned about my wellbeing and what impact it might have on my exam performance'

'I tried, with no success to find the words to "Prize Winning Hereford Bull" that Graham McGregor sang' [try endnote,⁹⁸ Ed]

'how fortunate were we to have the opportunity to meet on a very individual level with the Dean and other members of staff in a small faculty'

'lectures under outside trees'

'terrorised ... for having a split infinitive'

'outside the university socially there were – parties at Marg Riley's house and evenings at Prof Reid's, watching the moon landing at Wilma's, occasional celebrations (21sts?) and field trips in a relaxed style'



'April fool's day when after an hour lecture by some 'esteemed' person (later found out it was a 4th year science demonstrator) we were reminded of the date!'

THE DISGRUNTLED COW
(by Tom McKinney)
Though I've just given birth to a heifer,
And of pride and of milk I am full;
I am sad to relate that my lacteal state
Was not brought about by a bull.
I've never been naughty, I swear it,
In spite of the calf I have borne;
By Farmer Brown's tractor, I'm virgo intactor,
I've never had a bull on the horn.
How dreary the farm and the meadows
The sheep pens are gloomy and grey
And the one bit of fun in the long years run
Has by science been taken away.
I know that the farm is a business
In which we must all pull our weight;
I'd pull and pull for a strongly built bull
But this phoney arrangement I hate.
It mustn't be thought that I'm jealous,
There are things that a cow should not say,
But these farmyard tarts who handle our parts
Still get theirs the old-fashioned way.



FASIs



Graduation Photos⁹⁹



Wilma and Marg. Robed and in conversation with TDH (alias Richard Luke)¹⁰⁰



Glenn College: in 1968,¹⁰¹ and ethereally lit a year or so later¹⁰²

A collage of faces of old, some from the period of the first agricultural science intake, resurfaced at the reunion dinner, as follows.¹⁰³



From such a mixture of memories, many jogged by the reflections demanded by writing something for this collation and others by old photographs, the flavour of those first four to five years returned some of the freshness of the guileless youths masquerading as young adults that entered the course in 1968. Fifty years later, some signs were still evident in wrinkling faces of the reunion held in 2018, as the following chapter shows.

Chapter 8

Fifty Years Reunion, 2018

Through 2017, when La Trobe University celebrated its first half-century, those La Trobe alumni that could be readily traced were unlikely to be able to miss the publicity. Perhaps this was in minds when, one of the first agricultural science intake of 1968 chanced upon a notice about another from the first intake – Neville Oddie – being awarded an Order of Australia medal. In that brief email re-connection, Neville suggested that it was now 50 years since we started the BAgSc course together, and that this might be observed. Lindsay Falvey followed up with the University and after a few interchanges, suggestions and meetings, the University kindly hosted a gathering of those from the first intake and staff from that time that could be found and partners, as well as the two key representatives of the current agricultural activities at La Trobe. Those present on the evening are shown in the photograph.



The 50-year reunion dinner at the RACV Club for the First Agricultural Science Intake (FASI) at La Trobe University. Left to right: Tony Gendall (current La Trobe staff), Neville Oddie (FASI), Kate Redwood, Rob Dumsday (lectured to FASIs), Sue Cross, Bernadette Taylor, Ian Taylor (FASI), Ann Shovelton, Jim Shovelton (FASI), Roger Hooley (FASI), Judith Hooley, Margaret Bright née Christie (FASI), Simone Falvey-Behr, Matsy Uren, James Hunt (current La Trobe staff), Helen van Riet (School secretary from 1968), John van Riet, Lindsay Falvey (FASI), Nick Uren (lectured to FASIs).

Six of the first intake that appeared in an earlier second-year photograph attended the reunion of the possible 14, two having passed away - Ian Hamer and Graeme McGregor. The following FASIs are therefore missing from the photograph: Steve Funston, David Gillespie, Rob Irwin, Geoff Hubbard, Peter Morgan, Philip Noakes, Wilma Andrews née Ord and John Whitford.



Six of the first agricultural science intake (FASI) at La Trobe University - 50 years on. Left to right: Neville Oddie, Ian Taylor, Jim Shovelton, Roger Hooley, Lindsay Falvey and Marg Bright née Christie.

Chapter 9

Legacy

The first agricultural science (FASI) intake was special – for four main reasons: it was the first intake; it was subject to a rigorous approach to establishing quality; the small post-first year cohort and the early staff bonded far beyond the coursework, and it was the only applied science in the original La Trobe University suite of courses. From that beginning, the course developed further with staff using the intimate experience with FASI students to design a course that was to be a legacy enjoyed by students for the subsequent decades during which it was recognized as a leader.¹⁰⁴

It might also be said that a legacy of the FASI has been the careers that each of them pursued. Ranging across the spectrum of agriculture, careers have included research, agribusiness, academia, production agriculture, health, education, advice and much more. The stories of each individual contained in the preceding pages testify to this diversity and the varied ways by which agricultural science has equipped individuals to serve society. In many cases, the individuals themselves have highlighted the particular benefit of an intensive integrated course that defined agricultural science education.

The nature of agricultural education has changed across the decades with shifts in public attitudes and urban remoteness from food production, and with technological developments. That change could also be seen as a legacy of the success of past agricultural education and its application by agricultural scientists from institutions here and around the world – the world has largely been fed when earlier predictions were gloomy. With such change, it may be that what a strong undergraduate course catered for in terms of society's needs in the 1960s is moving towards postgraduate education, as opined in a recent overview. But as that article also notes: 'Today's agriculture demands sound integrated understanding in research and the environmental application of its outcomes – to continually adapt to ever-new pests, climate and other variables while efficiently increasing food production for expanding populations from reducing lands, water and mined resources. The past century's experience suggests that our responses to agricultural science education today may be one yardstick by which our contribution to human civilization is judged in the future'.¹⁰⁵

La Trobe now seeks to carry its agricultural science legacy forward through two recent initiatives; the La Trobe Institute for Agriculture and Food (LIAF)¹⁰⁶ a state-of-the-art research and education institute, and Australia's first Research Hub for Medicinal Agriculture¹⁰⁷ – an investment of around \$50 million. Such innovations form part of a network of major research and education activities around the nation that are linked internationally. Such collaboration between institutions is the mode of the day, echoing the integrated nature of the old agricultural science courses in a wider arena. The benefits of parochialism have diminished, offering the opportunity for building close relations between the two local universities offering agricultural science courses – perhaps also echoing the collaboration that

produced La Trobe's initial agricultural science course.¹⁰⁸ That would indeed be a wonderful legacy of the great vision that led La Trobe to include agricultural science in its initial planning – and sustaining global food production is a legacy that the world sorely needs today. The FASI have been a small part of this continuing legacy.

All of this is also a legacy of the energy, dedication and vision of Foundation Professor Bob Reid, who is acknowledged in the name of the R.L. Reid Building, and a plaque within it with the image below.



Prof Bob Reid¹⁰⁹

Endnotes:

- ¹ Centrefold from Agros 71.
- ² Lindsay Falvey et al. (2017) *Agricultural Education – in Victoria & the Faculty of Agriculture*, University of Melbourne. Society of Old Agriculture Fellows, Melbourne. Pp231.
- ³ Images courtesy of Jane Chalmers née Reid.
- ⁴ Don Watson (2017) *Goodness and Wisdom in Bundoora*. In, *From the Paddock to the Agora: Fifty Years of La Trobe University*. La Trobe University Press. Pp153.
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- ¹⁰ W. Breen and J. Salmond (1989) *Building La Trobe University: Reflections on the First 25 Years 1964-1989*. La Trobe University Press. Pp205.
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- ²⁸ J.S. Ryan (2007). *McClymont's Vision: The Challenge Remains: Rural Science 50th Anniversary Conference 2006*. Armidale, New South Wales: University of New England School of Rural Science and Agriculture. p. 205.
- ²⁹ Lindsay Falvey et al., (2017) *Agricultural Education – in Victoria & the Faculty of Agriculture*, University of Melbourne. Society of Old Agriculture Fellows, Melbourne. Pp231.
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