

OLD AGGIES

President: Frank Doughty, (02) 9481 8787, fdoughty@tpg.com.au
 Secretary: Graham Linnegar, (02) 9524 3592, helgra@linnegarplumbing.com.au
 Treasurer/Membership: Colin Short, (02) 9876 1018, cbshort@bigpond.com

Diary Dates

Alstonville luncheon – Monday
 17 September 2018 at Federal
 Hotel, Alstonville commencing
 at 11.30 am to eat at 12.30 pm
 – contact Geoff Jacobs
 0412 107 727 or
gajacobs@bigpond.com

Armidale/Tamworth luncheon
 – Wednesday 21 March 2019,
 12 noon for 12.30pm start.
 Bendemeer Hotel – contact
 Dr Barbara Vanselow
 0434 344992 or
bvanselo@gmail.com

Gosford luncheon – Thursday
 1 November 2018 – Central
 Coast Leagues Club – contact
 Geoff Warr (02) 4342 3226
 or 0411 128 936 or
warries@optusnet.com.au

Laurieton luncheon – Monday
 18 February 2019, Laurieton
 United Services' Club,
 11.30 am, contact Ray Buxton
 (02) 6559 7001 or
rbu87351@bigpond.com

Orange luncheon – Wednesday
 10 October 2018, Eighteen70
 Restaurant, 11.30 am for
 12.30 pm – contact Peter
 Witschi (02) 6369 0011 or
jfpwitschi@bigpond.com

Sydney luncheon – Tuesday
 11 December 2018, City of
 Sydney RSL Club, 11.30 am
 – contact Col Short
 (02) 9876 1018 or
cbshort@bigpond.com

Wagga Wagga luncheon
 – Thursday 10 May 2018
 – contact James Hamilton
 0447 225 875 or
jnch1950@bigpond.com

From the President's desk

At the 2018 AGM the following were elected Frank Doughty (President), Graham Linnegar (Secretary), Col Short (Treasurer/Membership), Lawrie Lucas-Smith (Auditor) and John Bowler (Newsletter Editor) and Barry Jensen (Assistant Editor).

Once again I acknowledge the efforts of our regional group coordinators in organising the various luncheons/gatherings. Gosford group is now organised by Geoff Warr who has taken over from John Stone. A big thank you to John for his untiring efforts for our Gosford members. John formed this group some years ago and it continues to flourish.

My thanks to the Executive for their support and encouragement, it has again been my pleasure to be your President and I look forward to your continued support in 2018 and beyond. Our luncheons continue to provide great camaraderie among our former work colleagues, many of whom are considered life-long friends – *Frank Doughty, President.*

Ray Storrier's AM Award, Australia Day

Ray worked at the Wagga Wagga Research Institute before transferring to Wagga Agricultural College, later Riverina College of Advanced Education.

He then moved to Canberra, ACT and was heavily involved in Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn.

From a news article:

Dr Reginald Raymond Storrier, of Crace in the ACT has been named a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to agriculture specialising in soil science, to education as an academic and administrator, and to the Catholic Church in Australia.

After working as an agricultural scientist, Dr Storrier moved into Catholic education and held a series of prominent positions with the Australian Catholic University and was also Chairman of the Catholic Education Commission in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

DPI staff and the Orange Wine Region

The Orange Wine Region has come a long way since Chris Bourke planted Cabernet sauvignon vines at Millthorpe in 1981. The Orange wine region is now the main cool climate viticultural region and 4th largest in NSW after the Riverina, Hunter Valley and Mudgee. Chris was also a founding member of the Orange Region Vignerons Association (ORVA) and makes his own wine under the Sons & Brothers label. Peter Hedberg brought vines from the Viticultural Research Station in Griffith to plant at the Orange Agricultural College in 1984 and was the first President of the Association in 1985. Peter (and Peter Cannon) developed an 18ha vineyard and Templers Mill wine label at the College in 1998. In 1998 began his own vineyard called Hedberg Hill on the Forbes Road. Phil Stevenson was another original starter when he developed Ibis Wines in the 1980s and was involved in the development of ORVA.

Col Walker developed the Faisan Estate vineyard near Borenore in the late 1980s, which is now run by his son Michael. Bruce Auld planted Shiraz vines in this area at a similar time. Bob Colton became involved with grape growing helping out his brother-in-law Ian Sellwood at Giles Estate in the Cadia Road area. Bob made a huge contribution to ORVA by being the Viticulture Committee chairman for many years organising field days and seminars.

Other DPI staff involved in growing grapes in Orange included John Ryan and Tony Moody. Tony Moody developed a small vineyard on the Icely Road and sold Shiraz and Sauvignon blanc under the label Moody's Wines. More recently in 2010 Ian McGowen of DPI and Peter Hedberg authored a booklet titled Orange Region Terroir. Ian's expertise in generating rainfall, elevation and soil maps of the region was invaluable.

The development of the Orange Wine Region has been greatly assisted by local and state governments. DPI support has been invaluable and greatly assisted by District Horticulturists and more recently Darren Fahey as Viticultural Development Officer –
Peter Hedberg

First Toosday get together

For the last 24 years former administrative staff of the old Department of Agriculture have been getting together at the Great Southern Hotel in George Street on the 1st Tuesday in December for lunch and a few drinks. On Tuesday 5th December 2017 twenty-one former employees were in attendance to reminisce about the good old days. The annual event is organised by Peter Mooney.



Sam Votano, Lawrie Lucas-Smith, Mick Jeffries, Peter Mooney, Geoff Jacobs, Bill Ritchie and Owen Simpson.

The following were in attendance on this first Toosday: (or Boozeday as it is sometimes called.) Geoff Jacobs, Bill Ritchie, Sam Votano, Chris Ballantine, Lawrie Lucas-Smith, Owen Simpson, Bill Rodger, Ray Johnston, Steve McCoy, Graeme Wigmore, Graham Gollan, Ellen Paull (Jarrett), Kay Mitchell, Graham Linnegar, John Kelly, Athol Robins, Michael Byrnes, Mike Jeffery, Tony Brown, Marea Mooney and Peter Mooney.

There were also 14 apologies, all with a commitment to attend in 2018. We all had a great time and some even stayed on for an evening meal at a restaurant in China Town. There was also a sad reflection held on the passing of John Everson in August 2017 –
Lawrie Lucas-Smith

Laurieton Luncheon

The luncheon went off okay with an attendance of 19 after a shaky start. President Frank persevered and the final numbers were great for this location. Frank outlined what news he had and everyone joined in with a few tales. We had a few extra's to normal. Cameron Kirton put his bridge on hold and was with us this year. John Balz

came up from Sydney a first time attendee, likewise Chris Dadd who now resides in Port Macquarie. We also had Chris Ballantine, Peter Mooney and Maria from Sydney and our Ballina crew Geoff Jacobs and Owen Simpson. Alan and Val Lee were with us despite not enjoying the best of health at present. Received quite a number of apologies if only they could get here we could have a large gathering – *Ray Buxton*



Cameron Curtin, formerly one of the Statisticians in the DPI, and Geoff Jacobs.

RAS Honour for Bruce White

Bruce White was awarded “Show Legend” status at the recent Sydney Easter Show. Bruce was recognised for his contribution to the State’s Apiary industry over his 41 years in the Department, as well as his continuing involvement with the bee and honey section at the Show. Bruce’s willingness to help exhibitors and show displays, as well as promoting the industry to consumers and visitors was particularly noted. The Department and ex Departmental staff have had a major contribution to the Fresh Foods Display with Fred Benecke, and now Bruce having major involvement over the years.

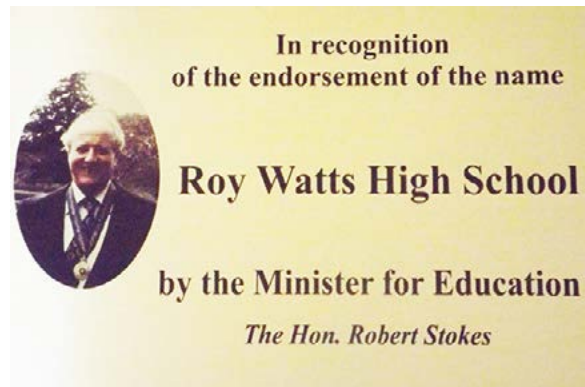


The Royal Agriculture Society’s Murray Wilton and Robert Ryan with Bruce White (centre) – Courtesy of the Hills Shire Times, 3 April, 2018.

Relocation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School



Fred Benecke, Ken Hutton, Roy Watts and Bruce Owen French at Roy Watts farewell in 1980.



The State Government announced the relocation of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School to the Hawkesbury Agricultural Campus last year. (This will free up 140ha of land for housing in the south west of Sydney).

The Government also announced that a new selective co-educational High School will be established on the old site to open in 2023. The new School will accommodate about 1080 students, and will be named to honour a distinguished alumnus of Hurlstone, Dr Roy Watts who went on to be leading veterinarian, Director of the Board of Tick Control when it was a major force in northern NSW, and finished his career as Director-General of the Department of Agriculture.



Roy and Alison Watts’ ashes are interred in the rose garden at Hurlstone. Courtesy Luisa Cogno, Macarthur Chronicle Campbelltown, October 12, 2017.

Sydney Christmas Lunch, 12 December 2017

Twenty-seven Old Aggies attended the Luncheon at the City of Sydney RSL Club in George Street. Unfortunately, there had been a breakdown in communication with new caterers so quick work by Col Short and Frank Doughty got us all fed. Fortunately, the company made up for any deficiencies in cuisine.

Dr Graham Swain reported on some exciting developments at Hawkesbury with a major program in Horticulture with a National Vegetable Propagation Centre, a United Nations \$40m research grant investigating CO₂ in Eucalyptus trees, and the relocation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School to the Campus.

Graham also recounted a lovely story from when he visited the recently refurbished Graham Swain Library at the Hawkesbury Campus. When asked his name by the bright young person at the desk, he replied "Graham Swain". The response was "you can't be, you should be dead. They don't name these places until after you are dead." Graham's response was "Well, I am working on it!"

Orange Lunch

Although the numbers attending (42) the fifteenth Orange Lunch on 11 October, were slightly lower than in previous years, everyone had an enjoyable time and two course meal. The Function was held at the Eighteen 70 Restaurant and pre-dinner drinks from 11.30am enabled everyone to enjoy each other's company and chat before the meal was served at 12.30pm.

Most of those attending was from the Orange District, but some travelled a considerable distance to attend. These included: Helen Scott-Orr and Committee Secretary Graham Linnegar from Sydney, Laurence and Carol Lewin from Leeton, Peter Simpson from Goulburn, John Dymock from Boorowa, Jim Booth from Pyree, Roy and Jenny Menzies from Bathurst.

A warm welcome was given to Barry Jensen's wife, Jane and to Roger Toffolin who attended for the first time. It was great to welcome Shirley Sugden and Margaret Wilson who both worked together in the Orange Office of the Department in the 1950's.

Unfortunately, Frank Doughty, President and Treasurer, Col Short and Committee Member, George Bennett who regularly attend the Orange Lunch had other commitments.

The Orange Lunch this year will be held on Wednesday 10 October. If you know of anyone recently retired whom you would like to invite, please contact me. My email address: jfpwitschi@bigpond.com or Mobile: 0408 630 385 – Peter Witschi

Departed Aggies

Unfortunately, there are a number of our old mates and work colleagues who have died in the last year. We all pass on our condolences to their families and friends.

Faith Butt, who worked at Wagga ARI and RVL, 2017.

John Everson, Clerk at Head Office in Sydney and moved to Fisheries in 1991.

Mark Tame, 1940–2017, Herd recorder from the Hawkesbury area

Wilfred (Bill) Single, 20.8.24–6.9.17, Wheat Breeder and Director at ARC Tamworth

Bryan Robinson, 1935–2017, Registrar at Tocal Agricultural College

Peter Mylrea, 2017, Director at Glenfield VRS and Chief, Division of Animal Health

Ken Symes, 2017 Director, Australian Wheat Collection at Tamworth ARC

Jeff Dorahy, who worked in the audit and inspection in head office in Sydney before retiring from the Police Department.

Editors Note: It would be really appreciated if friends or work colleagues could provide information on the careers of those who have been called to higher service for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Bryan Robinson (Clerical Officer) 1935–2017

Bryan was born in England in the year of 1935 and passed away at the age of 82 on 20 November 2017. His funeral service was held on 23 November in the Tocal Agricultural College Chapel with a eulogy being read by former Principal, Cameron Archer.

Bryan and his parents came to Australia in 1947 when he was 12 and after finishing his school he joined the NSW Department of Agriculture as a junior outdoor attendant at the Royal Botanic Gardens in January 1951. Bryan realised he was misplaced in this position and successfully applied for a transfer to the Administration & Clerical Division of the NSW Department of Agriculture.

Bryan held various clerical positions within the Department, some of these being at the Export & Import Branch, Accounts Branch, Circuit Clerk – Bathurst & Cowra, Condobolin, Hawkesbury Agricultural College Dairy Factory, Wagga Agricultural College – Assistant Registrar and eventually being appointed in 1969 as the first Departmental Registrar of the newly acquired Tocal Agricultural College by the NSW Department of Agriculture. Bryan's first duty in this new position was to convert the management of the CB Alexander Agricultural College (Tocal) from that of a church owned college to that of a departmental institution. Bryan retained the position until his retirement.

I personally had considerable contact with Bryan during his time in the Department which included excellent instruction to me in the duties of the positions he held when I relieved during his leave of absence.

I have had the privilege of reading Bryan's eulogy as presented by Cameron Archer and it indicated he was of a great value to Tocal as he had been to the rest of the Department during his employment – *Graham Linnegar*

NB: Bryan had recently completed a history of Tocal, details of which was included in the last Newsletter and is available for anyone interested.

Gosford Regional Old Aggies Annual Luncheon held at Gosford Leagues Club, Thursday 2 November, 2017

On behalf of the members of Gosford Old Aggies we offer our great thanks to John Stone (and Joan) for their work over the past years in organising the Gosford luncheon.

Twenty-one members attended on 2 November to enjoy fellowship over lunch and refreshments, while there were 15 apologies. Thanks to our executive members Frank Doughty, Graham Linnegar and Col Short for attending and lending their support to our group and to all the other groups which they make the effort to attend. Your efforts are much appreciated.

We acknowledge the passing of Peter Collins and Max Gowland, who were great supporters of the Gosford group.

Frank Doughty addressed the luncheon and thanked all for coming, but added that information about the department was harder to access. With the many redundancy rounds and changes to the extension service to Local Land Services our contacts within the department have diminished.

People enjoyed an all you can eat buffet with refreshments, with a huge selection of dishes on offer. Yvonne Unitt and Chris McIntosh were the happy winners of the lucky door prizes. Many stories of the old days were told and some discussion centred around the current situations of former Government Ministers Ian McDonald and Eddie Obeid.



Eileen Andrews, Kay Leese and Margaret Roddam.

As your new co-ordinator I am putting together a members email group so that in future I can contact you about our luncheon with plenty of notice. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with your email address if you have not already done so. My email is: warries@optusnet.com.au

Our next luncheon will be held at Gosford Leagues Club on the first Thursday in November 2018, which will be Thursday 1 November – *Geoff Warr, Gosford Co-ordinator*



Joan and John Stone.



Alistair Grieve, Chris McIntosh, Ken Archer and Alan Bell.



Graham Linnegar and Bob Martin.



Jeanette Aaso and Harry McKenzie.

Armidale/Tamworth Lunch – 7 March 2018

Unfortunately, we did not get a report of the Lunch, but we are grateful to Barbara Vanselow and Ian Collett for providing some wonderful photos which clearly showed the great attendance and enjoyable reminiscences. It was great to see that Barbara has a very extensive email list for the local ex Aggies and the local circulation of the photos.



Jack Thompson, Barbara Vanselow, John Holland, Graham Crocker and John Hosking.



Gus Shaw, John Kneipp, Anne Kneipp and Rod Browne.



Reg Whitby, Bob Gahen, Colin Short and Alan Jackson.



John and Lynn Black.



John Hosking, Judy and Ian Collett, Margaret and Mick Duncan.

Bathurst Experiment Farm

What's in a name? For 69 years from 1895 to 1964 this key institution in Bathurst was known as "The Bathurst Experiment Farm" (or affectionately "The Farm"). It then became the "Bathurst Agricultural Research Station" (BARS) and then "The Bathurst Agricultural Research and Advisory Station" and, most recently, "The Bathurst Centre for Organic Farming Excellence" for a very short time. Now it is possibly coming back to "The Farm".

In 1890 the Department of Agriculture, a wonderful government initiative, was up and running and by 1895 "The Farm" was the third experiment farm to be set up to demonstrate, guide and lead the farming community. In the case of Bathurst, there were a couple of "interesting" scenarios including the 'friendly' competition between Orange and Bathurst (Orange 'lost') and the keenness of the local member for Bathurst, Sidney Smith, to be re-elected. Some might say that this was not the last time politics impacted on the life of the Farm.

Development of the site was rapid with many paddocks prepared and sown and a large tree fruit collection planted by 1896. This was despite a comment by the first temporary manager, John Coleman from Wagga Wagga, that the soil at Bathurst left "something to be

John Bowler, Editor is requesting articles for publication along with photos of interest to Old Aggies. Please keep short and photos with captions appreciated.
jkpbowler@bigpond.com, (02) 6365 6182.

Updated Mailing List

As you all would appreciate, the cost of postage has increased dramatically. In an effort to keep our costs down we ask that anyone who would prefer to receive the newsletters via email to advise the editor. Please fill in the attached form and mail or email back to the Editor/Secretary. Please also advise of any change to contact details.

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desired". While the Farm could operate it was not until 1908 that all the building was completed. For those 13 years BEF operated from a grand old house, Logan Brae.

During the golden years from 1902 to 1939 the Experiment Farm had two notable managers. One was Reg May who used to sit on the front verandah of the managers house on Sunday afternoons with Ben Chifley. The other was Robert Peacock, perhaps not quite as well known but a major foundation figure for BEF from 1901 to 1917. And it now appears Robert may also have been instrumental in the installation of the Carillon in Bathurst. These are two of many ways in which the managers had a major influence on the Bathurst community. Other future managers added their personal touches such as Jim Holbecht with his prize-winning flowers and Bill Trimmer with his rugby training skills. By this time, The Farm occupied 800 acres of the "Bald Hills" country and the river flats – a sizable and critical key part of the Bathurst Community.

The renaissance of the station began in the 1950s after the dust had settled from the numerous losses of functions and facilities following the second world war. Bill Greenhalgh, who sadly passed away in early April, was a key player in re-organising the research program. A little later John Stone as manager was also instrumental in putting the station on a sounder technical and financial basis.

In the 60s and 70s, the arrival of Jill Campbell from Kent and Bill Koffman from Chile together with a resurgence in the entomology IPM programs, provided a wonderful foundation to work for the deciduous fruit industries. National field days including one drawing almost 800 people from all states highlighted the important of the station to the stone and pome fruit in producers.

Unfortunately, from 1992 on, the fruit industries faced greater competition and reduced profitability while at the same time traditional research areas for the department moved to commercial interests. Funding became more difficult more competitive and based in districts.

The demise?

The last attempt to re-badge BARAS was short lived. In the year 2000 Organic Farming

received a guernsey and BARAS received a new building (the 'nursing home') and the advisory staff from the Government Office Block. The rejoicing would prove to be short-lived. One vintage of the organic grape wine was produced and then the vineyard was removed. The staff, all except Marian, the farm supervisor, have moved on and for the last 3–4 years CSU Campus Services have been renting three of the buildings.

What does the future hold for the Research Station?

There is a slight irony in a sporting relationship. To initiate the station the turf racing track was resumed. 120 years later residential subdivision is prevented by the decibel level from the Mount Panorama Race Track. In addition, the research and education covenant over the land still remains. These two scenarios protect the site but how can it be utilized to protect and honour its heritage.

Is the phoenix rising? There is an exciting community ground swell and maybe politics may play its part again with support from the local member and council. With a shared history CSU is becoming more sympathetic. High on the agenda is a botanic garden. To help the community to take part, a Friends of the Research Station has been initiated and incorporated. What a fitting 'rebadging' as in 1860 the land was known as the Bathurst Park. "The Farm" can once again play a significant role in the life of Bathurst and be used to honour our rich agricultural heritage.

Old Aggies would be more than welcome to join the Friends of the Research Station. For details contact Roy Menzies, email: rjmenzies@activ8.net.au

ineptocracy

[in-ep-tah-krah-cie]

noun

a system of government where the least capable to lead are elected by the least capable of producing, and where the members of society least likely to sustain themselves or succeed, are rewarded with goods and services paid for by the confiscated wealth of a diminishing number of producers.