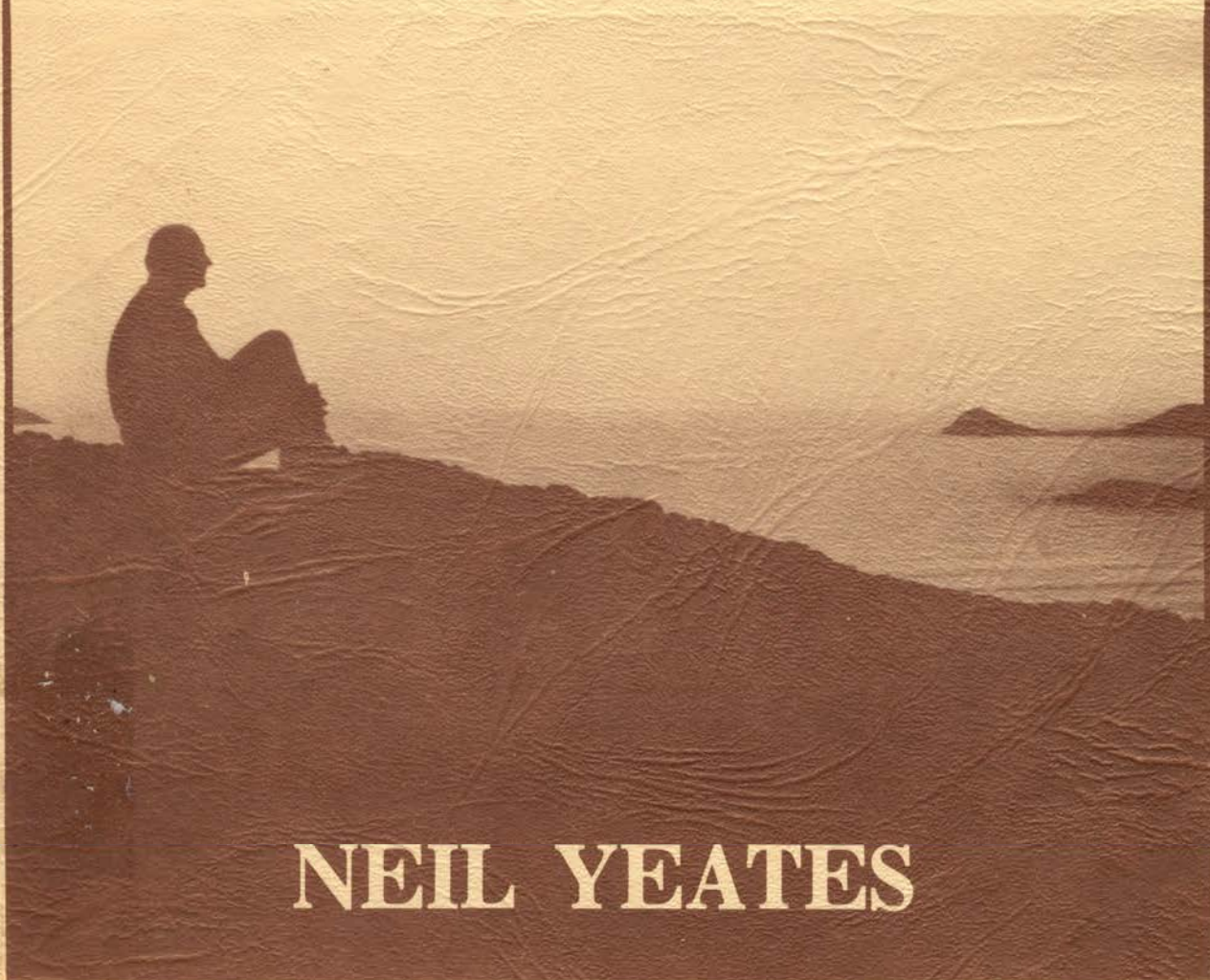


STONE ON STONE

A PIONEER FAMILY SAGA



NEIL YEATES

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STONE ON STONE

A Pioneer Family Saga

by

NEIL YEATES

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Arnold: "Morality"

ABOUT THIS BOOK

“Stone on Stone” is a true story about one family, spanning five generations.

It starts with the arrival from England in Jan 1839 of John and Martha Yeates with their five children in a 434 ton barque in the Colony of South Australia.

When John dies of dysentery within a few months of his arrival Martha supports the children, aged 7 to 16, by establishing a school for “young ladies and young gentlemen under nine”. Martha’s two daughters soon marry and the three boys eventually make careers on the land.

The three Yeates brothers spend 12 years from 1851 on sheep runs in the South Flinders Ranges, Sth Aust, before moving to north Queensland. Travelling to Port Jackson by sailing ship, they purchase stock and equipment, then make a remarkable overland trek which lasts a year and takes them 1700 miles north, to the Einasleigh River in the watershed of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The youngest brother Sidney (the author’s grandfather) stays 16 years in the north. Then, with his wife and large family, plus the remnants of his sheep flock, he sets out to the “new El Dorado”, S-W Qld. Travelling by bullock wagon, the 700 mile journey to Boondoon, a 550 sq ml lease near Adavale, takes three months. But they find no El Dorado when they arrive on 2 Feb 1881 “in the midst of an awful drought”. Despite hardships Sidney and his family remain on Boondoon until 1894 when he retires.

Moving through further generations of the family the author tells his own story: how his deep boy-hood love of the land and especially the pastoral industry was directed into professional agricultural science rather than practical farming. Was this a soft option, a betrayal of the spirit of his pioneering forebears? . . . or was it common sense for the fifth son of an impecunious family in the 1930’s?

By the same author:

Modern Aspects of Animal Production: Butterworths, London. 1965.

Spanish edition — Avances en Zootecnia: Acribia, Zaragoza, Espana. 1967.

Beef Cattle Production (with P. J. Schmidt): Butterworths, Aust. 1974.

Animal Science (with T. N. Edey & M. K. Hill): Pergamon Press, Aust. 1975.

THE AUTHOR

Neil Yeates was born in Toowoomba, Qld in 1915. Graduating with first class honours in agricultural science from the University of Queensland, he was awarded a research scholarship and then a travelling fellowship. With the intervention of World War II, however, he joined the Navy in 1941 and spent 4½ years in that service, three years being in a destroyer of the Royal Navy engaged mainly in north Atlantic convoying.

After the war the author married Marnie Watt, a Sydney University graduate, and took up his travelling fellowship at Cambridge University where he gained a PhD degree. Then followed nine years of animal production research with CSIRO in Brisbane, a Doctorate in Agricultural Science from the Univ of Qld, and over 20 years in charge of a department in the Faculty of Rural Science at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW, where from 1965 he was Foundation Professor of Livestock Production.

During his last 11 years at New England the author and his wife lived on campus in Mary White College, a women students’ residence of which Marnie Yeates became Principal in Feb 1967.

With this background and having five children, four with university degrees and the fifth studying for one, Neil Yeates (who was granted the title of Emeritus Professor following his retirement in Dec 1977) is well qualified to comment on university life and ways, which he does in the closing chapters of his family saga.

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National Library of Australia
ISBN 0 909228 06 X

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PREFACE

This book owes its existence to the stimulation which I have invariably felt on reading two brief accounts of the exploits of my pioneering ancestors. One is a four-page printed article entitled "The Yeates Family," compiled in 1942 by the then President of the Sth Aust Pioneers' Assn, Geo C. Morphett. The other consists of six pages of notes, hand-written by my father, which came into my possession following his death in 1945. On re-reading these two documents over the last 30-odd years the thought often occurred to me that the story contained in them merited wider publication.

However, such meagre resource material clearly required reinforcement if a book were to result. Accordingly, when I at last found the time, I set to work on the research necessary to accomplish this aim. I was rewarded with much more information, some obtained from official, archival sources and some from my own relatives. All too frequently, however, my questions to relatives received the regretful reply: "What a pity you hadn't asked me that question a few years earlier, before so-and-so died . . . he or she could have given you the picture, but I am afraid I cannot help." So often was I thwarted in this way, that I determined, as well, to record some of the main events in the more recent history of the family. At least there could be then no similar regrets in the future, should any descendants of mine ever wish to know a little more about the period to 1979.

In this way the book became a continuum from the pioneering past to the present; and, since it concerns one family, I gave it the sub-title of "a pioneer family saga."

The work is intended primarily for members of the now very large extended family or "clan" to which I belong. In addition I hope that it might interest others: friends and associates of the family; persons who enjoy reading about the pioneers and their enterprise and courage; those interested in the war-time Navy, in teaching and research, and in university life and ways; perhaps even a few who appreciate a simple but true story — in this instance about people who might reasonably be described as dedicated and conscientious rather than celebrated.

Throughout the text the old units of money, distance, area, weight . . . are used. The chapters about the pioneering era demanded this; so, for the sake of consistency, the same system was preserved in writing the later chapters. Readers should also note that the authority on which certain statements are based is indicated by bracketed numbers at relevant locations. The corresponding references are listed at the end of the book.

The author owes a great debt of gratitude to all who helped him: the staffs of the State Archives of Sth Aust and of Qld; the Oxley Library in Brisbane, the Dixson Library at the University of New England; the Sth Aust Lands Dept, the Dept of Mapping and Survey, Qld; representatives of the local Historical Societies at Bowen and Charleville in Qld; numerous relatives, most of whom are female cousins. (It is interesting that the women-folk, not the men, preserved the fine old photographs, letters and newspaper clippings!). Most of the helpers are mentioned either in the text or in the list of References, so I hope they will accept my warm thanks, tendered collectively rather than individually.

I do, however, wish to single out for special mention my greatest helper: Marnie, my wife. She accompanied me on all my travels, she walked over all the properties, climbed every mountain and hill; she took many of the photographs (including that on the front cover) and she combed through half of the old newspapers and archival material. But perhaps more significant were the useful suggestions she made as the work progressed, the thoroughness with which she read, corrected and improved the manuscript, and the encouragement she gave when my spirits occasionally flagged. So I formally record acknowledgement of the contributions of Marnie F. Yeates to this work and I thank her most sincerely.

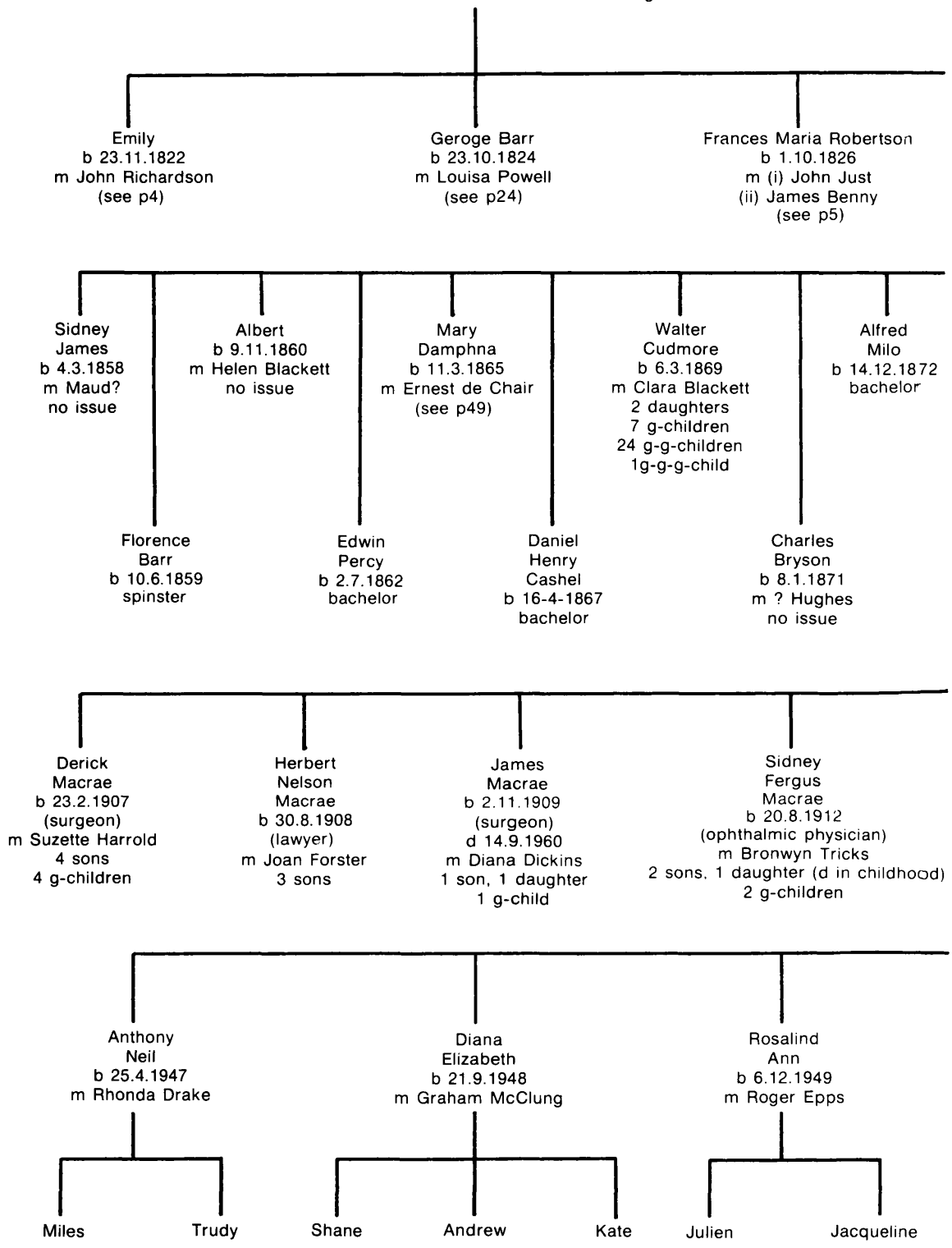
Finally, I express my appreciation to the publishers. They were the quickest with whom I ever dealt in the production of a book and they co-operated genuinely in trying to keep the book's price within reasonable limits.

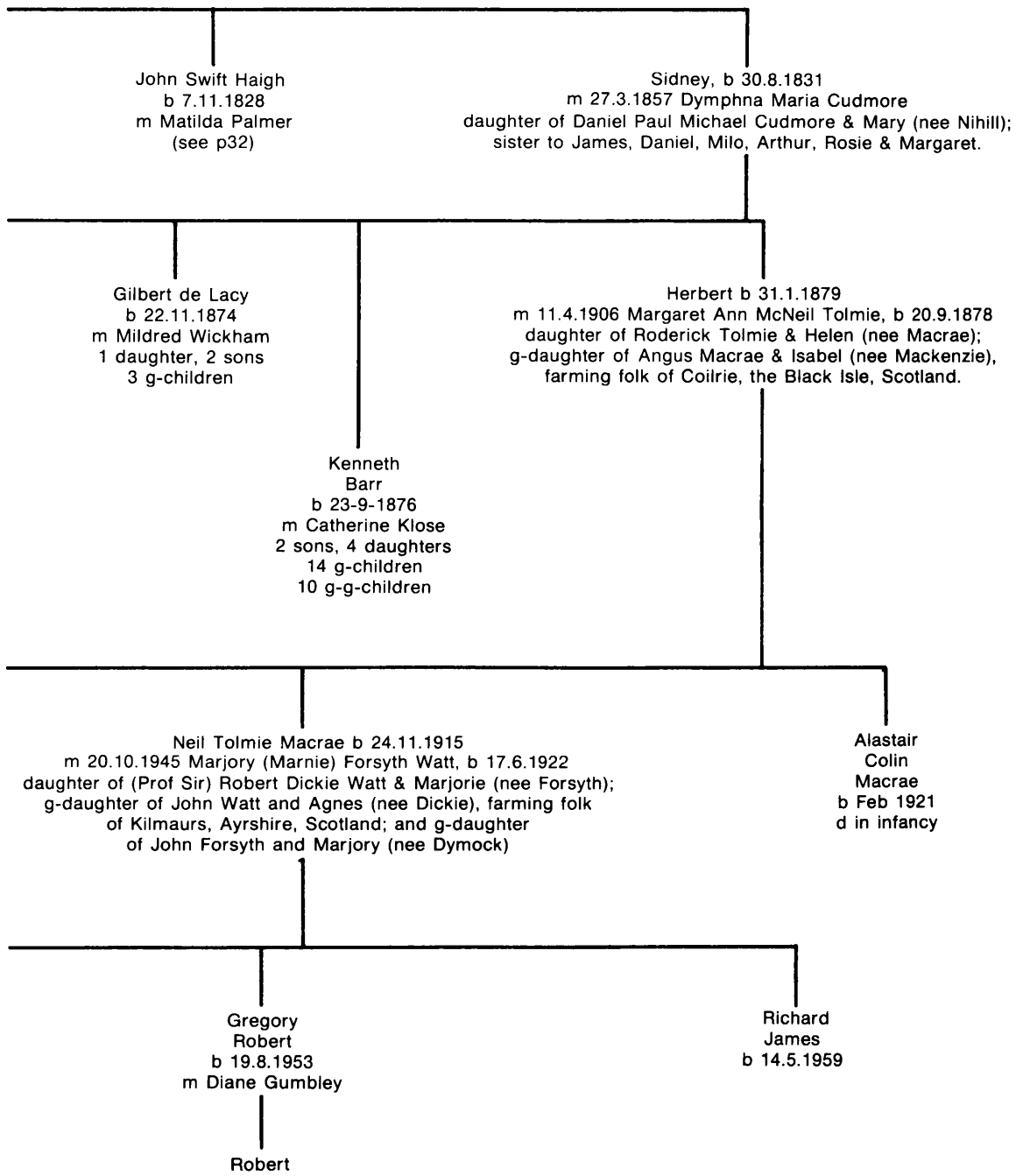
If "Stone on Stone" contains any mistakes they are unintentional and I apologise for them. Certainly there are many gaps in the story which I was unable to fill. If any readers can provide me with improved or additional material I shall welcome it, in case another edition should be attempted.

Neil Yeates
5 Arthur Street
Woolgoolga, N.S.W., 2450.

August, 1979.

John Luther Yeates
 b 13.7.1766. Lawyer, Walworth, Middlesex, England
 m 16.7.1820 Martha Barr of Henwick Hall, Worcester, England b 1797
 Arrived Adelaide 22.1.1839 with 3 sons & 2 daughters





CHAPTER 1

A NEW LIFE IN A NEW LAND

Many folk whose ancestors came out to Australia in the early days of settlement must, like me, wonder what the motivating force was to have made their forebears embark on the big adventure. The journey itself, made by sailing ship, was hazardous enough; but, once arrived, all manner of privations had to be endured in a land which can hardly have seemed hospitable. Perhaps they did not know before starting how strange and difficult the new environment would be.

Some new arrivals of course had no choice: they had lost their freedom and were convicts. The presence of convicts might well have discouraged some free settlers from coming to such a place; but many did come. Among these latter there were some ne'er-do-wells; others who were unwanted at home, even to the extent of actually being paid to disappear (remittance-men); and of course a few who were keen to escape from something — the clutch of the law, the shadow of dishonour, domineering parents, or perhaps just life itself as they knew it. But there were also many genuine adventurers; many purposeful settlers keen to seek a future of greater opportunity; and no doubt others who combined both these latter motivations.

I like to believe that my own emigrating ancestors fell into the last of the above categories, and from what I have learnt I believe this to be so.

The first direct emigrant ancestors of mine bearing the name Yeates arrived in Adelaide on 22 January 1839. They were my great-grandparents. Another pair of my great-grandparents arrived in Australia four years earlier, but they bore the name Cudmore.

The 1839 arrivals were John Luther Yeates, his wife Martha (nee Barr), three sons, George Barr, John Swift Haigh and Sidney, and two daughters, Emily and Fanny. The children's ages ranged from 16 to seven, Emily being the eldest and my grandfather, Sidney, the youngest.

A copy of Yeates entries in the Register from St. Martins-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, the parish church of John Luther Yeates, tells much (56). The following are relevant extracts:

John Yeates was born 13 July 1766 and christened at St Martins-in-the-Fields. He was married three times : first in 1786; second in 1807. His first and second wives died.

1820, July 16: John Yeates married Martha Barr.

1821, May 15: Frances Yeates born at No 9 Seymour Place, Walworth; christened at Newington Church, 6 June.

1822, Nov 23: Emily Yeates born, No 9 Seymour Place, Walworth; christened at Newington Church.

1823, Jan 27: Frances Yeates died; buried at Newington.

1824, Oct 23: George Barr Yeates born; christened at Hackney Church.

1826, Oct 1: Frances Maria Robertson Yeates born at Hunts Street, Bloomsbury; christened at St George's Church, Bloomsbury.

1828, Nov 7: John Swift Haigh Yeates born, 7 Agnes Place, Waterloo Rd; christened St George's Church Borough [?].

1831, Aug 30: Sidney Yeates born at New Cross, Kent. Christened at St Paul's Church, Deptford. Mr. John Sidney Barr, Mr. Butchell and Mr. Stephen Pearse Godfathers and Mrs. Ellen Van Butchell Godmother.

Sidney's full name appears to have been Sidney Van Butchell (or Van Buchel) Yeates. The middle name was obviously given him in honour of two of his Godparents but in later life he never used the name.

An article (2) about Sidney at the time of his retirement says that the vessel which brought his family out from England was the barque "Bardaster" of 434 tons, commanded by Capt John Virtue. Listings of newcomers in 1839 (S A Archives) confirm the arrival of this family and, according to Sidney, they reached Holdfast Bay on 18 January after a journey occupying about seven months. Another of the boys, George, recalled in later years (24) that they were "carried ashore on sailors' backs and landed at the Patawalonga Creek." The procedure after landing was to travel by bullock dray to the settlement of Adelaide and establish a camp.

Martha Barr was born at Henwick Hall, Worcester, England in 1796. Two of her brothers served under General Gough in India, where they spent 19 years without furlough. Col Frederick Barr died of wounds on the battlefield and Lt-Col Marcus Barr expired while having a leg amputated. (1)

John Luther Yeates is said by one writer (57) to have been a London barrister. One other view is that he was a solicitor. All accounts agree, however, that he came from Walworth, Middlesex, England. John was also at one time a Captain in the Berkeley Regiment; this is indicated in a letter (see below) and confirmed in the St Martins-in-the-Fields entries which tell that "Mr. Yeates, Captain . . . (was) inoculated 19 May 1812."

Since I am only three generations removed from John Luther Yeates, it might be thought unusual that I know so little about him. However, we were born 150 years apart and the few generations are explained by the fact that my grandfather Sidney was the youngest of five, my father Herbert was the youngest of 12, and I (born 1915) am the youngest of five.

It was evidently the family's intention to remain in Adelaide, for Mrs Yeates' diary recorded no complaints of the hardship of tent life "while their house was being built on North Terrace." (1)

Unfortunately, however, dysentery claimed the life of John Luther Yeates, aged 73, only three months after their arrival. He was buried in the West Terrace Cemetery. Records of that cemetery did not begin until 1 July 1840, but a tombstone in part of the cemetery known to contain the graves of persons who died before 1 July 1840, carries the inscription: "Sacred to the memory of John Yeates, Esq, who died 26 April 1839 . . ."

In the S A Archives there is a rather remarkable letter written in a clear, meticulous though slightly "spidery" hand, by John Luther Yeates to the Colonial Secretary. The letter reads as follows:

G. M. Stephens, Esq,
Colonial Secretary
Sir,

Having a puncheon 3 feet 10 inches deep by 12 feet in circumference, which I understand is much wanted in some parts of Government Stores, I beg leave to offer same at Government's own valuation, tho' it cost me in London 7.10.0.

An early attention is required on acct of the weather on the puncheon.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Yr most obed servt

Jno Yeates — East Terrace — late Captain, Berkeleys.
15 March 1839.

Two official minutes are written obliquely across the page. One of these (signature indecipherable) is dated 16 March 1839 (next day!) and reads: "The Colonial Storekeeper will report if such a puncheon is really required." The second minute, signed by Thos Gilbert, Colonial Storekeeper, and dated 19 March 1839, states: "I am not aware that a puncheon such as is here described is required for public service." The Concise Oxford Dictionary says that a puncheon (historical) is a large cask for liquids, holding from 72 to 120 gals. No doubt my great-grandfather bought it to provide the family with water on the voyage from England.

Apart from the unusual subject of the letter and the strange chance by which it came to be preserved in the Archives, a point of interest to present-day readers might be the promptness with which the public service handled the matter!

When Mrs. Martha Yeates was widowed she must have been comfortably placed financially, for the house-building went ahead, and, no doubt after delays at the start, she became established in her own home on North Terrace, opposite Government House grounds. She lived there until 1854, then moved to Stanley Street, North Adelaide occupying a house named "Birsingshaw" until 1864. (54).

The house on North Terrace was built on Acre 18. It was described in the City of Adelaide Assessment Book for 1848 as "brick buildings and Mannings house, with offices, back entrance and out-buildings" (54). The "Manning's house" referred to in the annotation, according to the S A Archivist, is the name of a make of prefabricated building brought out by some of the early settlers.

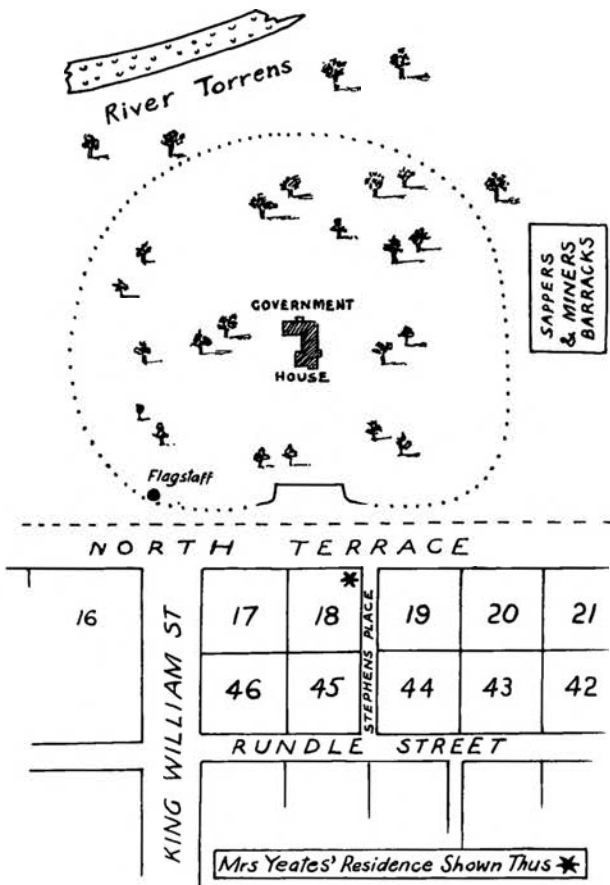
Following her husband's death, Martha evidently desired to supplement her income or simply to be industrious. She achieved this quite quickly by starting a private school in which she taught for at least three years, from 1840 to 1842 inclusive (66). Although Martha lived on North Terrace, she conducted her school in other premises. Specific locations were Craigie Place, the Tavistock Buildings, Gouger Street and Rundle Street, and the 1841 Census listed 11 persons as being under her roof, in Rundle Street, on census day. She must have attracted both girl and boy pupils because one writer (4) refers to "Mrs Yeates' establishment for young ladies and young gentlemen under nine."

* * *

During 1839, while the family was still living the tent-life (presumably on East Terrace), customary in those days for new-comers, a certain John Richardson interested himself in Emily who by then was almost 17 years old. We are told (1) that Richardson's diary recorded that "Emily displayed a very finely shaped leg when she tripped and fell over the tent-rope to-day." The recorded marriages at Trinity Church, Adelaide include "Emily Yeates (of Walworth, Middlesex) to John Richardson (of St George's, Southwark), on 12 October, 1839."

Other family papers (Frances Buttrose, in F. D. Johnson's Journal) (5) state that:

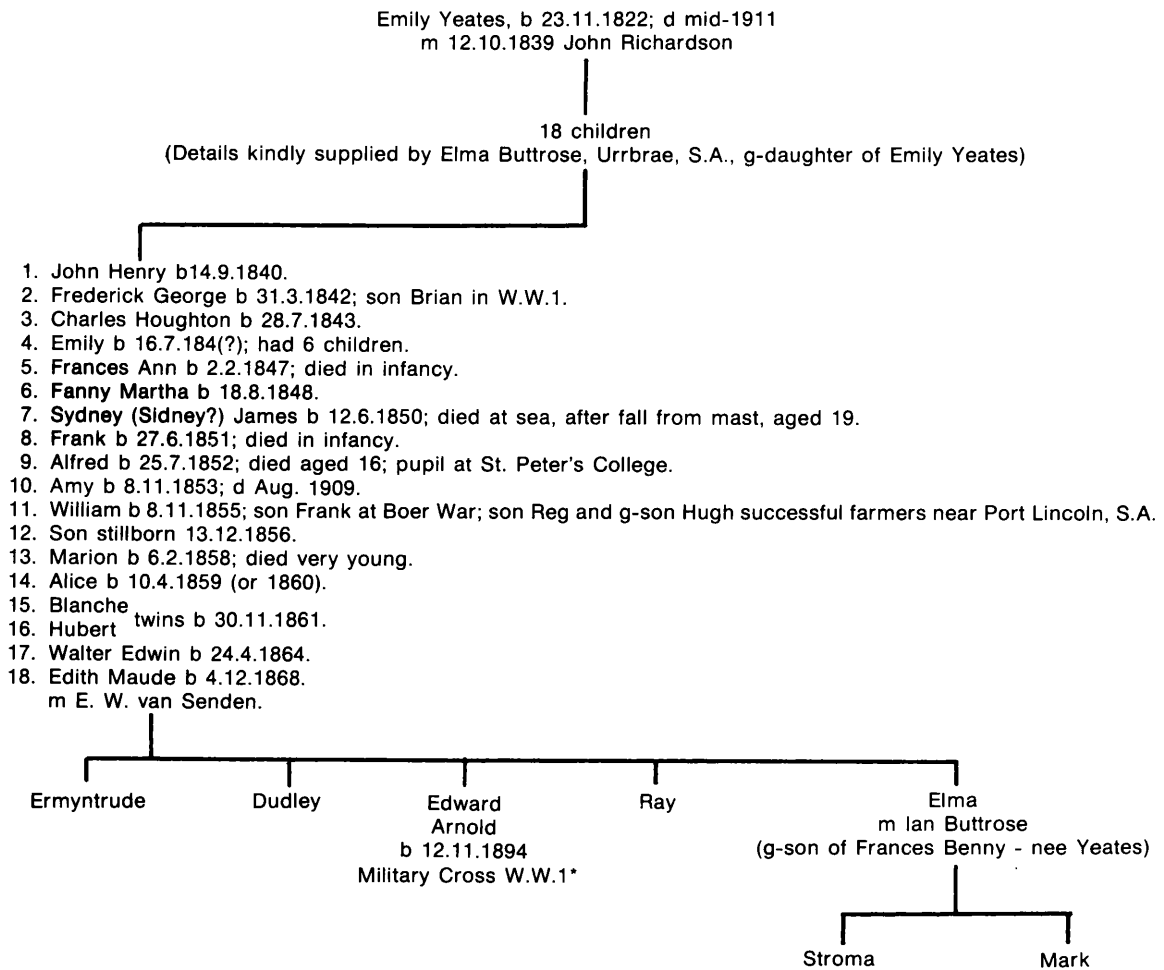
Emily was a big handsome girl, full of life and animation. Before proposing to her John Richardson used to hunt for mythical lost articles in all the corners, to see what sort of a housewife this Emily would be! This trait in his character may have been helpful, as he died leaving £60,000 to her and the living members of his eighteen children.



Site of first Yeates home (after tent life) in Australia, with numbered Acre allotments as surveyed by Colonel Light. Sketch based on maps dated 1841 and 1842 (the latter, G. S. Kingston's by courtesy S A Archives).



Residence of Mrs Martha Yeates, on Acre 18, west corner of North Terrace and Stephen's Place, Adelaide (54). Following her husband John Yeates' death in 1839 Martha married William Fairbank in 1842. Fairbank died in the early 1850's; but Martha resided in this house until 1854. The artist's name appears to be S.Dempster. (S A Archives).



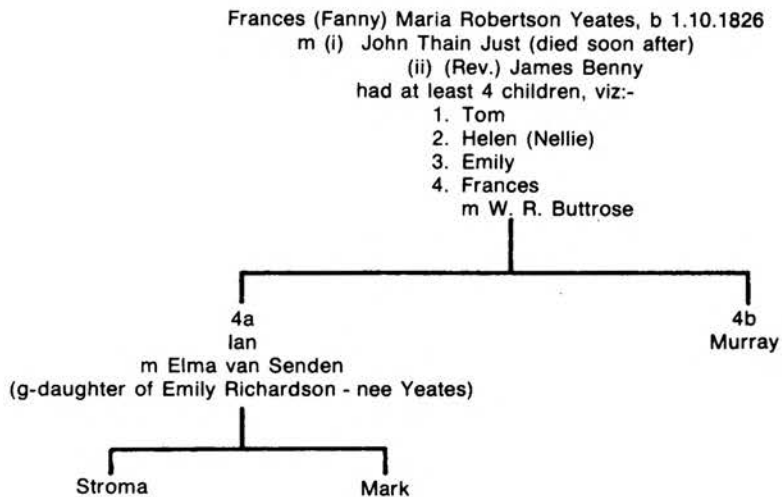
*Capt. van Senden's award was for conspicuous gallantry in action at Olivert on 1 July 1916 with the 8th Bn York & Lancaster Regiment. "He led his men to the assault under heavy machine-gun and shell fire, and cheered them on when they had suffered severe casualties . . ."

The same source says that the second daughter, Fanny, helped her mother in the school at North Adelaide. When 18 she married John Thain Just, from Dundee. He only lived a year or so after their marriage, and later (about 1853) the young widow married a lawyer from Stirling, James Benny of Druin. He was a widower and was studying Greek and other subjects preparatory to being ordained in the Church of Scotland as a minister. After ordination and marriage, this family went to Morphett Vale, where for 50 years the Rev Benny ministered to his devoted congregation. When he died in 1910, at the age of 86, sons and grandsons of his original parishioners as well as more recent members of his flock, travelled miles from distant parts to attend the funeral service in the old John Knox Church at Morphett Vale.

The older Yeates boys evidently started working soon after their father, John Luther Yeates, died. Thus George was employed by a city firm in Hindley Street, but later transferred to Drew and Crews at the Burra Burra, some 90 miles north of Adelaide, where copper mining was booming. Even young Sidney started working at a tender age. Though he terrified his mother on the trip out from England in the "Bardaster" by always climbing the masts (5), he soon adopted more sedate ways, and accepted a position with a bookseller in King William Street, Adelaide at 2/6 per week (2). After about six months' service the manager one day said: "Sidney, I have found you very industrious and honest in my shop; from this date I shall raise your salary to 3/- per week." But about a year of bookselling at that rate of pay was enough for Sidney, and from that time onwards he and his brothers appear to have worked on the land, always in close association. In the earlier years they joined in some of the gold rushes; but it was in pastoral pursuits that they were to find their real vocation. George Barr Yeates at first appeared to be the trail-blazer — which was natural enough since he was the eldest of the three boys.



Frances Benny (nee Yeates), wife of the Rev James Benny, The Manse, Morphett Vale, Sth Aust, about the late 1850's.



On 11 October 1842 the widowed Martha Yeates, then aged 46, remarried. Her new husband was a 41 year old bachelor accountant named William Fairbank who arrived in the Colony on 18 June 1840 in the "Thirteen" (54). The marriage certificate shows that the officiating minister was Thomas Quinton Stow, that the location of the marriage was "the house of Mrs. Yeates, North Adelaide" and that two of the six witnesses were Martha's son George and daughter Emily (Richardson).

The home-site of Acre 18 North Terrace was evidently acquired as a lease from the South Australian Company by John Luther Yeates who arranged for the residence to be built on it. Following John's death, and after completion of the house, Martha lived there; but it appears that William Fairbank took over the lease at the time of, or just prior to, his marriage to Martha in 1842.

In the early fifties Fairbank left for the Victorian diggings and is believed to have died there as a result of a horse accident (54). Then in 1854 Martha moved from the North Terrace house to "Birsingshaw," Stanley St, N Adelaide." (3)

Martha lived at "Birsingshaw" for 10 years until she died on 7 April 1864, aged 68. She, like her first husband John, was buried in West Terrace Cemetery. Her grave, which is marked by a well-preserved tombstone, is in a leased plot. The 100 year lease was granted to George Barr Yeates in 1863 and it expired in 1963 (55).



Martha (nee Barr), mother of George, John, Sidney, Emily and Fanny Yeates photographed in 1864, the year in which she died, aged 68 years. (55). Photo by courtesy S A Archives. (3).

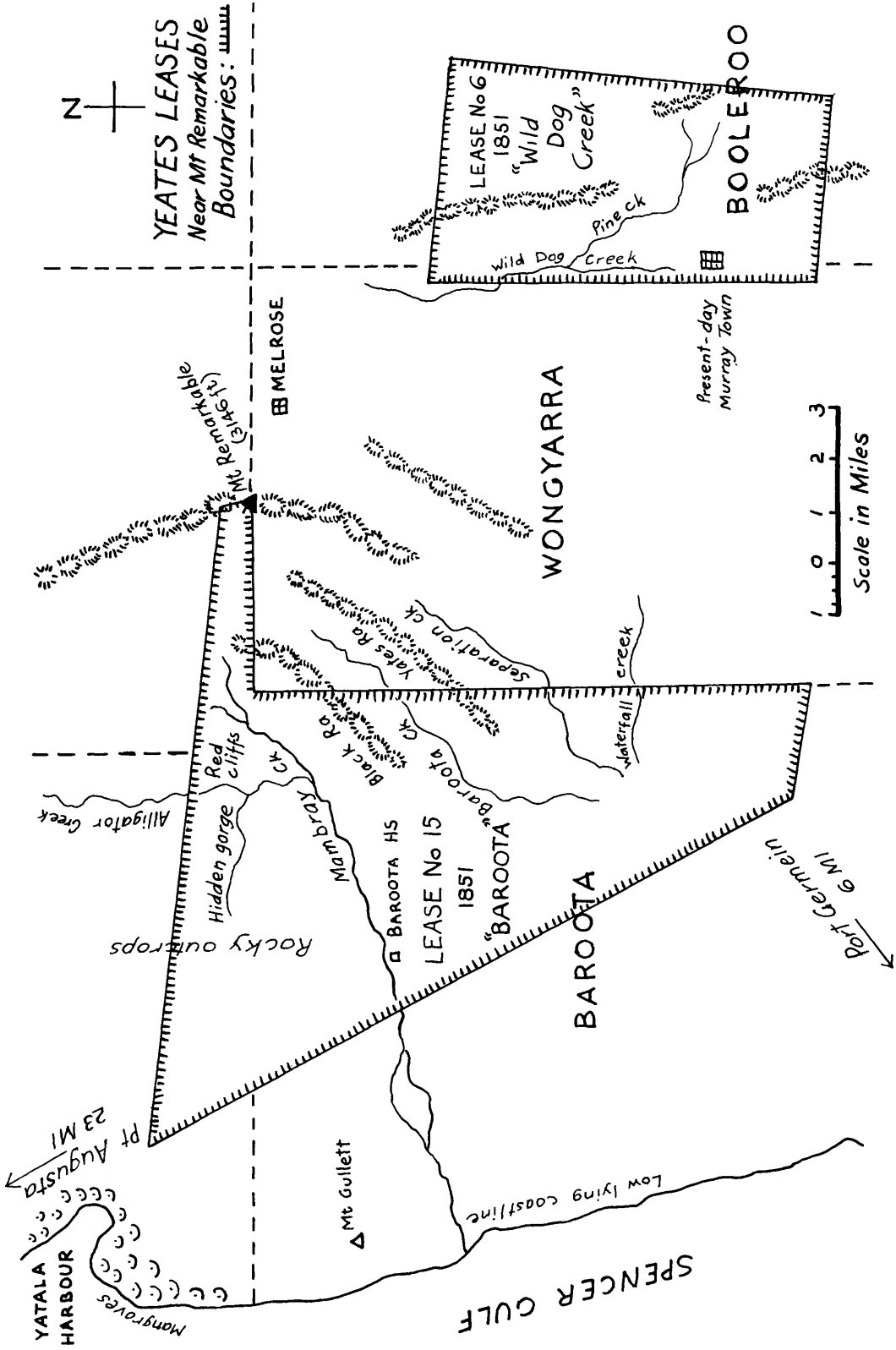
George Barr Yeates' work at the Burra Burra evidently paid well for he was able to take up a property named Baldina, located due east of the Burra, on the southern extremity of the South Flinders Ranges. As this was in the 1840's, and since pastoral leases were not established until 1851, George most probably "squatted", paying annually the necessary occupation licence and stock fees.

In 1851 George extended his pastoral interests by leasing two additional runs, some 80 miles further to the north-west near Mt. Remarkable. These were called Baroota and Wild Dog Creek and it is in connection with the management of them that brothers John and Sidney come strongly into the picture. The two runs were 67 sq miles and 27 sq miles in size respectively.

The oldest register and actual lease documents at the South Australian Lands Department show that George Barr Yeates held Pastoral Lease No 15 (Baroota) from 1 July 1851. He then transferred it to John Yeates and Sidney Yeates in 1857. But there seems little doubt that John and Sidney were in fact working the Baroota run prior to its official transfer to them by George, and that one or other of them also looked after Lease No 6, Wild Dog Creek, until George came from Baldina to live there himself.

It is recorded (1) that one day, while waiting for his horse to be shod in the Burra, George Barr Yeates saw a young girl looking from a window and said to himself "That's the girl that I shall marry." However, on acquaintance he found that she was so young that he had to wait until she was 17. She was the daughter of Thomas William Powell, who had arrived in South Australia on 8 April 1849, in the "Sir Charles Forbes," commanded by Capt Prynne, and in the Directory of 1864 he is named as Clerk of the local Court at Clare. It was at their house, (1) that the McDouall Stuart party spent their last night in beds en route to the Gulf of Carpentaria, on which journey they named Powell's Creek in honour of their host.

After patient waiting, George married Louisa Rebecca Powell at the Burra on 28 November 1854, and, having sold Baldina, they started off on horseback on the honeymoon journey to their home at Wild Dog Creek. The first day of travel was fiercely hot but they made the journey in stages, the bride riding a chestnut filly which had been perfectly schooled for her at Wild Dog Creek. At least the country over which they travelled would have been pleasant scenically. Even to-day it retains the unspoilt charm of rolling hills and dales. Nowadays the country is given over to wheat and sheep production, but in 1854 grazing settlement had only just commenced and there would have been no fences to impede the travellers' way. Though the weather was hot and probably dry in late November, that was characteristic of the region's climate: hot, dry summers and cold, wet winters.





Wild Dog Creek, near Mt Remarkable, Sth Aust in 1978. Parts of the old house (top) and the thatched barn (below) may well date from George Yeates' occupation from 1851 to 1862.

As they approached Wild Dog Creek they would have seen the rougher, timber-clad range country ahead, with Mt. Remarkable rearing up as the landmark just short of which they were to halt. Though at Wild Dog Creek they were still in rolling, pleasant, up-land country, a main spur of the South Flinders Ranges lay immediately to their west. Over that and across a narrow coastal plain, a mere 15-20 miles distant, lay Spencer Gulf, with Port Pirie 50 miles to the south and Port Augusta, at the head of the Gulf, 50 miles to the north.

Having arrived at Wild Dog Creek, George's wife, Louisa, had to adapt to bush life (1). When George and Sidney were away getting stores from Port Augusta, and the Blacks — all unclad — massed for a corroboree on the open space before the bark-roofed, pise house, with its wide verandahs on three sides Louisa would lie all night, fully dressed, near the water-barrel, with a gun and accompanied by her faithful house-keeper, Mary Hobbs. She would refuse the dancers a drink in order to hasten their departure, until, sensing the return of "Georgie" and "Thydney", they would disappear as strangely as they came.

To-day, the old homestead at Wild Dog Creek does not conform to the above description: its outer walls are of stone and it has an iron roof. However, one end of the house is really old and its roofed verandahs, with rammed mud and stone floor could well be original; the outer wall surfaces were probably stone clad and the iron roof added in later years. In fact the description (7) of the improvements on

Lease No 6, in Parliamentary Paper 105 of 1864 lists, among other items, one stone hut with verandah. Even the "newest" part of the present house looks at least 100 years old and one of the stones in the kitchen doorway, at about rib-height, shows the customary groove worn deep from years of knife sharpening by diligent kitchen personnel.

John S. H. Yeates, the second son, married Matilda Palmer when she was only 17 and "straight from the school-room" to quote her grand-daughter, Mrs. Kathleen Seaton. Matilda's brothers had said to her, "If Mr. Yeates asks you to marry him, you are to say 'Yes' "!

In 1851, when the Yeates brothers first settled in this area, the present town of Melrose did not exist: its development came later. Instead, the runs were described by reference to Mt Remarkable. This is illustrated by the 1851 list (8) of pastoralists leasing runs "on Crown Lands near Mount Remarkable," viz:

Lease No.	Lessee	Site
6	G. B. Yeates	Wirrabara North, 10 miles S-E of Mount Remarkable. (This was Wild Dog Creek).
15	G. B. Yeates	Baroota
110	D. Cudmore	Mount Gullet
56	J. H. Angas	Stony Creek, N-N-W of Mount Remarkable
121	J. H. Angas	2½ miles east of Mount Remarkable

Communication for the brothers between Wild Dog Creek and Baroota could not have been easy, for, although the homesteads were only about 10 miles apart in direct line, the two runs were separated by the main spur of the South Flinders Ranges which in that area reached their greatest height in Mt. Remarkable (3,146 ft). In fact the very peak of the mountain marked the north-east boundary of Baroota. Then, still separating the two runs and running diagonally south-west away from the spur of which Mt. Remarkable formed a part lay Yates Range and Black Range.

Mt Remarkable was named (8) by Edward John Eyre on 18 June 1840, during his third and most famous journey — the one to King George's Sound. While at Rocky River, a little south of Crystal Brook (40 miles south of Mt Remarkable) he made the following entry in his journal:

From our present encampment a very high and pointed hill was visible to the N-N-W. This, from the lofty way in which it towered above the surrounding hills, I named Mount Remarkable.

Although I have studied a 10-page "History of the Melrose District" compiled from notes in the S A Archives I am unable to find precisely when Melrose township, which is nestled in against the eastern base of Mt. Remarkable, received its name. In 1848 a police outpost comprising a slab hut measuring 26 ft x 16 ft was completed "at Mount Remarkable." Slightly more substantial police buildings were erected in the same grounds in 1855 and still there was no mention of the name Melrose; however, included in the design of one pine log hut was a room for a local Court — a sign that a township was envisaged. The first hotel licence was issued in 1854; the first school (run privately by a Mrs Enoch) was recognised by the government in 1858; a permanent Police Station-cum-Court House was built in 1862, Holy Trinity Church in 1864, and a Post Office and Telegraph Station in 1865-6. But at the time these last two symbols of urban status appeared, the Yeates brothers had departed, after 12 years in the district. The male members undertook in 1863, a formidable trek which was to establish their families in another outpost of civilization: far north Queensland.

On the 27th day of March 1857 my grandfather Sidney was married. The marriage certificate is headed "No 43 of 1857, District of Mount Remarkable." Obviously Melrose had not been named by that date. However, Sidney Yeates and his wife gave the name "Melrose" to the property on which they later resided in Queensland. Melrose township probably acquired its name before the end of 1862 when Sidney left the district — perhaps when the Court House was completed.

* * *

The girl whom Sidney married was Dymphna Maria Cudmore, eldest of the seven children of Daniel Paul Michael Cudmore and his wife Mary (nee Nihill).

Sidney first met his future bride when he was on a visit to Yongala Station, which was a lease of Daniel Cudmore's some 35-40 miles in a direct line to the south-east of the Yeates' runs at Mt Remarkable. Sidney therefore had to travel quite a distance to do his courting and the journey both ways on horseback must have needed more than one day — especially if he had to cross the ranges from Baroota rather than make the shorter and much easier journey from Wild Dog Creek.

At anyrate his efforts as a suitor were successful and the attractive girl of 22 whom he chose (he then being 27) certainly also wins my approval; her photograph, taken in 1860 when she was 25 and had had two of her large family of children, shows a confident and personable young woman of character.



Dymphna Maria Yeates (nee Cudmore)
at age of 25 years in 1860, three years
after her marriage to Sidney Yeates.
(24).

The marriage ceremony was performed at Pinda, which was another lease of Daniel Cudmore's just north of Mt Remarkable. Pinda was acquired by Daniel Cudmore after Yongala, and some of his later children grew up there. It seems that towards the end of the 1850's the family divided their time between the two stations.

The two witnesses who signed Sidney and Dymphna's marriage certificate were the bride's parents. Sidney's mother, Martha (then Martha Fairbank and once more a widow) may also have been present, but she receives no mention.

Since Sidney married in 1827, it is significant that in that same year he (and his brother John) took over the Baroota lease from George. This appears to have been Sidney's first responsibility in the sense of "ownership" for a piece of land — and what a test it must have been!

The whole north-east portion of the run is mountainous and rugged, with deep gorges cut into the red sandstone along the course of all the major creeks, making spectacular scenery. So interesting and unusual a place is this scenically in the Alligator Ck, Mambray Ck, Mt Remarkable area that it has now been proclaimed a National Park; but its rugged terrain may not have been appreciated by the Yeates brothers when they were trying to make a living from sheep raising. There were of course no fences to contain the sheep in those days, all such control having to be accomplished by shepherds. Hence the Baroota lessees had to employ more than the usual number of shepherds (see large number of huts, below).

Even the less rugged eastern and south-eastern parts of the run, in the region of Baroota Ck, Separation Ck and Waterfall Ck, would be difficult enough to manage, for steeply-sloping hills separate the creeks. The streams would have been fast-running in rainy weather, but dry in rainless months. Baroota Ck rises on the southern spur of Mt Remarkable, Separation Ck between Black Ra and Yates Ra, and Waterfall Ck to the south-east of the latter range.

The naming of Separation Ck is of historical interest. In September 1842 Inspector Tolmer led a small party of police and civil volunteers to search for a man named Dutton, who had left Port Lincoln to take some stock by land to Adelaide. He had set out a few months previously but had not been heard of since.



Red sandstone gorges along course of Alligator Ck, Baroota Run, Sth Flinders Ras. Now part of Mt Remarkable National Park.

At a creek a few miles west (south-west actually) of Mt Remarkable, the volunteers refused to go any further with the police party and the place became known as Separation Ck. Dutton was never found.

At least the western side of Baroota would have been more manageable, for there the country is flat, forming part of the coastal plain beside Spencer Gulf.

According to a work (9) which describes the history of the Port Pirie area, Baroota is reputed to have shipped its wool from Germein Bay. This entailed carting the bales down to the water's edge by bullock wagon, then loading them on to a flat bottomed barge which had to be beached for the purpose at high tide. As there are mangroves along much of that coast, some of the difficulties can be imagined.

In 1864 a good description of Baroota, following its appraisal by Surveyor General G. W. Goyder, appeared in Parliamentary Paper No 105. This was just before the first 14-year lease of the property expired. The run was then being re-assessed and Sidney and his brother had not long sold out to the next occupier. Many if not all the improvements listed would have been made by the Yeates brothers between 1851 and 1862. The paper states:

The 65 square mile run [67 according to the lease document] has a grazing capacity of 9400 sheep. Watered on the N-E, E, and S, by Mambray, Baroota and Reedy [now Waterfall?] Creeks. N-W portion usable in winter only [insufficient water in summer for stock]. Several small springs in the ranges, but only sufficient water for huts. Improvements comprise five stone, two gum slab, and four pine huts and two tanks on the run; and, at the head station, a six roomed pine house — plastered, ceiled and floored, with verandah, large tank, scullery, etc. Overseer's house, woolshed, five pine huts, smith's shop, post and rail yard, stockyards, garden and other fences, waterhole and troughs, well and pump. Value of improvements £ 1124. Tolerable roads [presumably for bullock wagons] from the head station on Mambray Creek, to Port Augusta and Adelaide.

The Baroota homestead still exists as a ruin and conforms to its 1864 official description. The native pine (*Callitris*) logs, cut in halves longitudinally, are in amazingly good condition behind the mud and mortar plaster on the walls — even though the roof has long since disappeared. The nails are all hand made. There are three stone fireplaces: one in the sitting-room, one in what was probably the main bedroom, and the largest of all at the rear of the house in a court-yard area which may have been covered; this was probably the separate kitchen.

An interesting feature of the house is its surprisingly modern plan: it is L-shaped, with a verandah along each side of the inner angle looking across to Spencer Gulf—not box-shaped, with a hall down the middle, like so many of the old houses. There even appears to have been a breeze-way through the angle of the L, leading to the outside fireplace and kitchen.

The siting of the house was obviously given great thought. It is near Mambray Creek, but on a rise and far enough away to be safe from floods; it has a most beautiful view of Mt Remarkable to the east; and away to the west the blue waters of Spencer Gulf are easily visible. Finally, some 30 to 40 yards to the rear of the house is a gigantic river red gum whose bole (measured in Oct 1978) had a circumference of 41 ft 10 in, at a height of 4 ft from the ground. Its trunk is hollow and the interior so large that a cricket team could hold their annual meeting there, all seated round a large table! That tree must have been large even 150 years ago, and, assuming the Yeates brothers built Baroota homestead, they appreciated a fine tree just as much as this present-day writer.



Picturesque setting of Baroota homestead ruins, 1978, with back-drop of Mt Remarkable (upper picture) and distant view of Spencer Gulf (lower).



Details of the outside chimney (left) with Mt Remarkable in the background; and (right) the structure of the slab walls.

* * *

Although Baroota's terrain was much more rugged than that of Yongala, living in the bush was nothing new to Dymphna. Hence she would have taken the change from Yongala to Baroota in her stride — feeling none of the strangeness, loneliness and perhaps anxiety which beset George's wife, Louisa, in her early days at Wild Dog Creek. The six-roomed house at Baroota would have been fairly similar, comfort-wise, and was larger than the little stone Yongala homestead in which Dymphna had lived for the previous 10 years.

The original old Yongala house is still well preserved to-day, set beside a larger, later-built extension. The present owners, Mr and Mrs F. R. Humphris, themselves descendants of folk who came to the district in early days, have renovated and maintained the homestead with great skill and taste, preserving the dignity of the original structure while achieving an overall appearance of the greatest charm. One feature of the original section of the home is the huge slabs of slate which were used to pave the floors and verandah. They came from a slate quarry near Clare, about 50 miles distant and could not have been easy to move. Another point of interest is that a large excavated tank under the middle of the house, to which access is gained by a trap-door set into the floor, was used for storage of household water — probably a precaution in those days when possibly unfriendly Aborigines abounded in the district.

Unlike Sidney, Dymphna Cudmore was born in Australia, her parents having come out from Ireland as a recently married couple (10, 17). In fact Daniel was only 24 when he and his bride arrived at Hobart Town, in 1835. Their intended destination had been Sydney; but the "John Denison" (Capt Mackie) in which they sailed called first at Tasmania and an army cousin of Daniel Cudmore's, who was stationed there, persuaded them to stay.

A wealth of information about the Cudmore family exists in the S A Archives. They originated in the English County of Essex; but in the mid-17th century one branch of the family settled in Ireland. Daniel was born at Tory Hill, County Limerick, in 1811. However, he went to school at Chelmsford in Essex, so the separate branches of the family evidently remained closely associated. Mary Nihill, whom he married, came from Rockville (later Ballynavick), County Limerick.

Whatever Daniel's calling had been in Ireland, he turned his hand to brewing when he reached Tasmania. Dymphna, Dan and Mary's first child, was born at George Town which is on the north coast near Launceston. Dymphna's birth certificate (11) is interesting for several reasons: first, it is "a true copy extracted from the Registrar of Baptisms in the Parish of St John's, Launceston"; second, it describes the father, Daniel Cudmore, as "settler" having abode at "St Vincenents Gulph" (obviously St Vincent Gulf in South Australia); third, the date of birth (19 July 1837) and the date of baptism (23 November 1837) both conflict, as we shall soon see, with the dates on which the mother arrived in Adelaide bringing not only the baby Dymphna but her first-born son, James. All things considered, it seems more likely that Dymphna's birth and baptism dates should read 23 November 1836 and 19 July 1837, respectively or that both dates should be 1836.

Other source material (10) makes clear that Daniel went to Adelaide ahead of the family. Hearing of the formation of the free Colony of South Australia, he set off alone, presumably to compare prospects there with those in Tasmania, and arrived in Adelaide in January 1837 (10).

The settlement had not even been fully surveyed at that time and no restriction was placed on the choice of a camp site. Daniel hired a barrow for £3 and wheeled his belongings up from the old port, ("Port Misery" as it was often called), which Colonel Light discovered in 1836.

After establishing a modest shelter, made of wattle sticks and rushes from the river, he chartered a schooner to collect his family which then included infant Dymphna. Daniel did not accompany the family on the voyage, but waited in Adelaide to welcome them. They arrived in September 1837 (10), with an earlier than expected addition to the family. The new infant was the first boy, James Francis, born just before the schooner reached Adelaide. Births were not registered in the new Colony of South Australia prior to 1842, but James Cudmore was baptised in Holy Trinity Church, Adelaide on 20 October 1837. A journal written by Miss Dorothea Neville Cudmore in 1889 (17) states that James Francis Cudmore was "born on the ocean and was a seven months baby." Perhaps the rigours of the journey across Bass Strait hastened his birth. When Daniel was informed of his wife's arrival, with a new-born baby, he secured the services of a doctor and hurried down to the Port — this time in a bullock dray, hired for £10.



Yongala homestead, about 20 miles north of Jamestown, Sth Aust. Dymphna Cudmore lived in the original old stone house, now over 125 years old (top photo), for some 10 years prior to marrying Sidney Yeates in 1857. The lower photo shows the attractive way in which the original house at right merges with the larger, slightly later built residence.

In later years the Cudmores had five more children: three boys — Daniel H. (Dan), Milo and Arthur, and two girls, Rosie and Margaret, making a total of seven children. Besides Dymphna and her father, it is James, Dan and Arthur who, among the Cudmores, figure most in the rest of this story which is chiefly centred round the Yeates.

A pine house was soon built for the Cudmore family on the banks of the Torrens River, which at that period was said to be remarkable for its beauty, the trees along its margin not having felt the effect of the saw and axe. The population of Adelaide then numbered little more than 500 and only about 50 houses had been built.



Daniel Paul Michael Cudmore and his wife Mary (nee Nihill), great grand parents of the author. They arrived in Australia in 1835. (S A Archives photo).

Daniel Cudmore's first business venture in South Australia was a brewery and malting house in Lower North Adelaide. He then acquired a section of land at Modbury (on the N-E outskirts of Adelaide) and spent some time farming in that district. About 1847, he unexpectedly inherited the family property in Ireland, and, after selling it, was able to take up the fine big tract of country known as Yongala station some 120 miles north of Adelaide. Daniel was the original settler on this property — first by occupation licence, then, after 1851, under a pastoral lease (12). But he was soon to acquire other land — Pinda and Beautiful Valley stations north of Mt Remarkable, Paringa on the River Murray and Avoca on the Darling River. It seemed that Daniel (my great-grandfather) always yearned to be just one step behind the explorers. About 1860 he set off into remote north Queensland where he undertook further pioneering exploits (13).

* * *

After Sidney and Dymphna settled into married life at Baroota there was a busy time for both of them: for Sidney, improving the property, purchasing stores, managing the sheep and marketing wool; for Dymphna, looking after young children and the home. By 1862 they had four children — three boys and a girl. At that date conditions of leasehold were worrying as far as the property was concerned. Like all the other landholders whose 14-year leases started in 1851, time was running out and there was no assurance that the lease would be renewed. Not only that; even within the 14 years of the original agreement, the Government reserved the right to terminate the contract with a mere six months' notice, or to resume any portion of the run. The insecurity which this policy engendered, particularly at a time of rumours of closer settlement and subdivision of suitable large holdings for farming, caused many landholders to sell out and try their fortunes further from civilisation.

In fact just over half the Baroota lease is recorded as having been resumed — as from 25 May 1859. The S A Lands Dept Register of the time shows that on that date 28 sq miles of the original 67 sq miles was resumed; and that, whereas the original total annual rent was £ 33.10.0, the new sum payable was

£33.6.3. In other words, the rent was increased from 10/- per sq mile to £1.3.0. (It is possible that an appeal against this decision may have been successful, as Goyder's survey of 1864 still refers to virtually the full original area).

This Government policy, at a time when marketing was difficult and costs relatively high, must have been discouraging to landholders. However, Sidney Yeates persevered for another three years, when the Yeates brothers decided to make the break and try their fortunes in Queensland. It is likely that Daniel Cudmore influenced them to some degree in making the decision, for he had already taken up country in the far north. He had organised an expedition from South Australia which, between September and November 1861, followed the western tributaries of the Burdekin River and marked out pastoral runs along their courses. This made him one of the earliest pastoralists in the far North. (13)

Sidney and John sold 10,000 mixed sheep to a Mr Salter at 20/- per head, with the remaining lease and all improvements on the station (Baroota) given in. However, there is some evidence that the two brothers continued paying the annual rent until the original 14 year lease expired. The actual lease documents show that transfer to William Thomas Salter was finalised on 30 June 1865. Baroota was then designated a "renewed lease", but Salter evidently gave up after only two more years, for the new document is endorsed "Cancelled by surrender under Act 21/67."

To have agreed on a price for the sheep and "given the station in" (Sidney's words) (2) might seem generous; but £10,000 walk-in-walk-out was probably an appropriate price with the existing insecurity and when the lease had only another three years to run. Probably there was also some advantage to the purchaser in not having to sign a lease until he had gained experience of the run.

When the Yeates sold out to Salter, neither of the parties was to know that the Great Drought of the mid-sixties in South Australia, "unprecedented before or since," (12) lay only a couple of years ahead. It devastated the properties and probably explains why Salter left Baroota.

When the Yeates men set off for Queensland their wives and children remained in South Australia, and, in Sidney's case, except for occasional visits he made to Adelaide by ship, he was not to be reunited with Dymphna and the young children, in what was a normal home atmosphere, for another four years at least. Such was the lot of the pioneers and their wives.

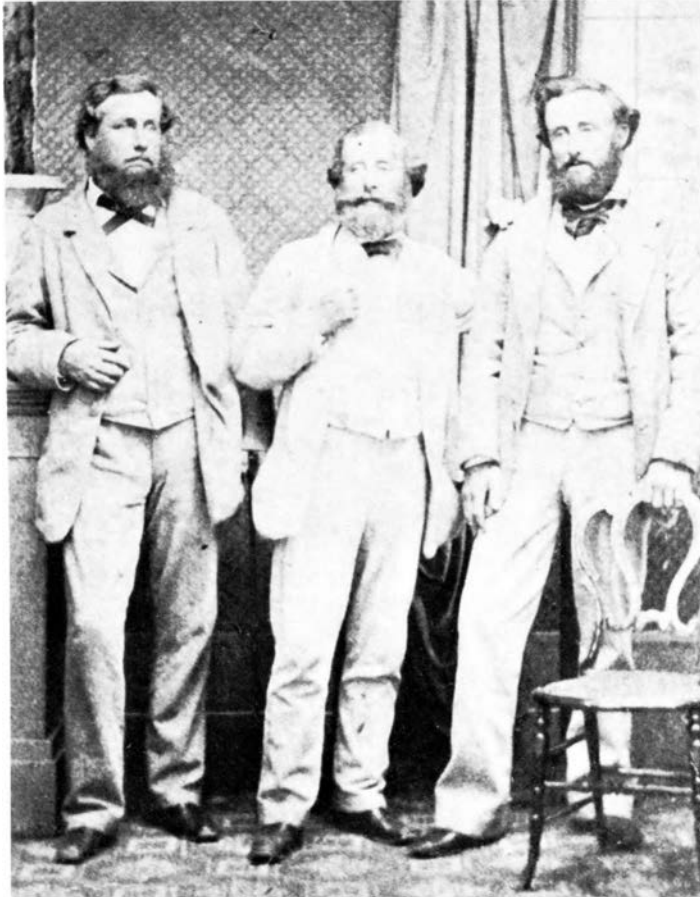
CHAPTER 2

EL DORADO I : NORTH QUEENSLAND

Towards the end of 1862 the three Yeates brothers, George, John and Sidney, "taking enough equipment to start a settlement," left Adelaide by the sailing ship "Sorato," bound first for Port Jackson (1,2,14). Accompanying them were their two nephews John Henry and Frederick G. Richardson, George Agars (husband of Dymphna Yeates' sister), Samuel Powell (Mrs Goerge Yeates' brother), Frank Gardiner (a relative of one of the Cudmores) and others: shepherds, a man named Low and George Yeates' faithful blackboy Warry, are mentioned in accounts of their later travels; and Sam Pilton who "often shared a blanket" with F. G. Richardson is referred to in one of the latter's letters (see p 61).

The party arrived in Sydney on 18 December 1862, spent Christmas "in the region of Port Jackson" and, on 1 January 1863, started out on an overland trek that was to last a year and take most of the party into the watershed of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Their goal was an aggregation of selections at the junction of the Copperfield and Einasleigh Rivers, both part of the Gilbert River system. George Barr Yeates must have inspected the country prior to 1863, for he is said to have given "glowing reports of running streams and the El Dorado in front of them." (1).

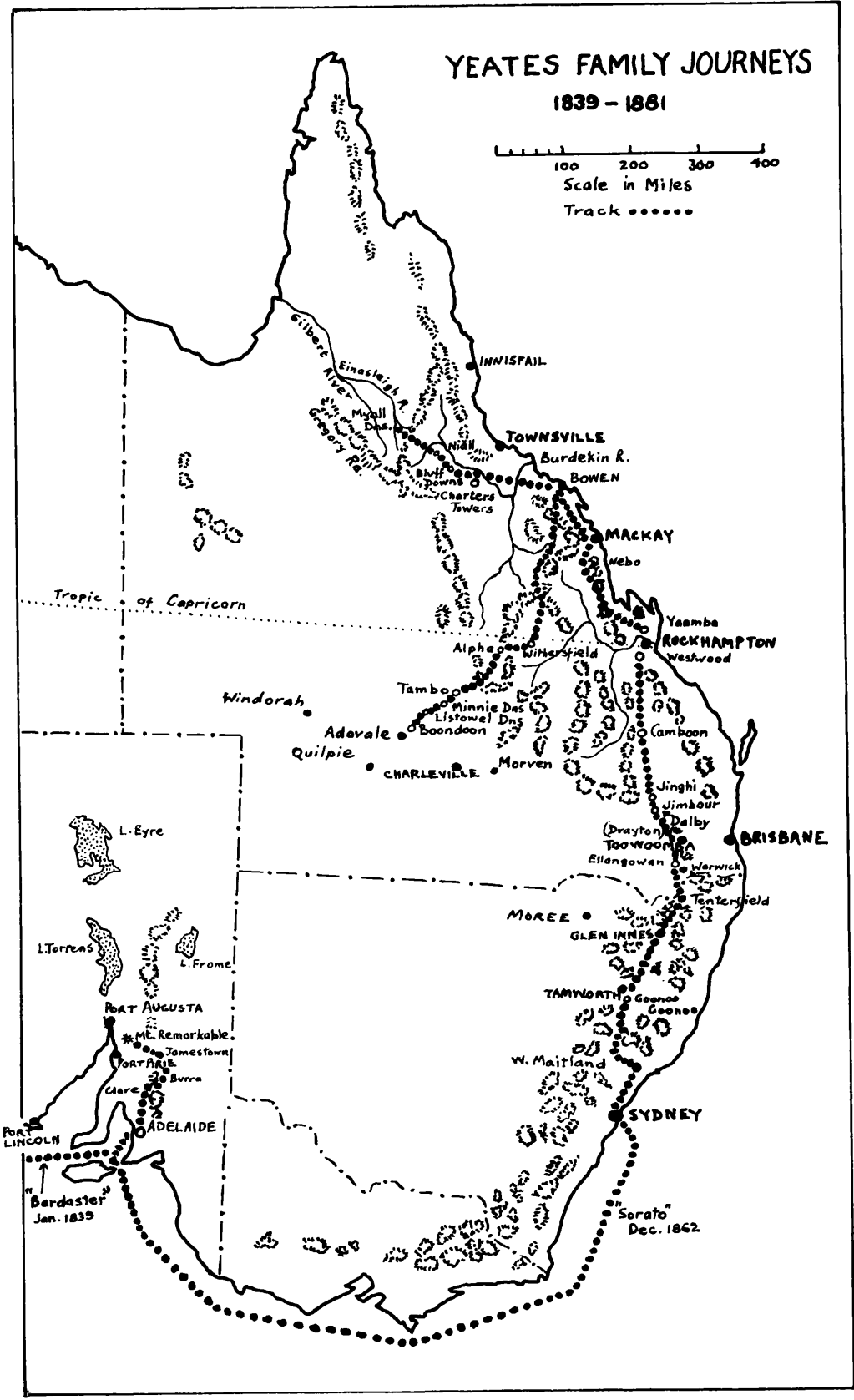
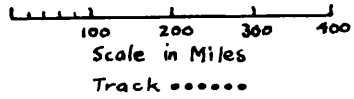
The day before leaving Sydney they arranged the purchase of stock and equipment from the Peel River Land and Mineral Co (PRL&MCo), delivery to be taken at the company's head station, Goonoo Goonoo, near Tawmorth on the party's arrival there. In addition, they bought horses, stores and some equipment at West Maitland, en route to Tamworth.



The three Yeates brothers, from left: John, George and Sidney. This photograph (56) was taken in Sydney, almost certainly at Christmas time 1862, immediately prior to the start of their 1700 mile overland trek to north Qld.

YEATES FAMILY JOURNEYS

1839 - 1861



The PRL&MCo Australian Ledger (15) contains the following entries:

G. B. Yeates (p 206)

31.12.62	To sale of livestock a/c	
	1127 ewes at 13/-	
	816 lambs at 7/-	£1018.3.0
	1 dray and 8 bullocks	90.0.0
	Entire horse "Caesar Augustus"	40.0.0
28. 2.63	50 wethers	25.0.0
31. 3.63	To Ellangowan a/c	
	deposit on 750 Ellangowan ewes	612.0.0

Sydney [sic] Yates [sic] (p 207)

31.12.62	To sale of livestock a/c	
	1234 ewes at 13/-	
	1018 lambs at 7/-	1158.8.0
	1 dray and 8 bullocks	90.0.0

The sales to George in February and March 1863 were for sheep obtained from PRL&MCo properties further north along the travellers' route. For example, the property Ellangowan through which they passed, is on the southern Darling Downs.

An explanatory note from the Archivist at the Australian National University, where the company's papers are held, states that:

... the sale appears to have been arranged in late December 1862 when Phillip Gidley King, General Superintendent of PRL&MCo, visited Sydney. King's despatches to the PRL&MCo Court of Directors in London ... contain references to the sale of the ewes from Ellangowan, the PRL&MCo's run on the Darling Downs.

Relevant sections of a report, dated October 1862, which was included in King's Despatch No 286 to England, refer to the Yeates' blocks in the Gilbert River Basin, thus confirming that they had secured the country prior to making their 1863 northward trek. The report was written by Andrew Ross, an employee of the PRL&MCo, after delivering 12,000 sheep to Albinia Downs. He had been asked to seek possible runs for the company in Queensland. The report states:

On Limestone Creek I met Mr Robert McMaster on his way from the Lind and Gilbert ... he gave me all the information I wanted about the Lind River ... first class sheep country well grassed and plenty of saltbush all through the grass and no scrub. I knew that J. G. McDonald had 6 blocks of country on the Lind adjoining Mr Yates [sic] country and applied for 6 more blocks — three behind each of the three fronting the River or Creek. He has put it down in his offer to me as good second class country but I can depend on what Mr McMaster told me as well as Mr McKinnon who has country next to Yates [sic]. They all three say it is first class sheep country and very well watered.

(Note in the above quotation the unusual spelling of Lynd and again, the incorrect spelling of Yeates. The McDonalds and McKinnons referred to were to become the Yeates' nearest neighbours, and within 12 months Sidney Yates was to be one of a small party to bury Mr. McDonald who was speared by Aborigines). Wherever the "Lind" River is mentioned in the above report the Einasleigh should be substituted: the Einasleigh was at that time believed to be Leichhardt's Lynd. (13)

* * *

At Tamworth the Yeates' party replenished their stores. Specific items mentioned were two tons of flour, much extra salt to sell along the track, and two trusses of pressed hay.

Their style of living was described (1) as plain, the rations consisting mostly of salt beef and damper. However, everyone had first-class appetites. Eight or more of the party, leading a horse each, would ride on ahead. At night each leader took three hours' watch. The man Low was described as "quarrelsome, of disagreeable manners and disposition, and a general nuisance." He would not speak some days and would go off by himself and try to make-believe he was lost; but they were truly sorry to see him show up when the start was made!

Heavy and continuous rain was encountered in the vicinity of the Liverpool Ranges and the journey through New England was rough, with little more than a bridle track to guide them in places. They passed through Glen Innes and Tenterfield, thence via Warwick and Ellangowan to the Darling Downs, reaching Drayton on 31 March 1863.

At that time the Darling Downs was settled by squatters. The nearest stations to Drayton (the original town) were Eton Vale, Harrow and Gowrie. When Sidney Yeates, Henry Richardson and Frank Gardiner were taking the sheep through Gowrie they failed to notify the local authorities, with the result that Sidney was summoned and fined in Drayton Police Court. The incident merited a paragraph in the "Darling Downs Gazette" which described the charge as "driving a mob of sheep across Gowrie Road without first having given the necessary notice". The Bench (Squatter J.P.'s at that time) thought this "an unmistakable offence during the present scab hubbub" (presumably sheep scab disease was prevalent) and fined the defendant £ 5 with £ 2.2.0 costs. (In later years, Sidney was to serve on the banch himself for 10 years in another part of Queensland).

After that incident the trek continued through Dalby, Jimbour, Jinghi Station, Camboon, Westwood and Yaamba; thence across the Connors Range and northward along the Connors River. The country at this stage was very boggy, flood rains having fallen everywhere. Flood debris was seen 60-70 feet high along some of the rivers and care was taken to camp in safe places, above possible flash-flood level.

The track was always rough and dangerous. Rivers had to be crossed with the 6,000 sheep, (1) some of which were drowned. Travelling eight or ten miles a day was good going. Rainy days, with everything wet and uncomfortable, drays getting bogged and upset, bullocks being lost and men becoming bushed when looking for them, caused anxiety and delay.

As the country grew wilder, two carbines were given out to the shepherds for self-defence. Warry was always watchful and knew in which directions the wild Aborigines were located. And so they continued to make progress — turning N-N-W to Nebo, Mackay and Port Denison (Bowen), having then travelled almost 1500 miles by inland route from Sydney.

Very few travellers were met, but once a pleasant man, riding a good horse and leading a better one for a pack-horse, asked if he could join the party for company. He made himself generally useful and there was nothing he could not do, so all enjoyed his cheerful ways. One morning, on breaking camp, he had disappeared without saying good-bye and that evening two troopers rode up asking for a man of his description: he was one of the most dangerous bushrangers in the country.

This man may have been Frank Gardiner (not the one of that name in the Yeates' party!) who was at that time in the north, on the run from the law, due to offences he had committed a thousand miles to the south in 1861. In the "Port Denison Times" of 19 March 1864 the following item appears:

The whole town is thrown into a state of agitation by the news of the capture of Frank Gardiner, the notorious bushranger, wanted for the shooting of Troopers Middleton and Hosie at Fish River on 16 July 1861. Six policemen arrived yesterday evening having in custody, so it is reported, this celebrated highwayman, whom they found in a grog shanty at Apis Creek some 80 miles distant from here . . . The most absurd precautions, it is said, were taken to prevent the possibility of his escape from the lock-up: eight regular staff of police kept watch and ward over him, so fearful are they of losing the chance of getting the reward.

(It is interesting to note that a peak alongside Apis Creek is named Mount Gardiner).

In due course Gardiner was transferred from Bowen to the region where his earlier misdemeanours were committed, to stand trial. News of the trial finally reached Bowen and was reported in the "P.D.Times" of 23 July 1864. The trial was of Francis Clarke, alias Francis Gardiner, alias Francis Christie.

For the wounding of William Hosie, of which offence Gardiner had just been found guilty, the Judge determined that he be kept to hard labour on the roads, or other public works of the Colony for 15 years, the first two years in irons. For the armed robbery of Horsington, of which the prisoner had pleaded guilty, he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment with hard labour; and for the robbery of Hewett with firearms, the prisoner was sentenced to 7 years hard labour on the roads or other public works of the Colony, the second sentence to take effect on the expiry of the first, and the third on the expiry of the second.

* * *

On reaching Port Denison in late 1863, John Yeates left the party. He had secured two runs, aggregating 75 sq miles, situated on Edgecumbe Bay, some 25 miles south of Bowen. These he stocked with sheep — but instead of living on the newly acquired country, he established his residence in Bowen.

George Agars also remained in Bowen. He bought two farms, Nos 6 and 7, on the Don River, about eight miles from Bowen, adjoining country which Sidney Yeates was to occupy a few years later. In fact Farms 8 and 9, each of 78 acres and each with a frontage to the east bank of the Don, were purchased in the name of Sidney's wife, Dymphna; the deeds are recorded as having become effective on 12 May 1864. (52)

While visiting George Agars, presumably on his new land, the Yeates' party met a man named James Morril — a ship-wrecked sailor, who had been found and befriended by tribal Aborigines. The latter cared for him for 17 years, from 1846 to 1863, when he returned to civilisation. He afterwards wrote an account of the Aborigines' habits and language, a copy of which Fred Richardson is said to have secured (1). Morril died on 29 October 1865. The "P. D. Times" of 1 November 1865 gave a resume of his remarkable experiences, not the least of which was his eventual reunion with whites. When brought to the edge of a white settlement by the Aborigines he at first feared making contact lest the white settlers not understand

or believe him, nor even recognise him as a member of their race.

George and Sidney still had far to travel. However, before starting for the Einasleigh, Sidney went to see an agent in Bowen. The purpose of this visit was to exchange some sheep, which had become wormy, for cattle. The agent was able to make a suitable arrangement with Mr. Hann who had taken up Bluff Downs, some 150 miles W-N-W of Bowen, in 1862-3. George and Sidney received £1 a head for a portion of their flock, and they took some of Mr Hann's cattle as part payment. According to Bolton, (13) Joseph Hann was drowned in the Burdekin River in 1864. His eldest son William then ran Bluff Downs until 1870.

In late 1863, when Sidney Yeates passed through Bowen, the township was only in its third year of settlement. Its choice as the first centre to be established in the north owed much to its fine natural harbour which was a special asset when sea transport was so heavily relied upon by the settlers.



View from Flagstaff Hill of the entrance to Port Denison (Bowen), showing North Head and, beyond it, the two arms of Stone Is in the middle distance, with the Ben Lomond — Edgcombe Heights mainland at far right and Gloucester Is distant left.



The Don River (Bowen) agricultural lands, looking S-W across the Don from Mt Nutt. Tomatoes and mangoes are the main crops.

The town itself, which is 750 miles north of Brisbane and 350 miles north of the Tropic of Capricorn, was established right beside the waterfront in the same location that the shopping centre occupies to-day. Indeed, the present long jetty, served by rail and road, and at which quite large ships can berth, differs little from its earliest predecessor and, as then, is almost a straight-line continuation of the main street. The huge harbour is semi-circular in shape, with shelter being afforded the jetty and anchorage area by Flagstaff Hill and Dalrymple Point which form the northern "jaw" of the harbour's semi-circle. Added protection for the anchorage is given on the seaward side by Stone Island and, further south, Gloucester Island (the latter now a National Park — a wilderness area of rugged mountain terrain).

Apart from Flagstaff Hill and one other elevated point four or five miles to the N-W of the town centre on which a reservoir now stands, Bowen's immediate hinterland is extremely low-lying and flat. The River Don which is wide but shallow, flows from south to north about five miles to the west of the town centre and joins the sea via an extensive delta, some seven or eight miles to the N-W of Port Denison and west of modern Bowen's several populous seaside suburbs: Queens Bay and Horseshoe Bay facing north and the beautiful Rose Bay contiguous with the long line of Kings Beach, both of which have easterly aspects and give views of the off-shore islands.

The flood plain of the River Don is several miles wide in places and because its alluvial soil is fertile and the river water suitable for irrigation, year-round cultivation of truck crops, mainly tomatoes and mangoes, is now practised. (Although the average annual rainfall is about 50 inches, most of that falls in the four months of December to March inclusive, when temperature and humidity are both high). But in 1863 the first farms were only just being surveyed and there was no experience on which new settlers could base their agriculture or forecast market opportunities. That knowledge had still to be gained.

In late 1863, however, George and Sidney's main concern was not with farming on the Don, but stocking their much larger holdings on the Einasleigh. This meant pressing on, far beyond the ranges visible from Bowen as a blue line along the western edge of the coastal plain.

As they set out in a northwesterly direction on this next stage of their journey, across 250 miles of rough virgin bush, carbines (short firearms used by horsemen) were issued to all the men for self-defence, owing to the presence of "numerous and unfriendly" Aborigines (1).

When far out from civilisation, looking for strayed bullocks, a man was encountered who asked for water. They gave him some and it was arranged that he would come over to their camp later that day. As he failed to appear, they searched next day and found him dead — believed killed by the Aborigines. His name was John Barnfather, a recent arrival from England, and notice of the tragedy was in due course reported to the police (probably in Bowen) and the Attorney General in Brisbane.

Far up the Burdekin the travellers met James Cudmore on his way back to Adelaide. He had stocked some country further up the river — probably Niall which Daniel Cudmore (snr) had selected prior to 1863 (58). When travelling in this region the party would make a fire and have tea before sunset, then travel on a few more miles and camp. They dared not light a fire at night for fear of the Aborigines.

Just over 12 months after leaving South Australia, and having travelled 1750 miles overland with their stock, the Yeates' party reached their destination. The country which George had selected, named and registered on behalf of "George Barr Yeates and Sidney Yeates of Bowen," is described in the Qld Archives (51). It comprised three adjoining runs: Mopata, 70 sq miles, Red Rock, 80 sq miles, and Myall Downs, 100 sq miles. These were consolidated into one station which they called Myall Downs. Although they had applied for two other blocks, Baroota and Mamberra, the leases of these were not confirmed. The official descriptions of the runs include references to the River Lynd; but a foot-note explains that "this river is now called the Einasleigh and is found to be a tributary of the Gilbert." A description of Mopata follows:

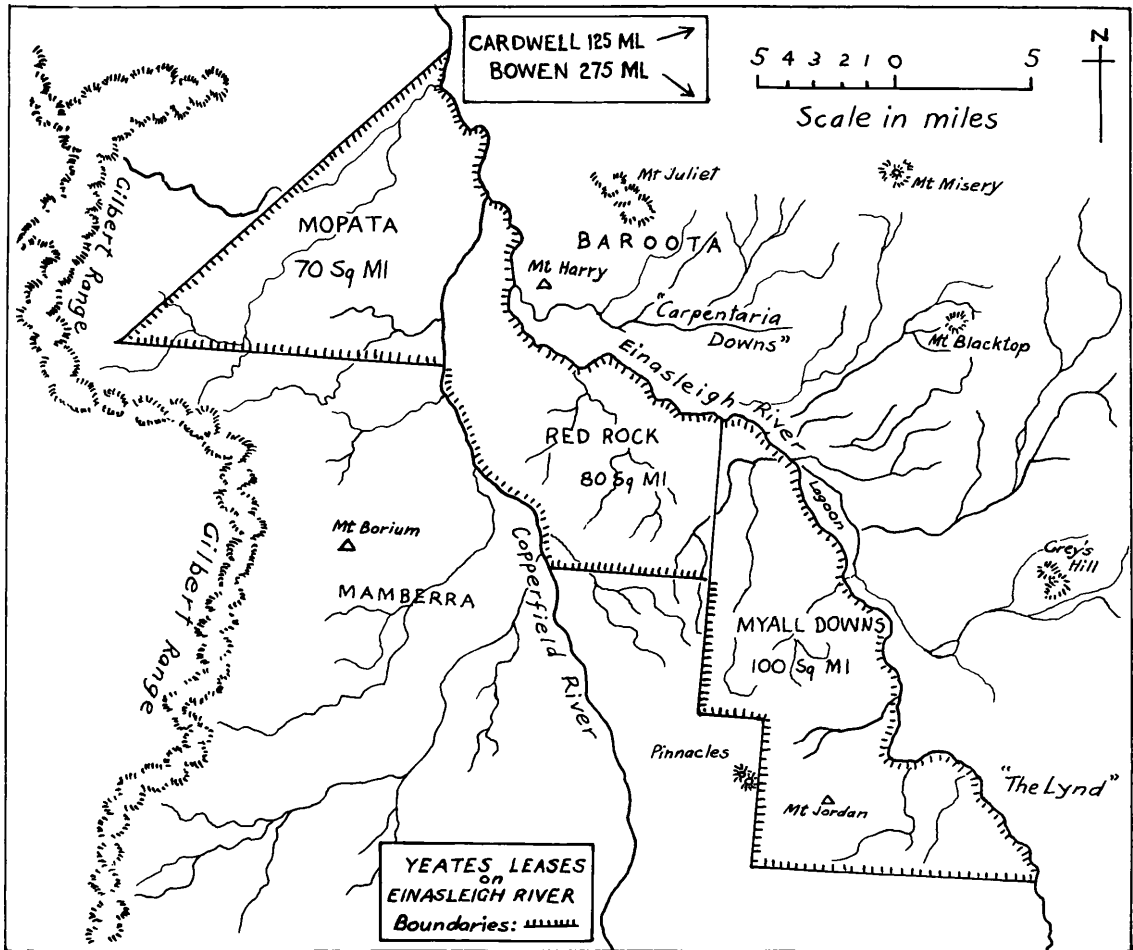
The run commences at the junction of the Rivers Lynd [Einasleigh] and Copperfield . . . runs south along the Copperfield 7 miles; thence west to the foot of the Gilbert Ranges about 12 miles; thence in a north-east direction along the foot of the Gilbert Range to the River Lynd [Einasleigh] about 16 miles; thence about 5 miles along the River Lynd [Einasleigh] in a south-east direction to the point of commencement.

The Red Rock and Myall Downs blocks lay to the south-east of Mopata, in the wedge between the Copperfield and Einasleigh Rivers, each with a long frontage to the west bank of the Einasleigh.

There were only two stations further to the west: Mr. McKinnon's and Mr McDonald's. Another nearby station was Carpentaria Downs, then owned by a Mr Stenhouse.

In March 1864, the Brisbane "Courier", reporting northern news of two months earlier, (thus indicating the difficulties of communication), includes a paragraph headed "New Stations Formed". This mentions that Mr Donald McDonald from South Australia had formed a sheep camp about 16 miles west of Mr McKinnon's, on the Copperfield River a branch of the Lynd [Einasleigh]. The article continues:

Messrs G. B. and S. Yeates have established with sheep and cattle on Myall Downs, at the junction of the Copperfield and Lynd [Einasleigh]. Any amount of runs are ready for squatters north and west. Cartage and labour are the present drawbacks . . .



Within weeks of the Yeates' party establishing their camp, tragedy overtook the McDonald family. The McDonalds had not long come from World's End station near the Burra in South Australia, when, on 27 January 1864 Mr McDonald was speared and killed. The circumstances of his death are described briefly in Morphett's paper (1), a little more fully in the Brisbane "Courier" (nearly two months after the event), and in considerable detail in the "P. D. Times" of 5 March 1864, some five weeks after Mr McDonald's death. The "P. D. Times" account follows:

Murder of Mr Donald McDonald by the Blacks

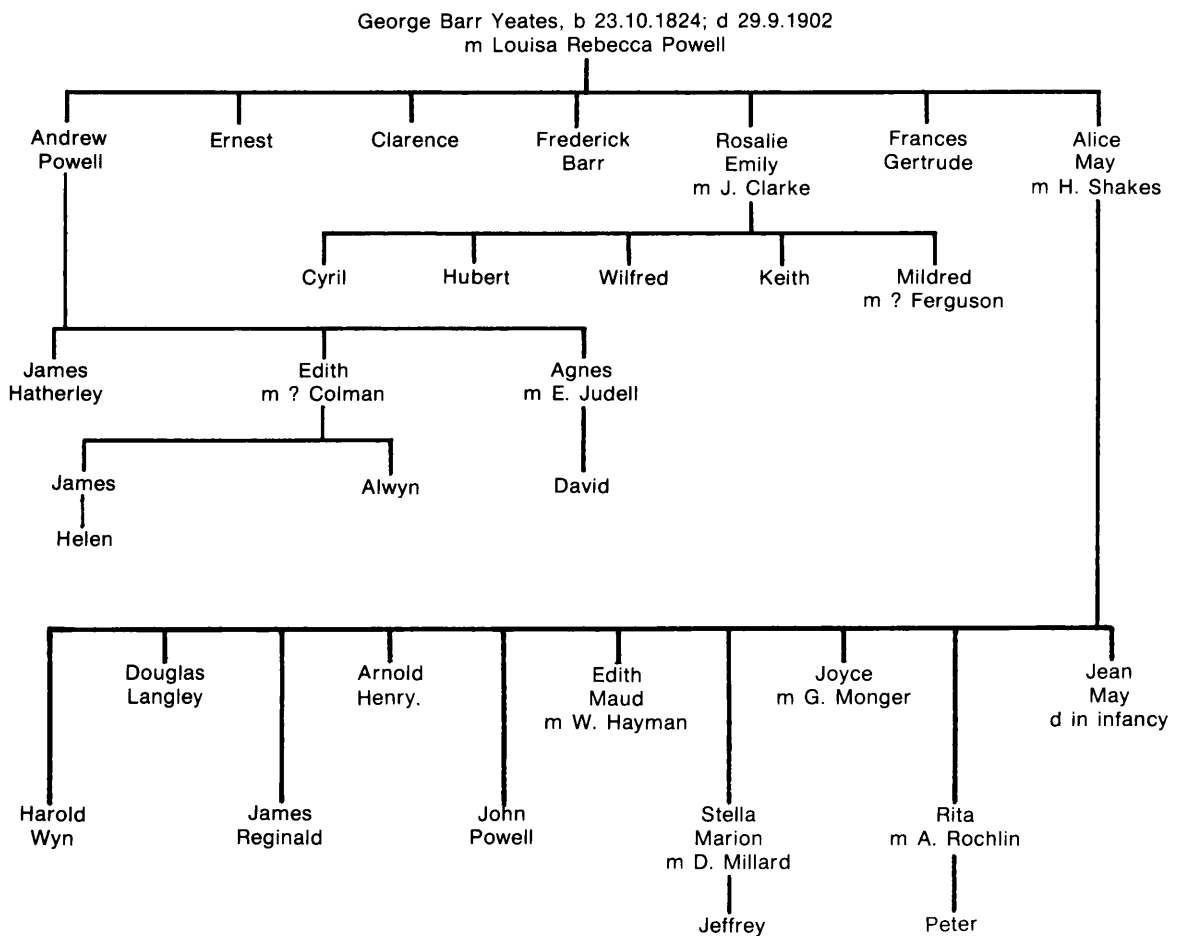
We are indebted to Mr Richardson for the details of the death of the late Mr McDonald, which occurred on 27 January last . . . It appears that the unfortunate gentleman was camped on the Coppertield, 16 miles from Myall Downs, the station of Messrs G. B. and S. Yeates. McDonald had no one on the station with him except two daughters and a little boy. [Morphett's account says the daughters were aged 18 and 16 and a son was "down country" at the time]. He was in the habit of coming back to the camp to dinner, but on the day in question he did not return as usual nor on the following night. A search was instituted next morning and his daughters discovered the dog that accompanied the father lying about 100 yards from the camp, speared. They started off immediately to Mr McKinnon's station. About the middle of the day four men from that station, accompanied by Mr Robertson, Mr S. Yeates, Mr Richardson and a black boy, proceeded to the camp . . . and discovered the body of McDonald . . . Portions of two spears were still remaining in the body, one piercing the heart, the other in the hip . . . The body was buried close to the spot where it had been lying for four days. [The "Courier" says "a funeral service was read over the deceased"]. The party followed the tracks about half a mile, for which distance the deceased gentleman had been chased by the Blacks, seven in number . . . Next day the party again followed the tracks and came on three camps, about 50 in all. They took possession of one of the camps where they found pieces of the great coat and gloves worn by Mr McDonald at the time of the murder. They burnt about 100 spears, stone tomahawks, and other native weapons found in the camp. The blackfellows saluted the whites with several flights of spears, but without doing any harm. They were dispersed and driven back to Gilbert Range. The Blacks appear to have taken advantage of an unlucky omission on the part of the unfortunate gentleman to supply himself with horse and arms on this particular day, contrary to his usual custom. One of the spears, which is pronged, can be seen in the "Times" office.

This tragic and violent death of a near neighbour was indeed an unhappy start for the newly arrived Myall Downs selectors who, nevertheless, battled on — but only for three years. They found there was no demand for fat cattle other than for the boiling down works at Cardwell on the coast, and that meant driving the cattle a good 120 miles over lonely country to the north-east. Sheep farming, too, was difficult and unprofitable, partly because of the spear grass and tropical climate, but above all because of the hostile Aborigines. Reliable shepherds were also hard to obtain under the prevailing conditions. According to Bolton (13), “none of the northern stations payed . . . and practically everyone ran up large debts on their properties . . . original pioneers [were] . . . obliged either to sell out at a heavy loss, or simply walk off.”

It is recorded (14) that J. H. Richardson was manager of the Yeates' station; that he was “extravagant”; and that he “piled up the debts buying all kinds of things, e.g. saddles, harness, etc.” These items hardly seem to qualify as extravagances and so do not explain the presumed financial failure of the venture, especially when the two principals, George and Sidney, were so intimately associated with the property. Perhaps the real turning point came when Sidney contracted malaria. This, indeed, is stated as the reason for disposing of Myall Downs in the report (43) of Sidney Yeates' death some 51 years later.

Once the exodus was decided upon, the two Yeates brothers sold the lease of Myall Downs in 1867. George appears to have accompanied Sidney to Bowen briefly, for at about that time both of them contributed to Bowen's Trinity Church building fund and they advertised jointly in the “P.D. Times” for eight working bullocks. However, George soon left Queensland and took over Tulloch station near Casterton in Victoria. Problems of foot-rot and scab in his sheep drove him from there back to South Australia and he resided for the rest of his quite long life in Jamestown.

George Barr Yeates, the man who first met his young bride-to-be (Louisa Powell) in the Burra, had a family of seven: four sons and three daughters. The eldest boy, Andrew Powell Yeates lost his life in World War I. He was shot in the trenches at Gallipoli; but he left a son and two daughters, and grand-children were to follow. Another of the boys, Frederick Barr Yeates went on the land at Springsure in Central Queensland.



One of George's daughters, Alice May, who was born at Casterton in Victoria, married Henry Perry Shakes and descendants of theirs, Rita Rochlin and Joyce Monger, have helped me in tracing some of the relationships.

George himself was not content to retire when he and his wife moved from Casterton to the "breezy uplands over which they had ridden on their honeymoon" (1). In 1874 he set up as a commission agent in Jamestown. He played an important part in that town's community life until he died in 1902 (12); he was Town Clerk for 21 years, and for many years he conducted the Sunday School at St James the Great Anglican Church.



George Barr Yeates, pioneer of the pastoral industry, and, in his later years, prominent in the civic and church life of Jamestown, Sth Aust. (Photo: Areas Co — by courtesy S A Archives).

In 1902 Goerge at last felt that a rest was his due, so he asked to resign as Town Clerk. At a meeting of the Jamestown Coroporation, held on 23 June of that year it was moved and seconded that:

"a letter recognising and acknowledging the faithful service given to the town during the past 21 years by Mr Yeates should be sent to their old friend."

With cries of "hear, hear" the motion was unanimously adopted (16).

George died soon after that, at the age of 78, predeceasing his wife by 17 years. Both lie buried together in the Jamestown cemetery. George Barr Yeates is further remembered by a stained glass window in the church of St James the Great, Jamestown.



Lower portion of the stained glass window in the Anglican Church of St James the Great, Jamestown, Sth Aust, which is a memorial to George Barr Yeates.

Despite his malaria, Sidney still felt that life on the land in north Queensland had much potential. He spent a short holiday in Adelaide, then started real family life again with his wife Dymphna and their children: Sidney James, Florence, Albert, Edwin, Mary Dymphna, and Daniel. During Sidney's absence in north Queensland from 1862 to 1867, Dymphna had lived at North Adelaide. A Prayer Book and New Testament, with her name and the north Adelaide location written inside the front cover, is dated 14 August 1863. (42)

About the end of 1867 Dymphna and the children travelled by ship from Adelaide to Bowen where they joined Sidney and made their home on the banks of the River Don, some eight miles south-west of the town of Bowen. It was in this new home that the last six of Sidney and Dymphna's children were born: Walter, Charles Bryson, Alfred, Gilbert, Kenneth and Herbert.

It is of interest that travel by ship over such distances as between Bowen and Adelaide occasioned little comment in those days. The only item known of Dymphna's voyage with the children is that three caps and hats were lost overboard! Sidney made at least two trips to Adelaide between the times he selected Myall Downs and took up residence on the Don River. To landholders then, such trips were evidently the equivalent of present-day graziers stepping into a plane to visit a capital city! Sometimes the passengers were listed in the newspaper's shipping news. Thus the passengers on the "Diamantina" which reached Bowen on 3 January 1865 included "Mr Yeates" and this fits in with one of Sidney's visits to Adelaide. An interesting side-light is that in the newspaper reports steerage passengers were given by total number travelling — not listed individually by name!

Mention was made earlier of Sidney's malaria. In those days fever and ague "raged in the wet seasons, leaving no energy in human nature" (14) and Sidney is sure to have had recourse to the Cudmore remedy (17) which was:

Take half this mixture within 48 hours if possible and gradually decrease the dose after that. The mixture must never be taken during the time the fever is on.

20 grains of quinine
2 oz epsom salts
60 drops laudinem [laudanum]
¼ oz elixir of vitriol;
dissolve in a quart of cold water;
add ½ teaspoon of essence of lemon.

Dose: a wine glass full, three times a day. First dose to be taken four hours after the fever has abated.

* * *

During George and Sidney's Myall Downs venture, John Yeates had become very much a part of the community life of Bowen. By 1864 he had stocked his two runs, Maralda and Longford. These were of 50 and 25 square miles respectively, located on Edgecumbe Bay, some 25 miles south-east of Bowen. The runs adjoined, and comprised country which was bounded on the west by Eden Lassie Creek and on the north by 10 miles of coast-line. The latter extended east from Eden Lassie Creek, past Ben Lomond (1465 ft) to a point near Miralda (present-day spelling) Creek. The holdings extended inland ten miles and five miles for Maralda and Longford respectively. John's applications for the runs were lodged on 20 May 1864 and the leases were gazetted on 15 December 1864.

An early issue of the "P. D. Times" in 1864 makes mention of Maralda as an estate owned by Mr J. S. H. Yeates, located at Edgecumbe Bluff. The Bluff was no doubt formed by the steep sides of Ben Lomond. The present settlement of Longford Creek, on the main N-S highway, probably owes its name to John and his holding of Longford. A letter (24) written by a descendant of his, Ernest Kesting (now deceased), says that John Yeates' wife's people came from Longford in England.

The first issue of the "P. D. Times" appeared on 5 March 1864 and John Yeates was quick to make use of the new medium. In the second week of issue he advertised:

For Sale: Three tons of Fine Silk Dressed Flour, direct from Adelaide, at twenty five pounds (£ 25) per ton.
JOHN YEATES.

Then on 16 April 1864 the following appeared:

For Hire: for a few days only,
a bullock team and dray,
with driver, at so much per diem.
Terms moderate.
Apply to: J. YEATES.

The fact that John Yeates gave no address in these and many subsequent newspaper advertisements and notices suggests that he had already become known in the settlement, that the population was still small and that John probably lived in town. At least some of these suggestions are confirmed in subsequent issues of the "P. D. Times" during that same year. Thus among the general news we are told that Bowen's population at 3 September 1864 was a mere 450. Then two notices dated 21 Sep and 15 Oct 1864 appeared which did give a town address for John at Livingstone St, Bowen. These respectively sought "a female general servant," and advertised for sale in November, "400 full-mouthed ewes, unshorn."

John evidently continued to reside at Livingstone Street, for on 16 November 1867, among nine nominations for aldermen of the town Council is that of John Swift Haigh Yeates, Grazier, Livingstone Street. Still later, on 12 March 1870, an agent advertising some 10 to 12 town allotments for sale, describes one of them as "fronting Mr J. S. H. Yeates' house."

Mention has already been made of Bowen's small population in 1864. In considering the town's development it should be realised that it was the first far northern municipality to be proclaimed. Mackay (1862) was founded more than a year after Bowen, and Townsville was not proclaimed until July 1865. (13)

Numerous other newspaper items give a picture of the town in 1864. The "streets" were a source of constant complaint. Evidently they were nothing more than a network of tracks, laid out on the natural terrain, full of ruts and pot-holes, with some places almost impassable in rainy weather. The town Council was evidently doing its best, for mention is made of: "clearing stumps in Herbert Street" and later, more clearing "in Gregory and in Poole Streets." The transport of any heavy goods necessitated the use of horse or bullock teams. Although such transportation was slow and probably damaging to the roads, it was cheap. Thus on 13 August 1864 we see:

FOR HIRE: A bullock dray and team with driver.
Terms £1 per day.
Mr J. S. Yeates.

It is extremely unlikely that John himself would have been the driver referred to in that advertisement, so the use of such an outfit for a whole day, with a paid hand supplied, all for a mere £1, gives an indication of the costs and wages of the time.

With sea transport being so important, the local citizens called a public meeting early in 1864, to press the Government for funds for a jetty. Although the initial endeavours were so successful that the Brisbane government agreed to supply £10,000, much strife ensued during the next few years. There were disagreements among Bowen's prominent citizens as to the exact location of the jetty, allegations of "improper" tendering procedures were made, and rates of pay for day labourers also caused argument in some quarters. Whenever such disputes arose, the practice seemed to be to call a public meeting. These were always fully and faithfully reported by the "P.D. Times"— even to printing the sometimes wild interjections.

"Our water supply" came in for trenchant criticism too, especially when the Council decided that threepence per cask was to be levied on all water taken from the Corporation reservoir. The "P.D. Times", always objective and usually restrained, stated, 17 September 1864:

The water in it [the Corporation reservoir] at the present time is none the best. In colour it is decidedly greenish, and in quality opaque . . . If the town depended on this water hole alone, the town would soon die of thirst. At present most of the water is taken from the native wells on the beach, and though at times slightly brackish, it is on the whole far clearer and purer than that in the reservoir and is only half the price . . .

The first action towards pressing for a government-run school seems to have been taken at public meetings towards the end of 1864: in the "P. D. Times" of 8 October we are told that "in the event of £200 being collected for the purpose, the Government will undertake the erection of a school house and provide a teacher for the National School." Some subscriptions were subsequently received and others promised. The paper declared that the project "will enable those parents who cannot afford to pay the fees charged by private schools, to give their children the boon of a good education."

The first offering of "country lots (Crown land) near Bowen" was announced on 12 October 1864. The price quoted was £1 per acre.

An unhappy aspect to those pioneering times was the frequency of pilfering and theft. Hardly an issue of the paper appeared without somebody advertising the loss of property and offering payment of a reward for its return. John Yeates certainly had his share of this trouble. Sometimes his loss would be a horse, for return of which he would offer a 10 shilling reward. But on one occasion (24 December 1864) no reward was offered; instead, the following statement appeared:

The public are hereby cautioned against the purchasing of one bay mare branded BM near shoulder, JY near thigh . . . the same having been stolen from near the residence of the undersigned.

John S. H. Yeates.

About this time he also advertised for the return of another bay mare. But more important was the loss he sustained out on his run. For help in this matter he offered a large reward for those days, as may be seen from the following:

£20 REWARD

Whereas some person or persons did on or about 11th or 12th instant, set fire to and completely consume a HUT, situated on a high bluff immediately above the beach in Edgecumbe Bay, on a run named Maralda, in the occupation of the under-signed, and also stealing therefrom or destroying the same, four or five barrels of flour, some bags of sugar, salt, tea, 400 rounds of ball cartridge, some boots and a quantity of slops [work-clothes] and tools.

The above reward will be paid to anyone for information that will lead to the conviction of the Incendiary or Incendiaries or Thief or Thieves. The boots, of which there were two or three dozen pairs, are thick and heavy, and well studded with nails, and are branded J. S. Stacey & Sons, Adelaide.

John S. H. Yeates
Livingstone Street
Bowen, 13 December 1864.

The loss of property and interference suffered by John evidently worried him so much that within two months he tried to dispose of Maralda. On 11 February 1865, with the £20 hut fire reward still being offered, he advertised for sale: "1500 four-tooth ewes together with good salt-bush run embracing an area of 50 square miles, about 25 miles from Bowen." Then on 27 May 1865 he offered for sale a team of six working bullocks with bows, yolks, chains and dray.

The sheep and land evidently found no buyer, for on 28 October 1865 John advertised as follows: "Wanted — Three shearers and one shepherd. None but first class hands need apply." (In fact, as we shall see later, Sidney Yeates took over the Maralda and Longford leases in 1868, when John left Bowen).

If John set much store by being socially prominent, he had some diversion from his troubles, for the "P. D. Times" of 14 October listed him, along with a good many others, as "Gentlemen presented to His

Excency Sir George Ferguson Bowen at the Levee" held in Bowen. (Sir George Bowen was Governor of the Colony).

In July 1866 John Yeates subscribed to the Northern Separation League: local feelings were strong about the alleged neglect of north Queensland by the Brisbane bureaucracy. It seems this belief continues to the present. He also advertised for sale: "A first class wool dray but little used," while his wife once more sought "a female servant". In August John was elected to a committee set up to "secure the return of George Elphinstone Dalrymple Esq as Colonial Secretary." All this shows that life was again running fairly normally for citizen John; but the climax to his Bowen endeavours, perhaps even to his life's work, was close at hand.

* * *

The year 1867 started quietly enough for John. Five classified advertisements taking up most of one column in the first newspaper for that year were typical. The first offered a liberal reward for recovery of a work bullock stolen from near the mouth of the River Don. The second offered for sale sheep of mixed ages and sexes. The third informed readers that 20 tons of superior flour, warranted perfectly sound and pure, imported directly from Adelaide, were available at cost price. The fourth described a stolen or strayed black mare, branded JY, with filly foal at foot, for return of which a reward would be given. The fifth offered for sale a first-class wool dray.

Another "normal" event for John was that he was elected a Church Warden of Trinity Church. But major events were also to ensue: election to the town Council of which he became Mayor, two devastating attacks by Aborigines on his station, and the resignation of his whole Council en bloc as a result of public displeasure.

When the annual Council elections came due in February 1867, nominations were invited, according to the usual practice. Then, as more nominations than places were received, an election was necessary. So a meeting of rate-payers was called to hear the views and policies of each candidate. At that meeting ("P.D. Times" 6 Feb 1867) J.S.H. Yeates, one of those nominated, said that he had not come before the electors previously, but he would do his best if elected. In particular he would work towards betterment of the roads. He said "there is scarcely a wool dray that comes in, or one of stores that goes out, that does not get stuck up at one of the two swamps . . ." (His interest in roads is of more than passing regard in view of the fact that his grandson, J. N. Yeates, was to receive a CBE while Commissioner for Highways in South Australia, over 100 years later). He also wanted something done about the town's water supply. He suggested the construction of an aqueduct from the Don River — something which he had investigated. He said that suitable timber was available, labour was in over-supply and total costs would not much exceed £ 2000. He realised that funds were low but said they would not always be like this. He continued: "Other colonies I have seen worse than this. In one case we were reduced to living on rice; that was South Australia. She got over her difficulties, and I for one do not despair that Bowen will be able to do likewise."

Polling was conducted a few days later and, from a field of seven, Yeates (93 votes) was second to MacLeod (96). At the first meeting of Council, called to elect a Mayor, Alderman MacLeod nominated Alderman Yeates as "a fit and proper person to be Mayor of this Council." The motion was seconded; but then Alderman Willis, who had been elected Chairman of the meeting, was also nominated and he seconded his own nomination. Much time was spent deciding whether to vote secretly or openly: the Town Clerk said either was allowable under the constitution. Finally a show of hands was decided upon. This resulted in Yeates winning by three votes to two. However one person was absent, apparently having resigned. This caused some discussion but the Chairman, after consulting the Town Clerk again, declared Alderman Yeates elected. Normal Council business was then proceeded with; but the atmosphere of the meeting suggested that an undercurrent of "sectionalism" (common in so many local government bodies even to-day) existed. In fact this was to surface later in the year, leading to so much unpleasantness that the whole Council was virtually dismissed by the rate-payers.

The multiplicity of jobs which descended upon John as Mayor of the struggling new township can easily be imagined. He probably relished the work, but the attack on his station some three months later by Aborigines must have placed him under great strain. The "P. D. Times" of 1 June 1867 reported as follows:

On Wednesday evening news was brought to town that the blackfellows had rushed Mr. Yeates' coast station and murdered a shepherd. We have received the following particulars:— The murdered man (Joseph Peate) . . . was hut-keeping and had charge of a flock of 34 rams. His mate, the shepherd, was away with the main flock, and on his return found Peate's body within 50 yards of the hut. He had one spear wound and marks of blows on the head — apparently inflicted with a tomahawk. His body was stripped. The rams had been driven away and the hut plundered. A revolver was missing, and also, strange to say, a £30 land order. The shepherd immediately left and made the best of his way to a neighbouring station, where he gave information of what had occurred.

The editorial column of the paper followed this up a week later:

The destruction at Mr Yeates' station, in addition to the loss of a valuable human life, is something fearful in its very wantonness. The sheep are lying in heaps barbarously slain and numbers of dilly bags were found on the spot (which the blacks were compelled to leave in haste) filled with mutton fat. Mr Yeates will be a very heavy loser because in addition to the hundreds of sheep killed and scattered, which were all in excellent fleece, it was anticipated that the lambing would yield nearly cent per cent. It is folly to suppose that people will invest their capital in a place where there is so little security for life and property, and the shameful want of adequate protection to our settlers is another reason why we should cut the painter as soon as possible . . . [this referred to the movement for the independence of North Queensland from Brisbane domination].

In an attempt to recover some recompense for his loss, John instructed a solicitor, I. A. Gregory, to petition the Colonial Secretary for reimbursement. The original document, written in copperplate hand and signed by John, is held by the Qld Archives. The text of it follows:

To the Honorable The Colonial Secretary of Queensland
The Memorial of the undersigned John Swift Haigh Yeates,
Mayor of Bowen in the Colony of Queensland Humbly Sheweth

That your Memorialist is a Grazier and has occupied the Maralda and Longford Runs in the district of North Kennedy in the business of depasturing sheep until the 28th day of May last when an attack was made by the aborigines upon the Stations of the said Runs and Joseph E. Peate a Hutkeeper was murdered and the remainder of the men employed by your Memorialist being five in number were driven away.

That upon receiving intelligence of the said murder on the following day your Memorialist sent information to Inspector Marlow of the Native Police who accompanied your Memorialist the day after to the scene of the said murder where they found a number of the aborigines whom they dispersed and upon making examination discovered the body of the said Joseph E. Peate and also the carcasses of upwards of 600 sheep lying in the yard in which they had been penned which said sheep had been wantonly killed by the aborigines.

That 200 sheep the property of your Memorialist are also missing having been dispersed by the aborigines and also 36 rams and there is but little hope of any of them being recovered.

That the said sheep were of considerable value having been bred upon the said runs during the last three years with great pains and being near the season for shearing the price in the British market for the wool in the grease of the last season being 1/1½d per lb and the direct loss sustained by your Memorialist is not less than £550, besides the Station property carried off or destroyed by the aborigines.

That on the 2nd day of June instant the troopers left the neighbourhood of the said outrage and your Memorialist is informed that the aborigines have since been seen upon the same spot.

That the surviving persons who were employed on the said runs have all refused to return thither being afraid of losing their lives and there is every prospect of your Memorialist being obliged to abandon the said Stations the loss of which and of his property as mentioned being of ruinous consequence to him.

Your Memorialist therefore prays that the Government will take into consideration the hardship of his case and the serious losses he has sustained through no fault of his. And will be pleased to propose a vote to Parliament or adopt such other measures for reimbursing and re-instating your Memorialist as the case may require.

And your Memorialist will ever pray &c

[Signed] John S. H. Yeates.

Unfortunately, John's imaginative attempt to gain some redress was unavailing. Across the top left corner of the document are scrawled the words: "Acknowledge . . . and express sympathy at his losses. State that no grounds however exist that would warrant the Govt in recommending to Parlt to vote compensation".

As though this were not enough trouble for John, he sustained another great loss of sheep, 700 this time, on 14 July 1867. A shepherd named Klaus in John's employ left his (John's) hired service without leave, whereby the sheep were dispersed and destroyed by the Aborigines. Klaus claimed that on the day on which the station was attacked, only he and another man were present and that they were not strong enough to resist the attackers. Litigation was involved and the Magistrate was of opinion that: "as the blacks in that neighbourhood were in bad repute, the men were justified in leaving." However, he added the general rider that: "where men were hired on a station, known to be infested by blacks, he (the P.M.) believed they were not justified in leaving unless their lives were in actual peril." In a petition dated 24 August 1867 John again sought Government recompense — this time addressing his request to Honorable Members of the House of Assembly (53). The petition was printed and placed before Parliament. It makes clear that John had abandoned his station — but again his request for help was refused.

Following the two attacks an anonymous correspondent claimed that the station hands had not been sufficiently armed and that if they had been properly armed the tragedy (Peate's death) would not have occurred. John Yeates replied to this by saying that the man Peate had been armed, but had been let down by the cowardice of the hands who fled. He spelt out his belief that it should not be for the settlers to have to protect themselves with firearms. He said:

I have yet to learn that it is my duty to keep a staff of fighting men to patrol and protect my property . . . you must be aware that for any man (save those in commission) to shoot an aborigine is guilty of murder, and is open to law for doing so. The lessee of a run is also bound by the conditions of his lease to allow of the unrestricted "ingress, egress, and regress of the aborigines," and it especially condemns all interference with them . . . As for Mr Inspector Marlow . . . I can offer my testimony of his zealously and efficiency; and you will please to understand that it is the system, and the want of a sufficient force being supplied, and not individuals of the force,

that I protest against . . . Our legislators decline to introduce . . . a system whereby the sad and unnecessary destruction of human lives may be stayed and such measures be adopted as will be protective of blacks and whites alike.

Yours faithfully,
John S. H. Yeates
Bowen, 4 September 1867

* * *

The big Council incident which led to resignation occurred in the Sept-Oct period of that same year. Relationships among some of the aldermen became so strained that Council decided to seek advice from Brisbane, making use of the telegraph which had just become available. Brisbane replied that as Bowen was now a municipality it should solve its own problems. The outcome is succinctly described in the "P. D. Times Almanac" covering the affairs of 1867:

On 16 September the Council incurred the wrath of the rate-payers by some irregularity about the acceptance of a contract for the erection of a goods-shed at the jetty sent in by Mr G. Smith. This, together with other grievances that had been accumulating, caused two public meetings to be held, one on 25 Sep and one on 9 Oct at which resolutions were passed calling on the Aldermen to resign.

Each alderman agreed to resign, providing all the others did likewise; and this in fact happened. Another election was held and John Yeates was one of six aldermen elected from nine contenders. However, this time Mr MacLeod (John's nominator on the previous occasion) became Mayor.

Other activities of John Yeates during succeeding years were close association with the recently established Bowen Primary School, of which he was a Patron from 1868 to 1874; election to the Kennedy Hospital Board; appointment as a warden of Trinity Church; and occasional calls to act as Chairman at public meetings called by the rate-payers.

Ironically, John was asked to be chairman of a public meeting which was similar in many ways to the one which only six or seven months previously led to his own Council's resignation. The following account is from the "P. D. Times" of 2 May 1868:

. . . a public meeting was held for the purpose of taking into consideration the conduct of certain aldermen. At about half past eight, the usual Bowen reading for eight, Mr Yeates took the chair and opened the proceedings by reading the advertisement calling the meeting . . . He then called upon Mr Alderman Lannoy to move the first resolution which ran as follows: "that the rate-payers consider the vote of public moneys by the Town Council for the use of one of the aldermen, for carrying out his private litigation in the appeal Warry and Marsh v. O'Sullivan, is a breach of their trust as guardians of the public funds . . ." The motion was seconded and carried. The next motion, to do with the Jetty and Jetty Store . . . was that "the Mayor and Alderman Warry . . . have forfeited the confidence of the rate-payers." This was seconded and carried as were several more motions.

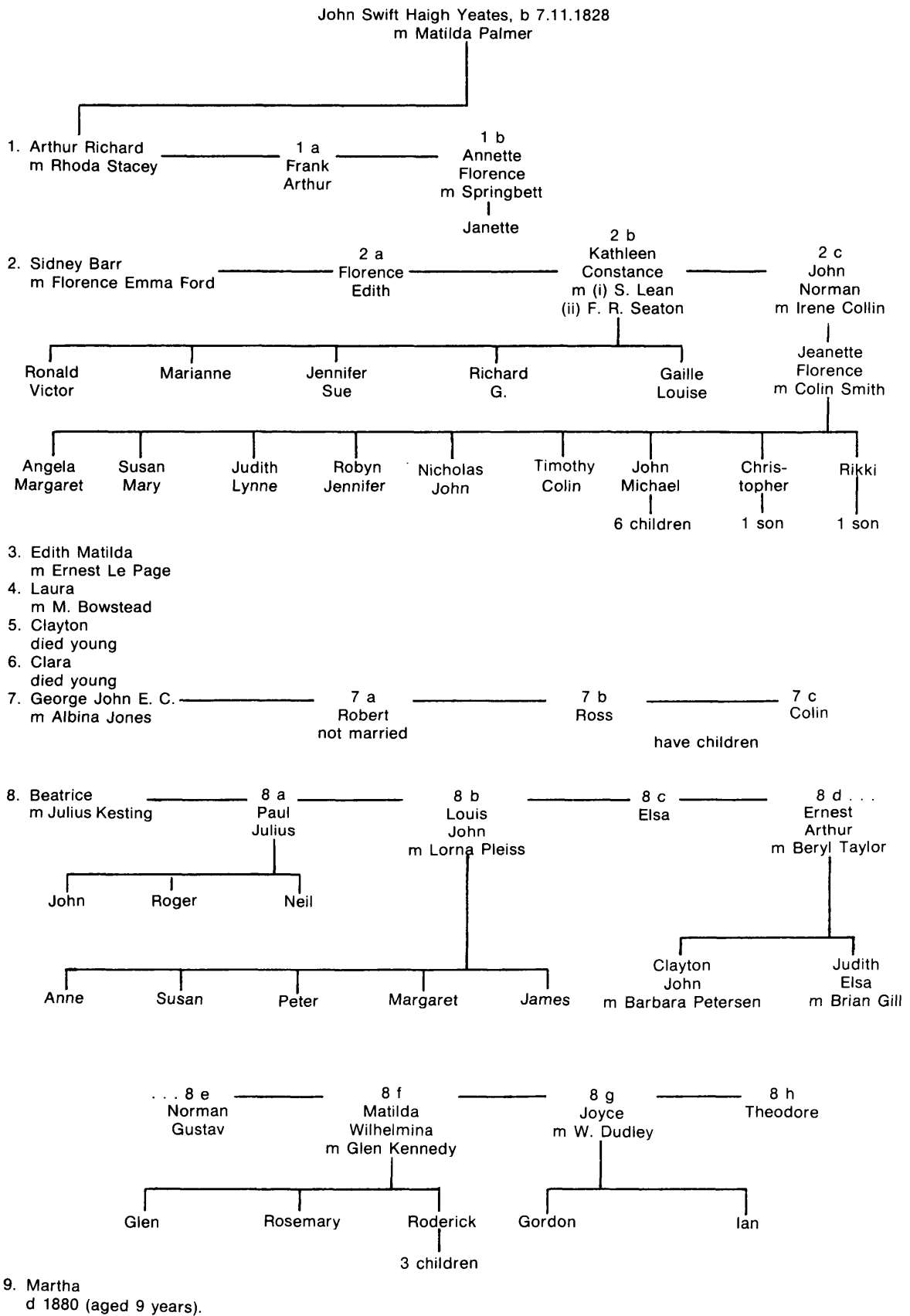
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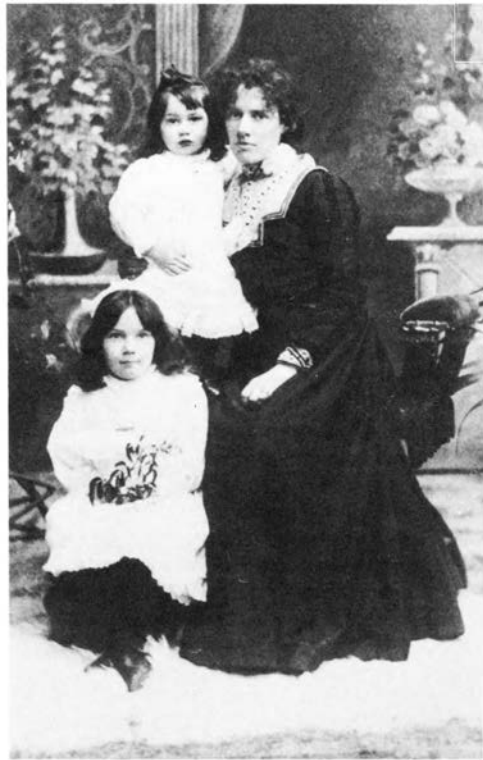
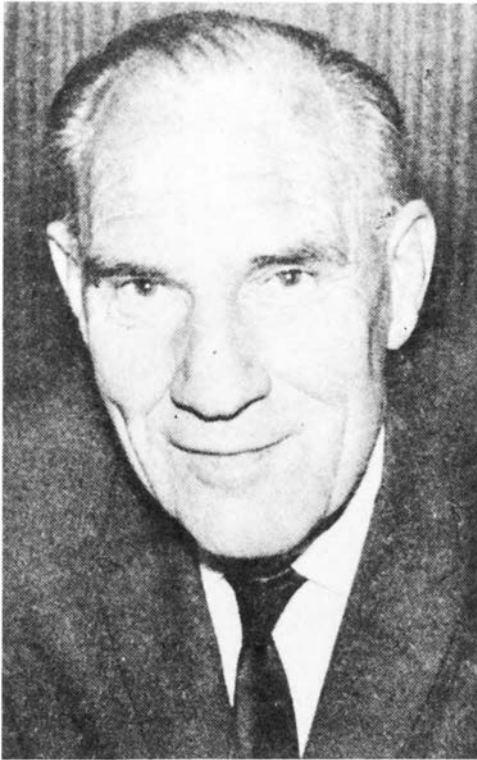
John Yeates and Matilda (nee Palmer) whom he married when she was only 17 years old, had at least nine children. The first of them, Arthur Richard, may have been born before the family's Bowen sojourn; the next three and possibly four were born at Bowen; and the youngest four or five were born in Adelaide, after John and Matilda's eventual return to South Australia. There are now a great many descendants of their branch of the family in various parts of Australia. One in particular, Mrs Kathleen Seaton, a granddaughter of John S. H. Yeates has helped me to sort out the relationships.

Two grandsons of John and Matilda should be given special mention for their outstanding public service. I refer to Frank Arthur Yeates, OBE, of Perth and the late John Norman Yeates, CBE, of Adelaide. Frank is or has been a member, if not chairman, of so many charitable, educational and municipal organisations and societies that it is perhaps best to say that they can be read in the 1974 and some earlier editions of "Who's Who in Australia". (18)

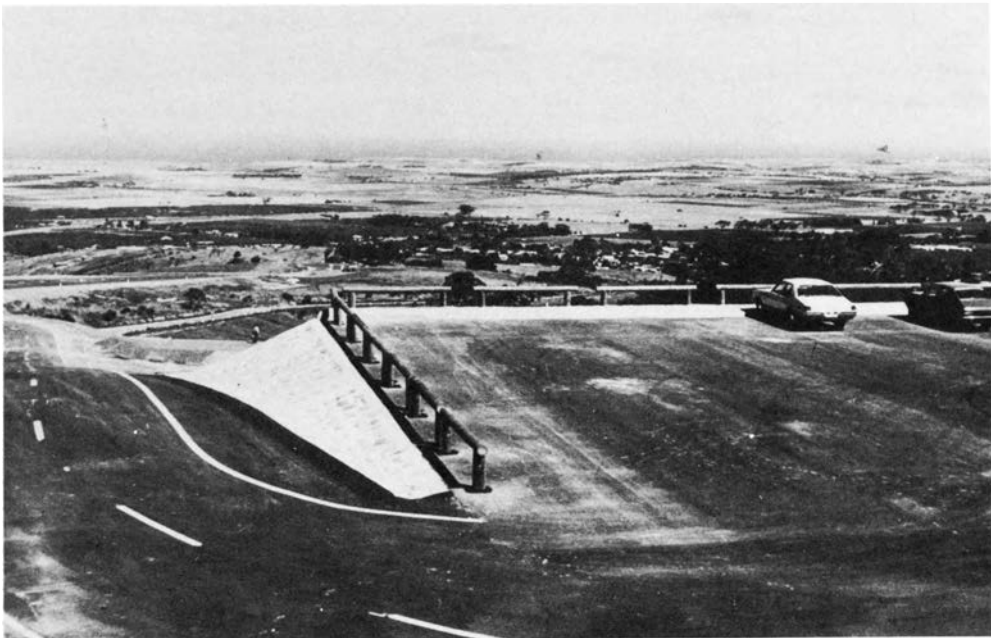
John Norman Yeates (19) gave 49 years of outstanding public service in South Australia, eventually becoming Highways Commissioner and Director of Local Government. He retired at the end of 1969, bringing to a close a successful career, during the latter part of which he supervised most of the important engineering assignments carried out by his department. These included building sections of the Stuart Highway, the Salisbury Munitions Works, the Gawler and Mt Gambier aerodromes, Northfields workshops and research laboratories, the Walkerville central administration building and most of South Australia's modern highways. The "John Yeates Lookout," near the recently completed Willunga Hill deviation, was named after him.

* * *





A grandson and two grand-daughters of John Swift Haigh Yeates. Left: John Norman Yeates, CBE, at the time of his retirement in 1969 as Highways Commissioner and Director of Local Government in Sth Aust. Right: the two little girls, pictured in 1902 with their mother, Florence Emma Yeates (nee Ford), are Florence (seated in front) and Kathleen, sisters of John Norman Yeates (56).



"The view from the newly-completed John Yeates Lookout." (Adelaide Advertiser photo and caption, 14 Dec 1976, reprinted with permission).

When Sidney Yeates returned to Bowen from Myall Downs in 1867 he set up the family home on land that he had previously acquired on the west bank of the Don River, opposite Portions 8 and 9 which had been purchased earlier in Dymphna's name. Their land on the west bank eventually comprised the contiguous blocks Nos 20, 107 and 161, and Sidney and Dymphna called this holding Melrose after the settlement of that name in South Australia which gained township status about the time they disposed of their run at Mt Remarkable in 1862.

Quite soon after settling on Melrose, Sidney commenced acquiring more land: this he did by taking up leases. Then, after paying rent for the required period (generally 6-10 years) he exercised his option of conversion to freehold. A Register in the Qld Archives shows that he acquired the leases in stages, between 1868 and 1873, eventually purchasing all the blocks (see Table).

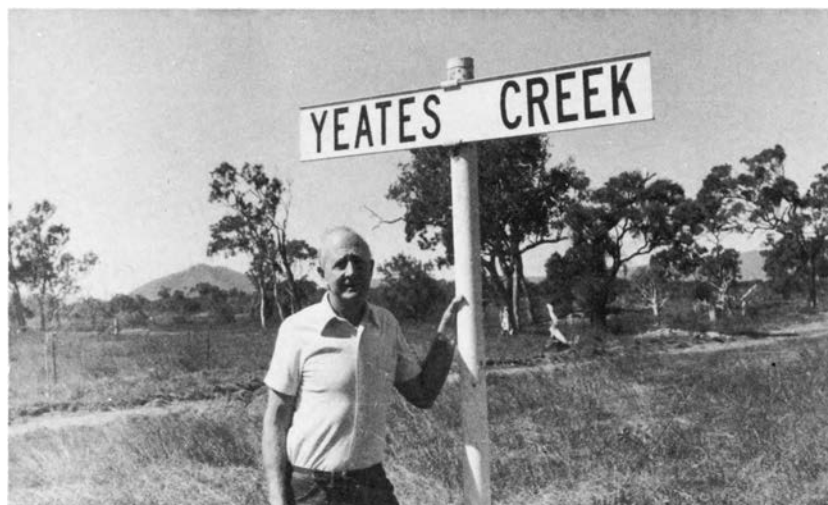
TABLE: Showing extracts from Qld Archives Land Register of some of the Bowen district land holdings of

No. Date of Selection	Selector	Locality	Country	Remarks
20 1868	Sidney Yeates	Marlow 20	40 ac agr 40 ac 1-cl past	Rent pd 6 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 6.12.76
107 1870	"	Marlow	32 ac 1-cl past	Rent pd 6 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 26.9.79
135 1871	"	Herbert Dargin	379 ac 2-cl past	Rent pd 9 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 15.3.81
141 1871	"	Herbert Dargin (Forfeited Selection No 13)	40 ac 1-cl past 40 ac 2-cl past	Rent pd 10 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 17.12.80
161 1872	"	Herbert Marlow 161	116 ac 2-cl past	Rent pd 9 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 17.12.80
229 1873	"	Herbert Dargin 229	1256 ac 2-cl past	Rent pd 8 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 11.4.81
230 1873	"	Herbert Ben Lomond 230	473 ac 2-cl past	Rent pd 8 yrs Purchased Deed prep : 15.7.81



The Don River, 8 miles S-W of Bowen, where Sidney Yeates farmed from 1867 to 1880. The land on the near (east) bank was called "Marshmead"; that on the further bank, where he and his family lived, he named "Melrose".

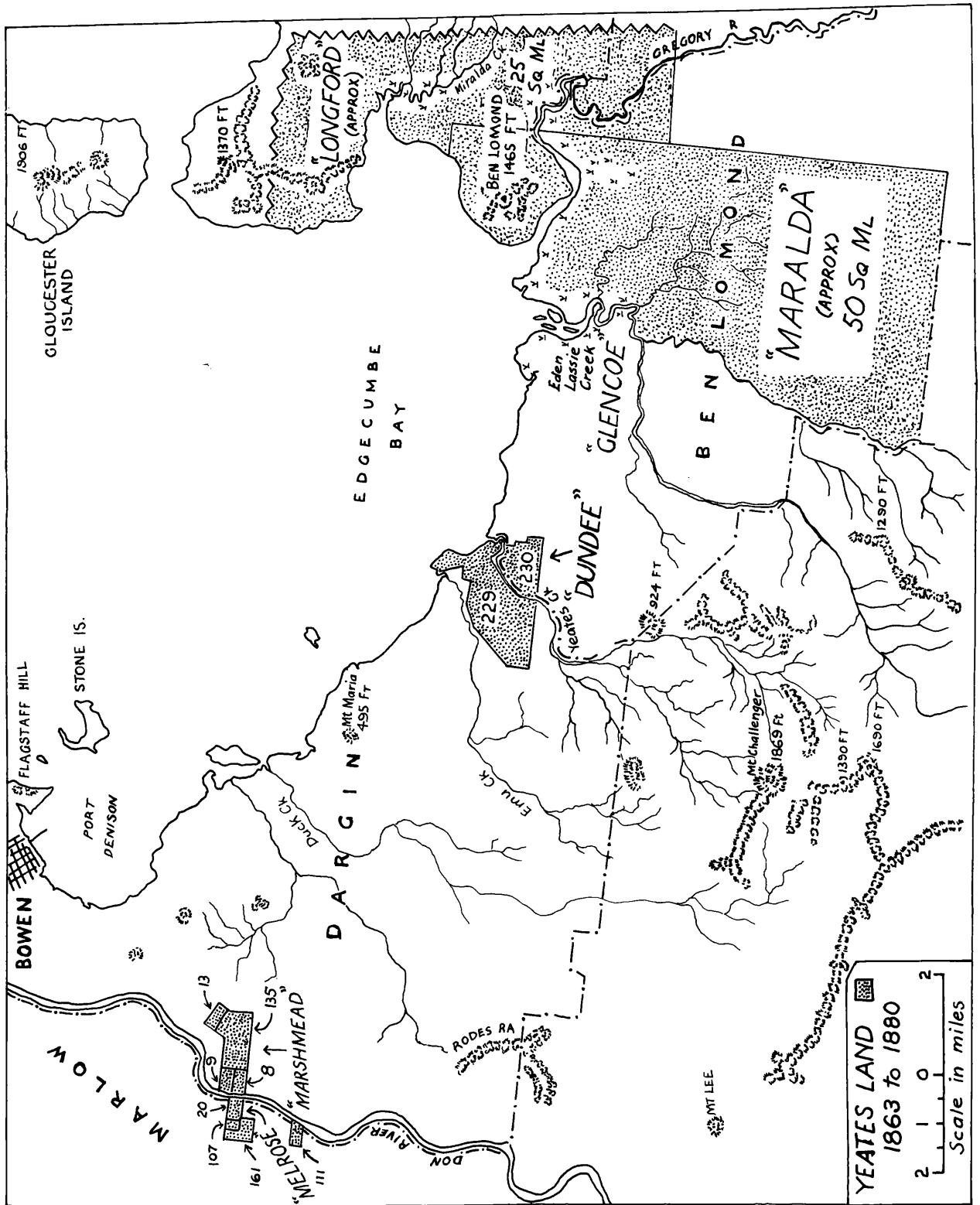
This gave him a total of about 2600 acres, including 156 acres in Dymphna's name. But the land was in three locations: about 300 acres on the west bank of the Don (Melrose); 616 acres on the east bank of the Don, which he named Marshmead; and 1729 acres of second class pastoral land (blocks 229 and 230), some 12 miles in a direct line to the south-east, on either side of Yeates Creek and fronting Edgumbe Bay, which he called Dundee.



Yeates Creek, 15 miles south of Bowen, on the Bruce Highway. Upper photo: looking up-stream from the bridge. Lower: the author beside the road sign on bridge approach.

The stream known as Yeates Creek enters Edgumbe Bay about four miles up the coast towards Bowen from Eden Lassie Creek, the northern boundary of what was John Yeates' run, Maralda. Yeates Creek rises on Mt Challenger some eight or ten miles (in direct line) to the south-west of its mouth and forms the boundary between the Parishes of Dargin and Ben Lomond. Sidney's Dundee run comprised portions 229 and 230 on the west and east banks respectively of Yeates Creek. This run extended inland from Edgumbe Bay to well beyond the present road and rail bridges over the creek. Yeates Creek doubtless received its name through custom because of Sidney's occupancy of the land watered by it.

Besides the above three holdings of Melrose, Marshmead and Dundee, it is also clear from the Qld Archives' records of Maralda and Longford, that Sidney Yeates acquired the leases of these two runs in 1868 (refs 68.1493 and 68.1494 respectively).



Less certain, is whether Sidney also leased and perhaps purchased Glencoe, the run situated between Dundee and Maralda. It is likely that he did so, for Sidney advertised in the "P. D. Times" of 8 Feb 1868 for a "bay mare, branded CR near shoulder, 125 off saddle, with hobbles and bell, lost from Glencoe." His ownership of Glencoe is also supported by family notes (14) stating that Sidney's (freehold?) country totalled 4000 acres, i.e. 1428 acres more than is accounted for by Melrose, Marshmead and Dundee. On the other hand, these three properties were the only ones listed for disposal when Sidney left the Bowen district in 1880; no mention was made of Glencoe. Perhaps he allowed its lease to lapse?

As Sidney settled into his new home on the Don, he started to play a part in community affairs. In February 1868 he became a member of the Kennedy Hospital Committee, on which his brother John also served. Then in 1870 he took responsibility for officially supervising the stocking regulations of the Bowen Town Common. Only licensed persons could depasture stock on the common (carriers' working bullocks and travelling stock excepted) and an annual fee of two shillings a head was payable. An official announcement dated 4 June 1870 stated that Sidney Yeates, acting as Inspector, would be available in the Council Chambers each Saturday morning to transact business and enter brands.

During this time, too, Sidney was both receiving stores and sending away produce by sea. Itemised reports of such movements were given in the newspaper, and receipts for Sidney included 25 bags flour, 2 cases fruit; on another occasion several cases of plants (presumably for his alluvial land beside the Don) were received. Evidently he did not have the same taste for the grape as his brother John who now and again received a quarter cask, and on one occasion a cask, of wine. Sometimes Sidney sent away wool; sometimes skins. The vessels mostly mentioned at this time were the "Boomerang," "Tinonee," and "Black Swan."

Of course stock losses continued to be suffered by Sidney. The mare missing from Glencoe has been mentioned; other losses were reported from Melrose. On one occasion Sidney offered £2 reward (£1 each) for two animals lost from Melrose: a strawberry cow and a bay filly branded SY on near thigh.

But the busiest non-farming venture taken on by Sidney was to set up, on his own initiative but with Brisbane departmental approval, a local school which would serve his own large school-age family and the children of neighbours.

The first evidence of Sidney's move towards establishment of what became the Melrose Provisional School is the following letter from him to the Board of Education in Brisbane (20):

*Melrose 8 miles from
Bowen
Sept 24th 1843*

Sir -

*I wish to know if any
arrangements can be made by the
Board for the Education of about 16
Children residing within 3 miles
of this place*

*I have a suitable house that
will do for School rooms, if the
Inspector had orders to report & get
information for the Board. &c*

I remain Sir yours truly

The Secretary Board
of Education
Barrabine

Sidney Yeates

This letter evidently resulted in an official visit being made to the locality — but without the visiting party finding any of the parents at home. After some delay, Sidney wrote to the Board again, on 24 January 1874, stating that if the Inspector had posted notice of his intention to visit, he (Sidney) would have made arrangements to meet him in Bowen. He ended his letter:

Should the General Inspector not be visiting the North for some months I beg to request that two or three of the Patrons of the Bowen School should report to the Board.

Sidney enclosed in his letter the following "memo":

Memo. Showing the
no of Children. all residing
within two miles half of this place

Name of Parents	
Gill	1
Davis	1
Webb	1
Wise	1
Yeates	7
G. Pott	4
J. Kyle	3
Hitchings	1
	<u>19</u>

We have a School House
only want a teacher

For self & other Parents

Sidney Yeates

Mcrose
8 Miles from Bowen
Jan. 24th 1874

This correspondence evidently had good effect, for written across Sidney's letter is the following departmental minute dated 4 Feb 1874.

Both Mr Yeates and Mr Potts [should be Pott] were away from the district when I visited it in company with the Commissioner for Crown Lands and the Members of the School Committee at Bowen were of the opinion that there was no population to justify a grant to a provisional school. It seems, however, that there are nearly twenty children so that an average of from 10 to 15 might fairly be expected. I think aid might be granted if the residents can find a person fit to act as teacher.

In fact the Melrose Provisional School opened on 5 May 1874 (and remained in use for 19 years till its closure on 31 March 1893 (20). The next news we have of the school is contained in a letter (17) written by Sidney Yeates from Melrose on 19 June 1874 to his brother-in-law Daniel H. Cudmore. The letter to "Dear Dan" starts off on business connected with Dan's northern sugar farms, including Avoca; but on p2 Sidney mentions the school:

Eight of the children [i.e. Sidney's] are now attending school. I find cottage and school room and have a very good Master, married with one boy. The Education Board, Brisbane pay salary £50 and scholars about 1/- each per week. My share las month came to £1.8.0. The Board find books.

Other news in this letter from Sidney was that:

The Lady Douglas has arrived with 220 immigrants with few exceptions a drunken saucy lot, £ 30 a year and rations, nothing under. I thought would be useless sending any up to Avoca and be no use in bush work . . . I had to engage a New Chum as shepherd. He is turning out so far very well . . . As the Myalls used to prig sheep when not allowed about here I am now trying them in lambing and shepherding and so far doing very well . . . Weather cool, thermom 7 a.m. 45 and 3 p.m. 65. Dymphna makes splendid butter. We have had rain every month — grass still green — good season for stock and farming. Will you require any more Sweet Potatoes, Bannas [sic], Pines. We are all quite well and send kind love to you all. The telegram sent from here to Father [Daniel Cudmore Snr] while you were in Town should have been Post Adelaide not Port Adelaide.
I remain your affectionate
Brother [brother-in-law] Sidney Yeates

A letter (20) in the Qld Archives shows that one, Alfred Wall, Teacher, Bowen Primary School, visited the Melrose Provisional School and on 6 June 1874 reported favourably to the Secretary, Board of Education, Brisbane, as follows:—

. . . Mr McDonnell a quiet steady person . . . not a trained teacher but appears to take great interest in his work. The parents express themselves much pleased with him . . . The school house is a rough slab building about 15 x 10. It is badly supplied with school furniture. The teacher's residence is a small house with garden attached, placed at his disposal by Mr Yeates.
[Signed] Alfred Wall.

In three or four months' time the school was again inspected, by "S. Ewart" who reported somewhat more briefly that "Melrose Provisional School, inspected 12 October 1874 [is] a very promising provisional school in somewhat rough quarters".

After the passage of another year Sidney started to press for a better school building. One argument he used for this in a letter (20) dated 6 Sept 1875 was that the present school had recently been submerged to a depth of 5 ft by flood waters. I can well understand this, as I was shown the original site last year (1978) by Doug Pott a direct descendant of Gideon Pott, Sidney's next-door-neighbour and friend. Doug and his family still own the original Pott's land. The old school room was on the Yeates' block (no 20) on the west bank of the river but on terrain not much higher than the river bank.

Sidney's letter was followed by another from a Mr Macdonald (probably the Teacher, though spelt differently in the Inspector's letter). He wrote on behalf of the Committee, saying that "Mr Yeates was quite prepared to convey 2 acres of land in absolute perpetuity to the Board of Education for a building site".

No action was taken on that suggestion; but years later the school was moved to another site. A few other points connected with the school (some after Sidney's family left the area) deserve mention:

- The first teacher resigned after two years, owing to "ill health and a change of climate being necessary".
- The next teacher stayed 16 months, then resigned "because of the extreme solitude of my situation".
- On 14 August 1882 the District Inspector of Schools reported no clock in the Melrose Provisional School. "The Committee is therefore requested to have a clock provided in compliance with the regulations, to prevent the withdrawal of aid under clause 69 thereof".

- On 15 April 1885 one of the Pott girls (Ellen Jane) became the teacher.
- On 16 November 1888 the District Inspector reported “. . . Bark roof of schoolroom leaks and should be repaired or replaced with one of iron”.

* * *

Sidney certainly believed in diversification in his rural enterprises. Presumably he ran most of his sheep on Maralda and Longford. Then, as we shall see later, he had 150 dairy cattle, including 30 milkers, on Dundee; and there is much evidence of intensive use for cropping of his higher quality agricultural land fronting the Don River. Thus on 23 October 1875 he advertised for sale from Melrose: “Pure-bred Berkshire pigs, English potatoes, maize” and again on 8 April 1876: “Berkshire pigs, ready for delivery about 14 May next”. On 11 February 1876: “A fat steer; a draught colt; poultry of all kinds; bananas; pineapples; Cavendish, Plantain, Sugar, Java, banana suckers; Cayenne pineapple suckers; paw paw; apples. Orders promptly attended to”. And on 19 February 1876: “Table ducks given away at Brisbane prices”.

One thing is sure: the family must have been well fed with all this produce so readily available! It is also certain that Sidney left no stone unturned in his effort to market his produce; for on 16 March 1876 he advertised that as an alternative to leaving orders for produce with him (Sidney) at Melrose, orders could also be placed with his agent, Mr T. K. Horsey in Bowen.

Much mention has been made of all the advertisements offering rewards for lost or stolen animals. But in 1878 the “P. D. Times” carried two “found” notices — rarities indeed. Both originated from the Yeates household. On 22 January, Albert Yeates, then 18 years old, informed readers that the owner of a Scotch Collie Sheep Dog could have same by paying expenses; and, on 24 April, Sidney described a grey draught horse, then running in Dundee paddock, which could also be had by paying expenses.

It is of interest that Sidney and family were on friendly terms with the Aborigines. We have already seen from Sidney’s letter on page 39 that he co-operated with them; and there is no evidence of any conflict during Sidney’s Bowen days or later. In family notes, the only reference (14) is an amusing one: Edwin, aged 14, was at home on his own one day when “a big blackfellow called with a fish”. Edwin handled the situation by telling the visitor that “big fellow boss come home soon”.

* * *

On 29 March 1879 a public meeting of those interested in forming a Pastoral and Agricultural Association was held in the Bowen School of Arts. The Mayor occupied the chair and a list of 72 subscribers was read. It was decided to hold a show (the first ever for Bowen) later that year and a committee of 12, which included Sidney, was elected. At a subsequent meeting Sidney was also elected to a sub-committee of five to draw up by-laws and a programme. He was then elected a “country steward” and appointed steward for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs at the forthcoming show.

The show was held on Wednesday, 24 September 1879 and the “P.D.Times” pronounced it “an unqualified success”. In the list of results, Mr S. Yeates figured prominently, winning a silver medal for the best pen of five ewes or wethers; a silver medal for the best ram; being highly commended for Roots, and commended for Fresh Butter and for Bacon. The butter was doubtless of Dymphna’s making. There were no mentions of first, second or third placings for the roots, butter and bacon, so it is possible that Sidney’s entries were the best — and that medals were not awarded for such every-day items!

An interesting insight into Sidney’s character and an indication that he possessed a good sense of humour, is given by the following announcement in the “P.D.Times” in mid-October 1879.

NOTICE: All persons cutting and removing timber and manure, or otherwise trespassing on Selection Nos 111, 135 will be promptly introduced to his Worship the P.M.’s morning levee, Bowen.

Sidney Yeates
Melrose, 13 October 1879

(Incidentally, selection 111 is additional to the land listed earlier as belonging to Sidney. The map shows it to be about 80 acres on the west bank of the Don, approximately 1½ miles up-stream from Melrose).

In the first week of January 1880, Sidney addressed a press notice to the rate-payers of the District of Wangaratta, saying: “Gentlemen, I have much pleasure in offering myself for nomination as a Member of the above District Board. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant, Sidney Yeates — Melrose, 7 January 1880.”

The newspaper of 14 February shows that Sidney was elected to Sub-Division 1, thereby becoming a member of the newly constituted, first Divisional Board of Wangaratta. At the first meeting he was one of three elected to the finance committee.

Sidney's participation in these new, additional public activities (P and A Assn and District Board) make clear that in the 1879 — early 1880 period he could have had no intention of leaving the district. Yet by about mid-1880 he must have decided to move on, and he resigned from both positions. On 28 August he wrote to the Under Secretary for Lands, Brisbane, requesting that Mr T. K. Horsey be permitted to act for him at the next Land Court in October at Bowen: at that hearing he intended to apply for "certificate of fulfilment of conditions" on three of his selections, viz:—135,229,230. He gave as his reasons that he would be "absent in the Warrego in that month". His application was approved and, as we know from the Table on page 34, all his selections were converted to freehold.

Family notes (14) leave little doubt that Daniel Cudmore (senior) had an influence on Sidney's decision to move from Brisbane to the Warrego. During the later years of the Yeates' stay on the Don, Daniel spent much time on his north Queensland sugar lands. Having suffered a bad attack of "fever and ague" while there, he stayed with Sidney and Dymphna (his daughter) at Melrose. There he was nursed back to better health and during his convalescence he discussed a suggestion that they might trek overland to far southwest Queensland and take over a station lease. Daniel already had some property interest there and he must have believed that there would be a better future in western wool-growing than in farming on the Don. Sidney and Dymphna evidently agreed. With their large family now growing up they probably felt that the children needed more scope than the difficult market situation in Bowen allowed.

Having decided to make the move, Sidney had to make satisfactory arrangements about his freehold and leasehold land and any stock which he would not be taking to the Warrego with him. The following two advertisements from the "P.D.Times" of 18 September 1880 tell much:

Sale: Saturday next, 25 September; 11 o'clock at T. K. Horsey's Auction Mart.

150 head first-class Dairy Cattle, including about 30 head first-class milkers now running on Dundee, 17 miles from Bowen on the Mackay Road.
Farm Implements &c., &c.

To Selectors, Dairymen and Others — T. K. Horsey has received instruction from Mr Sidney Yeates who is leaving this district for the Warrego . . . inspection of the cattle is invited.

T. K. Horsey will receive tenders up to 30 September from persons desirous of leasing for 7 years the undermentioned valuable properties:—

MELROSE: Situated on the west bank of the River Don, containing 310 acres on which is erected the dwelling house occupied by Mr Yeates.

MARSHMEAD: On the east bank of the River Don, containing 616 acres good agricultural land.

DUNDEE: On the Mackay Road, 17 miles from Bowen, containing 1736 acres, well suited for dairying or sheep farming. The improvements comprise sheep yards, sheep-proof paddock containing 600 acres on salt-bush plain, stockyard, &c.

As these items appeared in one issue only of the paper, satisfactory disposals were evidently achieved.

The family then doubtless became very busy organising the big trek across-country to their proposed new home near Adavale in far S-W Queensland. As there would be little opportunity to buy furniture and household equipment there, most such items would be taken with them — and that meant loading up the bullock wagons once more.

On 2 October 1880 the Editorial column of the "P. D. Times" had this to say:

We are sorry to lose Mr Sidney Yeates, one of our oldest and most energetic settlers, who has taken up a sheep station in the Warrego District. Mr Yeates, his brother and some other South Australians arrived here about 1864, intending to enter upon sheep farming, but finding the country unsuitable for that industry most of them returned to South Australia. Mr Yeates went in for farming on the Don, but not finding sufficient market here for that kind of produce he resolved to relinquish it and try wool again. Mr Yeates is a public spirited man and looks ahead, which many of us neglect to do . . . Mr Yeates will be a great loss to the district.

On 15 October 1880, with the remaining sheep flock mustered, and the younger children put aboard the wagons with their mother, Sidney and his eldest sons guided the large family with their remaining possessions out on to the stock route and headed into the south-west. Another pioneering venture had started.

CHAPTER 3

EL DORADO II: FAR SOUTH-WEST QUEENSLAND

When Sidney Yeates and his family set out from Bowen on their 700-mile overland trek to take up a leasehold property, Boondoan, in far S-W Queensland, the hope was that at last they would be in more suitable country and a healthier climate for their sheep. Perhaps they also remembered the malaria with which Sidney had been afflicted while in the north. There would be no risk of the children contracting that disease out at Adavale — which they envisaged as the “new” El Dorado.

The party, which left Bowen on 15 October 1880 (14) comprised Sidney, his wife Dymphna and 10 of their 12 children, including one daughter, Mary. (The other girl, Florence, and one of the boys, Daniel, were in Adelaide). The youngest traveller was Herbert, my father, who, at the time that they set out, was one year and nine months old.

They took with them all their remaining possessions, transportation which included covered wagons with a total of 24 working bullocks and the remnants of Sidney’s sheep flock, numbering 1200.

The two eldest boys, Sidney James (22) and Albert (20), drove a bullock team each, while the sheep were in the care of Edwin (18) and Walter (11). These two boys had a good sheep dog named Hansom to help them. Edwin rode a saddle horse but Walter walked most of the way — only sometimes riding on a pack horse on top of the swags.

It is presumed that the younger children rode in a wagon with Sidney and Dymphna and that Mary (15) helped her mother to manage them. They were: Charles (9), Alfred (8), Gilbert (6), Kenneth (4) and Herbert (1).

When camp was made each evening the children slept in the covered wagons, while Dymphna and Sidney occupied a 10 ft x 12 ft tent in which they arranged a mattress and bedding. They also carried sheet iron as an added protection in case of extremely wet weather. They were never short of milk on the journey as “a milch cow travelled with them” (14). This was just as well, for Herbert became ill at one stage from drinking contaminated water from waterholes along the way. Perhaps boiling the water was not a widely recognised safeguard in 1880.

The route taken by the travellers was via Withersfield, the Drummond Range and Alpha station to Tambo; thence south-west through Minnie Downs and Listowel Downs to Blackwater Creek. They followed the latter creek south to within 12 miles of Adavale, then struck east about seven miles to Boondoan station, where they arrived on 2 February 1881.

The whole journey of 700 miles had taken 110 days, so they must have averaged just over six miles per day. The country through which they passed changed successively from high rainfall (50”) spear-grass woodland near Bowen, to semi-arid open forest across the Drummond Range (1000-2000ft), to open Mitchell-Flinders grass plains in the Alpha-Tambo area, this finally giving way to stony mulga country dissected by some “softer”, well-grassed watercourses such as Blackwater Creek as they approached



The country at the northern end of Boondoan, beside which Sidney Yeates and his family would have travelled, as they made their way south along Blackwater Ck towards their new home in Jan 1881. This land now appears relatively open, having been cleared of gidyea and sown to buffel grass in recent years.

Boondoon. The party travelled at the hottest time of year, but no complaint seems to have been made about the heat. Perhaps the much reduced humidity as they progressed inland was a welcome change after living for 13 years in the humid tropics. By travelling in mid-summer they had the advantage of long days. This would have allowed rests to be taken in the hottest part of the day, with satisfactory distances still being travelled by making early morning starts and continuing on in the afternoon until sundown.

Although Boondoon lies on about the 15 inch mean annual rainfall line, the "effective" rainfall, which takes into consideration such components as seasonal distribution and evaporation, is such as to give a growing season of only 2-3 months. As compensation, however, the arid-zone native plant species "hay-off" in the non-growing periods and preserve their nutriment for stock longer than the fast-growing native grasses of wetter regions. But, as well as having low effectiveness, the reliability of rainfall is low in S-W Queensland, including the Adavale district.

Unfortunately Sidney Yeates was immediately confronted with evidence that Boondoon was no El Dorado. They had arrived during "an awful drought" (14) and had to cart water to the head station, a distance of three miles.

Conn Bros had been the previous holders of the Boondoon lease, but a man named Joe Brady, who had his wife and small child with him, was in charge when they arrived. Boondoon was then a cattle run with practically no fences. The purchase price of the lease was £10,000 including 3000 cattle. The decision was made by Sidney and his elder sons to produce wool. Accordingly, after a brief settling in period they "converted the station into a sheep run and set to work fencing". I can assure anyone who has not visited Boondoon that to set to work fencing it would be a task to frighten most people onto the first coach for Brisbane; but fence it they did.

During the whole period of the Yeates' occupancy of Boondoon, the station was run by a partnership which traded as Cudmore, Yeates & Co. Business letters and documents in the Qld Archives are signed in that way, whether they were written by one of the Cudmore men (59) or by Sidney Yeates (60). The partnership arrangement seems to have been that Sidney accepted the responsibilities of resident manager, while the Cudmores undertook to secure the leases and meet the annual rents. No doubt an understanding was also reached regarding the share contributed by each party to the purchase price and running costs, as well as the basis on which division of any profits would be made. The Boondoon file at the Qld Archives shows that from the time of Sidney's arrival on the station until 1886 the leases were in the names of Daniel Cudmore (Snr) and James Cudmore; thereafter, they were transferred to James' three younger brothers, Daniel, Milo and Arthur.

During all the time of the Yeates' occupancy of Boondoon, the much larger station of Milo, named after one of the Cudmore family and situated across the Blackwater Creek stock route immediately to the west of Boondoon, was controlled by Cudmore interests. However, Boondoon and Milo were managed quite independently, and contact between the two stations was probably no closer than a normal "neighbourly" one. The oldest Qld Lands Dept map of the Boondoon run shows a track on the western boundary of Boondoon labelled "from Milo . . . to Boondoon." It would be satisfying to know how often the horses of the respective stations trod that trail on exchange visits. In general the Cudmores conducted their north Australian land business by correspondence and by visits, preferring to live in the south, first at Yongala and Pinda; later at Avoca and Poplitah; and, for some of the family, in Adelaide and Sydney. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the blocks on Milo, 15 miles N-N-W of the homestead, astride the Grey Range, was (and still is) named Yeates.

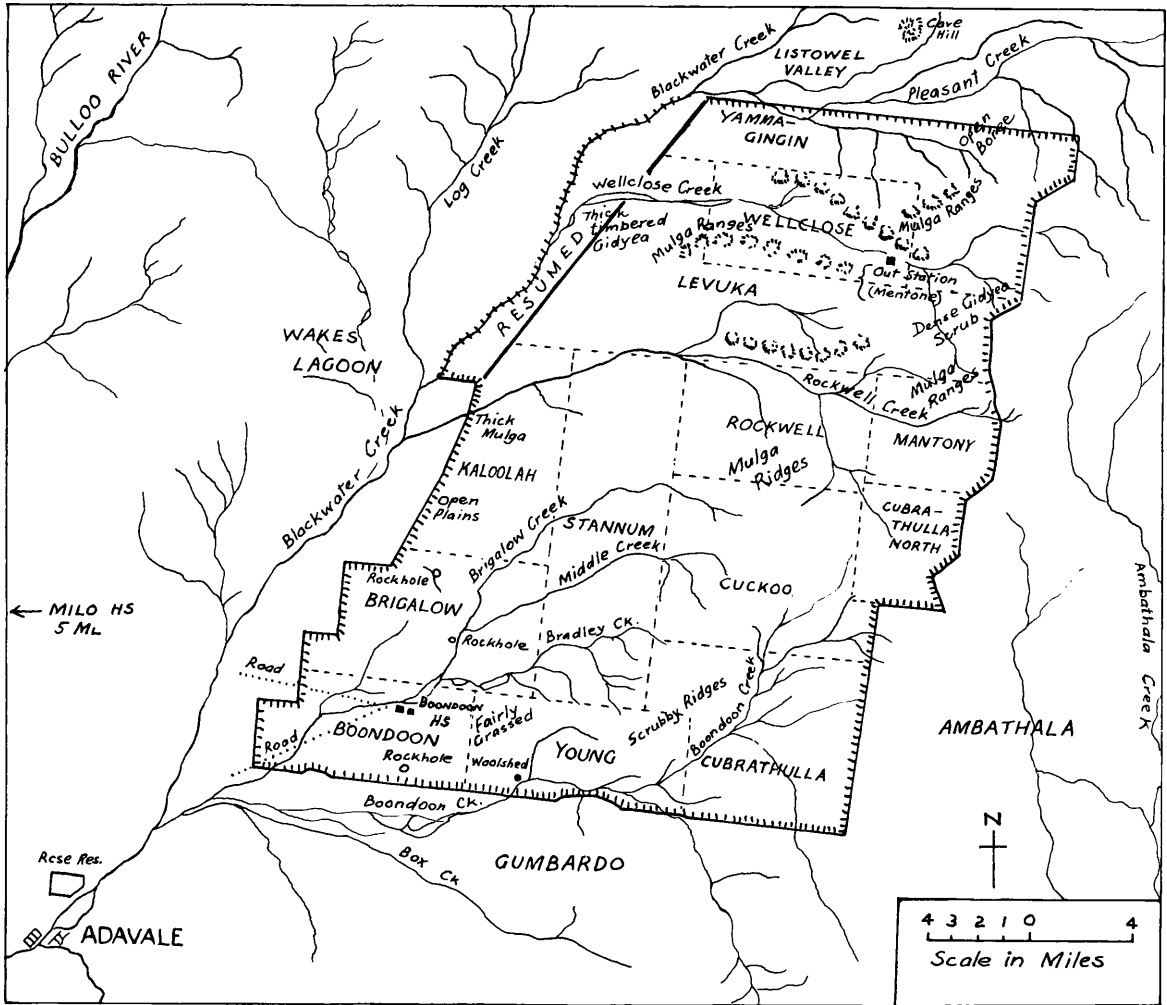
* * *

The consolidated run known as Boondoon, on which Sidney and his family settled in 1881 totalled 553 square miles and comprised the two adjoining leases of Boondoon in the south and Mentone in the north. Much detail relating to these two properties is available in the Qld Archives. Some of the records are in the Boondoon file; but others are among Ambathala papers, apparently because in more recent times part of old Boondoon was worked under the same ownership as Ambathala.

During the 1880's Boondoon was surveyed and appraised for purposes such as fixing the annual rent and, later, resumption of a portion in the north. The old survey descriptions are characteristic of those times, as shown by the first few phrases of a whole page of close printing which seems never-ending in its detail:

Commencing at a point one mile south of a box-tree marked broad-arrow over M1 in triangle, and bounded thence by a north line passing through the said tree and a giddiah-tree marked broad-arrow over L over I in triangle nine miles twenty-two chains to a giddiah-tree ... thence by a north line crossing Koolibah Creek... thence by a west line ... also crossing a bend of Pleasant Creek thirteen miles to a point one chain west of a boree-tree marked broad-arrow...

Fortunately these descriptions were accompanied by maps, so that exact locations of the consolidated run as it then was can be shown. Fortunately, too, meaningful and reasonably detailed descriptions of the land, its vegetation, water resources and the station's capital improvements, were recorded.



Map of the consolidated holding Boondoon, near Adavale, in the Warrego district of S-W Qld, as in the 1880's. (61).

From all this it is clear that Sidney and his sons embarked on a herculean task in deciding to develop Boondoon. Besides being rough topographically and of only light stock carrying capacity, the run was described as "inadequately watered." Water certainly appears, from all descriptions, to have been insufficient or unreliable in dry seasons. Thus a waterhole at the Head Station was said to have been "permanent in all ordinary seasons but inadequate during drought". Eight holes in Brigalow Creek were "evenly distributed and had excellent catches"; but they lasted only about three months without rain. Three rock holes (one known as Niagara Falls) also had excellent catches but were of limited use in rainless seasons. (A later report, however, described the three rock holes as having permanent water). There were also several springs on the station but these were stated to be either inaccessible to stock, or so far removed from any grazing area for stock as to be "practically useless." However, one Government official summarised the creeks and waterholes as having such good catches as probably to be seldom without water "for long". By the late 1880's watering improvements had been constructed in the form of some 10 tanks and dams. These were probably put in by the Yeates men, and their locations are shown on maps dating from about 1886.

The 553 sq miles of Boondoon comprised the individual runs of Cubra-thulla, Cubra-thulla North, Boondoon, Brigalow, Young, Stannum, Kaloolah, Levuka, Yammagingin, Cuckoo, Wellclose, Rockwell and Mantony — the last three constituting Mentone. Most of these blocks contained a mixture of useful country and either rough rocky outcrops or dense scrub. Some of the typical official descriptions include such terms as the following: red soil, red stony soil, rocky, barren; country very mixed, patchy and irregular; mainly stony red soil mulga country with patches or flats of open box forest; some red soil flats lightly timbered with open brigalow and gidyea (my spelling) in isolated areas. Some grass and summer herbage;

any quantity of good mulga, with bush mulga in many places; sufficient mulga and in places gidyea suitable for fencing and yard building.

The Cuckoo block was described as "very rough indeed". Other block descriptions were:- Stannum: some good herbage...salt bush ..but some rocky ridges of bendee and gidyea scrub forming the watershed of several creeks and gullies. Brigalow: herbage on western boundary..with rocky places..



One of three noteworthy rock holes on Boondoon. It was probably from here that Sidney Yeates' family carted water "three miles to the head station" (14) when they arrived on Boondoon in Feb 1881. (Peter Schmidt, friend of the author, who has assisted with the Boondoon enquiries took this photo).



Waterhole in Brigalow Creek, S-W portion of Boondoon. The abandoned machine, showing a large gear wheel and a long shaft fitted with a universal joint, may have been part of a horse-or bullock-driven pump.

watershed of Blackwater and Brigalow Creeks. Kaloola: some good open country, remainder scrubby ranges and dense gidyea... watershed of Rockwell and Brigalow Creeks. Rockwell: open country.. remainder inaccessible ranges formed into amphitheatres amongst which are gidyea and salt bush flats. The creeks ran only after substantial rain; otherwise they consisted of strings of waterholes, or were occasionally quite dry.

The total improvements, as at 2 December 1886, were listed, showing an overall value of £12,278. By that date the Yeates family had been in occupation nearly five years and had no doubt effected many of the improvements.

In 1886 the head station buildings and stockyard on the Boondoon sub-block were valued at £500; the woolshed, woolstore, shearers' and men's hut, store and wool scouring shed, sheep yard and engine shed, plus fenced drying ground and stockyard (all in Young block) had a value of £1029; and an out-station dwelling house, kitchen, store and stockyard on Wellclose had a valuation of £300. Another out-station hut and yards receive mention; but otherwise the improvements by that date consisted mostly of watering facilities (tanks and dams) and fencing, these latter items evidently bringing the total to £12,278.

The annual rent for the Boondoon consolidated run was £238.3.0, made up of £189.18.0 for 374¼ sq miles in the south and £48.5.0 for the northern section of 178¼ sq miles.

* * *

In December 1978 I visited Boondoon by kind permission of the present lessee, Mr Malcolm Patterson who helped me in every possible way, including with 4-wheel drive transport which was necessary to follow the rough and difficult tracks. The main purpose of the visit was to gain a closer knowledge of Boondoon and the surrounding district; to photograph items of special interest; and to absorb the general atmosphere. All these aims were achieved; but the big surprise was to find how very greatly Boondoon, Adavale township and presumably other nearby stations must have deteriorated from the relatively thriving state of the 1880's and 1890's. In those days a big family and their employees lived on Boondoon, and Adavale was a busy centre of trade, a depot for Cobb & Co and the teamsters, with a permanent population of 180 or more.

Nobody now lives on Boondoon. The old homestead has gone, the woolshed and men's quarters are recognisable only by stone foundations and broken brick or stone fireplaces, and huts and stockyards here and there through-out the run are mere ruins of century-old gidyea structures with stone chimneys. The property is now run from Acton far to the North, by methods which have by-passed the saddle horse, the bullock wagon and the horse team. The once-thriving Adavale is now desolate, impoverished, and almost a ghost-town.

Mr Patterson now operates a cattle grazing enterprise over a great tract of country of which Boondoon represents merely the southern end. He has a deep understanding of and love for the whole area, both through his present ownership, his great interest and efficient management, and by virtue of the fact that he is a genuine "local", having grown up on nearby Listowel Valley.

As an aid to present-day mustering and general management, including on Boondoon, Malcolm Patterson frequently uses a helicopter. This gives him a wonderful over-view of the country and in a matter of a few minutes he was able to pencil in on my 4 miles to the inch map, the boundary of the country which was occupied by the Yeates family. This he could do because of the characteristic fencing system they adopted — recognisable on broad scale when viewed from the air, and still identifiable when inspected at close quarters on the ground.

When the Yeates men "set to work fencing" it is clear that the process involved felling with axes swathes of the abundant timber, mostly mulga and gidyea, in long straight runs down the whole length of each fence line. Then, as they progressed, the fallen scrub was laid tree on tree in parallel, to make a thick brush type fence quite impassable by their sheep. Because of the durability of the wood, many of these old fences still remain — weathered, burnt and decaying, but clearly identifiable after nearly 100 years. Even where fires have burnt the wood, the line of the fence is recognisable by the mound of ash and earth remaining. And from the air, whether the fence has been burnt or not, the fence lines are identifiable by the changed vegetation pattern along the track of the long-felled scrub.

The remarkable thing is that this style of fencing extends for seemingly endless miles throughout the area occupied by old Boondoon; and every stick of scrub that went into making the fences was cut by hand with the axe. Equally notable is the fact that Malcolm Patterson's delineation of the brush fenced boundary conforms almost exactly to the boundary shown on the Lands Dept map of the property, following the first survey of the area in February 1884 by "theodolite and perambulator" (61).

The area of Boondoon, stated in various writings of my father to be "500 sq miles", corresponds reasonably with the actual 553 sq miles given in the Archives' documents. But I put to Malcolm Patterson the question of sheep numbers, quoted by my father as being "up to 45,000 in later years". This, according to Malcolm, is compatible with the area and probable carrying capacity of the property. He also believes that the woolshed and shearers' quarters, the stone foundations of which can still be seen, were of such large size that a flock approaching 45,000 would have to be envisaged.

Since no one is believed to have run sheep on the property before or after the Yeates' occupation, it must be presumed that all the sheep facilities were installed by them. Bearing in mind the difficulty of transport in those times, and the fact that all the bulky machinery had to come from Charleville by bullock wagon, their achievements and those of others like them, are something to marvel at. For example, among the relics around the woolshed area there stands a huge iron wool dumper. It is at least 8 feet high and it must weigh a ton. It is no ordinary wool press, but a machine used to compress three wool bales into the volume of one, for more convenient transport by bullock wagon. Still clearly readable, despite its having been out in the weather, standing in the wind-blown red sandy soil, is the casting of the maker's name on its side: H.H. Mortimer & Co, London & Birmingham. That huge machine must have been sent



Remains from Sidney Yeates' time (1881-1894) on Boondoon in the woolshed area. Upper photo: stone fire places which probably formed parts of the shearers' quarters and bake-house. Lower: huge iron dumper for compressing wool bales, with nearby machine which may have been the dumper's winding gear.

out from England and then transported to Boondoon, the last 140 miles at least by bullock wagon. I can imagine the swearing that went on during the various handlings; but the fact that it was acquired under such difficulties shows what enterprise and faith the pioneers had. Beside it in the dust is a heavy iron apparatus which may have been a winding device used to operate the dumper, and nearby there lies a sophisticated solid iron worm gear, larger than a football, which was a part of either the dumper or the wool press.

Besides the numerous other relics, such as piles of old hand shears, huge iron rings from the hubs of bullock wagon wheels, parts of camp ovens and the like, there is a large stone fire-place or oven. Malcolm Patterson believes this to have formed part of the shearers' bake-house.

The woolshed area is sited beside a creek where the sheep would probably have been washed prior to shearing. In the 1886 valuation, a fenced-off "drying ground", in the woolshed area, is mentioned. It is also known (42) that the Yeates always sent their wool away washed. The wool was probably first washed on the sheep in the creek; then again after shearing. The latter is supported by the information (42) that Walter Yeates "often drove the steam engine on Boondoon, which was used to dry the wool". This was achieved by centrifugal action much like that of a modern spin drier.

* * *

Once Sidney and Dymphna settled in at Boondoon and all the men-folk and older boys started work, the education of the younger children had to be organised. This involved finding a governess to teach about five of the boys, from Walter (11 or 12) down to Kenneth (4 or 5). Only Herbert (2) was too young at the start for either work or "school".

Strangely enough, bearing in mind the isolation, there seems to have been little difficulty in finding good governesses or tutors over the years. Having been to Boondoon, which seems so isolated and in such rough country, I can imagine the thoughts of each newly arrived governess when she climbed off the coach or buggy from Adavale! Certainly all the children received excellent educations and, in later years as adults, they could hold their own in literacy, numeration, general knowledge and ethical behaviour, with even the most advantaged urban folk. This says much for the governesses; but it is to the parents, Sidney and Dymphna who set such great store by all the children receiving a sound education and learning how to conduct themselves, that credit is due. Because of her insistence on maintaining high standards, in her household management as well as family upbringing, it seems that Dymphna became known in certain quarters as "the duchess." Sidney was also concerned about such matters, as we know from his having started the Melrose Provisional School near Bowen. We are also told (21) that:

...with his large family of ten sons on the station at Boondoon, he saw to it that in the home, the courtesies and refinements in which he had been reared should be observed. "Go out to the mulga" he would say, the unfailing remedy for noise inside. At night all work of any kind was tabooed — music, talk and games, or dancing being the usual routine. The father [i.e. Sidney] appeared to be the presiding genius in the home, according to the younger daughter [Mary Dymphna Yeates]. The mother was of a very quiet disposition and not in good health. I remember her coming to Morphett Vale in my young days, and we loved her, as she seemed to enjoy collecting us round the piano and playing and singing nursery rhymes to us, instead of talking to the grown-ups. She was really the quietest person. One of the sons, Edwin, reminded me of her in later years. I have a special place for him, because, to my surprise, when I was being unmercifully teased at the Richardsons, he astonished everyone with a most sarcastic remark which stopped the fun effectually, and as he seldom opened his lips the surprise was shattering!

Two sisters, Helen and Clara Elizabeth ("Lily") Blackett, who were governesses at Boondoon and another western property, Mount Maria, respectively, married two of the older Yeates boys, Albert and Walter. It was during a visit to Boondoon to stay with her sister that Lily Blackett met Walter. Helen became a great correspondent with the Adelaide branches of the family in later years and Lily and Walter's daughters, Theo Booth and Vera Morris have provided some of the anecdotal material for this book.

The two Blacketts were well-educated, English girls. Suddenly finding themselves orphaned, they decided to emigrate to Australia and start a school. On arrival in this country, however, conditions were more difficult than they had expected, and, with insufficient capital to start a school, they became governesses. When Lily, the younger of the two sisters by 10 years, went out to Mount Maria she was met, presumably at Morven, by the station's owner, Mr Douglas. He had with him a horse and side saddle for the new governess; but unfortunately she had never ridden before in her life! She certainly remembered that trip out to the station. In those days there were few roads suitable for even a buggy so most of the travelling was done on horseback.

One governess at Boondoon, a Miss Harris, unfortunately did not care for salt beef. I say unfortunately, for, when a beast was killed, the fresh meat only lasted for a day or two in summer and a little longer in winter; thereafter salt meat was the fresh only type available perhaps for weeks. On one occasion,

when asked if she would like some curry, Miss Harris replied that she certainly would — if it were made from fresh meat. In fact the meat had been salted but this was not admitted and she consumed her meal heartily!

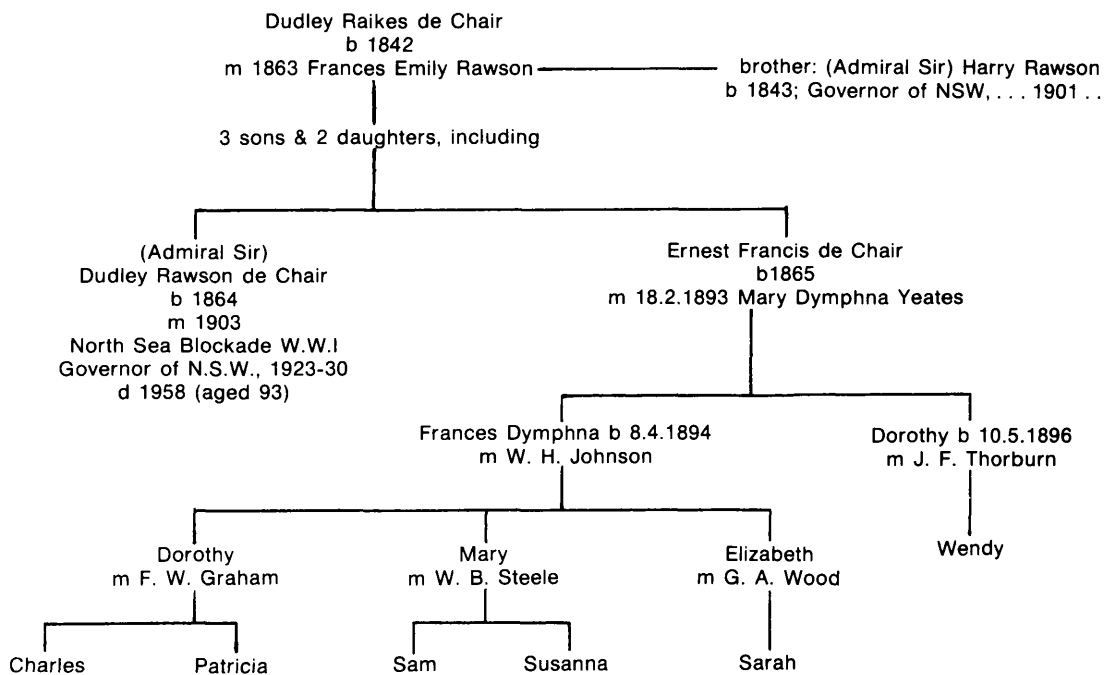
One unusual visitor to Boondoon in the early 1890's was a young Royal Naval lieutenant, Ernest de Chair. The chances are that he met the Cudmores in Adelaide and that they, knowing he was interested in sampling "life in Australia", suggested a visit to Boondoon. Sidney Yeates always welcomed visitors, and a trip to the "real out-back", with part of the journey in one of Cobb & Co's coaches, would be quite an adventure for the young Englishman.

It appears that while Ernest de Chair was at Boondoon, the younger Yeates girl, Mary Dymphna, returned from one of her lengthy stays with Grannie Cudmore in South Australia where she had been studying. On the night she arrived at Boondoon there was a great welcome for her. Mary's daughter takes up the story: (5)

The bachelors all rallied from their quarters in the long room of the house, and she saw, on entering, a young Navy officer who was looking at her intently. Like a flash she knew why she had come back...

In fact, Mary Dymphna Yeates and Ernest de Chair were married in 1893. Years later, a brother of the groom, Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair, became Governor of New South Wales (from 1923 to 1930).

Mary and Ernest de Chair had two daughters, Dymphna and Dorothy, cousins of mine. Dymphna de Chair married the Rev William Herbert Johnson who later became Bishop of Ballarat, holding that position from 1936 to 1961 when he died. Dorothy de Chair married an English Army man, Colonel Thorburn. She lived all the latter part of her life in England where she died about 1976. Another cousin of mine who visited England said that Dorothy Thorburn had managed to find the site near Worcester, where Henwick Hall, the home of our great grand-mother, Martha Barr, once stood; but only the massive gate posts remained.



One of the Yeates boys, Daniel, was in Adelaide at the time the family journeyed from Bowen to Boondoon. Daniel Henry Cashel Yeates (uncle "Dan") seems for a time at least to have been something of a favourite with the older Cudmores in Adelaide. Perhaps this was because he was born in Adelaide during the early part of Sidney's north Queensland foray, and because he was named after his grandfather, Daniel Cudmore. The name Cashel is also a Cudmore family name. It is also possible that because he seemed such a bright boy, Dan was being given special opportunity for schooling.

At anyrate Dan went back to South Australia where he spent quite some time with Grannie Cudmore, either at Claremont in Glen Osmond or at Paringa Hall, both of which were Cudmore residences. While



Many post and rail cattle yards, made from the local gidyea, still exist on Boondoon after more than a century. Upper picture: one set of yards still in use to-day. Lower: close-up of gateway construction.

there he attended school. He occasionally got into trouble and on one occasion was punished for throwing his grandmother's walking stick through the glass wall of her conservatory! Dan was evidently not too happy about the small sum of threepence or sixpence a week he received for pocket money. However, he was given some money each day to pay for his bus trips to school, so he decided to save this by walking. He soon accumulated sufficient funds to buy some kind of fire-arm and with that he set about shooting pigeons or similar saleable "game". Sale of these brought in enough money to satisfy his immediate needs! But the bush boy was out of his element in Adelaide and it is not surprising that he rejoined his own family again. There is also a story that, back on Boondoon, and always loving a "joke", he mixed a trace of gun powder into one of the packets of tobacco in the station store. The punishment for that was not revealed, but I expect he would have been banished to the mulga for at least a day or two!

* * *

The property work on Boondoon can easily be envisaged. The formidable task of fencing has already been mentioned, and no doubt the method of using felled mulga and gidyea scrub was adopted because it involved no capital outlay — merely blood and sweat. As an interim measure while sheep fences were being constructed for the sheep which Sidney brought with him from Bowen, some shepherding must have been adopted. Then, as more secure paddocks became established, further sheep would have been purchased to stock them.

In later years (possibly as capital became available), wire fences were erected, for in the 1895 Report of Palmer, a Dividing Commissioner, the improvements included 190 miles of 5 and 6 wire fencing. Its cost was put at £35 per mile and its "present value" at £23 per mile.

The change-over from cattle to sheep would have involved mustering the cattle and taking them away for sale. Although there was scant fencing on Boondoon before the arrival of the Yeates, cattle yards existed, so the yarding and drafting of sale mobs, once mustered, would have been relatively straight-forward. Many of the old cattle yards, made from local gidyea, are still standing and indeed are well-preserved and in use to-day, generally with repairs, extensions and modifications having been made more recently. The colossal iron rings by which the gates are hung, with inch-thick iron bolts, a foot long, passing through the posts to which they are secured with 1½ inch square nuts, are as good to-day as when they were fitted well over 100 years ago. These days, a helicopter is used to help muster most of the cattle and Malcolm Patterson has improved much of the north end of the old Boondoon run by pulling the gidyea scrub and establishing Buffel grass. At a few locations, in rough scrubby country where isolated water points exist, cattle traps are used to yard the cattle when they are required.



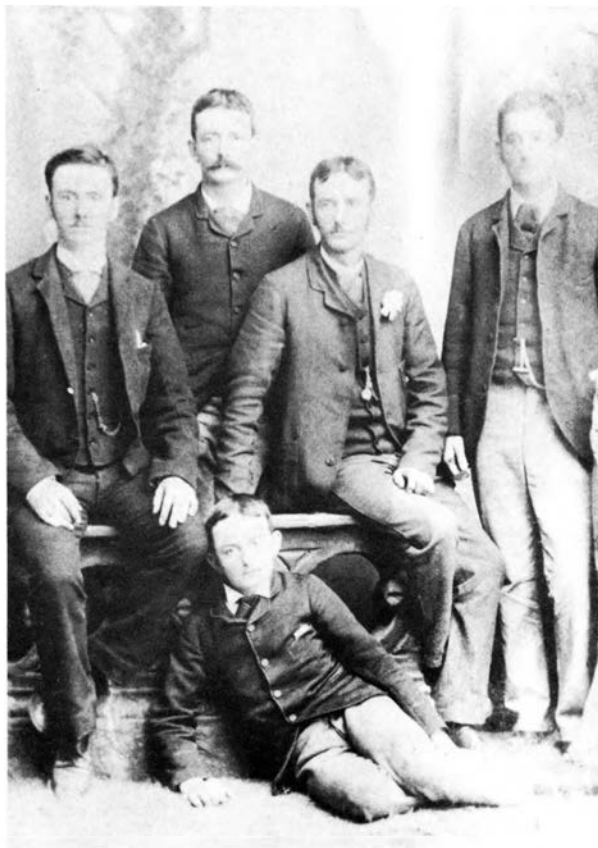
Ruins of one of the old huts on Boondoon. The author's youngest son, Richard, is standing at rear, beside an old stone fireplace. Note the deep slots in the gidyea posts, into which the tapered ends of the horizontally laid slabs fitted.

Erecting the woolshed and shearers' quarters must have been a major task for the Yeates men, necessitating first the laying of the rammed stone and clay floors. These are still in surprisingly good condition. The stones must have been carted from nearby ridges and set into place with great care. It is believed that the floor, once laid, was covered with a mixture of mutton fat and ashes to make a firm, smooth, dry surface.

Although my father was only two years old when the family settled on Boondoan, he would have been about 15 when they left. He told me, when I was a young boy, that from the time he was 11 he commenced undertaking significant jobs connected with running the property. As a teenager he did boundary riding which sometimes kept him out over-night on his own. There were huts on parts of the run where one could shelter; but he said how lonely it was sleeping out in such wilderness. In retrospect he felt it had perhaps been wrong to expose so young a lad to such conditions; such thoughts may indicate the change in outlook as people moved out of the pioneering era.

Herbert Yeates also described the excitement when a bullock team arrived with the station's stores. The interval between arrivals was sometimes as great as six months. Unfortunately I was too young and insufficiently knowledgeable to ask him the many questions to which I should now like to know the answers. I am not sure, for instance, whether there were any regular coach services for passengers and mail. Adavale was certainly an important centre for the teamsters and for Cobb & Co coaches; and, according to Malcolm Patterson, one of the coach runs did pass through Boondoan on the way to and from Listowel. My father also recalled how the snakes would come up to the homestead from the nearby creek on summer nights, sometimes being found in the creepers around the verandah.

Some good photographs exist of the Yeates boys, taken about mid-way through the family's occupancy of Boondoan. One photo is of five of the older boys, with the eldest, Sidney James, missing — he by then possibly having married and gone away to his own selection. Another is of the four youngest boys. A third is of my father alone. Although I have no photograph of the two girls at that stage, fine descriptions of them, written by their cousin Frances Buttrose, are recorded. (5)



The older Yeates boys in the 1880's — Sidney's main work force in the development of Boondoan. Left to right at rear: Walter, Edwin, Albert, Daniel. Reclining at front: Charles. (Sidney James, the eldest son, was not present). (42).



The four youngest of Sidney and Dymphna Yeates' 12 children, about 1884. Left to right: Gilbert, Herbert, Alfred, Kenneth (42). Herbert, the youngest in the family and the author's father, seems to be enjoying the occasion.

Herbert Yeates, the author's father, about 1891. By this time he was starting to participate in significant property work on Boondoon, such as mustering and boundary riding.



Flora Yeates, the elder of the two sisters, was a sweet gentle girl when I first met her at "Claremont", Glen Osmond, South Australia, the home of her grand-parents, Mr and Mrs Daniel Cudmore. I often stayed there as Mrs Cudmore approved of me, and it made it brighter for Flora. Although I was younger than she was, I always felt her protector. She just submitted to everything, with never a word of protest. We had great fun between ourselves when alone, away from the majestic authority, and planned all sorts of escapades, which, however, never succeeded because of the vigilance [sic] always on the alert!

Mary Dymphna, the younger daughter, was a very different proposition, tall, upstanding, with an air which demanded, and got a different treatment. She was very ambitious, and we talked of the time when we would both have letters after our name, she B.A. and I Mus. Bac. At Isong Gyidou Ladies' School, Maclaren Vale, 12 miles beyond Morphett Vale, she studied for a year or so, meaning to go on to the university afterwards. For most of her vacations she came to the Manse for part of the time, or I might get in the coach and travel to Adelaide with her, bound for the Richardsons, who had a beautiful home in Avenue Road, North Adelaide, now the Memorial Hospital, belonging to the Wesleyans. Great days of our youth, laughter and talk, tales of school girls and their pranks. [Mary] Dymphna was a great raconteur. She is remembered by all who knew her here. Mrs Jim Cudmore of Sydney was only talking of her the other day to me. What fun we all had together at Paringa Hall, Glenelg in those school holidays when [Mary] Dymphna was staying there, and where, as usual, she always made a niche for herself. At the Vale too — all our special friends to whom we took her for teas etc. often speak about her. I introduced her to Mrs Kelsey of Drybert House School, and she was offered a position there ... so as to be able to attend lectures at the university. I remember sending a wire to Paringa Hall when Mrs Kelsey made me this offer for her, and Dymphna came at once, leaving a dance and other joys which I had not known of. Strangely enough, or so it seemed them, she could not come to a decision. Eventually she decided to return to the station at Boondoon, Queensland, and we did not see her again for several years....

(That return to Boondoon was the occasion on which she met the man she was to marry — Ernest de Chair).

* * *

Once the station's work programme was established and the younger children's schooling properly arranged, Boondoon settled down to normal routine. Sidney's wife, Dymphna, obviously played an active role in affairs, as shown by a document in the Qld Archives describing a police constable's visit to Boondoon on 23-24 January 1888. The officer's verbatim report follows:

Police Station
Adavale
25 January 1888

To Inspector of Police
Charleville

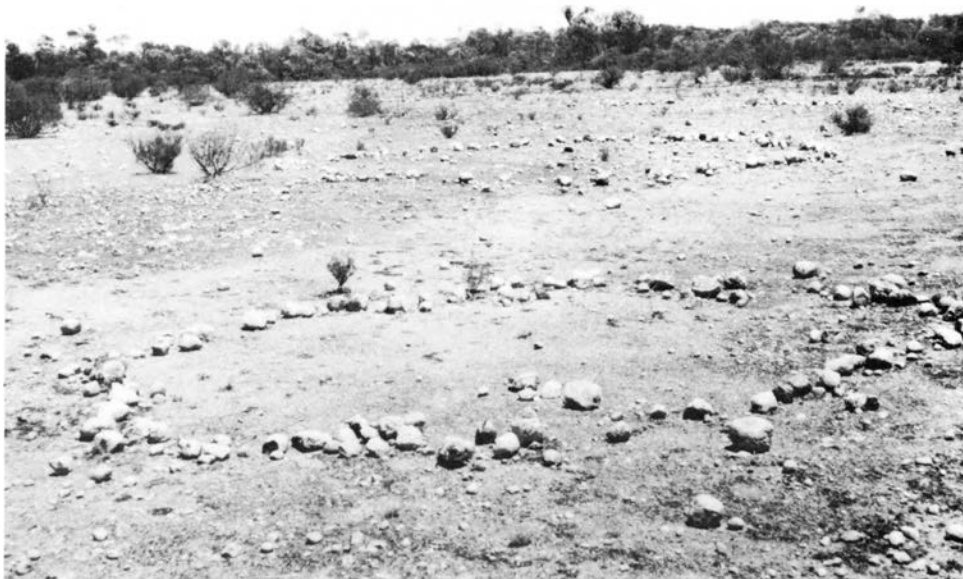
Constable H. Jackson W5 begs to state for the information of his Inspector that on the 23rd inst he started from Adavale for Boondoon Station a distance of 25 miles to collect station returns. He reached there that night and stopped. When asking for information as to the road to Listowel Downs he heard that a small party with cattle would proceed across country to an outstation that was on the main road to Listowel, and it would be a saving of 14 miles, as Boondoon laying off the main road a distance of 12 miles, it would be necessary unless taking this short cut to go back the same way. The Constable accordingly started next morning following the party....as there was no sign of a gateway....went through a fallen wire fence...leading his horse "Sirius" across...sticking his off fore foot....The constable led the horse back to the station and got some coal tar or the tar they use on the station for wounds...when bandage applied the bleeding stopped. The Constable by the permission of Mrs Yeates of Boondoon left the horse in the big horse paddock there. He then returned to Adavale on a Boondoon horse and reported to Senior Constable Walsh. Mrs Yeates' opinion is that the horse will be alright in a week.

H. Jackson
Constable No. 183.

Clearly, Mrs Yeates appears to have been the responsible person present at the homestead at the time of the constable's visit; she obviously played an active part — indeed seems to have taken charge — in seeing to the horse's welfare; and her opinion as to the animal's future progress was obviously respected. One can't help feeling that the constable was probably young and inexperienced.

Among the household employees (mainly Aborigines), Dymphna had the help of a Chinese cook about whom two stories exist. (42) It seems that he made excellent buns which were specially noted for their glazed tops. But whenever he was asked how he achieved the shine he withdrew, guarding his secret. The mystery was solved when one of the boys, unknown to the cook, observed him licking the top of each bun before placing them in the oven! It is also said that once, when a flood was imminent, the Chinaman went out and killed, then cooked, all the hens — not wanting them to be a total loss!

In the household management it seems that Florence was a tower of strength to her mother — particularly after an illness which struck Dymphna and of which further mention will be made. For one thing Flora appears to have been in charge of the big household clothes wash, though for the actual performance of the job she had the assistance of willing Aboriginal women and girls. One of the more regular of such helpers, named Rose, was well-known for the cheery way she would shout: "All clothes on line Missie". These Aboriginal women thought a great deal of Flora. This we know (42) because numerous girl piccaninnies born on the station were named Flora by their mothers. In fact so popular did the name become that it was thought too confusing to use it again when names were being considered for one of Sidney and Dymphna's early grand-daughters.



Arrangements of stones, marking Aboriginal sites, apparently as undisturbed now as they must have been in Sidney Yeates' time on Boondoan.

There was an Aboriginal camp on Boondoan and some of the men worked as stockmen with Sidney who always got on well with them. However, they would often disappear on a walkabout "without a minute's notice" (42). Arrangements of large stones on an extensive ceremonial site some distance from the head station are still evident to-day, as undisturbed now as they were in Sidney's time on the station. Under-lying this area there are said to be limestone caves where good water may be found.

An interesting tradition at Boondoan was that every Sunday, Sidney Yeates would hold a short religious service for the family and the station employees. Everyone dressed in their best clothes for this, the ladies in white. The service was held before the mid-day meal which was always a rather special one.

The illness which Dymphna suffered at Boondoan was a bowel obstruction and this placed her life in grave danger. Fortunately there was a medical man in Adavale at the time and Walter Yeates rode to town and found the doctor who was agreeable to ride back to the station to treat Dymphna. Following his examination the doctor decided to operate; and Walter was the anaesthetist. The stress of this whole episode can be imagined; however the operation was successful. At least a decade later, when Dymphna was hospitalised in Toowoomba by the complaint from which she later died, the doctors who attended her commented on the excellent surgery which their bush colleague had earlier performed.

* * *

Three years after settling on Boondoan, Sidney Yeates was appointed to the Bench in Adavale. He was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace on 4 April 1884 (22) and his name is also included in the list of Magistrates in the Colony during that year. (23) Although he resigned the position of Magistrate in 1885 (probably owing to the commitment being too heavy and entailing much travel) he continued in his capacity of JP, "discharging the onerous duties of court work at great personal inconvenience for over 10 years". (43) The Adavale Police Reports of 1881-1891, (62) show both the need for such help and the variety of cases on which the bench of justices had to deliberate. Thus on 23 March 1882, Constable Atwell reported that he:

is unable to make an affidavit as there is no Magistrate living nearer Adavale than 70 miles and is often months without anyone passing through...

During the 1880's and early 1890's there were many serious industrial disturbances among the shearers in the Warrego district. Strikes and picketing of some stations occurred, and there were a few cases of violence. Milo station came in for much trouble of this type but neighbouring Boondoan was never affected. It is said (42) that Sidney Yeates always had good relations with the shearers.

On 25 July 1884 the Adavale police officer posted to Inspector Thornton at Thargomindah an application for more police "to help with the Milo shearers' strike". Then much later, 30 April 1891, but again during a serious industrial confrontation, Constable Iver Manuell reported to the Police Inspector at Charleville that:

...Troop horse "Rattler" was staked about 6 inches below the off knee on 16th. inst whilst Tracker Charlie was riding him through the bush tracking offenders who had set fire to Gumbardo woolshed..

(Gumbardo adjoined Boondoon to the south).

But by no means all the troubles were due to shearer v. management disputes. On 26 August 1887 the police report states that:

...The Senior Constable [Thos. Walsh] proceeded on 22nd. inst with Tracker, in company with Mr Pegler to Paddock No. 1 of Milo Run and found there certain men named Robert Brown and William Sutton alias "Terrible Billy" in possession of a mob of horses that had faked brands but most of which are newly branded with Robert Brown's registered brand...

The Senior Constable finds that horses having other district registered brands being among them he took possession of...21 head in all and impounded them. Warrant is now issued for the arrest of William Sutton alias "Terrible Billy" and a summons against Robert Brown; the first on the charge of horse stealing; the second on a charge of permitting his brand to be used. William Sutton has been arrested.

A mere two days later a report of an altogether different misdemeanour was submitted:

Constable H. Jackson, Reg. No. 183 reports that on the night of Saturday 27th August 1887 he was on duty on Klugh St., Adavale and that about 12.30 o'clock a.m. on the Sunday morning 28th. inst the Constable went round to the back of the Imperial Hotel and hearing voices inside the Hotel entered... several persons .. [were].. playing a game of cards called "Poker" for drinks... The constable saw the drinks supplied... The constable informed the proprietor...that it was after closing hours; soon after speaking the proprietor asked the constable to come into the coffee room saying "Jackson I want to speak to you". The room was not lighted up but light entered from the other room by the door; as soon as the constable entered the coffee room he was clutched by the throat with one hand by [name given] and was struck a severe blow in the eye with the other clenched fist, said fist having a ring on.

H.J.Jackson, Const.

Over the years an incredible number and variety of crimes, petty misdemeanours, suicides, discovery of bodies and strange incidents occurred in Adavale and the surrounding district. It must be remembered that, in those days, Adavale was a busy centre. The 1886 census gave the town's population as 156 and the 1889 Qld Post Office Directory listed 31 pastoral names (families) the last being: Yeates Brothers, Squatters." The town was recorded as being "613 miles from Brisbane; rail to Charleville, thence coach 130 miles." The coaches from Charleville to Adavale and Boondoon had to cross the Ward and Langlo Rivers.

A particularly informative article about Adavale, its district and the hospitality of the people as they were in 1891 was written by a traveller at that time. (44) Extracts follow:

Wakes Lagoon and Adavale:

At Adavale we met some very fine people, whom it is a pleasure to remember: A.H. Pegler of Milo; E.B.Learmonth of Gumbardo; the Yeates family of Boondoon; some of the Tullys of Ray station; Charles McLean of Comongin; Duncan McNeill then the Shire Clerk; Alford who was at Pinkilla. In the town there were Mr and Mrs Dare at the Post & Telegraph Office; T. Skinner, a storekeeper; Charles Fitzwalter of the big Western firm; Stewart Gibson who loved a good horse and could ride one; Woodhatch of the principal hotel; and Taylor of the Blackwater Hotel. The Adavale folk were a fine, hospitable lot; and appreciation of the happy days at Milo, Gumbardo and Boondoon are still with me ... the big shearers' strike was on ...

A few lines about Adavale may not be out of place. Few knew anything about the village or district. It was named from Mrs E.J. Stevens...wife of the Victorian athlete — a record breaker for 100 yards — who was the owner of Tintinchilla, a few miles below Adavale ... The site of the village is flat, and the Blackwater [Creek] had a habit of overflowing its banks when the rains were heavy up Listowel way. That was an inconvenience to the dwellers in the houses with pise, or mud, walls, for they had an inclination to sag and endeavour to reach solution when the water lapped round them. Three "pubs" or hotels, the more fashionable of which was Woodhatch's, a couple of good stores, a school, police quarters, post & telegraph office, and the currency was Fitzwalter notes or calabashes as similar currency had been called on the Darling Downs, though I never heard the expression west of the Warrego.

We shot plain turkeys when tired of meat, we gathered in ducks down at Tintinchilla, we had beautiful fish from the Blackwater at times, and generally we lived well, if not "riotously". Our larder had frequent additions from the stores at Milo, brought in by Mr A.H. Pegler... The country out to the Bulloo, and even to Milo was fairly level but to the east a few miles there was the dreary Grey Range and the ruins of the old homestead of Tintinchilla was on a knoll in a picturesque corner... But the rich part of the locality is up the Blackwater, past the racecourse and the Boondoon gates, towards Wake's Lagoon.

* * *

Apart from his work on the bench, Sidney was politically aware. In the early 1880's he "fought vigorously" for the transcontinental land grant railway scheme, as proposed by McIlwraith (43). This was the talk of the country at the time; but the majority of electors "had not sufficient foresight to approve the great scheme...so the election resulted in Griffith's party being returned to power, and the railway proposal being thrown out." (2)

* * *

In March 1894 the Yeates family left Boondoon after 13 years of hard but generally successful endeavour. There had been a serious drought the previous year — so bad in fact that Milo station lost 160,000 sheep. Wild dogs were troublesome and the rabbit pest was becoming established in the district; but none of these problems on their own seems to have accounted for the Yeates' decision to leave. The older boys in the family had moved off to selections of their own and Sidney may have felt that the work was too much for those remaining. Although he was fit and active for his 62 years at the time, his wife Dymphna appears to have been in indifferent health. The advantages to her of residing in a less hostile and more urban environment, close to medical aid, may well have been the deciding factor. All we are told (2) is that Sidney "sold his interest (in Boondoon) just in time to avoid the worries of the great drought which followed in the subsequent years."

As an interesting side-light on the great drought, a sad letter is included among the Ambathala papers at the Qld Archives. It was written by the owner of Ambathala, which adjoined Boondoon to the east, asking for remission of the two years' rent which he had been unable to pay. The letter is addressed to the Hon J.P. Bell, MLA, Minister for Lands and is dated 6 October 1903. The following is an extract:

After spending 27 years and £20,000 on this place I am leaving it a poor man. I was unable to pay my last two rents and have no prospect of doing so. The run was gazetted forfeited on July 18. I sold my few remaining stock and am barely able to pay off my debts incurred cutting scrub during the drought... I am leaving my "improvements" on which I have laid out £8,000 in perfect order.

(Signed — by the departing owner).

Archival records indicate that a Mr E. Nicholls managed Boondoon, on the Cudmores' behalf, for three years after Sidney Yeates' departure. Then, Augustus Pegler who managed Milo added the oversight of Boondoon to his responsibilities. At all events the run became a financial liability and a document among the Cudmore papers in the South Australian Archives mentions that Boondoon became a "disaster". Perhaps bad years and the calamitous drought at the turn of the century were mainly responsible for the decline. But for 13 years which included droughts, Sidney and his many sons, starting virtually from scratch, had battled along — not in affluence, but at least with financial security.

My own belief is that the economic decline of Boondoon after the departure of Sidney and his family illustrates the advantage of property management being in the hands of a dedicated, hard-working family of resident "owners," as opposed to being under absentee control, managed by employees having no special allegiance to the job in hand. The Yeates men and boys did their work on much less than full pay; but they took a pride in their achievements and in their way of life.

* * *

CHAPTER 4

A LARGE FAMILY DISPERSES

Well before the general exodus of the Yeates from Boondoan, four of the older sons had left the station, some having married. Most of them took up selections in the Charleville district, either singly or jointly. Thus in 1890 (63) and 1891 (64) Albert, Edwin and Walter, trading as Yeates Bros, obtained mortgages respectively on: "1900 sheep [plus other specified stock] and all depasturing rights of Grazing Farm 33, Charleville;" and "6164 sheep depasturing on Lockwood Station." Lockwood appears to have been Walter Yeates' headquarters and it was well after he settled there, in fact in April 1895, that he married Clara Elizabeth (Lily) Blackett, the Mount Maria governess who had visited Boondoan in earlier years. Sidney James, Sidney's eldest son, also probably had his own run; but he certainly undertook droving assignments. His address as recorded in his father's notes was Molonga, Glengarry, Charleville.

The younger of the two daughters, Mary Dymphna, was married in 1893, so at most only Florence and the five youngest sons were at Boondoan to help with the packing-up, and departure of the family.

Upon leaving Boondoan, in March 1894, (24) Sidney, with his wife Dymphna and daughter Florence, settled in Toowoomba where Dymphna spent the remainder of her life. The four youngest boys, Alfred Milo, then aged 22, Gilbert (20), Kenneth (18) and Herbert (15) went into business together in and round Charleville.



Sidney Yeates regarded Toowoomba, Qld as the "the best spot in Australia" in which to retire in 1894. Three generations later, in 1961, one of his great grand daughters also approves the scene from the look-out at Picnic Point. After taking this photo the author and his daughter (pictured) walked from Picnic Point to the summit of Table Top (middle distance) and back: time, 3-4 hours.

We are told that Sidney considered Toowoomba "the best spot in Australia in which to live, hence his decision to reside there permanently." (2) This is not altogether surprising when one considers Toowoomba's attributes: it has a bracing climate in winter and the heat of summer is tempered by the city's 2000 ft altitude, it has a well-distributed 36" rainfall, and its soil is a chocolate basaltic loam second to none in fertility. On the city's eastern side, breath-taking views can be seen from points such as Webb Park and Picnic Point on the escarpment of the Main Range, while to the west, rolling hills slope gradually away to black soil plains of the Darling Downs, famed for its fertility and agricultural productivity.

What a contrast this must have seemed to Sidney who had lived for over 16 years in the far north of Queensland where he contracted malaria and for another 13 years near Adavale in some of the hardest hot, dry mulga and gidyea country in Australia! In these locations there had been no respite from summer heat — no chance of taking coastal holidays, nor of having present-day household conveniences such as refrigerators or air-conditioners to make life a little more tolerable. The nearest approach to such



Sidney and Dymphna Yeates, the author's grand parents, soon after 1894 when Sidney sold his interest in Boondoan and left the Warrego to live with his wife and daughter Florence at "Mambray" cottage on the S-W outskirts of Toowoomba. (42).

luxuries that Boondoan could provide was a canvas water bag hanging on the verandah. It is understandable that Sidney would have welcomed all that Toowoomba had to offer.

A journal (17) written by a Miss Dorothea Neville Cudmore mentions that Mrs Sidney Barr Yeates (Dymphna) was living at "Barr Farm Cottage, Darling Downs, Queensland South." However, nowhere else have I come across this address; in fact it is certain that Sidney, Dymphna and Florence set up home in a cottage which they called Mambray, at the southern end of West St, three miles from Toowoomba Post Office in the direction of Drayton. When the property was sold six years later the press advertisement (24) described the residence as, "a nice cottage of seven rooms with pantry, bath, etc." Also mentioned were, "stables and a buggy shed, all standing in 5 acres of land in an elevated position." The price asked (including horse, buggy, harness and a cow) was £270. Sidney's notes show that he bought the property for £146.5.0 and sold it for £210. Its present-day value might be something more!

Sidney's diary (24) of that period shows that he resided at Mambray cottage from 28 March 1894 to 10 May 1900. Several family members still living remember this place and one, Frances Dymphna Johnson, Sidney's grand-daughter, has written about it. I quote from her journal. (5)

On the way [to England, Oct 1899] we [Frances Dymphna de Chair and her younger sister Dorothy] stayed with our Australian grand-parents at "Mambray", their home in Toowoomba, and it was there that I first remember my mother, as she taught me "Now the Day is Over" one evening in the garden. I also remember the bough shed, covered with yellow buddleia in full bloom, where we were sent to play, each armed with a large slice of bread and butter and jam, and decorated with two sweets ... Flora, who was unmarried, was living at "Mambray" with her parents.

Another of my cousins, Theo Booth (nee Yeates) also remembers Mambray cottage with grandfather's horse and buggy at the rear. She, too, played in the buggy shed.

Interestingly, Sidney and Dymphna named their retirement home "Mambray" in preference to "Melrose" or "Boondoan." Evidently in making that choice they had pleasant memories of their first home together, beside Mambray Creek on Baroota run, South Australia, following their marriage in 1857.

Sidney's wife Dymphna Maria Yeates (nee Cudmore) died on 4 March 1899, aged 63 and was buried in the Toowoomba cemetery. The inscription on her tombstone is almost identical to words written by Sidney in his diary of that time; hence either he had them engraved on the tombstone — or, if they were put there after his own death (19 years later), it was arranged by one or more of his sons as a known wish of their father. The wording includes the two lines:

How long we live, not years, but actions tell;
The man lives twice, who lives the first life well.



Sidney Yeates, not long before he died in 1918, aged 86 years. (42). Those of his grand children who were born early enough to have known him, remember Sidney as a kindly old gentleman and a great correspondent with those of his relatives who were in distant places.

Following Dymphna's death, Mambray cottage no longer held any significance for Sidney who disposed of it in 1900. Thereafter, he and Flora, together with Albert, the latter's wife Helen, and Edwin, spent about three years on a sugar farm named Rostrevor at Beenleigh, some 20 miles south of Brisbane. But Sidney and Flora returned to Toowoomba and lived at the corner of Gowrie St and Campbell St (west). There they were joined by Sidney's two youngest sons, Kenneth and Herbert, who, by 1900, had started in business in Toowoomba. Shortly after that, Walter and his wife Lily rented a nearby house in Campbell St. When first Herbert and then Kenneth married, Sidney lived for a year with Walter until the latter moved with his wife and two daughters to Clermont, central Queensland, in 1909.

In his new location, Walter at first undertook bush contract work, such as boring for water (see below). However, for his last few years in central Queensland, until about 1920, he took up a selection named Chelsea Park. This was formed from part of Retro and part of Langton, mid-way between Capella and Clermont. As a reminder of those years, my cousin Theo (Walter's daughter) has a painting of the characteristic peaks in that area — the Peak Range — which was later the scene of the large-scale sorghum growing venture by the Queensland-British Food Corporation at Peak Downs. Theo Yeates married the Rev J. Spencer Booth. She has nine grandchildren — all boys. Her eldest son, Herbert, is now (1979) Rector of Warwick and Archdeacon of the Downs. From 1955-60 he was a Bush Brother in western Queensland and used to visit Mount Maria station, near Morven, to which his grandmother rode on horseback last century to become the Douglas boys' governess.

In discussing the Yeates men's capabilities as bushmen, Theo says that her father sometimes reminisced about having to show most of the strangers who came about the station (probably Boondoon) how to manage a team of horses. They would try to get the team moving before all the horses were taking

the strain evenly on their collars. This would lead to great bother, which Walter would then sort out very quickly.

Following the Walter Yeates' departure for Clermont in 1909 Sidney and Flora lived with Ken and his wife Jessie in Mort St, Toowoomba. Flora died in January 1910 but Sidney lived on for a further 8-9 years in the contentment of a good home with his own kith and kin. Before he died, peacefully, on 20 June 1918, aged almost 87 years, he could look back on a full and eventful life knowing that there were already numerous grand-children to carry on the traditions by which he had lived. Sidney was buried beside his wife. In his later years Sidney continued carefully to keep a diary and account book. He was also a great correspondent, keeping in touch by letter with many of his relations and descendants.

That Sidney was the head of a very closely knit family will now be evident. But he was also held in great respect by all his other relations—as letters (24) from South Australia just after the turn of the century show. His many nieces, in particular, were obviously very fond of him; the following letter from Helen Benny, illustrates:

The Manse
Morphett Vale
2 July 1907

Dear Uncle Sid,

I have been thinking a good deal about you lately. The frosty mornings...have perhaps helped me because they are just like the Toowoomba mornings, freezingly cold & then the glorious sunny days — I will never forget that happy little time I had with you, & the happy old man in the mornings, whistling round, & lighting the fire, doing kind little things. With the trifle enclosed will you get one of the boys to buy you a pipe, just to remind you sometimes of your very loving niece, in case you should forget me...

Please remember me to Herbert & his wife. They must be proud of their little son...

I hope you are keeping well & strong & jolly — Do you still get up early in the morning? Em joins me in love to our dear old Uncle.

Your affectionate niece
Helen Benny

Other nieces who wrote regularly were Fanny Richardson, Frances Buttrose and Edith Le Page. Typical of the tone of the letters is Edith Le Page's from "Pinkerton", 3rd Ave, East Adelaide which addresses him as "My dear old Uncle" and ends "...wishing so much that I could see and talk to you this Christmas. With best love, from your affectionate niece, Edith M. Le Page."

There are also numerous letters from Sidney's sister, Emily Richardson. A somewhat nostalgic example follows:

"Grangewood"
Hawker's Road
Medindie,
25 August 1910

My dear Brother Sidney,

This should reach you about the anniversary of your birthday. Receive my warmest love & hope that it may find you in health & spirits. You are like me of a cheerful disposition and I hear such good accounts of you from others... Years are passing are they not? We two are the last in our generation... my memory is excellent, but alas there is no one with whom I can converse about the "long ago" — You also have a good memory for your youthful days, and we could talk for hours of past events. Your letters are always cheerful and I like to have them... How much we all miss dear Flora. Helen kindly writes to me also Herbert and give family news... I expect your son Harry [Daniel Henry] is with you before now. I was glad to see him and wonder if he will settle down in Queensland. He seemed to wish to be again amongst his family. He was very bright and chatty... Fanny [Emily's daughter] is fairly well, but misses her sister [Amy who died] very much for they were almost inseparable companions. Time only will reconcile her to her loss. The other members of my family [she had 18 children] are all actively engaged and their numbers increasing. Another great grandchild arrived lately. God bless you and yours my dear Brother,

Your ever loving Sister,
Emily Richardson.

Another letter, from F.G. Richardson, Sidney's nephew, is of special interest because it recalls the "great trek". The letter follows:

Royal Exchange
Adelaide
10 May 1909

Dear Uncle Sidney,

Many long years have passed since last you and I met; years that have brought both of us some trouble and I hope much happiness. I have often been going to write to you & wondered whether I had altogether gone out of your life. I know I would not be out of your memory for the long Queensland journey together of 1800 miles is not easily erased from the mind.

I see Sam Pilton every few years & the events of that journey are still fresh in his memory. We often shared the same blanket, as you and I shared the same tent. I have travelled many a thousand miles inland since those days & have had many a hard camp in the North & West and have been twice round the world. But that great Queensland trip & later experience still remains the event of my life.

John Henry — my brother passed through the same experiences & has had many a hard and bitter time of it. Since those days, of late years he has had ample means and returned to S.A. as you know to live with his mother until one of them passed away. His health was in a very bad state when he arrived here but for years past he has had fair to good health. During the last 10 days he suffered from a cold & was off colour... This morning he came in to his breakfast...but said he felt seedy and would lie down... 15 minutes later Mother and one of the sisters...found him on the floor beside the sofa. His heart had ceased to beat; his life's work was done. We had been together nearly all our lives off & on & he was the one man in the world I will miss more than any other.

I trust my dear Uncle that you are keeping well and that all things are going well with you. I expect you will write a few lines to your Sister (my Mother). She is 86 years old — very good health — & was not so upset as I expected her to be.

Your affectionate Nephew
F.G. Richardson.

* * *

Because all the sons of Sidney and Dymphna had grown up in the bush, knowledge of bushcraft and of property management and work was their forte. They were hard working and practical. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that most of their futures were to be connected with the land: with stock, properties and practically any of the multitude of tasks which go with being a good bushman. They were all competent horsemen of course, but letters (65) in my possession tell of the special expertise of some of them. Thus Gilbert is said to have won the open campdraft at Charleville show in 1900, from 20 competitors. He was known as "the champion campdrafter of the West". Kenneth, too, was known as "one of the good rough riders". It is also stated that Charles Bryson was "the champion scrub dasher". I am not sure on what criteria the last-mentioned achievement could have been decided, but the inference is that some sort of competition was held. No doubt Bryson's expertise derived in part from the work of clearing the fence lines in Boondoos rough mulga and gidyea. Perhaps he was in charge of that section of the work at Boondoos, and that word of his ability having spread, nobody in the Warrego was anxious to challenge him for his crown!

After leaving Boondoos, Alfred Milo, Gilbert de Lacy, Kenneth Barr and Herbert took up and stocked a lease on the Ward River about 12 miles from Charleville. There was a two-roomed house on the run, but the latter had to be fenced. Their idea was to hold stock on this block to service a butchery business which they established in Charleville. Their eldest brother Sidney James helped with the droving and his wife lived in the house for a time. It is probable that this was one of the selections which Albert, Edwin and Walter had taken up earlier, because they too were connected with it for a time.

Sidney James died on 5 June 1899 (24) during the period of this venture. Aged only 41, he caught influenza and should have gone to bed. Instead, he and his wife went to a ball in Charleville, after which fatal pneumonia set in. His wife then went to live with her people near Rockhampton. They had no children.

Albert and Edwin worked the selection on the Ward River, while Albert's wife Helen stayed with the four boys and Miss M.G. Wickham, a lady help, at the Rectory in town. They paid no rent, but looked after the Minister. Prior to that they had rented a house opposite the Rectory. A letter (65) relates: "Miss Wickham washed and ironed the boys' starched shirts and they were so well done that Herbert Yeates said he thought they had been sent to the laundry . . . and wasn't she proud of those remarks". Mildred Grace Wickham later married Gilbert Yeates. She had grown up on her parents' property "Buckhurst" near Warwick, was christened by Archdeacon Glennie at Glengallan Station homestead in 1876 and lived to the great old age of 99 years and two months. She is buried beside her husband in Toowoomba; and her daughter, Eva Crameri, now 74, has helped me with some of the detail of this part of my story. There were also two sons of the marriage: Raymond, who now lives near me at Woolgoolga, NSW, and Milo Yeates of Toowoomba.

The business interests of the Yeates brothers in Charleville can not be traced fully, for most of the newspapers prior to 1900 have been destroyed. All that remain are a few copies of the "Charleville Times" and the "Charleville Courier" for 1896 and 1898. These are lodged in the Oxley Library, Brisbane and from them my wife and I obtained the following information:

In May 1896, Walter C. Yeates of "Lockwood" inserted several notices stating that "trespassers will be prosecuted and all stray stock impounded off Lockwood without respect to owners". Then, for the first time, on 27 June 1896, but repeated in numerous issues thereafter, a front page advertisement appeared in the names of A.M. Yeates (that was Alfred Milo) describing himself as "Family and carcass Butcher, Alfred St, Charleville." In September of that same year, Alfred also advertised: "A.M. Yeates has a well-grassed and watered paddock on the Ward River, 13 miles from Charleville; stock taken in on agistment. All care taken but no responsibility. Particulars on application to A.M. Yeates, Butchers, Charleville."

On Saturday, 4 July 1896, a meeting was held in Charleville to consider the rules of the Qld Selectors' Assn of which it was proposed Charleville would become a branch. Walter Yeates and five others, plus a Chairman and a Secretary, were elected as a provisional committee. They were asked to report back. The committee used the Cunnamulla branch Assn's rules as a guide and considered such items as rent, conditions of residence, fencing (both rabbit proof and ordinary), government assistance for fencing and boring, and self-government of the district for assessment purposes. The Charleville chairman alleged that selectors had to pay four times as much rent as squatters, for similar country.

At a general meeting of selectors, a set of aims and rules was finally adopted and Walter Yeates was elected as one of two trustees of the newly formed branch. (At this time the main issues appeared to be: rabbits, federation and the spread of ticks. The first two certainly became realities, but for reasons of ecology the cattle tick never spread as far into the dry interior as Charleville).

The next available information indicates that in July 1898, A.M. Yeates' butchery business was trading as Yeates Brothers. Its location had also changed to "Wills St (opposite the Norman Hotel)". A feature of the advertisements was: "corned beef a speciality" and "all orders promptly attended to and forwarded by coach or rail if required. Carriers, Drovers, Travellers and Wholesale Buyers specially catered for."

In the "Charleville Times" of Saturday, 5 November 1898 under the heading of "Thanks", Yeates Bros tendered "their sincere thanks to the persons who so kindly and systematically assisted in removing goods from the recent fire." However, the fire did not put them out of business, for it was not until at least two years later that the boys sold out to Armstrong Bros. (42) My father, Herbert, moved to Toowoomba before July of that year, and some of the others followed. Although I am sure that my father helped with the business in Charleville, the only newspaper item concerning him, from the few available, is that he advertised on 8 October 1898: "Shop to let at Newtown. Reasonable, Apply — H. Yeates." He was then 19 years old and four and a half years had elapsed since he left Boondoobon. The final wind-up to the Charleville business seems to be indicated by the following notice which appeared on 12 January 1901: "Persons owing money to Yeates Bros kindly pay same to Mr G.N. Bell, Solicitor, Charleville, whose receipt will be sufficient discharge — Yeates Bros, Butchers."



Herbert Yeates, May 1898 at age of 19 years, at which stage he was working with some of his older brothers in and around Charleville, Qld.

Gilbert stayed in Charleville for two or three more years, then went to "Buckhurst" via Warwick, to marry Mildred Wickham. The weather at the time of the wedding was very wet but they managed to reach Warwick by buggy. There they caught the train to Brisbane in time for the Exhibition, on 11 August 1903, as part of their honeymoon. In later years Gilbert drove a 4-in-hand wagon delivering cream to Toowoomba Butter Factory from round the Crow's Nest and Goombungee districts, in which latter centre he built a home. Then for five or six years, from 1908, he helped run "Wyobie South", a property near Warra, for Mr Billington of Brisbane. In 1914 he and his family moved to Dalby and for many years he ran the mail service from that town to "Coorooah," then later to "Coomrith" far down the Moonie River. In the earlier years of the run he drove a 4-in-hand buggy; then, when the T-model Fords came on the market, he bought one of them. It was necessary for my Uncle Gilbert to cross the Moonie River about half way along the run and the "road" was bad. He had his own winding track through the trees and bush, which other people found hard to follow. Most of that country was covered with prickly pear in those days, so cattle were run on the properties. In later years, after Cactoblastis eliminated the pear, sheep became more popular and predominated.



Gilbert Yeates, outside his home at Goombungee, Darling Downs, Qld, driving the 4-in-hand in which he delivered cream from the Goombungee and Crow's Nest districts to Toowoomba Butter Factory from about 1905 to 1908. (65).



For five or six years from 1908 Gilbert Yeates helped run "Wyobie South", a property near Warra on the western Darling Downs, Qld. This photo was taken in Jan or Feb 1910, just after his sister Florence died. (65).

During the first World War, Daniel Henry Yeates and Charles Bryson Yeates enlisted and it should hardly be necessary to state that they chose to be with horses. They left Australia in 1915 as Troopers in No 8 Squadron, No 2 AIRU (Aust Imperial Remount Unit) for Egypt. Each of them eventually returned and took up a farm on a soldier settlement near Stanthorpe. Charles Bryson then married a Miss Hughes and had his farming enterprise well started when he became ill and died of cancer of the liver. He had no children.

True to his character, my Uncle Dan (Daniel Henry), one of the three Yeates bachelors, preferred being on the move to settling down, so he left his farm. His travels took him to many parts of Queensland and sometimes back to Adelaide. He also worked for a time in my father's business on the Darling Downs. He was an imaginative and inventive person and I just remember hearing, as a small boy, that Uncle Dan at one time invented some sort of saddle attachment which he called the "Can't Buck". It acted after the fashion of a crupper but prevented the would-be bucking horse from lowering its head — which thereby prevented (?) the buck. He patented the contrivance, but alas, made no fortune from it! My elder brothers used to joke about Uncle Dan's "can't buck" saddle, but the very mention of such "nonsense" distressed my mother.

Daniel was quite an athlete in his younger days and was wont to compete in foot races in various parts of the country. He remained very fit and even in his 80's, after finally settling down in retirement in the Sandgate-Redcliffe area on Moreton Bay, he sometimes rode a bicycle to and from Brisbane — for the sheer pleasure of travelling by that method.

* * *

Frances Dymphna Johnson (nee de Chair) was the first of Sidney Yeates' many grandchildren. I recently approached her (aged 85 years) about helping me with information. Not only was she "very excited to hear that I was writing a book about our forebears" — but she lent me a copy of her splendidly typed and bound Journal (5), completed about four years ago for her own immediate family. She hoped that it would help me. Because Dymphna, as she was always known in our family, remembers right back to the turn of the century, her recollections are indeed valuable. In addition, however, she and her younger sister Dorothy moved round the various families, including the Cudmores, more than any of Sidney's other grandchildren. Her recollections of all those people and places give her story a unique character and breadth.

I feel that to do justice to the beautiful expression in Dymphna Johnson's journal, a substantial part should be quoted verbatim. Accordingly, the following extract is reproduced with her permission, to give the picture of the early years of this century in various Yeates and some Cudmore households:

Wedding: de Chair — Yeates. On the 18 Feb 1893, at St John's Pro-Cathedral, Brisbane, by the Reverend Montagu John Stone-Wig, Ernest Francis, second son of Dudley Raikes de Chair, of Sheperdswell, Dover, Kent, England, to Mary Dymphna, second daughter of Sidney Yeates, Boondoon Station, Warrego District, Queensland.

My birthday was on 8 April 1894, and I was called ...Dymphna after my mother and her mother. The Greek name Dymphna has been in the family for many generations, and there is a legend in the Cudmore family which tells that long ago, in Ireland, a dashing young son of the Cudmore clan, sailed away to see the world, and while in Greece fell in love with a beautiful Greek girl called Dymphna, eloped with her and carried her off to Ireland, where they were married, and the name has been in the family ever since.

Dorothy was born on 10 May 1896...

In about the year 1899 my father returned to England to see his father who was ill, and we followed shortly afterwards..

One day while I was in hospital [in London, with scarlet fever] I had a visitor enveloped in a white gown, and I think a gauze mask... She was a great friend of Grannie [Rawson], and I am sure she must have asked her to break the news to me that my mother had died [at 52 St. Clement's Mansions, Fullham, London, 24 Feb. 1901, aged 36 (24)]. I was not told the cause of death then, but I learned when I was much older, that she had had a miscarriage, and a few days later she died suddenly of a clot.

During the next period of time we went to live with our Grandmother, and our father went to Canada. Grannie was a dear person, very gentle and loving, and was devoted to us. She must have been appalled by our Australian accent, as I remember the two of us sitting beside her, and going over again words like ground, round, and sound etc. She must have realised that I liked growing things, as she gave me a little fern in a pot. I was very attached to it, and I can remember the special feeling I had about it to this day.

Once during that time Grannie became ill, and we . . . went to school in London. It was a convent, a closed order of Roman Catholic nuns.

There were twenty five girls there, ranging from about eighteen down to Dorothy who was the youngest. On our first day we were given slates and pencils, and were, no doubt, told to draw something. Suddenly I became conscious that Dorothy's slate was covered with her tears, and I was overcome with misery for her, and didn't know what to do about it. A sweet young nun taught the two of us reading...

About two and a half years after my mother died my father married again, but they could have had a very short life together, as news came from Canada to my Grandmother, telling her that he had died of a heart condition following pneumonia.

Then there came a day when we were sitting beside Grannie and she was telling us that we were going to Australia, and that when we got there we would be staying for a little while with Great Uncle Sir Harry Rawson at Government House, Sydney, before going on to live with our mother's sister, Aunt Flora, in Queensland. The idea of going in the big ship filled us with delight, and we evidently thought of nothing else, because, years later Grannie told us that if we had made the slightest sign of wanting to stay with her, she could never have parted with us.

She gave us two books before we left, ... which were a great comfort on the voyage out. We were put in charge of a Miss Archer, who seemed to be quite kind to us...

We were met by the Governor's A.D.C. and taken to Government House, where we were presented with two lovely dolls by Great Uncle Harry and his sweet wife and daughter Alice...

We eventually arrived in Toowoomba and were received into my mother's family, consisting of two uncles [these would be Ken and Herbert], Aunt Flora, and our Grandfather [Sidney].

At that time Dorothy and I fought with each other occasionally, but nothing could rouse my temper to such a dangerous pitch as for anyone to be unkind to her.

Thinking about my grandfather [Sidney] now, I realise that he was a very fine old man. He was a lonely old man in spite of his large family, and probably got more comfort from the two of us. He had a lovely vegetable



STATE GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

11th Jan 06 SYDNEY

Dear Miss Yeates
Thank you & all
your family for their
very kind message of
sympathy with us in
our great & very sad
bereavement. It is a
terrible home coming
for us all and we daily
miss the loved voice
and presence

I hope you all are
well - & I wish you
all a happy & prosperous
New Year.

Our love to my grand
nieces

Yours v. truly

Harry A Rawson

At the end of a leave period in England before commencing his second term as Governor of NSW, Sir Harry Rawson's wife died. This letter to Florence Yeates acknowledges the Yeates family condolences and refers to Sir Harry's two grand nieces, Dymphna and Dorothy de Chair who at that time were in the care of their aunt, Florence Yeates

garden, and the family was kept well supplied. Each Saturday afternoon he would prepare for church the following day, and a great washing of his gardening hands would take place, in order to have them immaculate for the service in the morning. He went to the Presbyterian church and generally the two of us went with him, and I can remember so well the beautiful white linen handkerchief put ready with his prayerbook and the rest of his clothes.

We went to a children's party, our first in Australia, and Aunt Flora bought two very nice bonnets for the occasion, sun bonnets I think they were called. We didn't like them and the thought of wearing them before the other children worried us a lot beforehand, but we eventually found a way round the problem. As soon as we were out of Aunt Flora's sight we took them off and carried them, and the performance was repeated in reverse on the way home, and thus we enjoyed the party. As time went on the two uncles married and went to homes of their own [Herbert 1906; Ken 1908], and Grandfather and Aunt Flora and the two of us moved to a smaller house.

From there we went to a boarding school — a convent [in Sandgate] near Brisbane, where we were taught the three R's, the theory and practice of music, and needlework etc. While we were at school the Vicar of the Parish prepared us for Confirmation, and we were confirmed by the Archbishop of Brisbane Doctor Donaldson.

When I was about fifteen Aunt Flora became unwell and after a long illness died of cancer [Jan 1910]. During her illness I kept house for Grandfather and Dorothy, and it was by the Grace of God far more than by any talent on my part that we got through as well as we did. I spoiled Dorothy, and after the homework was done, we spent wonderful evenings, I listening to her recite and act, as she was so fond of doing.

When it was all over the family said that they were very grateful to me for looking after Grandfather and Dorothy, and to my amazement they gave me a golden sovereign.

After this the family was again divided, and we were separated. At the time I can remember people saying it was a shame that we had to be parted, and knowing now what it meant to us I entirely agree, but perhaps it is much easier to be asked to look after one child, than have to take two.



Florence Barr Yeates, born 1859, elder daughter of Sidney and Dymphna Yeates, at age of 50 years. (42).

Dorothy and Grandfather went to one of the married uncles in Toowoomba [Ken], and I was sent to another in Central Queensland [Walter]. Fortunately for me, in the little town of Clermont, where we lived, a kindergarten had been established under the auspices of the Sydney Kindergarten Training College, and I attended for a couple of years as a voluntary helper. Then with the help of the Director, Marion Cochrane, I was able to obtain a scholarship to the Sydney College, and did a three years course there...

After graduation I took charge of a kindergarten in Toowoomba, and was able to live near Dorothy for that year. It was there that I had my twenty-first birthday. I was then appointed to the Junior Department of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School, and it was while I was there that our two cousins Theo and Vera Yeates came into my life again. We had been together in Toowoomba during our childhood, and Dorothy's outstanding memory of that time was the terrible feeling she had when the four of us were put to the test with mental arithmetic questions by an uncle. Theo and Vera always knew the right answers, and I might have come a halting third, but poor little Dorothy could answer none of them, more than likely from sheer fright.

Walter Yeates, the father of Theo and Vera, was boring for sub-artesian water in Central Queensland, during the time I was in Rockhampton, and while his two girls were at the Brisbane University. [They had earlier been boarders at Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School]. His camp was right out in the Queensland bush, and his wife, Aunt Lily, a gentle, refined English woman accompanied him. They lived in a galvanised iron bedroom, a little "lean-to" kitchen and a bough shed for a sitting room, and she cooked outside with a camp oven, and the camp was kept in spotless condition. One of the happiest holidays for me was spent there with my two cousins. We slept in a large tent, and during the day did all sorts of interesting things on the large and substantial table under the bough shed, where we had our meals. At one period dressmaking was the order of the day, with Aunt Lily's lovely little Singer hand-machine. Sometimes the weather was very hot while we were there, and once the bedroom had to be tied down with ropes when a hurricane of wind descended upon us. In the distance we could hear the noise of the machinery boring down into the earth. The water, when discovered at a depth of about 500 feet, and sometimes after extreme difficulty when tools got jammed in the rock below, was cold...

We travelled by horses and buggy in those days, and it took all day to do 50 miles, with a change of horses half way, and gates here and there which had to be opened and shut. I remember wearing gloves to prevent sunburn, but as there was an inch of arm exposed to the sun, and I didn't notice it, stupidly, I ended up with a bracelet of blisters on each wrist. Our uncles were first class bushmen, and before nightfall tents were erected, and mattress covers, made out of very large hessian bags appeared, which we were told to fill with leaves from under the trees. What a wonderful experience it was to wake up early in the morning after spending the night in the Australian bush!

Before I left Toowoomba Dorothy and I were determined that she also should go to the S.K.T.C. and train as a kindergartener. This she did but not without problems which had to be solved. During our training both of us made close and lasting friendships with some of the other students.

It was while I was training in Sydney that I met Mr and Mrs Arthur Cudmore for the first time, and we were both invited to stay with them on several occasions at Mandeville Hall for the Christmas holidays.

Aunt Nettie and Uncle Arthur treated us as though we were almost their own daughters. They were used to girls as their family consisted on three daughters, but they were all married with families of their own by that time.

Two of them had been married from Mandeville Hall, where the wedding receptions were held. Aunt Nettie and Uncle Arthur lived there for some years after they had retired from their station home, "Avoca", near Wentworth, on the River Murray...



Frances Dymphna de Chair (left) and Dorothy Melville de Chair in 1899, aged 5 and 3 years respectively. (65).

The de Chair girls about 1912, aged 16 and 18 years . (65).



During those holidays at Mandeville Hall Dorothy and I shared a chalet in the garden, where we slept and talked and lived our own lives, going over to the house for meals, and at other times when Aunt Nettie and Uncle Arthur wanted us to be there. On one of these occasions among many interesting events that I remember, we went to one of the big race meetings... with Uncle Arthur. We had new frocks for the occasion, and elegant parasols, one pink and the other blue.

While Dorothy was at the Kindergarten College in Sydney, she became ill... Aunt Nettie and Uncle Arthur immediately suggested that she should live with them for a year. At the end of that time she had recovered, and returned to College, where she completed her course, and I took her place, and accompanied our Uncle and Aunt to Adelaide, giving up the kindergarten work for the time being.

Uncle Arthur was suffering from angina... and I used to write his letters for him, and read the paper to him each day, and in general try to make myself useful.

... Aunt Nettie and Uncle Arthur turned their attention to the problem of which church they would attend... Finally the choice rested upon St. Cuthbert's, Prospect, as they liked the tall young rector, lately returned from the war, and furthermore he could preach. He called on us occasionally, and we learned that his sister lived with him at the Rectory...

... Uncle Arthur... did not live to see the second Avoca, which was bought for Aunt Nettie's permanent home. It was situated in Robe Terrace, Medindie, facing the park lands, and was a well designed and very comfortable house. When we moved there I felt that I should return to my kindergarten work, and Aunt Nettie was agreeable that I should join the staff of a private school in the vicinity, and still live with her. In the following two years, immediately after the war, much entertaining took place, especially at the time when Edward, the Prince of Wales was in Australia, and visited Adelaide. On that occasion a private ball was arranged for His Highness by Lady Hackett, and we were invited.

The finale to Dymphna de Chair's maidenhood was that Aunt Nettie (she was as much my aunt too, though I never met her) arranged a paddle-steamer trip on the Murray to Mildura. The "tall young Rector" from St Cuthbert's was invited to accompany the party and the Rector finally proposed to Dymphna. Those two were married by the Bishop of Adelaide in St Cuthbert's, Prospect and in due course they had three daughters: Dorothy, Mary and Elizabeth. In 1936 the one-time Rector of St Cuthbert's, Prospect became the Rt Rev W.H. Johnson, Bishop of Ballarat.

CHAPTER 5

MY PARENTS AND THEIR GENERATION

After leaving western Queensland my father, Herbert Yeates, came to Toowoomba and in July 1900, at the age of 21, started a stock and station agency and auctioneering business. He was joined by his brother Kenneth Barr Yeates and in partnership they built up and administered what became the well-known firm of Yeates Brothers. The two brothers had always been close pals, and they remained together in business until Ken died in 1939. My father was then joined, at senior level, by Ken's second son, Maitland, who had already served several years' apprenticeship in the firm.

In the early years of this century Toowoomba was still surrounded to the west by large pastoral holdings. Stock and property business was conducted by already well-established companies and the atmosphere was one of conservatism. Breaking in on this scene was not easy for young men having to start from scratch; however, by perseverance, hard work and a willingness to make long country journeys, the Yeates brothers gradually built up a sound business.

An article by E.H. Geisel of Dalby in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" just after Herbert Yeates died gives the picture. The article states, in part:

The late Mr Yeates and the writer were known to each other over many years... one found Mr Yeates bubbling over with energy... that energy never faltered...
...on one occasion the Hickson Brothers had arrived in Toowoomba from New Zealand, to take up land. Mr Yeates was on the scene early, and, knowing the possibilities of areas and the quality of the land in the Dalby district, decided to bring them out; so they came all three on horseback, to inspect some properties here, including Park Head, then a portion of Daandine station... The Hicksons eventually bought Park Head, and so our late friend gained his reward. That was about 1900. Since then I have often seen Mr Yeates in Dalby on horseback, in sulkies, and in latter years in his small car; and I often wondered how his tall frame fitted into the latter.

The energy and initiative of my father in achieving sales never flagged. As an example, I recall his selling of "Loudon" in my school-boy days. The period would have been about the early 1930's. Business had been quiet and my father decided to go out and generate some. He persuaded the owners of Loudon station, a large tract of high quality land on the Condamine River, west of Dalby, to subdivide and sell, giving him the sole selling rights. About ten or twelve choice blocks were offered separately and eventually sold by my father who never relaxed in his search for buyers nor in arranging property inspections with them.

In 1902 the Toowoomba Centre of the Ambulance Brigade was established. Herbert Yeates was appointed a member of the first provisional committee and at the first meeting ever held, on 10 July, he was elected honorary secretary. He served on the Ambulance Committee in all for over 40 years: 1902-4 and from 1906 till he died in 1945. He was Chairman for six years (1936-43). In 1930 he received the Brigade's gold medal — now in my brother Bert's possession. Inscribed on the front, below the Ambulance insignia are the words "FOR WORK DONE" and on the rear with his name and period of service: "First Hon Sec"

A fine collection of old Ambulance records and photographs has been preserved. These show that when the Centre opened on 5 August 1902 it used part of the Fire Station in Neil Street as temporary quarters. The plant at that time consisted (25) of two Ashford litters (hand-carts), "one kindly lent by the Toowoomba Hospital Committee", and a collapsible stretcher. The first annual report ending December 1902 disclosed that 223 calls had been attended to, and 807½ miles were travelled, all on foot. In 1903 a horse and sulky was added to the facilities. A photograph taken in 1904 shows the sulky with "Fairy, a smart grey mare bought from Mr Kirk" in the shafts, three uniformed bearers in the sulky (one facing the rear), and an Ashford litter attached, trailer-fashion, behind. In 1904 the Brigade secured its own quarters in Herries Street. A two-horse covered wagon was added in 1907 and the first ambulance car was purchased in 1912. (25)

* * *

On 11 April 1906 Herbert Yeates married Margaret Ann McNeil Tolmie, the youngest of nine children of a Scottish couple, Roderick and Helen Tolmie. Helen Tolmie (nee Macrae) had grown up in a farming family at "Kinbeachie" in the Black Isle, near Inverness, Scotland, (26).

The first of the nine Tolmie children (Isabella) was born in Scotland after which the young family came to Australia. The 627 ton sailing vessel "Rajasthan" (Capt J.C.Wilson) in which they travelled left Birkenhead, England on 23 June 1862. (45) There were 269 passengers and the ship sailed direct to Moreton Bay where it arrived on 1 November 1862. The Tolmie's second child, James, was born during the voyage, on 25 July 1862.

The family first made their way to the western Darling Downs where Roderick Tolmie worked for five or six years on Wallan Station. Wallan, which was just north of the present township of Drillham (14 miles

Minutes of meetings of the
Toowoomba Branch Centre
Q. A. S. P. Hospital

Provisional Committee meeting
Council Chambers 10th 7-02

Present: G. Robotham (Chairman)
J. Melvin, G. Allow, H. Gossall, H.
Yeates, and D^r Freshney

Yeates was appointed Hon Sec
pro tem.

Proposed by H. Gossall see by J.
Melvin that the amended Rules of
the Q. A. S. Brigade be adopted.
Carried

Pro by H. Gossall see by
G. Allow that G. Robotham be
Chairman to the committee. Carried

Pro by G. Robotham see by J. Melvin
that A. Mayes be appointed
treasurer. Carried

Pro by D^r Freshney see by G. Allow
that a subcommittee consisting
of H. Gossall, J. Melvin and
the Chairman be appointed
to make arrangements for a
suitable building to carry on
the work in pro tem. Carried

Chairman

Yeates

Hon Sec.

Photograph of the first page of the original Minute Book of the
Toowoomba Centre of the Ambulance Brigade, established in
1902. The author's father, Herbert Yeates, who signed the
minutes was the first honorary secretary.

west of Miles) was a leasehold property held by John Ferrett, who became a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1862. How Roderick Tolmie came to get his job there as sheep overseer is unknown. However, the next three children Helen, Mary and Christina, were born there in 1865, 1867 and Dec 1868 respectively. The early settlement of the area began with the selection of Dulacca, Binbian and Wallan Stations. John Ferrett is said to have built the homestead on Wallan, an early description of which follows:
(27)

Wallan homestead is commodious. It is surrounded by four out-buildings, and the walls are of dressed ironbark and bloodwood slabs, 2 to 3 inches thick and 12 to 14 inches wide, loopholed for defence against attack by aborigines. The roof is bloodwood shingles, whilst the out-buildings are of sheeted bark variety and steeply pitched. It is recorded that Rev Glennie stayed at Wallan en route to Juandah in 1857 and was made welcome by Mrs Harry Ferrett (wife of John's brother). Harry Ferrett was drowned crossing the Condamine River, with stores for Wallan, in 1860.

The old Wallan homestead block has been owned by Mr Errol Kowitz since 1966. On a recent visit (Nov 1978) I could find no trace of any original buildings, though the site is marked alongside Wallan Creek on the 1902 Archives map of the Queensland stock routes. All that remains now is a set of old cattle yards which Mr Kowitz believes to be original. They are approximately two hundred yards from the creek and are very similar to a set shown in a photograph labelled "Wallan Station in the Early Fifties" reproduced in the Drillham historical booklet (27). The booklet also includes a picture of "Wool Washing on the Sheep's Back in the Fifties at Wallan". Ten men can be seen at work. Three of them are engaged in catching sheep from a forcing pen beside large sheep yards on the creek bank and sliding the animals down a 45° sloping ramp into the creek. The other seven men are spaced round a complicated system of planking mounted in the creek, forcing the sheep along with poles towards a final outlet point which is a walk-up ramp of much less slope than the entry.

The Tolmies are believed to have left Wallan and come to live in or near Toowoomba about 1870 or 1871. An older Tolmie cousin of mine, Jess Fraser, says she heard the story in her childhood that a Presbyterian minister, the Rev William Nelson, urged the Tolmies to move to Toowoomba, Wallan being too rough a place and too lacking in educational opportunity for the young family's future needs. This story may be true; but if so one wonders how there would have been any pioneers if others, including the Yeates, had thought similarly. The Rev William Lambie Nelson, father of Sir Hugh Nelson a Premier of Queensland, and grandfather of Duncan Nelson, built the magnificent old home "Gabbabah" on the crest of the Range to the S-E of Toowoomba in 1863. My brothers and I came to know the next (fourth) generation of Nelsons well. Duncan's wife, Colina Nelson, proposed a toast at my wedding.

The last four of the nine Tolmie children were born in or near Toowoomba between 1872 and 20 September 1878 (the latter date being my mother, Margaret's birthday). Three years later, in 1881, the children's mother, Helen, died — aged only 39 years. At that time the father, Roderick, left home; what became of him is unknown. James, the eldest son, who was then 19 years old, assumed the role of head of the house and, from then on, accepted responsibility for the welfare of his seven sisters and one young brother. A writer in later years (46) rightly described the way in which he did this as "eternally to his credit."

James Tolmie received his first education at the South Toowoomba State School which he attended between the ages of seven and 13. He then spent a year working in a grocery business. However in April 1877, aged 15 years, he entered the service of the Department of Public Instruction as a pupil teacher. After three years and nine months' training he taught at South Toowoomba State School for three years with a short time interposed during that period at Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. Then for 10 years from 1884 he



Eilan Donan — Or Ellandonan (26) — Castle, the restored ancient stronghold of the Clan Macrae, at the junction of Loch Duich and Loch Aish in N-W Scotland, with the snow-capped mountains of Skye in the background. During World War II the author visited the Castle and, as a direct descendant of the Macraes, was invited to sign the visitors' book.

was at Gowrie Creek School. This meant that he was near the young family for which he took responsibility from the time their mother died and without their having to leave the Toowoomba area.

He passed through all the teaching ranks and, graduating as head teacher of the third class — and subsequently of the second class — he was promoted to the charge of Gowrie Creek State School on 1 January 1890. The latter school was located at Wetalla, just outside Toowoomba, and was then quite a large institution; but it was closed in later years.

In the Qld Archives every detail of James Tolmie's teaching career is documented in the Departmental Reports on male teachers. (One wonders why females were not so catalogued). His salary was £90 a year in 1881 and by 1884 it had risen to £110. His examination results were only moderate — generally in the 50-60 percent range — and there is evidence from the annual reports that his lack of formal advanced education must have been a handicap. Although he gained aggregate marks of from 50.5 to 58.8 percent over several years when trying for his class two examinations, it was not until 1890 when he gained 67.1 percent that he was elevated to that class. Typical comments on him were:

1881: Very fair teacher; industrious; promoted...

1882: Energetic and efficient teacher with good control of his class

1883: A little rough, uncouth — thoroughly honest and earnest; throws himself heart and soul into execution of his duty

1884: Honest, earnest, hardworking; teaches with skill, spirit and tact

1885: Energetic, v.industrious and painstaking... The weakest methods are found when intellectual training is required

1886: Industrious, conscientious and fairly efficient. V.fair organiser and good disciplinarian. Arithmetic rather weak in all classes; and very uneven grammar. Shows want of intelligent training in 2nd and 3rd class

1887: [similar to above, plus] ...teaching skill good. Supervises v.fairly and v.good disciplinarian

1888 to 1894: [Similar reports].

When he commenced teaching at Gowrie Creek, my Uncle Jim was 22 years old. He played sport and I remember being told as a boy that he would run to Toowoomba from Wetalla (about 5 miles) after work to attend football practice, then run home again afterwards.

The younger members of the family, including my mother, were taught by their brother at Wetalla and my mother often told me how strict he was with them — both in school and at home.



The nine Tolmie brothers and sisters, about 1892. After their mother's death in 1881 they were cared for by the elder boy, James, seated at left. Others are, standing, left to right: Christina, Roderick, Agnes, Sarah; seated, centre: Margaret (youngest and the author's mother), Isabella, Mary; reclining at front: Ella.

In August 1894 he resigned from the Education Department and became editor with half-share interest in the "Darling Downs Gazette," second only to the "Courier" as the oldest newspaper in Queensland (48). His partner was Mr S.C.W. Robinson who was well remembered in Toowoomba as manager of the Empire Theatre. James Tolmie disposed of his interest in the "D.D. Gazette" in 1922 at the time of its amalgamation with the "Toowoomba Chronicle". However he continued as principal leader writer of the "Chronicle", and his last editorial appeared only a few weeks before he died on 5 April 1939, aged 76. He won wide acknowledgement for his grasp of international affairs and was extremely well read.

I so well remember often delivering "Uncle Jim's" bulky envelope containing the next day's "leader", as I passed the "Chronicle" office on my way to school. If an important national or international event suddenly occurred he would be rung and asked to write a hurried special article. Then the typewriter would tap-tap and within two or three hours, if I were around, I would most likely be asked to make the special delivery — this time taking the envelope into the Editor's office personally.

Some of my most prized books came from James Tolmie's fine collection — and he knew what was in them all, whatever the subject, from Greek and Roman mythology, the Essays of Montaigne, Wells' Outline of History of Dicken's novels to Banjo Patterson and the Sentimental bloke (to name just a few). Often in my school days, if I had a difficult essay to write, I would go and do it in Uncle Jim's study at "Kinbeachie", next door to our house, where there were sets of large encyclopaedias, and reference books galore. And, if ever any of our family had some difficult decision to make, someone was bound to say: "see what Uncle Jim says".

James Tolmie always took a keen interest in public affairs. He was conservative as opposed to labour in his political thinking and was elected to the Queensland Parliament, as member for Drayton and Toowoomba, in May 1899. That was the thirteenth parliament and he was also a member of the fourteenth and fifteenth. He missed the sixteenth and seventeenth, and came back for the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth. He was Minister for Agriculture and Stock in the Denham Ministry, receiving the appointment in February 1911. In the same cabinet he later held the position of Lands Minister. For a short period he was Leader of the Opposition; but in 1915 he resigned owing to a serious illness.

During his time in Parliament he fought hard for the establishment of a university. He was successful in this as may be seen from a beautifully bound, gold lettered Report of the Inaugural Proceedings of the University of Queensland, now in my possession. It was his personal, official copy and in gold at the bottom left of the front cover are the words: "The Hon. James Tolmie, M.L.A." Inside, at the top of page 10 the first sentence reads:

A resolution had been passed in the Legislative Assembly, on the motion of the Hon. James Tolmie, affirming the need for the immediate establishment of a University, and in 1909 the University of Queensland Act... became law.

The University's Inaugural Ceremony was held at the Exhibition Hall, Brisbane, on Thursday, 1 June 1911 although teaching had started earlier, in 1910.

C.A. Bernays an authority on early Qld politics from 1859 to 1919 described (47) James Tolmie's 1906 successful resolution for the establishment of a university and pointed out that the Kidston government was determined to celebrate Queensland's Jubilee (50 years) by giving effect to the resolution. Bernays stated that the University of Queensland "was undoubtedly established upon very democratic lines, the whole scheme being to bring higher education within the reach of every class of the community." He described Tolmie as a "popular politician of extreme geniality and no bitterness."

Prior to Federation James Tolmie was a captain in the 4th Queensland Regiment which was disbanded when the Commonwealth came into existence. During the First World War, when he was over 50 years of age, he served as troop commander in a troop ship, with the rank of Major. He was also for many years a member of the Downs Club in Toowoomba and was President in 1916.

In October 1903 he read a paper (49) before the Royal Geographical Society of Australia, Qld Branch, on the early history of Drayton and Toowoomba. Though accurate as to detail, (a fact appreciated by present-day historians), its wordy style is characteristic of the writings of that era. A few sentences from the introduction of the 14 page article illustrate:

It is not ... possible to treat of the early days of Toowoomba without associating with them the development of the still older town of Drayton... There are still living in our midst men and women whose memories carry them back a long way in the direction of the early beginnings of both Drayton and Toowoomba, and from them I have had frequent opportunities of gleaning reminiscences of a highly interesting nature which might lend a charm to a paper of this kind. But since my desire is to produce something of scientific value, which may be preserved in the annals of the Geographical Society, I have been careful to abstain from the use of any information to which a suspicion of legendary or traditional character might attach, and have tried to bring under your observation

historical facts based on State papers and on the reports contained in the newspaper Press of that early period — the "Moreton Bay Courier" and "Darling Downs Gazette" — circulating in what was then known as the northern districts of New South Wales, and now as the southern districts of Queensland.

James Tolmie had one term as an alderman of the Toowoomba City Council, from 1924 to 1927. For a while, too, he owned a farm which he called "Gowrie Brae". It comprised 640 acres of basaltic black soil on the north side of Gowrie mountain, extending from the main Toowoomba — Oakey road to the floor of the valley. A resident farm-hand ran the property, but unfortunately at a loss, so eventually James Tolmie arranged for my father to sell it for him. My brother Fergus and I often made day trips to the farm with our uncle and one or two aunts at weekends. My strongest memories of those visits are of climbing into the loft of the hay shed (which had a ceiling) to "bag" pigeons which we boys would bring home to our own pigeon coop.



Major James Tolmie, though over 50 years of age, served during part of World War I as a troop commander in a troop ship. Before Federation he had been a Captain in the 4th Qld Regiment.

James Tolmie never married. Instead, as indicated earlier, he ran the home for his brother and numerous sisters. His young brother, Roderick, and his elder sister, Isabella, predeceased him by many years and three of the younger girls married; however, three sisters remained spinsters. Those three (Helen, Sarah and Agnes) all trained as nursing sisters and had notable careers. As far back as I can remember, two of them lived with James Tolmie, until his death in 1939. Theirs was the large old home named "Kinbeachie"... a reminder of the birthplace in Scotland of their mother.

Helen (or Ella as she was always called) was the eldest of the three Tolmie nursing sisters. For 20 years, from 1897 to 1917, she was Matron of the Toowoomba General Hospital. I have a leather instrument case on which her initials E.T. are inscribed in gold. Below, on a silver plaque, are the words:

Presented by
Hospital Help Society
Toowoomba
7.2.18

This was a parting gift to her when, at the age of 53 years, she transferred to military nursing and served in a hospital at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane.

In her very early nursing days my Aunt Ella was present at a historic operation: the first appendicectomy in Australia. It was performed on 11 March 1893 and the surgeon was Dr Herbert Russell Nolan, MB, Ch M (Syd). An account of the case is given by Dr Drury Clarke. (28)

The operation was of particular interest to Queenslanders by reason of its having been performed in that State; and, in the provincial city Toowoomba. Throughout the 1880's surgical removal of a diseased appendix had gained favour as treatment in the USA and Great Britain; but prior to the Toowoomba case, surgical removal of an offending appendix had never been performed in Australia.

Dr Nolan was an honorary surgeon at the Toowoomba Hospital. The patient, a 30-year old mother of four children, was seen by Dr Nolan on the afternoon of 10 March 1893 and by evening she was suffering from acute peritonitis. At 8.30 next morning she was seen by Drs Roberts, Falkiner, Grade and himself. Her condition became critical. Surgery was decided upon, and chloroform was administered by Dr Falkiner. Drs Roberts and Garde assisted with the actual operation. "The appendix was detached, ligatured and removed. The cavity was irrigated with hot water, carefully dried...and the incision united with silk ligatures."

The article also documents the fact that 51 years later (in 1944) the patient "was still living and in good health." It also states that "the operation was not performed at a general hospital, but on the kitchen table placed in the bedroom at the patient's home," which was at Drayton. In 1944, too, "Miss Ella Tolmie, a nurse from the Toowoomba Hospital who assisted at the operation, was also still living." (Incidentally the Dr Falkiner who administered the chloroform was the doctor who brought all my brothers and myself into this world).

When her war nursing service ended, Ella Tolmie's nursing days were by no means over. She opened a private hospital in Toowoomba called "St Andrews," and was Matron in charge of it until she died in 1945, aged 79. As she started her nursing career in 1889, this means that she devoted 55 years to active duty in her calling. The starting date is known from a bible shown me by my cousin Jess Fraser: an inscription inside the front cover says that the bible was presented to Ella Tolmie on the occasion of her leaving to take up nursing. It is signed by four persons on behalf of Gowrie Creek Presbyterian Sabbath School and is dated Sep 1889. Gowrie Creek is near Wetalla where the family would have been living at that time.

My Aunt Ella was a wonderful person who seemed to sense in an uncanny way when any of us Yeates boys (her nephews) were in need of pocket money. A special perk of mine as a boy of 10 or 12 was to return the empty medicine bottles to Watson, the chemist, for her. There would generally be three or four dozen bottles every few months; and at three pence or sixpence each this added up to a goodly sum which I was always told to keep.

I, myself, underwent two operations at her hospital; but I remember her establishment much more for the good things than for the operations. St Andrews was located at the corner of Herries and Clifford Streets, only one block away from our house, so I made frequent visits and often walked back to the hospital at night with Aunty Ella (to "see her home") after she had paid a visit to "Kinbeachie". After I was old enough to obtain a driving licence and before I went to university, I generally took her and one or two of the other Tolmie aunts for a drive in James Tolmie's car on Sunday afternoons. My elder brother Fergus had established this pattern before me. Handling the big old Nash tourer's gears was not exactly easy and my uncle, who had learnt to drive late in life, seemed glad when we boys drove instead of him.

The two sisters who lived with James Tolmie at "Kinbeachie", Hill Street, until he died and then for another 10 years after that, were Sarah Jane (Jeanie) and Agnes. Jeanie, whose earlier nursing career had been at Toowoomba General Hospital, was an expert gardener and won many prizes at horticultural shows. She had an intimate knowledge of the pioneering days in Toowoomba and a fascinating fund of anecdotes associated with the people and events of those times.

Whereas Jeanie was practical, thoughtful, business-like and self-effacing in personality, her sister Agnes was more out-going and talkative — much more in the public eye. After completing her nursing training Agnes Tolmie was Matron of Maryborough Hospital in 1905 when a dreadful, highly infectious pneumonic plague broke out. There were many deaths, and the doctors and nursing staff (two of whom died) were exposed to terrible risk. Only chosen staff were permitted contact with infected patients, and then they wore special waterproof overalls and hoods, also goggles, respirators and rubber gloves. Dr P.A. Earhshaw of Brisbane, made the whole history of that plague the subject of the 35th Jackson Lecture, (29) delivered to the Qld Branch of the Aust Medical Assn on 10 April 1965, sixty years after the event.

The plague originated in Maryborough in a family of seven neglected children whose mother was dead and whose father was a drunkard. The children survived on what food they could find in rubbish cans and round the wharves. They also played near an open sewer. One child sickened and died, and four of the others crept on to the same mattress with the dead body. Owing to the father having no money to bury the child, the health authorities discovered the children's predicament.

But 14 days were to elapse and more deaths occur before pathologists in Brisbane found the causal organism to be *Bacillus pestis*. The outbreak was thereby shown to be the highly infectious, dreaded pneumonic plague — the same disease which caused the Black Death in Europe in 1665. The organism may be carried by rats. Human subjects bitten by fleas which leave infected rats may develop bubonic plague, characterised by swelling in the buboes (groin); but in normal circumstances that disease is not transmitted directly from person to person: another infected rat flea bite is required. However, as Earnshaw explained, if severe septicaemia in a case of bubonic plague involves the patient's lungs, the disease then becomes one of the most highly infectious and dangerous diseases known. Spread from person to person occurs by droplet infection and the disease is then given the name "pneumonic plague".

Fortunately the Maryborough outbreak was brought under control in 24 days and that is the only record of the disease ever having occurred in Australia.

On the 11th day of the outbreak, after the sixth death, five of which had been in the first-infected family, Dr Baxter Tyrie, the Government plague specialist, arrived in Maryborough. After inspecting the house where the neglected children had lived he ordered its immediate burning. The time fixed for this "legal arson" was 3pm on Saturday, 3 June 1905. A great multitude, led by the Mayor, the Superintendent of Police, the Chief of the Fire Brigade and Dr Tyrie witnessed the bonfire.

Sixty-one years after the outbreak the two nurses who died were honoured (no doubt through the initiative of Dr Earnshaw) by the establishment of the Bauer-Wiles Bursary, and Matron Tolmie, who was still alive aged 93 years, was able to recall that "the Maryborough General Hospital nurses were terrified, but not one flinched from doing the duties allotted her during that fateful time." (30)

On retiring to Toowoomba Agnes Tolmie became closely involved with community work, helping with such organisations as the Red Cross Society, the War Memorial Committee, and the Girl Guides. In recognition of her services she was awarded the O.B.E. For her long and distinguished service with the Red Cross she also gained the Society's Long Service Medal with two bars and the Laurel Wreath. Her Red Cross membership covered an unbroken period of 50 years, dating back to the Society's Foundation in 1914.

The married Tolmie sisters, besides my mother, were Mary and Christina, both of whom became teachers in the Department of Public Instruction — the former at East Toowoomba (1889) and Stanthorpe (1895); and the latter at Yeulba (1892). Their husbands were respectively T.D. Fraser of Brisbane and George Wieneke of Roma. I paid many a holiday visit to the Fraser's home in my early youth and came to know well my six Fraser cousins — all older than I. My uncle Tom was the Government Astronomer and as a special treat I was once or twice allowed to look through the big telescope at his work place. He was a man who loved to joke and I remember him perhaps best of all for taking rises out of me. As a boy of about seven I expressed surprise at the neatness of the edges to his garden beds. He said he had been cutting the grass for so many years that it was now trained not to grow there! Then at the big table round which the family had meals and at the head of which Tom Fraser carved the joint, he said to me one evening: "What's for you young man, bone or fat?" At the age of seven, being properly respectful, I was unable to answer that sort of question cleverly. (I smile now as I think how well a particular grandson of mine would handle that question — and he is only four!)

* * *

My mother occasionally recalled her pre-marriage days and said what a shy person Herbert Yeates was when she first met him. I think the difference between them would be a consequence of their different life-styles from the time they were teen-agers: Herbert, a bush boy who experienced little social life or gaiety, among people beyond his own family; Margaret, a town girl with lots of friends, and accustomed to entertainment and parties galore. To accentuate this difference I also believe that Herbert, without his ever saying so, always privately regarded parties as fatuous, and avoided them where he tactfully could. He entertained little.

At anyrate there was no chance of Herbert's escaping the formality of the Yeates-Tolmie wedding which was reported in the "Darling Downs Gazette" in the characteristic language and detail of those times.

The wedding took place at "Kinbeachie", Hume Street, the residence of the bride's brother, Mr James Tolmie, MLA.

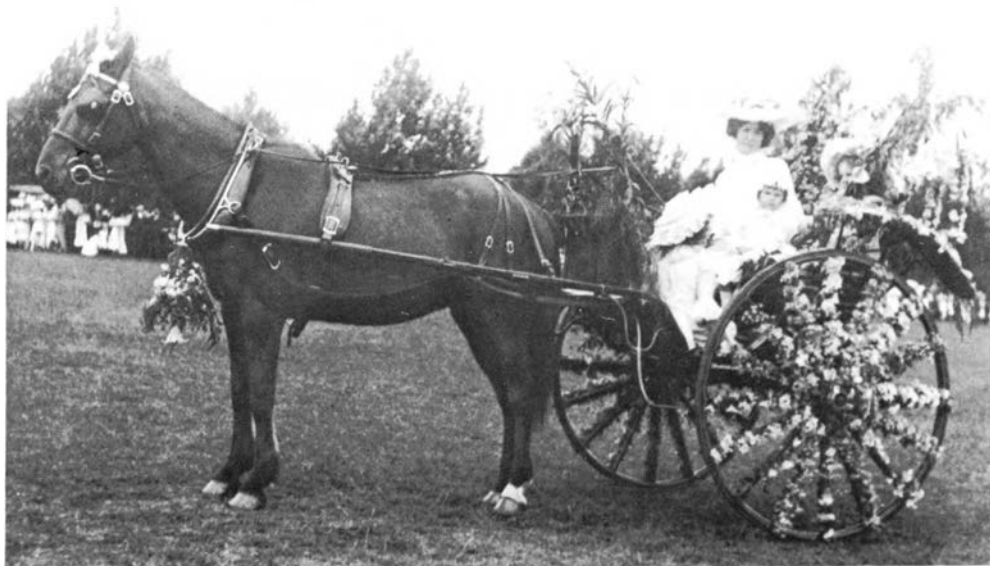
The day was a lovely one, and about seventy invited guests were present. The hall was arranged with pot plants, and the reception rooms were tastefully decorated with masses of lovely white flowers sent from "Clifford House" by Mrs J. Taylor, Mrs G.G.Cory "Vacy", Mrs T.R. Robinson "Camby", Mrs Roesser "Wyenbah" .. thus testifying to the popularity of the bride. The ceremony took place in the drawing-room, which was converted into a church, and artistically decorated with white flowers. . . .

As the bride entered the room with her brother, Mr James Tolmie, the hymn, "The voice that breathed o'er Eden," was sung. She looked sweet and happy in a lovely gown of ivory chiffon taffetas flounced with

accordeon-pleated chiffon. The French bodice was arranged with roses of chiffon and draped with real honiton lace. Her embroidered tulle veil (lent by a relative of the bridegroom) was fastened by a small coronet of orange blossoms. The bride's shower bouquet was composed of white marguerites, heather (specially sent from Scotland), narcissus, tuberoses, and fern, with satin streamers. She wore a very handsome pearl and turquoise pendant, the gift of the bridegroom. The bride's sister, Miss A. Tolmie, was her only bridesmaid. She wore ...

The Rev J.J. Lundie, B A was the officiating clergyman, and Mr Kenneth Yeates was best man. After the signing of the register, the bride was greeted with showers of rose leaves, as the Wedding March was being played by Mr S.C.W. Robinson ... The garden at "Kinbeachie" looked really beautiful and the spring toilettes of the guests mingling with the wealth of cosmea, roses and other flowers made the scene a very gay one. Afternoon tea was served in a marquee erected on the lawn... Mr and Mrs Yeates left for Warwick en route for Sydney.

The bride's travelling costume was of cream serge with Louis XV coat delicately embroidered, and dainty vest of Paris net and lace. A very becoming pale grey felt hat had a large white hackle feather and handsome buckle...



The author's mother, entrant in a decorated sulky event in Toowoomba in the early 1900's, probably just before her marriage, when she was Margaret (Peggy) Tolmie.

After their marriage Herbert and Margaret (or Peggy as her brothers and sisters called her) set up their home in Hill Street, Toowoomba. The newly built home was known as "Babiloora" for about 10 or 15 years. (Babiloora, a central western Qld station, was considered by the Lands Dept for subdivision into selections in 1900 so it is possible that my father had been interested in it just prior to settling in Toowoomba). Once the garden became well established, Margaret's suggestion for a name change of the house to "Rose-Bank" was adopted. This name was certainly appropriate in the spring and summer when masses of rose blooms, mostly pink, covered a trellised side-garden path about 40 yards long and an arched gate-way which separated the front and middle gardens. The middle garden, immediately to the rear of the house, contained fruit trees.

"Rose-Bank", which later acquired the street number 41, was a well-built, commodious home with ample bed-room and glassed-in sleeping accommodation for the eventual family of five boys. The outside walls were of painted chamfer boards, while internally there were decorated plaster ceilings above gaily papered walls. My first recollection is of gas-light, but this was later changed to electric lighting. For warmth, besides the wood-fired kitchen stove (gas in later years), there were four brick fireplaces, arranged in pairs, back-to-back, so that two chimneys protruded from the gabled, red-painted corrugated iron roof. The drawing room had a large corner bay window, surrounded by a right-angle verandah, with iron "lace" railings, which extended along portion of the front and one side of the house.

A huge table with a scrubbed, white pine top occupied the centre of the kitchen and the red painted kitchen door, made of wide tongue-and-groove pine boards had acquired by the late 1920's five small Yeates' initials carved in it at various heights and in varying styles of workmanship. Far from there being any trouble over this defacement (such as would certainly have happened at school) my father

turned a "blind eye" to it and I know that in his later years he rather prized the carved door.

Having married into a Presbyterian family, my father immediately set about helping with the business side of that church's affairs. He became a member of the Committee of Management of St Stephen's Toowoomba and remained on the Committee for 40 years — until he died. For 32 years he was Honorary Treasurer. This type of public service was characteristic of Herbert: without any trumpeting, to apply himself to worthy voluntary service and to stick to his task consistently.

* * *

A couple of years after his own marriage, Herbert's brother and partner, Kenneth Barr Yeates married Catherine Jessie Klose, a descendant of early settlers in Australia and a member of a distinguished family. An article in the "Toowoomba Chronicle" at the time of Mrs K.B. Yeates' death, and other papers (24) give the early background of her grandfather, John Bye Durnford Marlow. John accompanied his family to Sydney where his father, Major-General Marlow had an important post. A fellow passenger was Dr Leichhardt, the ill-fated explorer in whose hands was placed the completion of young Marlow's education on arrival in Sydney.

John Marlow spent some time at Furracabad Station, near Glen Innes and Leichhardt called there before setting out on his last expedition. He was overjoyed to meet his former pupil. Marlow himself later undertook several explorations, and Mt Marlow and Marlow River in Queensland are named after him. He was one of the party that accompanied George Elphinstone Dalrymple in the first exploration of the site of Cardwell.

After moving to Queensland in 1861, Marlow obtained an appointment as Lieutenant in the Native Police and rose later to Inspector, serving in the Maranoa district, also at Bowen and at Dalrymple outside Charters Towers. The Parish of Marlow in the Bowen Land District is sure to have been named after him. While stationed at Bowen, Marlow met the Yeates family after they had taken up land there on the Don River. His daughter Pauline Marlow married Max Klose who later went to live in Brisbane.

One day during a trip to Brisbane, young Kenneth Yeates went to see the friends whom his parents had known in Bowen and it was then that he met Catherine Jessie Klose, the girl whom he married in 1908. There were six children of the marriage (two boys and four girls) and I came to know them best of all my Yeates cousins — no doubt because our two families lived in Toowoomba and were associated in business. The two boys, Alexander Barr and Maitland went to Toowoomba Grammar School where both played in the school's first XV. The eldest girl, Vonda Yeates (later Murray), went to school at St. Hilda's Southport and graduated from the University of Queensland. Her husband died from war injuries in World War II. The other girls, Beryl (Wolstenholme) and Stella (Gordon) went to Glennie Memorial School and Audrey (Douglas) went to Fairholm College in Toowoomba. All six of the family married, two of the girls thereby going on the land, and many of their children have been prominent academically and in sport.

Alexander Barr Yeates made a special mark in surveying, becoming Surveyor-General of Queensland (1966-1975). He was President of the Institute of Surveyors, Aust (Qld Div) 1967-68 and President of the Royal Aust Planning Inst (Qld Div) 1967-8. He was a Trustee of the Toowoomba Grammar School for five years and during World War II was a Captain in the 5th Aust Field Survey Coy. His Army service took him to Cape York, Morotai, Borneo and the Celebes. In Borneo he participated in the landing at Balikpapan.

An historic event in which the Qld Lands Minister and Alex Yeates represented their State was the unveiling on 11 June 1969 of a commemorative pillar at Cameron's Corner — where Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia meet, near the centre of the continent. The Surveyors-General and Lands Ministers of NSW and South Australia were also present. "The Corner" was first pegged in September 1880 by John Cameron. At the commemorative ceremony tribute was paid to the pioneer surveyors. Cameron's assignment took more than 12 months and was carried out under extremely difficult conditions — the work being hindered by flood waters, sickness in the form of fever, blight and scurvy, and by severe shortages of water. Water at times had to be carted over distances of 100 miles, by horse-drawn vehicles.

* * *

About 1908 my father was advised by his doctor to take a complete break away from his business. He had evidently over-worked himself and a trip to New Zealand was decided upon. The first two children, Derick and Herbert (Bert), had been born by then, and my mother stayed at home to look after them.



Margaret Yeates, in 1909, with the two first-born of her eventual family of five sons: Derick in front, Bert being carried.

Evidently the trip to New Zealand worked wonders, for my father never had any more health setbacks of consequence until the illness which led to his death many years later. But if the trip away had been intended as a "rest", it seems hardly to have fulfilled this. Characteristically, Herbert applied himself to close study of the country he visited — taking notes as he went — finally writing a series of at least eight articles about his travels. All were published, in serial fashion, in the "Darling Downs Gazette". The articles covered a wide range of subjects related to both town and rural living.

Illustrative of my father's whole line of thought while on his trip — the betterment of his homeland — is this extract from his second article, on Christchurch city.

Here I noticed a very simple and handy street-sprinkler at work. It is drawn by two horses and does its work most effectively. It can sprinkle over 30-ft in width in one strip. The idea is a local one, and I have forwarded some particulars of it to the Toowoomba Council.

On his country trips he evidently rode a horse, for in an article entitled "Of interest to flockmasters" the following appears:

While riding through Canterbury one day I came across a place where no less than seven public roads met. I looked everywhere and couldn't see even one hotel. Not that I was thirsty; but would it be possible to find a junction of seven roads in Queensland without a hotel? Hardly!

It is not surprising that a man whose thinking was slanted so strongly towards the welfare of his own city and State should seek parliamentary office. Herbert certainly did that. Many times he offered himself for candidature and often he was chosen to carry the banner for the non-labour interests. But his early attempts were in the then strong socialist seats in the western electorates of Queensland. It seemed not to matter to him that his chances were forlorn; he threw himself into the campaigns with enthusiasm and thoroughness. One thing he gained from these efforts was political experience.

I don't know how many attempts he made to enter Parliament; but two whole-page press reports of

his policy speeches are typical. One, in the "Darling Downs Gazette" of 17 May 1913, presents his case for election to the Federal seat of Maranoa. That may have been his first candidature for Parliament. The other report is from the "Charleville Times" of 22 Sept 1923, when he was the endorsed Country Party candidate for a by-election in the State electorate of Warrego. Speaking in Charleville, he pointed out that he was no stranger to the Warrego, having resided there for nearly 20 years as a selector and business-man. In a wide-ranging policy speech he advocated extension of the bush nursing scheme, saying that his own mother had lived for years in the Adavale district and reared a family of twelve away in the wilderness... He wanted the women of the far outback to have a better deal than his mother had.

After all the stress and especially the disappointment of unsuccessful election campaigns, most people would give up. But Herbert would be back at his work, cheerful as ever, helping again with civic affairs in Toowoomba, and ready if asked to have another try for parliament — for it was there that he felt he could achieve most.

My father was the first President of the Real Estate Institute in Toowoomba; a long-time member, and President for six years from 1923, of the Chamber of Commerce; and a City Council Alderman for almost 10 years — from 1936 until he died. These positions, plus his continuing commitments to the Ambulance Brigade and St Stephen's Church, kept him always on the "go". As I think back over the whole of my childhood and boyhood, there was never a period when my father was free of the requirement to attend meetings. He would come home after dark, tired after a long day's work; then, as often as not, he would have to go out to one of the meetings, rarely getting home again before about 10 p.m.



Back Row: H. D. HATTON, T. HENDERSON, W. SOLLEY (Sec.), H. YEATES (Treas.), W. J. DEVINE, Jas. DUNN (Session Clerk)
 2nd Row: A. D. FOSSETT, D. A. MERCER, A. MILLER, Rev. J. LUNDIE, R. MCALPINE, A. MAXES
 Front Row: J. DIX, R. W. McLEARN (Chairman of Com.)

Members of Committee and Session, St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Toowoomba, 1913. Herbert Yeates, Treasurer, is fourth from left in back row.

Another activity of my father's, which my brother Derick recalls from the period of about 1920-24, was to organise a supply of firewood for poor people's use. He arranged for folk who had spare wood to dump loads of it in a vacant allotment in lower Hill Street, Toowoomba. Then arrangements would be made for those in need to receive wood at no cost to themselves or at some quite nominal charge. The need was greatest in Toowoomba's cold winter months.

In his business the major activity was selling country properties. However, town house sales, leases, and lettings made a useful contribution to the firm's income, while important "side-lines" were the weekly or fortnightly auction sales of cattle and pigs, and the district agency for "Sunshine" (H.V. McKay-Massey Harris) farm machinery.

Instead of merely hoping for large entries for the pig sales, my father would often go out into the surrounding districts to canvass for business among his farmer clients. Many a trip I made with him on such occasions when I was a small boy. I can remember going along black soil lanes in the 1920's in an old T-model Ford, through prickly-pear as high as the car, and growing so densely and so close to the track that the mud-guards beat against the big succulent stems. On those visits to farms he would sometimes do other unexpected business, even if he didn't book a few pigs for the next sale. He knew every road and a vast number of the farmers on the Darling Downs — not just around Toowoomba and its outskirts like Cecil Plains and Goombungee, but right out beyond Oakey to the Dalby and Bell districts.

Yeates Bros' saleyards were situated beside the railway at Harristown, on the south-western side of Toowoomba. Sometimes as a small boy I would go out there to see stock being unloaded from a train or to witness an auction sale in progress. A good-style pony, 14 hands high, was depastured at the Harristown yards and my father taught me to ride there. In later years, as a teen-ager, I did a great deal of riding — often along and below the range on the eastern side of Toowoomba. I was a member of the local Riding Club and served on the Committee for a time.



Margaret Yeates, about 1920 by which time the roses were becoming a feature of our home garden.

In quite early days, probably before the 1920's, Yeates Bros extended their interests into the motor business. I can just remember T-model Fords being driven from Brisbane to Toowoomba. At that time the road was rough and it traversed the Little Liverpool Range between Laidley and Ipswich. This was so steep that the gravity feed of the fuel line of the Fords would no longer operate; hence the Ford cars had to be reversed up the steepest part of the range! To achieve this, the driver had to use both feet, the left foot keeping the left-hand pedal half-in, in the "neutral" position, and the right foot hard down on the middle (reverse) pedal.

In later years the firm lost the Ford agency but took over instead the Hudson-Essex and the Morris Cowley and Morris Oxford selling rights. Those were times of great driving experience for my older brothers and later for me, as we all in turn reached driving age. We often washed and polished the new cars and, with all the "trade-ins" around, there was hardly a make of car that we did not come to drive. When I was about 10 or 11 years old my brother Jim drove and I went as passenger on a competitive petrol consumption trial in one of the Morris cars. The officials connected a special sealed petrol container to each car in the trial. They then set the cars off along a designated route. When the gallon of petrol allowed each entrant was exhausted, the car stopped and remained at the side of the road until officials



Herbert Yeates in middle life, about 1925; remembered so well by the author, then a boy of 10, for his thoughtfulness, boundless energy and enthusiasm.

arrived to record the distance it had travelled. By such tactics as "coasting" in neutral and switching off the engine down some hills, we saved fuel; and to lower wind resistance we drove with the hood down. Apart from the advertisement if the car did well, the miles per gallon travelled on such a test run could be quoted to prospective car buyers. But for us boys this was all great experience. Long before I was old enough to obtain a driver's licence I could drive well — and I learned about such refinements as double de-clutching from my older brothers, particularly Jim and Fergus. Double de-clutching was the sign of a skilled driver in the days before synchromesh gears. It allowed one to change the gears silently while still maintaining reasonable speed on hills. It was also a great safety aid, for the technique could be used to select a lower gear going down steep hills.

* * *

At long last, on 2 April 1938, Herbert Yeates achieved what must have been his life's ambition: election to Parliament. At the 1938 triennial State elections he contested the East Toowoomba seat as the endorsed Country Party candidate and gained a narrow victory over the sitting Labour member. Although the seat had traditionally been non-Labour up to about 1935, a re-distribution by the Forgan Smith Government, bringing the Railway Workshops and Foundry areas into East Toowoomba, resulted in the seat going to Labour. It was therefore a special feather in Herbert's cap to win the seat back under such conditions; and once in, he increased his majority substantially at each of the two succeeding triennial elections which he contested.

His consuming interest had always been politics and by throwing himself whole-heartedly into the new responsibilities, he won increasing support. He told his electorate that he would give his best attention to the requirements of all of them, irrespective of their political opinions, creed or class. "I have no time for class distinction," he said; "and there is no need to state political opinions when you come to interview me." In practice he stuck to these principles, and gave much time to solving the personal problems and meeting the requests of all electors who sought his aid or advice. People recognised his dedication, integrity and sincerity; hence they responded by giving him resounding majorities at later elections.

In "Who's Who in Australia" (1941) Herbert's recreations are listed as "business and politics". Those two "recreations" would have been nominated by himself and this shows his honesty. So many others might have put "walking" or "reading" or "gardening". At one stage my mother prevailed on Herbert to join a bowling club, to "be like other men." He actually played a few games at the West Toowoomba Club

but it didn't last long. Herbert's mind would have been far away on dreams of his country and how it should be run. To him, bowls would be "just silly" — though he never said so; and he never showed the slightest antipathy to all the sporting activities in which his sons became involved.

Herbert's maiden speech to Parliament was delivered on 24 August 1938 (31). It is characteristically wide ranging, earnest, sincere and sometimes whimsical.

After congratulating the Speaker on that gentleman's election to his high office, and expressing pleasure that the government proposed to carry out a great part of the Country Party's programme on rural development, he turned to the matter of unemployment and the transition from relief to full-time work:

... road works that are urgently needed will have to be carried out to put men on full-time employment... and the single man must be given his chance.

No single man has any excuse whatever for not going out and camping in a tent in the bush and working. I have done it myself and I am not going to ask anyone else to do something that I would not do to-morrow or that I have not done. I have camped under a mulga tree and also a gum tree in the Warrego district at places that the hon. member for Warrego knows near the border. I see no reason why the young single men of this country cannot go out and camp and get full-time employment at building roads. If they will not do it they must not have any consideration; we have to do things in a proper business way.

I would go to-morrow, if it were not that thereby I should be doing someone out of a job — and I would invite the Premier to come with me — to paint all the railway stations from Dalby to Quilpie and Cunnamulla. (Laughter)... of course I should be his offside. (Laughter)...

Coming to his greatest interest of all — improving the efficiency of the railway system — he had this to say:

... We must speed up our train service. It takes 44 hours 20 minutes, or an average of 23½ miles per hour, for our so-called fast passenger train to travel the 1,043 miles from Cairns to Brisbane. ... in the Union of South Africa. . they are able to travel over the long run of 954 miles from Cape Town to Johannesburg on a 3-foot 6-inches gauge at an over-all speed of 37.1 miles per hour. Why can we not do that in this country? ... We could reduce the run from Cairns to Brisbane by about 16 hours. Let us begin by reducing the time by 6 hours ... It takes passenger trains from 4 hours 40 minutes to 5 hours to travel from Brisbane to Toowoomba... I suggest that the journey should be covered in 2½ hours. I want the people taken from Brisbane Central to Helidon in 1 hour 55 minutes... then transferred to a comfortable charabanc... The passengers could then be taken up the Range road and landed in Toowoomba 2 hours 35 minutes after leaving Brisbane... Why are we charging the full rate for carrying people 29 miles round the range when there is a straight run of 12 miles by road? It is all right for tourists to travel round the range... and I shall have more to say about that...

In fact Herbert's pressure to introduce a co-ordinated rail-road option on the Brisbane-Toowoomba run (and vice-versa) brought results. The new service came into operation on 1 July 1939, thereby reducing the travelling time by one hour. He then looked for further improvement, pointing out the absurdity of

Always gets seat in train—takes his own!

BRISBANE, Saturday.

TO get a seat in trains, Mr. H. Yeates, M.L.A., takes his own chair when he makes the trip from Toowoomba to attend Parliament in Brisbane.

He sits in comfort on the rear platform of coaches.

On some trips Mr. Yeates has given up his chair to other passengers.

Once he gave it to a woman who, he said, "must have been 70."

He added:

"I sat on the edge of the platform with my feet hanging over the side.



Mr. Yeates

"I'm not complaining. The war that they build more loco-railways are doing their motives and carriages. But the Government "They should have had Henry didn't take any notice of Ford's outlook, and spent millions on their transport service."

A newspaper report illustrating the whimsical ways of Herbert Yeates who expended immense energy in trying to improve his State's transport systems.

the Brisbane-Toowoomba passenger train on Sundays stopping at 21 stations between Brisbane and Ipswich, although Ipswich had 11 other passenger trains from Brisbane on Sundays. He urged the introduction of a week-end "Blue" mountain train, Brisbane to Toowoomba on Saturday, returning on Sunday afternoon, late in summer and earlier in winter. Special fares of 10/- and 7/6 return were suggested, with the option to travel the Helidon-Toowoomba and Toowoomba-Helidon sections by the co-ordinated (motor) service.

During one Parliamentary recess Herbert spent two months journeying over the whole of Queensland's railways, taking notes of everything that was going on. No wonder he was such a well-informed contributor to the railway debates and such a persistent questioner in Parliament on railway matters.

On road improvement, too, he was active. From early days when the Oakey-Bowenville section of the Dalby road was a veritable quagmire in wet weather, he agitated for improvement. As an M.L.A. he brought greater pressure to bear and was successful in hastening the construction of that portion of the all-weather main Western Highway.

Herbert was never concerned about conventional behaviour or "what people thought"; he knew that he was on the right track in pursuit of his various goals. He would chat to the railway workmen, often calling them by their first names. Occasionally he even rode on the engine, at the driver's invitation. This sort of thing embarrassed me when I was a schoolboy; but once he got into Parliament, and I was older and at university, his whimsical ways no longer troubled me. I realised how sincere and effective he was; and I recognised how appreciative the public seemed to be of his tireless efforts on their behalf.

Herbert had "no time for class distinction," dodged parties and despised small talk; he was in no sense a club man. To my knowledge he never joined any social club; but by chance I have a letter written by him when he was a visitor to the Australian Club, Melbourne. The letter was to my mother, and it was so characteristic of Herbert to be impressed by such details as the founders' foresight in planning the club and by the "dear old chap" who had been in the club's employ for 57 years. Part of the four-page letter is reproduced. (see next page).

Although Herbert was perhaps more at home in the country talking with country folk, he adapted himself remarkably to city life. He always dressed smartly and tidily; he held his tall frame very erect; he walked briskly; and he never hesitated in seeking appointments with the highest people in government and the public service. He took the view that they were there to serve the community and that if he were entitled to information from them, there was no call for him to be timid — nor to go to them "cap in hand" (to use his own expression).

Apart from obvious attributes such as straight dealing and willingness to work hard, my father regarded self-reliance as an important trait regrettably too often lacking in our easy-going society. He deplored the "spoon-feeding" to which young Australians seemed to have become accustomed; and he saw in it the makings of a future decadent community. His picturesque description of the modern ways was "too much hot milk, chocolates and pictures." Perhaps at the back of his mind were contrasting memories of his own stern boyhood experiences in the bush, which engendered the self-reliance he applauded.

In 1945, Herbert undertook a marathon trip by rail to many distant and remote parts of Australia. His travels included the journey on the famous "Ghan" train from Adelaide to Alice Springs, and the trip on the Northern Territory's only line, running from Larrimah to Darwin. He told me how hot it was travelling that section of the journey and that the only provision for hanging up one's coat was a nail banged into the compartment wall. On asking if tea could be obtained anywhere, the guard eventually pointed out a place and said they would wait for him while he went across the road and tried his luck. He was tremendously stimulated by all that he saw, and I am sure that he learned a great deal and enjoyed his "see Australia by rail" expedition far more than most tourists who embark on more expensive cruises.

My father and mother attended my wedding in Sydney towards the end of October 1945 but clearly Herbert was not his old vigorous self. In fact he soon afterwards became seriously ill and was admitted to the Royal Brisbane Hospital in December. For approximately a fortnight he suffered intermittent massive haemorrhaging from a gastric ulcer and died on Christmas Eve, 1945. In later years, one of my surgeon brothers (speaking with hindsight but experience in that very field) told me that in such a case he would have operated — that a gastrectomy would probably have saved our father's life.

Herbert Yeates' funeral was largely attended. St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Toowoomba, was packed full for the service which was conducted by the Rev. N.H. Joughin, MA, BD. Mr Joughin gave a very fine oration and some two or three days later held another "In Memoriam" service in St Stephen's to honour "this worthy son of the community". He said: "The Presbyterian Church is sparing in its In Memoriam services, but Mr Yeates, as a Christian and a leader in St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, deserved this honour".

*Hope you
are feeling
well & have
care of rest
from 9 to 11 pm
I have plenty
of special
9 to 11 pm*



Australian Club
Melbourne

Parliament House,

Brisbane.

7am (Tues) 16 Nov 1943

My dear Margaret

As I am leaving this afternoon for Adelaide I want to finish the talk about this town - particularly this club. There are traditions attached to it that are well worth while. Born in 1879 - 64 yrs of the pioneers, looking ahead erected a building which is suitable for today's requirements. Right in the heart of the city, still as quiet & nice as one's own home. Most, man servants & elderly women like the Meekopol in Sydney. One dear old chap has been employed here for 57 yrs - has never had any other job in his life. He is probably 73 or 75.

*Just a
touches
a turn
switch be
to be wor
where othe
too 60 yr
all their*



Mrs Herbert Yeates
Rosebank
41 Hill St
Old Toowoomba

on my return
Affection & love Herbert

A characteristic letter from Herbert Yeates, in this instance to Margaret, his wife. Note that it was written at 7am, quite probably after he had already been up and about seeing the Melbourne street scene for an hour or so.



Herbert Yeates, MLA for East Toowoomba, Qld (right) with his youngest son Neil, in Oct 1945, a day or two before the latter's wedding which Herbert had come to attend. Herbert was not then his old vigorous self, and he died a couple of months later, aged 66.

A fine tribute was paid by Mr J.E. Duggan, MLA, the Labour member for the adjoining electorate of Toowoomba. The following extract is from the "Toowoomba Chronicle" of 26 December 1945.

Although Mr Yeates and I differed very greatly in our political philosophies, our work brought us close together in matters affecting both electorates. This association and my observations of his work in the Parliament enabled me to form a very high opinion of his personal qualities. His entry into politics was rather late in life, but he brought to his responsibilities an energy and enthusiasm that were surprising for a man of his years. He was never a strong party man, but was always a passionate believer in the efficacy of Parliament as an instrument of democracy. At great personal inconvenience he travelled widely throughout the Commonwealth to gather further information about Australia, its people and its problems...

Mr Yeates was quite free of personal animosity and however acrimonious the debates might be in which he was engaged he was always a kindly, considerate and tolerant gentleman. His sincerity and honesty of purpose could never be questioned and, because of that, members of all political parties deeply grieve his loss."

Another notable tribute appeared in "Queensland Country Life" on 3 January 1946, from James Sparkes, MLA, of "Lyndley", Jandowae.

Herbert Yeates has passed on and Queensland has lost one of her greatest sons, for no one loved and worked harder for the land of his birth than he...

To his many friends he was affectionately called Herbie. How I picture him now, drawing his six feet odd up, stroking his chin and then, after a really cutting remark at the Government saying "Of course, sir (to the Premier) I do not wish to be hard on you as I know what you have to put up with from those back-benchers." He was a great fighter, but ever kindly to an opponent.

One can safely say no member gave better service to his electorate and no member enjoyed a bigger personal following from all sections of the community.

Perhaps he was happiest when camped away in the outback country under a coolibah with his saddle for a pillow, for he so loved this great inland of ours and all it stands for.

He was as straight as a gun-barrel, not only in stature, but in all his dealings. Herbie, your seat was yours while ever you lived, and if qualifications count for anything, then your seat in the Heavens beyond must be yours for all eternity.

Herbert was buried in the Toowoomba cemetery. My two brothers Derick and Jim in their Army uniforms as Lieutenant Colonels, and I in my Naval Lieutenant's uniform, were three of the six pall-bearers. Bert and Fergus were far away and unable to attend. The other three pall-bearers were the Mayor of Toowoomba (Alderman J.D. Annand), Mr.G.F.R. Nicklin (Parliamentary leader of the Country Party, Qld Division) and Mr D.H. Stewart (St Stephen's Presbyterian Church). At the graveside we three brothers hung back for a few moments after the throng had moved away. We thought of all that this energetic man had done for us. Then, at my brother Jim's suggestion, we saluted our father before walking silently away.

* * *

It is perhaps surprising that two people of such different styles and outlooks as Herbert Yeates and Margaret Tolmie made the success that they did of their marriage. Mention has already been made of their respective childhoods and their very different teen-age backgrounds and up-bringing. Their opposite styles and outlooks persisted throughout their lives; but I suspect that Herbert always recognised the differences and made allowances for them — not expecting others, particularly his wife, to conform to his possibly unconventional beliefs and ways. I believe that he, rather than she, was the more tolerant.

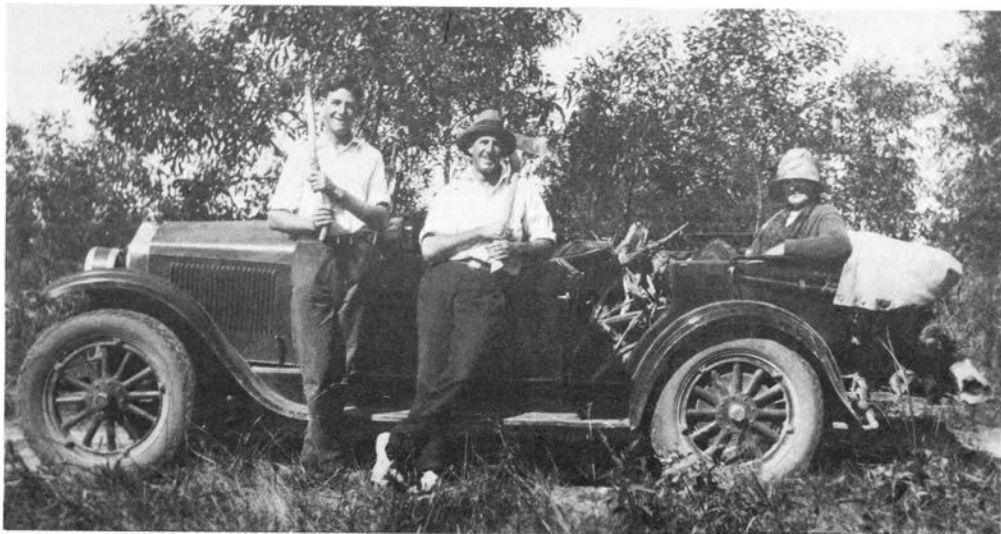
To illustrate the above, Margaret played the piano and sang well; so Herbert, in the early days of the marriage — long before I was born — installed a good piano in the home. Yet, though Herbert revered his bush background and honoured his pioneering parents, I believe that Margaret actively suppressed discussion of such “rough” outback origins. This of course was a pity, for it cut me off from many stories that might have been told — and it meant that I came to know and understand my Yeates forebears less well than I might have done.

But having said that, I must also say that my mother spared no effort to rear us boys well, according to her lights. She arranged for the three eldest boys, in turn, to be taught to play the piano. (By way of change Fergus, the fourth, learnt the violin; but when my turn came, I rebelled strongly enough to be excused). She ensured that we were clean and tidy for school and that our cricket and tennis clothes were always immaculate. If necessary, she would personally do the big family clothes wash on washing day; and in the early years that meant boiling many articles in the copper boiler with a wood fire underneath. She would iron the shirts and trousers with irons heated by the glowing fire in the kitchen stove; and she would make great pans of jam on the same wood-fired stove. She cooked wonderful roast dinners too, and our only contribution to all this was to chop the wood for the various fires and to help wash the dishes.

Most times there was a maid to help with the house work; but my mother instructed the maid and generally ended up doing many of the special jobs herself — for instance, competently ironing a pair of long cream flannel cricket trousers. And of course there were plenty of occasions “between maids”, or when we were doing without one for reasons of economy, when Margaret would do all the household chores herself.

If a new maid came, in place of a trusty “retainer” type of long standing, my mother would instruct the new girl to refer to us boys as Mr Derick, Mr Bert and so on, down to Master Neil. I remember being always embarrassed by this: to me, it carried the suggestion of class distinction.

Sometimes my mother would arrange for a few of the older boys, aged about 8 or 10, to have a seaside holiday at Southport with their uncle James Tolmie and his two spinster sisters, Jeanie and Agnes. In those days Uncle Jim rented a substantial house named “Dalmora” on the Esplanade. By about the mid-1920's however, our father bought a block of land and had a modest sea-side cottage built for the family at Southport. For the next five or six years — probably until the depression of the 1930's — we went there for a holiday each winter.



Wood-cutting expedition to fuel the kitchen stove in the Yeates' holiday cottage in High St, Southport, Qld, about the mid-1920's. The author, then about 10 years old, took the photograph. The chief axe-man, wearing felt hat, is older brother Bert; the car is an Essex six tourist.

It was probably my mother who conceived the idea of the holiday house and pressed for its implementation. At anyrate those holidays seemed very special. There would be a huge pack-up of household goods, clothing and linen — mostly done by my mother. Then all the goods plus our whole family would be loaded into the largest car that my father had available and which could be spared from among those at his business. The trip from Toowoomba to Southport was a full day's journey on rough roads, with the real likelihood of becoming bogged if rain intervened. Chains would generally be carried to put on the tyres if the road became greasy; but on one wet journey when we travelled without chains, my father cut lengths of rope which he tied round the tyres and rims, three or four pieces to each hind wheel. This strategy gave the wheels enough traction to get us through a nasty patch of wet road.

Those holidays were "pioneering" efforts compared with a Southport or adjoining Gold Coast holiday to-day. We would go into the bush with an axe to cut firewood for the little kitchen stove; and I well remember the bullock wagons going past our corner, near Loader's Creek, hauling the huge timber piles for the bridge which was to connect Southport and Main Beach. Prior to the "Jubilee" bridge being built, we would travel to Main Beach in a little open motor-boat which plied from a jetty near the old Southport Hotel (now supplanted by the modern shopping centre of Sundale). The boat was operated by a man named Barney Bolton and the fare was about sixpence return. Once over at Main Beach the only structures were two corrugated iron change sheds, a ladies' and a gents' with no roof on either. Otherwise, there was just bush. Later, the Surfers' Paradise Hotel was built; then a road was cut through the bush joining "Surfers", as it became known, to the nearly completed Jubilee bridge. Finally we were able to drive right to Surfers Paradise.

During those times my mother was ever anxious about us — too much so, we all thought. But perhaps her expressed fears and worries kept us out of dangers to which we might otherwise have been exposed. Her whole life seemed to be centred round doing what she thought best for our welfare. And when the older boys started to do well in their university courses, her pride knew no bounds. Sometimes this extended to public announcements, she having an item inserted in the newspaper's "Personal" column about the particular success. This embarrassed us and we said so; but it took a long while to change our mother in such matters.

In public life, Margaret was a helpful supporter of my father by accompanying him to the numerous fetes and ceremonies that became his lot. In her own right she was a keen supporter of the local branch of the Victoria League; but in general she kept out of controversial public affairs and did not participate actively in electioneering.

Some of the happiest recollections I have of my mother are connected with her lovely garden. She



The author's mother, Margaret Yeates, in the garden which she loved so much, about 1950.

spent many hours per week tending it, and when the roses were in full bloom folk often drove past specially, or hung over the fence to admire the scene. After we boys all grew up and left home, Margaret had a good and trusty man named Jones who came once a week to mow and help her with the digging. I am sure that the garden was a powerful factor in her deciding to stay on alone in the old home so long after Herbert died — when she was in her 70's and early 80's.



Margaret Yeates in 1961, aged 89 years, when she finally decided to leave the Hill St home in Toowoomba, in which she had spent her whole married life. Visiting her this day were two of her numerous grand-children.

A quite remarkable feat of my mother's was to write, without fail, a weekly letter to each one of her sons while ever they were away from home. This went on from the time the eldest boy, Derick, went to university. It continued through the periods we were engaged on post-graduate study; during the long war years when we were overseas, and even after we were all married and had set up homes of our own. And not only did she write herself, but she circulated as enclosures our letters to her — so that all of us boys could read, first-hand, our brothers' news. No doubt it was her example which inspired us to respond with a weekly letter of our own; but her task was five times the magnitude of ours. Only in her late 80's did the letters become less frequent and finally cease when, in her 90's, she was hospitalised.

Finally, I should mention two further outstanding feats of my mother. One was her fortitude during the war years when every one of her five sons was away on active service. The other was the exemplary manner in which she bore the news of her son Jim's untimely death, of which further mention will be made.

When Margaret finally recognised that she was too old to live alone, she was welcomed into the home (also in Toowoomba) of my brother Bert and his wife Joan. There, with three of her lusty school-age grandchildren, all boys, bursting in and out, there was no likelihood of boredom or gloom. Some years later, following a fall in which she broke the neck of her femur, she deteriorated in health and died peacefully on 1 June 1973, in her 95th year.

CHAPTER 6

FIVE BROTHERS

I grew up as the youngest in a family of five boys: Derick Macrae, Herbert Nelson Macrae, James Macrae, Sidney Fergus Macrae and Neil Tolmie Macrae. Some of the "Macrae" names, including mine, were mistakenly registered as "McRae." A sixth boy, Alastair Colin Macrae, born six years after me, died in infancy. I clearly remember Alastair as a nice looking baby, and how sad I was when he died. He was only 10 months old then and from what I have heard in later years I think he must have had leukaemia.

As the five of us older boys were born within a span of only eight years we had a good deal in common. Back yard cricket thrived, as there were generally enough players around, even without the usual reinforcement of neighbouring friends, notably the Lavers, another large family of boys. My lot as the youngest seemed to be to fetch the ball rather than to bat!

The cricket was played in the fenced-off rear portion of our quarter-acre Hill St grounds. The yard in which we played contained not a blade of green grass as about 30 fowls, a rooster and an occasional clutch of chickens, plus the house cow which my father kept, also had free run of the area. Other space within our "cricket field" was taken up by a hay-shed, a wood heap and a fenced-off vegetable garden. The "hay-shed" sometimes contained hay, but it always served as shelter for any cars and for the milking bail. Many a hen and some chickens were despatched by the cricketers' crisp drives and a wary eye had to be kept on the cow. It was a dark-coloured Jersey with sharp horns and it occasionally displayed bull-like behaviour, pawing-up the dust and charging round as though in a tantrum.

The cow was routinely milked by a huge ex-Indian Army Scot, Mr Dow, who lived along a lane which gave access to our back yard. Mr Dow was the caretaker-gardener of Sam Stephen's large private gardens (later Laurel Bank public park) opposite our home. Mr Dow provided the cow with vast barrow loads of scythed grass from the gardens, and for his part in the husbandry he shared the milk with us. If for any reason Mr Dow was absent, the task of milking fell on either my father or Bert. Bert was the "strong man" of the family who probably did more of the out-door jobs such as gardening, wood chopping and milking, than any of his brothers.

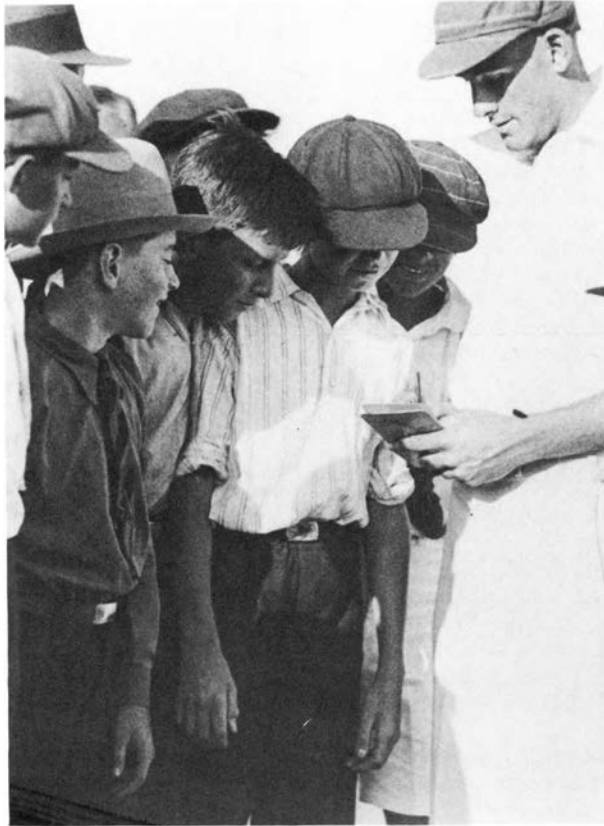
We all went to the North Toowoomba Boys' State School which gave us a great grounding, both in "the three R's" and in life's rough and tumble. I can just remember a fight that Jim had in the school grounds, over some disagreement. It was converted into an official encounter so gloves were used, a teacher was present and a great ring of boys shouted advice and encouragement. I, too, got into a similar scrape some years later; but my fight did not reach official status, so about 50 boys trooped up a lane (now Isabel Street) with me and my opponent after school. They formed the customary ring, so we had to go on with the battle — with bare fists.

All five of us progressed, in turn, to Toowoomba Grammar School. That was marginally further from our home at 41 Hill Street than "the North" had been, and travelling to and fro by bicycle became the tradition. Any bike that was ever purchased was a "second-hand" warrior, and as each of us finally left secondary school, his bike was either passed on to the next son or sold.

At TGS all five of us became prefects, received "colours" for at least two sports and matriculated to the university. Bert and Fergus were outstanding at cricket. Each of them played in the first XI for four years and Bert was captain in his final year at school, 1925. Some of their performances are listed in T.M. Hawkins' "The Queensland Great Public Schools" (32).

In 1925 Bert made an unbeaten century against Ipswich Grammar and took five wickets for six runs against Brisbane Grammar. In all his GPS matches he took 53 wickets. Perhaps his greatest triumph was to be selected, while still at school, to play for the Darling Downs against the Englishmen. I saw that match, in which Hobbs and Sutcliffe opened the batting for England. There seemed to be no hope of dislodging them by traditional means; but one of the local bowlers (not Bert) spotted that the batsman at his end was "backing up" too soon. Instead of bowling the ball, the bowler swung his arm over onto the stumps and of course the batsman had to leave — run out. I was only ten years old at the time, but I remember that a lady sitting in the English visitors' area of the grandstand close to me and whom I understood at the time to be Mrs Hobbs, was truly shocked. She cried out, "That wouldn't happen in England." I recall that, as the locals' position grew worse, some vociferous spectators in the outer started to yell "Give the boy a bowl." In due course Bert did bowl but with no special success that day. In later years he played for Queensland Colts, was awarded a University of Queensland full Blue and represented the State on one occasion. Last year (1978) he was presented with a "Golden Blue" by the university, it then being 50 years since he had earned his original Blue.

Fergus gained a place in the school first XI when he was only 14 years old. Hawkins' book (32) states that from 1927 to 1930 Fergus Yeates captured a record 79 wickets; also that he and one other (H.R. Kent) would rank as the best slow bowlers to come from TGS. After leaving school, Fergus continued to bowl well. He regularly represented Toowoomba in district cricket and then gained selection for Queensland, playing in three Sheffield Shield matches. One of his memorable performances was snaring both Brown and Fingleton, the two NSW openers, after they had put on a century partnership and had defied the pace



Fergus Yeates signing autographs in Brisbane, 2 Nov 1933, on the eve of the Sheffield Shield cricket match, Qld v NSW, in which he played for Qld. (Courier-Mail photo).

attack. He also took pride in having once bowled a maiden over to Bradman. Though Fergus batted low down the order he could hit hard and in one inter-State game he hit Fleetwood-Smith for two successive sixes and a four at Brisbane Cricket Ground ("The 'Gabba"). At the height of his crickering in Queensland, Fergus left to commence a medical course in Sydney. He played for Sydney University for six years in the A grade competition and gained a university Blue.

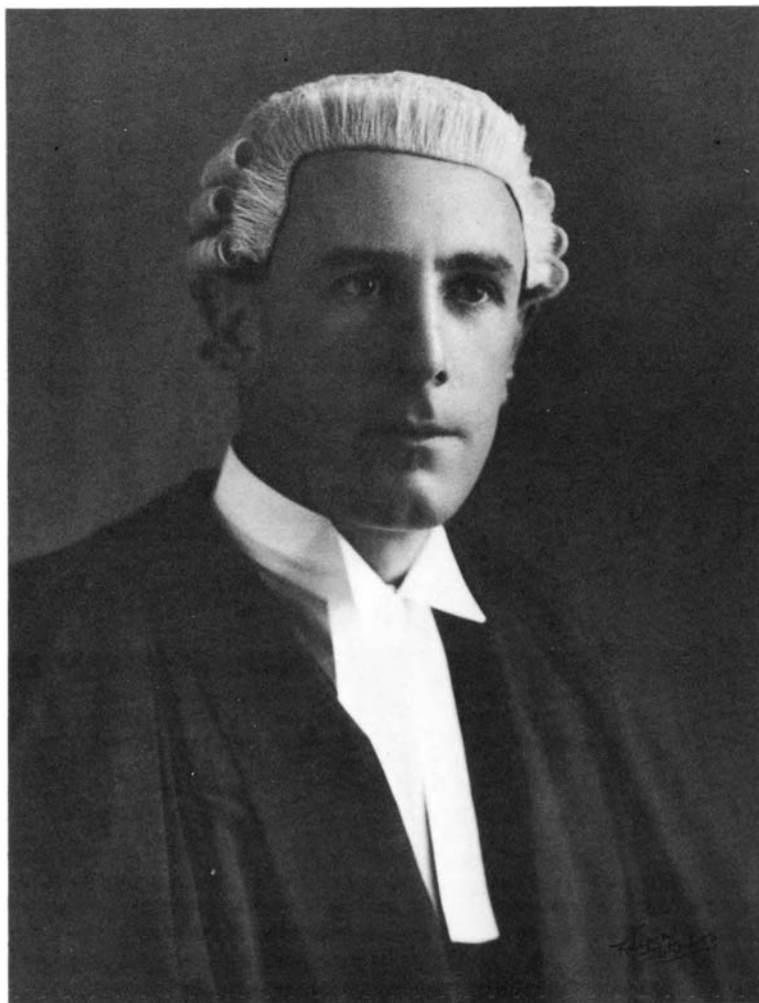
* * *

When Derick, the eldest boy, matriculated, it was decided that he would go to the university to study medicine. This was a big family decision, for the course was long and costly, and family finances were always tight. My mother had a big influence, for her driving ambition in life was for her sons to "do well" — and in her mind that included continuing their education at tertiary level. Perhaps she gained this notion about scholarship from her elder brother, James Tolmie, whose studious ways had taken him so far from unpromising beginnings. I am sure that my father would have been quite content for Derick (and any of the rest of us) to go into his or other business callings. The university and its ways were foreign to him and he probably regarded it as an unnecessary delay from the normal course of earning one's living. All the same, once a decision was made, with Derick or any of the boys who followed, my father never grumbled and was always pleased when we did well. Derick graduated in medicine, with honours, in 1930 and gained a Sydney University Blue for tennis.

When Bert left school there seemed no hope of his being financed to attend university too. So he supported himself by obtaining a prep-school teaching job as a resident master at Church of England Grammar School, East Brisbane. His sporting prowess no doubt helped in his selection for the position. He commenced night study at the University of Queensland and changed to a more senior teaching post at Brisbane Grammar School after a few years. After graduating in Arts he commenced the study of Law.

During this time in Brisbane Bert enjoyed many seasons of A grade cricket.

Bert's going off to fend for himself probably relieved the financial pressure, for Jim, the third son, proceeded straight to the university to study medicine. Nevertheless, both Derick and Jim worked during the vacations to help pay their way. Derick sometimes worked in our father's business; but if seasonal work offered, for example in the Wheat Board in Toowoomba, this was accepted, especially by Jim.



Herbert Nelson Macrae ("Bert") Yeates was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Qld on 3 Nov 1936. He practised as a barrister in Brisbane for over three years; but after service in the AIF in World War II he transferred to the Roll of Solicitors in Feb 1946 and practised in that capacity thereafter, in Toowoomba.

Jim was a good scholar, perhaps marginally the best in the family, judged by his school and university performances. At school he was a close friend of Lister Hopkins who topped the State in all his public examinations and in later years was a Rhodes Scholar. Close association with Lister no doubt influenced Jim; but in one subject, chemistry, Jim often topped the class at school, beating even Lister. Jim went straight through his six-year medical course and was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Medicine with honours from Sydney University on 29 January 1935.

When Fergus, the fourth boy left school, there was at that time no hope of his receiving the necessary family finance for university study. Accordingly he started work in our father's business. Besides learning much about real estate and property matters, it was during this period that Fergus did so well at cricket

and literally bowled himself into the Queensland side. Because of Fergus' promise as a googly bowler, prominent local sportsman Duncan Thompson arranged an interview for Fergus with the famous Australian bowler, Clarrie Grimmet. Among the many tips which Clarrie gave was to set up a net behind a 22 yard strip in the back-yard, lay a square of paper or cloth on the spot where the ball should lob; then, armed with a bucket of balls, go there as often as possible and practise tirelessly the lobbing of each ball on target. This Fergus did, and it gave him the skill to control his length and direction, the latter being varied according to the amount of turn that he put on his usual leg breaks or to his use of the occasional "wrong 'un".

After three years' work Fergus turned his thoughts to university study. With the money he had saved plus some help from Aunt Jeanie Tolmie and a bursary from St Andrew's College in Sydney (the last no doubt owing much to his cricket reputation), he too set off for Sydney to study medicine. Like his two elder brothers he graduated in the minimum time.



The author's four elder brothers in the middle garden at "Rose-Bank", Toowoomba, during a Christmas vacation about 1931. The home-comings of the boys who had embarked on medical and law careers were great family events.

The home-comings at vacation time during the years the three boys were studying medicine in Sydney were great events. My mother would start "getting the house in order" a week or more in advance and by the time the great day arrived the floors would be shining and everything else spick and span. There was generally a maid to help her with the work; but if we were without such help at the time she would do it all herself. I, too, felt the excitement; and as though to do honour to the ones of whom we were proud, I generally freshly mowed the front and middle garden lawns. This was no mean feat, for in those days the mowers had no engines and the middle garden was vast; moreover, it contained about a dozen fruit trees which impeded access to the grass under them. The boys always arrived by the Sydney Mail train which at that time came direct from the south, via Wallangarra. My father would meet the train and my mother would remain home, to be at the front gate when the car pulled up.

During the vacations there was always plenty of social activity. Even if any of the boys had a job, they went to dances, bridge parties and pictures at night and played tennis at the week-ends. The big social events of the year were the "Bachelor's Ball" and "The Girls' at Home", the former often being held at Pittsworth on the Darling Downs and preceded by a day-time gymkhana. As each of us reached about 17 or 18 years of age we were invited to these events and there were occasions at tennis parties when Yeates boys seemed to out-number everyone else combined! This sometimes embarrassed us when an invitation came; but if we demurred we were promptly told "not to be silly", or "the more the merrier".

One great advantage of a father, and five boys of very similar build living in the same household was that if there were a sudden "panic" need for a dinner-suit or even tails, something suitable could always be mustered. In fact my present best suit of tails was once my father's; and only a couple of weeks ago one of my own sons borrowed the same suit for a white-tie function. His grandfather Herbert's tail coat fitted him perfectly!

* * *

About the time that Fergus graduated, World War II broke out. He completed his obligatory year of hospital training, then soon afterwards joined the RAAF as a medical officer. Meanwhile, Derick had been to England where in 1938 he gained the coveted surgeon's qualification: Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (FRCS). Jim, too, took the path leading to an FRCS in England and was part-way through those studies when war broke out.

Before very long, Derick, Jim and Bert enlisted for overseas service in the Army or 2nd AIF as it was called. Derick, being a doctor, at once held the rank of Captain; then, because of his surgical training, he was attached to a Casualty Clearing Station (the 2nd/2nd CCS). After Jim gained his FRCS and while he



The author's brother Jim in England, early in World War II. At this stage he held a hospital appointment in London and was studying for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (England).



Captain Derick Yeates (left) and Army Nursing Sisters, all from the 2/2 Casualty Clearing Station, AIF, welcome Derick's brother, Capt J.M. Yeates (right) on the harbour front at Tobruk, North Africa on 7 April 1941. The 9th Bn, of which Jim was medical officer, had just arrived in the "Thurland Castle".

was still in England, a contingent of the AIF arrived in that country. He applied to join the unit and soon found himself a Captain camped on Salisbury Plain and Medical Officer of the 9th Bn, AIF, with the unusual Army number of UK12. (Later this was changed to a more regular Australian number — QX 6440).

Bert enlisted as a private; then, after becoming an NCO and undertaking an officer training course, he gained his commission. His overseas service was at Merauke in New Guinea where he was a platoon commander with the 62nd Infantry Bn, AIF. Fergus, too, spent some time in New Guinea, including on Goodenough Island fringing the Solomon Sea.

Derick's unit went to the Middle East and was despatched to Tobruk, arriving there on 26 January 1941, three days after it had been taken by the Allies. They were constantly bombed by aircraft; but the surgeons' work went on, as they had an underground operating theatre close by the harbour. On 7 April 1941 Jim's Battalion, which had been in the early desert battles including the capture of Giarabub, also arrived in Tobruk — in the crowded troopship "Thurland Castle". The two brothers met and had a great re-union. Jim then moved off to the perimeter of the occupied area with the 9th Bn. About Easter the Germans broke through the allied lines and the military situation looked desperate. However, the defenders finally turned the enemy back — by using all the traditional tactics, plus such unusual ones as hopping onto tanks and putting "Molotov cocktails" down the hatches.

At the end of July 1941 Jim was transferred to the 2/2 CCS as a surgeon and so the two brothers worked side by side for the rest of the siege of Tobruk. Later, many of the troops went on to Java and fell into Japanese hands; but the two separate ships in which Derick and Jim sailed were warned in time to turn back. They had almost reached Batavia when, on 23 February 1942, they were directed to Ceylon and later sent on to Adelaide. In due course both brothers went to New Guinea where Jim did distinguished surgical work under difficult and dangerous conditions in the field. A clear, factual account of this is included in the obituary written by Dr F.H. Mills (33) after Jim's death. The following is an extract:

. . . During 1942-43 he served in the South-West Pacific area with the rank of Major, working as surgeon in a forward surgical team. During the battle of Buna his surgical post was very near the firing line, and casualties received operative treatment literally on the spot. They were then evacuated by air to Port Moresby. The unit was situated in a sago-palm swamp, and water used by the unit was obtained by digging with a spade to a depth of 12 inches. As the battle progressed supplies became scarce, and towards the end of the battle conditions became really primitive. Yeates was operating with bare hands, in shorts without a shirt, and for dressings he boiled up those from previous operations and used them wet. He realised that some sleep was necessary, and worked out the minimum number of hours required and gave orders that he was not to be disturbed during that brief period of rest. His senior medical orderlies had been trained by him in resuscitation and were competent to give infusions without supervision, and so on waking he would find a fresh group of patients all ready for operation. Under these difficult conditions Major Yeates dealt with every type of wound — cerebral, thoracic or abdominal — as it came along. A later follow-up showed that the results of these cases, treated so soon after injury, were better on the whole than those of groups flown out for treatment under better conditions at hospitals in the base area . . .

At the end of the battle Major Yeates was mentioned in despatches for his work. Also his report, written with insight and force, was highly regarded and had some influence on the later conduct of medical operations under such difficult conditions. After being mentioned in despatches once again for surgical work with the 17th Brigade from Wau to Salamaua, James Yeates was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed OIC Surgical Division, 101 Australian General Hospital.

Among Jim's war-time letters home to our mother is one written in pencil immediately after the battle of Buna. The following portions of the letter give a graphic description of conditions:

QX 6440 Major J.M. Yeates
C/- DDMS, HQ, New Guinea Force
7 Jan 1943

My dear Margaret Ann,

This is about the first breathing space I have had since my hurried journey to this forward area with my own surgical team. From the day I arrived the casualties commenced to come along, and now this particular battle is won and I have time to collect my thoughts and record a few impressions on paper.

Altogether I operated on 80 cases — nearly all very serious wounds. My team is quite a small show and we have only the bare skeleton of equipment. In the ME such an idea would have been laughed at. But here everything must go by air, and so the weight factor is of prime importance. Even on leaving the plane, the transport worries are only beginning because there are no real roads and no proper vehicles other than the wonderful American "jeep".

Anyway I was all set up near the front with a decent size tent for my operating "theatre" by Dec. 19, and from that date to yesterday I have been operating all day and often (for very urgent cases) far into the night. The conditions were pretty woeful — rain, mud, black-out, even water leaking on to my op table sometimes. However we carried on and I am glad to say I had some very approving words from the Consulting Surgeon who payed me a flying visit yesterday. [This was Colonel Littlejohn].

He told me practically all my cases had done very well. Incidentally many of them came under Derick's care back at base.

It was fatiguing, often worrying but I have gained some really marvellous experience — easily the best of my surgical career. I found my ability and training often taxed to its utmost — the variety and difficulty of some cases being amazing.

The post-operative conditions were even worse. Instead of trained sisters, warm beds, electric lights, my patients needs must go into tiny tents, with army stretchers lying on the wet ground and often rain dripping through the roof. However the lack of cold weather was a good feature and despite all these troubles the results were in sharp contrast to those wounded who had to go back to base without operation.

I could really write a most interesting book on this remarkable experience. Perhaps I shall.

I shall give you more details when next I come home on leave . . .

. . . The Consulting Surgeon gave me some suggestions and advice, and frequently I sought his opinion on various difficult points. He is a marvellous man to have come right up here (walking the last 6 miles). Not many staff men will do that, but how we appreciate it when they do.

. . . Yesterday, when the battle was well won and all Japs wiped out . . . I paid a visit to the battle field — always a fearfully impressive scene the day after — a scene of destruction and desolation, and wanton wastage of men and material. Now all so terribly calm and serene — and yet with the twisted metal scarcely cooled . . .

I am now very well — perhaps a little fatigued — but above all very happy that on my first real test I have achieved some little success, and certainly saved some lives from the wreck.

Best wishes my dear Margaret to you and Herb and the Aunts for the New Year.

Love from Jim.

* * *

When all five of us boys came safely through the war no one was more thankful than our mother. She had been wonderful through the anxious years, writing cheerful weekly letters to each one of us, passing on what news she could, never mentioning her own worries. Yet the worry of having all her sons away, generally in unknown locations, was with her for much of every day and often through half the night.

In those days mothers were given a silvery badge to wear if their sons or daughters were in overseas units. A bar attached to the lower edge of the badge served as a mounting for little raised stars, the number of which signified the number of family members on active service. Our mother's badge had five such stars, filling up the full length of the bar and she wore that badge every day that we were away. Although proud, she always remained quiet about our war service — grateful that news from the war fronts remained good for her, but mindful of so many others' sadness.

On return to civilian life my brothers quickly settled back into more normal pursuits. Derick ended the war a Lieutenant Colonel, being OC (Surgical) of the 102 Aust General Hospital, Brisbane in 1944-45. He continued doing Repatriation Hospital surgery and consulting after demobilization; but most of his time was devoted to his private surgical practice in Brisbane where he also resumed his pre-war appointment of visiting surgeon to the Royal Brisbane Hospital. He was later appointed senior surgeon. Bert became a solicitor in Toowoomba and played a part in local government, always being elected high up on the list of aldermen in that city when he offered himself as a candidate. Jim went into practice as a surgeon in Sydney, while Fergus specialised in diseases of the eye and started practice in Brisbane. All three medical brothers were attached to teaching hospitals where they were on call for work within their specialties and where they helped in the instruction of medical students. Derick was attached to the Royal Brisbane Hospital, Jim to Sydney Hospital and Fergus to the "Mater" in Brisbane.

Before many years had passed, all five boys were married and 17 children (13 boys and four girls) resulted from the unions, so rendering fairly safe the continuation of our branch of the Yeates "clan".



On return to civilian life after World War II the author and his four brothers soon took up family life. Here the eldest brother, Derick, is holding the first-born of his own family of boys, about Sep 1947.

On 14 Sept 1960 a terrible blow befell our family in the untimely and un-natural death of my surgeon brother Jim of whom we were all so proud. Lengthy police investigations and a Coroner's enquiry, fully reported in the newspapers of the time, established that Jim had been feloniously slain by a person or persons unknown.

Prior to Jim's death and following his discharge from the Army in 1946, he was appointed honorary assistant surgeon to Sydney Hospital and visiting surgeon to out-patients, Repatriation Commission. He held a tutorship in clinical surgery at the University of Sydney and had been secretary of the Sydney Hospitalers. He served for some years on the council of the Medical Benevolent Society.

During the last few years of his life he devoted much time to the study of cancer of the breast. Several technical papers of his on that subject appeared in the medical literature. Largely due to his efforts, a special clinic in this field was established at Sydney Hospital, of which he had charge.

Jim took a pride in keeping fit and healthy himself. He enjoyed golf and skiing, and was a keen surfer. When I visited Sydney he generally tried to find time for us to have a surf and a meal together. At the time of his death he left two children: a boy and a girl aged about ten and eight respectively.

An article headed "Lieut-Col James Macrae Yeates" written by Peter McDig (34) who was evidently a Chaplain in the AIF gives much detail of Jim's army career. It includes the following:

... In every theatre of war graced by the labours of this magnificent surgeon, with his strong, shapely sure hands, his grave, kindly heart and gifted mind, he absolutely gave himself to the task of helping and healing. At Buna, New Guinea, in December 1942, shod with a pair of rubber boots, ... water in kerosene tins, a hurricane lantern for a luminant, he performed a delicate brain operation and toiled on and on until utter exhaustion intervened.

Numerous men in all walks of life who to-day enjoy a reasonable measure of health, remember that his skill played no small part in their restoration ... In post-war days many a man went to his Macquarie Street chambers and was freely treated because he belonged to the blood-bonded brotherhood of the dark war days ... and many a serviceman and many a civilian say of Dr James Macrae Yeates, "I was sick and he helped me".

Jim, it was at your suggestion that we saluted our father Herbert as we stood in uniform beside the grave at his funeral. Now we salute you.



Lt-Col James Macrae Yeates, twice mentioned in despatches in World War II.

CHAPTER 7

UNDERGRAD DAYS

Like all my brothers, I too went through university; but my field of study, agriculture, was very different from theirs.

When I started out on the university trail I had no idea that I would later embark on a research career, become a university teacher and end up as Professor of Livestock Husbandry at the University of New England. Yet that is what happened; and it is against that background that in the next several chapters I shall re-traverse the trail recalling some of the main incidents and the interruption caused by World War II.

The question of what motivates a person to pursue some particular calling or career is not always easy to determine. But it can be very important, as I now know very well through having discussed their futures with so many of my own students and indeed with my own children. Many students arrive at the university with no clear goal, nor even sometimes a knowledge of why they are at the university at all.

The absence of a defined goal tends these days to be ascribed to "the difficult times", scarcity of jobs for the young, the youth of to-day being "unsettled" and so on. This is perhaps understandable in an age of environmental problems, political unrest, lessened parental control, over-free use of alcohol and possibly other drugs. However, my own view is that the uncertainties of the young are natural enough and no greater now than they ever were.

For me, the choice on leaving school seemed to be either to enter my father's stock and station agency in Toowoomba or to attend the university. I think the precedent set by my older brothers was a telling factor in my deciding to go to university. All the other boys had either already graduated or were currently studying for university degrees — three in medicine and one in arts-law.

My 1935 matriculation results were quite modest so that my choice of faculties at the University of Queensland was limited to four: science, commerce, dentistry and agriculture. On first learning of these entry possibilities I was immediately attracted by the idea of Agricultural Science. Here was a pathway to a university degree (so maintaining the current family tradition); but also an avenue along which I could satisfy and perhaps cultivate what to me as a boy had always been a deep interest in and love of the land — particularly the pastoral industry. Further, I sensed that the idea pleased my father. He was probably always a little disappointed that none of the boys wished to enter his business on anything more than a temporary basis. Although he was proud of the others' achievements I think he specially liked this new idea of a son studying agricultural science, i.e. if there were to be no direct follower in his business. He, after all, had grown up on the land, and could well appreciate my own feelings towards it. I feel sure my inclinations were a reflection of his own early family background.

Certainly, however, in opting for Agricultural Science, I had no notion of a future academic career. My thinking at the time was that by gaining a degree in Ag Science I could learn much about the land, gain the credentials for land-industry employment and be all the better placed to run a property of my own if one day this became a financially realistic possibility.

The question of financing a fifth son embarking on university study away from home had to be faced. My father had only just weathered the great depression of the early 1930's and seeing Derick and Jim through their medical courses at Sydney University had been a great strain on family resources.

The break came for me when the Principal of Emmanuel College in Brisbane, the Rev Mervyn Henderson, wrote encouraging me to go to university and to be a resident member of Emmanuel. He said that in view of our financial position the College was agreeable to hold the payment of all my residence fees in abeyance until after my graduation when I could commence making re-payments. He said that there was already a precedent for this and the College had never regretted helping that person.

This was a wonderful offer for which I have always been deeply grateful. It was certainly the turning point in allowing me to enrol at university, for my father then said he would be able to manage the tuition fees. I have no doubt that the esteem in which my parents and brothers were held had much to do with Mervyn Henderson's offer. Derick and Jim had both completed their first year of university study in Brisbane and lived at Emmanuel, before having to go to Sydney (as was necessary in those days) to complete a medical degree, while Bert was currently a senior resident member of the College. Moreover my father was then, and had been for very many years, a committee-man in Toowoomba of the Presbyterian Church — the church which administered Emmanuel College. My own school background may also have helped, for I had been senior prefect, and captain of both rugby football and cricket. In mentioning these credentials of my own, however, it should be stated that I was 19 years old in my final year at school — a good deal older than the average pupil — and that I probably would not have attained these positions had I progressed straight through school.

My longer than usual stay at Toowoomba Grammar was due partly to earlier health problems and partly to the influence of the school's famous headmaster, G.P. Barbour, who held a strong belief in deriving all one could from school before charting one's life course. My own experience has tended to make me agree with Barbour in this. Indeed I think that an extra or repeat final year at school, in which emphasis is placed on service, is probably more useful in terms of maturing a boy and preparing him for

university life than undertaking a one-year job "outside". While saying this, however, I also support the direct passage on to university of any student who has earned entry and who is clear in mind about what he wants to pursue there.

On the question of determining eligibility for university study, I must say that the method now adopted by the University of New England appeals to me greatly. There, approximately half the places are allocated on the basis of headmasters' reports and the rest by mark obtained at the NSW Higher School Certificate (or its equivalent elsewhere). This gives students two chances, one of which (the headmaster's report) provides for some element of subjective assessment while the other (HSC) is (1979) based solely on the marks achieved in one examination. Our experience at New England was that students admitted by headmasters' reports had a marginally higher success rate at university than those admitted solely by examination. This suggests that school teachers' assessments of qualities such as general attitude, motivation, determination, stability, responsibility and socially acceptable behaviour do have value. If a school abused this system of admission by being too liberal it would quickly be revealed; on the other hand if occasional students were penalised, for example by teachers being biased against them, opportunity would still remain to gain entry by objective test at the public examination.

I must say that, in my own case, i.e. only moderate scholastic success at school, yet, I believe, at least some of the qualities mentioned above, I made good progress at university. This no doubt influences my approval of allowing entry by headmaster's report as well as by public examination.

The matter of financing university study should also receive mention. There were difficulties for many students in my time in meeting the costs of a university education. For the whole of Queensland, only the top 18 in the Senior Public Examination, plus two from the Agricultural College at Gatton, received scholarships. Students nowadays don't have to pay tuition fees and may, subject to a means test, qualify for substantial living allowances — indeed enough to subsist on when supplemented by even modest vacation earnings, or by parents.

This is a liberal scheme which removes any suggestion of university education being a preserve of the wealthy. However, it represents quite a burden on the tax payers and so requires strict oversight. My own view is that the charge on tax payers is a worthwhile investment in the case of well-motivated, serious-minded students who succeed. However, there are unfortunately a great many in first year who abuse their privilege and, although there is a mechanism for weeding them out after a certain number of failures, this takes time. Perhaps students should first earn the privilege of free tertiary allowances by succeeding in first year under a loans scheme? Certainly for those students who fail the means test but for some acceptable reason are nevertheless hard up (and there are many such), I think loan money should be available — on the understanding, as it was for me, that repayment would be made following graduation and the start of employment. Oddly enough, present-day students (or certainly the more radical ones) object to any suggestion of loan money — evidently expecting that a benevolent society should continue paying more and more for them, with little regard for their own performance or commitment to study.

I can vouch for the fact that my commitment to Emmanuel College and to my parents reinforced my own desire to succeed. The repayment details of my Emmanuel College loan are made clear in a letter from Mervyn Henderson (portion of which follows) and from a final receipt.

Emmanuel College,
Wickham Terrace,
Brisbane, B 18
March 4th 1940

Dear Neil,

I received your letter and cheque . . . You may like to know how the account now stands . . . As we agreed to allow you £15 off the full fees of £63 a year, i.e. £48, and as it meant some years before payments would be made, your father asked me to add interest; under the circumstances, I agreed. So this is how it goes:

1936 = £ 48

1937 = £48 + £48 + £2 (interest) = £98

1938 = £98 + £4 (interest) = £102 less £20 paid = £82

1939 = £82 + £48 + £4 (interest) = £134 less £20 paid = £114

1940 = £114 + only £3 interest = £117.

Your last cheque reduces this to £107.

It will be a long slog to get this off, but you have done so extremely well in your course that I think you'll agree that it has been worthwhile. At anyrate, I think it has been.

I am very glad that you like your job and trust that something better will turn up in due course.

Best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
[Signed] Mervyn Henderson.

Summarising now, it can be said that I was highly motivated towards the study of Agricultural Science, that I knew I had a family tradition to uphold, that I was aware of the sacrifice my parents and others were making for me and that I felt a responsibility to do my best to succeed.

My parents bought me a new suitcase and two grey blankets, and I set off, in March 1936, with a light heart and quite a deal of excitement, to reside at Emmanuel College and become a "fresher" in the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Queensland. The College was situated in Wickham Terrace and the University occupied the grounds of old Government House, near the Botanic Gardens.

* * *

After settling in at the university I soon found that I had a very full time-table. I had five subjects which involved lectures practically every morning from Monday to Friday and laboratory classes four afternoons a week. Saturday morning was also taken up for me, with technical drawing (an alternative to maths) in the Engineering Department. Wednesday afternoons however were free for students of all faculties, this being a concession to sport.



Old Government House, near the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, was the focal point of the University of Qld during the author's undergraduate years. The ground floor on the side nearest the camera served as Arts Faculty lecture rooms but could be opened up to form a ball-room for Freshers' Welcomes and similar official dances.

For a time I participated in sport at the university level; but I soon found it to be too demanding. Practice sessions on distant grounds after work made me late back to College for dinner and also sometimes disinclined for study at night. So somewhat reluctantly I decided to confine my cricket and football to College games. The inter-college matches were played on Wednesday afternoons and practice sessions were held near the College at convenient times. In addition, I played occasional games of social tennis, and I commenced what became a life-long habit for me: running for relaxation and to keep fit.

I am sure I made a good compromise decision over sport. I obtained ample physical exercise and savoured fully the competitive spirit of the inter-college games, without prejudicing my study. I also like to feel now that I contributed something through sport to the College which was then doing so much for me. Each year I was at the College I played in the cricket and football teams, and in my final year I was captain of the rugby XV. I also had the pleasure of playing in the cricket XI of which my brother, Bert, was captain.

Quite soon after entering College I had the good fortune to make close friendships with a small group of colleagues — fellows whose general outlook, conduct and liking for sport were similar to mine but whose scholastic records at school were mostly superior to mine. We remained close friends right through our undergraduate days and I am quite sure that this association was of tremendous benefit to me. The influence of one's friends at university, especially their attitude to study, can play a big part in success or failure.

My experience in this matter of close undergraduate friendships convinced me after I graduated of its very great importance. And, in looking back still later, following a long period at the University of New England, my conviction has been reinforced. For apart from noting the advantages, I have seen promising students set back, sometimes irreparably, by falling in with inappropriate or poorly motivated friends.

The charge could be made that having a small group of special friends in a residential college leads to undesirable cliquishness. This certainly happens sometimes; but it need not and it should not happen. Almost everyone has a few close friends, but an obligation remains to participate in college affairs and certainly to know and to be on good terms with as many other residents as possible. This is largely a mat-



Emmanuel College cricket team, probably 1937, captained by the author's brother Bert, seated second from left, next to Principal Mervyn Henderson, MA (Cantab). The author is standing at middle rear.



Emmanuel College rugby union team 1939. The author, who was captain, is in the front row, third from left.

ter of consideration for one's fellows and an extension of it is seen among those who go out of their way to be pleasant to new students who appear to be disadvantaged, e.g. specially shy persons or perhaps overseas students who are unfamiliar with our ways.

Once we settled into the routine of first year study I really enjoyed the work and the challenge it provided. It was the custom for the group to which I belonged to keep abreast of all lectures by going through them at night. Then, in spare time, sometimes even while walking to and from the university, we would discuss obscure or contentious points. This study pattern gave me a feeling of confidence.

So often, in later years as a teacher, I have found that students defer any really serious study of their lectures until the exams are nearly upon them. Then they feel overwhelmed by a vast mass of material which they barely understand. It is no wonder that they fear the examinations and, except for a few brilliant students, may fare badly.

Present-day entrants are warned during orientation week about the need for continuous serious study; but the facts are that about half of them fail in at least some of their exams, and it is my belief that this is mostly a consequence of their too casual study approach. Just why they are so casual is hard to say for certain, but we shall return to this in a later chapter.

On the subject of alcohol consumption it is interesting now to recall that in my own undergrad days any idea of frequent, regular drinking just didn't enter our heads. Alcohol was not permitted in the College, and as far as I can recall, this restriction was accepted by all students as perfectly natural. At faculty dinners or dances some beer would be available, but little drinking went on, and drunkenness was rare.

How different is the situation to-day! During the students' first days at university, drinks are liberally provided at welcome parties — all in the name of hospitality and "orientation". At some of these gatherings, whether organised by staff or students, it is hard to find any non-alcoholic drink at all.

This very great change in attitude towards alcohol in the 40 years of my university experience is obviously a reflection of the change in our society as a whole. Since most parents and university staff members themselves consume alcohol it would be irrational and hypocritical to prohibit its use by young adults under their supervision. Accordingly no such prohibition is attempted. Students are merely asked to "conduct themselves in such a manner as not to disturb others". Unfortunately a good deal of disturbance, damage to property and unpleasantness do sometimes occur.

The university drinking problem is quite serious mainly among a minor proportion of the male students; but it is no worse than in the outside community, and, in my opinion, its solution lies not so much in attempting to influence school leavers as on the example set by their elders.

* * *

When the exams approached at the end of my first year I felt reasonably confident. I had prepared for them thoroughly and, in the event, success came my way. I shall never forget the pleasure with which I learned that I had passed all my subjects quite well and in fact gained a merit (the highest category of pass) in Biology. I believe there were only about five merits awarded in Biology, in a class of something like 120. The overall result was a decided improvement on my latter-year academic school performances and a signal to me that I was on the right track with my studies. I knew, too, how pleased my parents were with the result and this counted much with me.

* * *

There was little time, however, for me to dwell on the events of the year which had just passed. Undergraduates in the Agriculture Faculty were required to gain practical experience during the long vacations, and my introduction to this came quicker than I expected. I had arranged to work over the Christmas period on a grazing and grain growing property of about 5000 acres near Oakey on the Darling Downs. While my exams were in progress I received a telegram from the property owners to say that the wheat harvest was in full swing, that their tractor driver had broken his leg and that I was to come as soon as possible.

I obeyed this instruction and after my first day's work, staggered into bed a very tired fellow. The day had started at 5 am with milking some house cows. Then followed separating the cream, feeding calves, washing up in the dairy, and, when the dew had dried from the wheat fields, helping with the harvest until all daylight had gone.

As the days and weeks went by, and with harvest over, the work became more varied. I scuffled the maize, ploughed seemingly endless paddocks of fallow, mustered and dipped sheep, assisted at lamb marking, hoed Bathurst burrs and even helped in the homestead garden to name but a few of the jobs.

The two brothers who ran the property were big, strong, cheerful fellows — but always on the alert to take a rise out of me, in a friendly way, because I was from university "and so not likely to be practical". I, on the other hand, was determined to work well, and, above all, not show any trace of weariness or weakness when the going became a little tough — e.g. during a succession of long, hot days hoeing burr.



The author milking one of the house cows on a Darling Downs sheep and grain property near Oakey, Christmas 1936. Gaining practical land experience during vacation (in this instance after completing first year) was a requirement in the Faculty of Agriculture, Univ of Qld.

In a way, I think I even relished the physically testing work and regarded it as a necessary balancing of my university life which, apart from my sport and running, was rather sedentary.

I was grateful to be on such a splendid property, to be treated as one of the family and to be gaining experience all the time. I also felt that I was of genuine help to the owners. Being able to ride horses and drive motor vehicles (things with which my father had assisted me in much earlier years) bolstered my morale, and no doubt made me more useful.

The question of pay had never arisen, so I did not expect any. I must admit, however, that as time went by and I sensed my hosts' satisfaction with my performance, I cherished hopes that I would receive something. In fact I was not paid and this became part of my "practical experience". In later years, when in charge of students' vacation work at the University of New England, I always did my best to encourage property owners or managers to pay something for a job well done, and above all to come to some understanding early in the proceedings. By the same token, however, I pointed out to students that gaining experience was the purpose of the exercise — not making money; also, that their accommodation and keep, especially if living as one of the family, was a big factor.

Once in later years at New England, during my supervisory role of students' practical experience, one student rang me from central-western NSW. He was very dejected because a week had gone by and he was still engaged on chipping weeds along the rows of some crop. He feared that this would continue, and was either seeking my advice or hoping that I might intervene on his behalf. On learning that he was being paid award wages I advised him to get on with the work and regard the episode as part of his experience. I reminded him that plenty of people have to do routine jobs most of their lives, and that if ever he had to be in charge of field workers he would be a better boss from having sampled a little of their kind of work himself. As I made this hasty judgment over the phone, my thoughts flew back 30 years to my hoeing experience for no pay; but I said nothing of that to the student who incidentally stayed in the job for the full time and was eventually given more varied work. Perhaps his employers (it was a large company property) were "trying him out"?

In later years I did my long-vacation practical experience training at Gatton College — the first time with free board and lodging but no pay, the next time on pay, working with the College plant breeder. Gatton always welcomed university students over the long vacation, when the College's own student work force was depleted. And university students in turn liked going there, partly because the work was varied and partly because of the sporting, social and recreational opportunities offering, especially if the visiting students included a good contingent from Sydney University.

In those days at Gatton College any group of university students wishing to travel the five or six miles into Gatton township at night, generally to go to the cinema, could apply for permission to borrow a drag. This was a horse-drawn buggy, the size of vehicle chosen being determined by the number of

passengers. If the numbers were sufficient a four-horse unit would be harnessed and it was something to remember, rumbling off to the pictures in that fashion, with perhaps 10 or 12 colleagues — including generally a few women students. On reaching Gatton township it was the custom to unharness the horses in the back yard of the hotel and leave them tied up there until required for the return journey. A standard prank, however, was for another group of students to remove the horses while the film was in progress. Well do I remember hunting with my fellow travellers for our horses one night, and eventually finding them, long after mid-night, tied up near a creek about half-a-mile away.

In looking back on my vacation practical training I think of it in a wholly favourable way. Not only did I gain much valuable experience, but the fact of doing the out-door work contributed strongly to the agricultural ethos which I am sure counted a great deal with me at that time. I am not surprised that rural type faculties in all the universities have maintained the tradition of this requirement, nor that students by and large have continued to accept it without, to my knowledge, any serious dissent.



The author working on a mapping project for Agricultural Geology (2nd year Ag Science) in the Emmanuel College library, July 1937.



At the end of second year Ag Science in 1937, and as a Christmas break from practical work at Gatton College, the author (centre) takes a camping holiday with brothers Bert (left) and Fergus. The car, loaned by our father, is an Austin seven.

The second, third and fourth years of my Bachelor's degree course proceeded smoothly. After surmounting the hurdle of first year I had greater confidence. This in itself tended to make the work more enjoyable, while the courses themselves were more obviously relevant to agriculture.

In making this last observation, however, I hasten to add that at no time did I, or, I think, any of my close colleagues, ever grumble about the requirement to pass first year pure science subjects. Many present-day students in rural faculties express discontent over this. After hearing all sides to the argument, my present view is that, for a future agricultural scientist, a thorough grounding in biology and

chemistry is absolutely essential, a good working knowledge of biometry and geology is necessary and that at least some physics is required. I think that some of the physics and some of the non-biometrical maths tend to be over-emphasised in the curriculum of some rural faculties—and that depth in these two areas should be available, as optional additions, to those students who have special interest in them.

In my day it was the custom for the whole of third year of study in the ag science faculty to be undertaken at Gatton College, where special facilities existed in areas such as dairying, dairy technology, horticulture, plant breeding and of course all aspects of plant and animal field work. While at the college, further opportunities for practical farming experience were also provided. I even remember going on a timber camp of several days' duration, with a practising "woodsman" rather than an academic in charge! On that camp we felled selected trees and tried our hand at splitting fence posts and rails, as well as using the adze and broad axe. We were also taken on numerous excursions, a notable one being along the Queensland coast as far north as Cairns, to study the sugar industry. P.J. Skerman was in charge of this side of our work at the time, and he was a man with a remarkable knowledge of agriculture in the broadest sense. As a Qld Govt scientist he later went on to do outstanding work in defining the agro-geography of the Channel Country of S-W Queensland and promoting the growing of grain sorghum in the central highlands of Queensland.

In 1938, during my third year, my father was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as member for East Toowoomba. We, his wife and sons, all felt happy for him and no little pride ourselves in what the electorate had done. After the strain of the election campaign my father and mother took a few days' holiday at Tewantin which is on the Noosa River, just north of Brisbane. I was able to join them and one day I hired a small motor boat to take my mother fishing. We proceeded down towards the mouth of the river and anchored in a curve not far from the unpredictable Noosa bar, where the river joins the open sea.

I was quite inexperienced, and as the tide had started to run out very strongly I was in the predicament of having to start the engine and get in the anchor, which by then was only just holding, on my own. I knew that my mother would not have been able to pull the anchor in, and that if we lost any ground in the operation we would very quickly be swept towards the bar. My mother could not swim, and my chances of saving her that day would have been slim.

In the event, I got the boat away safely and I never admitted to her my concern at the time; but I know to this day that the situation was dangerous. What a tragedy there might have been at that time of quiet family celebration! In later years, during my service in the Navy in World War II, I had my share of close calls but I am most thankful of all that the one involving my mother near Noosa bar had a happy ending.

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At the end of the following year, just after war was declared, I sat my final examinations and was elated with the results: straight through, with a merit in all but one of my subjects. This was the best result I had achieved in my four years of study, and, being final year, it was specially important. I had majored in Animal Nutrition and was eligible to sit the honours examinations which in those days were held several months later than the final year pass exams.

I duly sat for the honours papers and shortly afterwards received my degree, with first class honours. Three of my close friends also got "firsts" and one of them, G.L. Wilson, became Rhodes Scholar. Though I did not know at the time, I was later to be awarded the Robert Philp Research Scholarship and I am sure that was another turning point in my career.

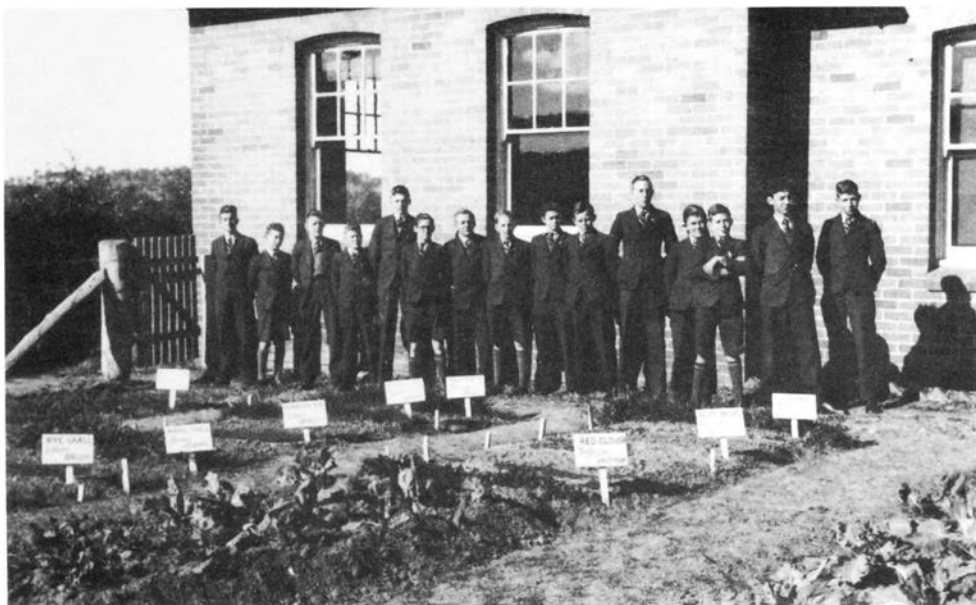
CHAPTER 8

FIRST JOBS

Once I knew that I had passed my finals but would be sitting for the honours exams in several months time, I was anxious to secure a job. This would at once make me financially independent of my parents, and hopefully enable me to start paying off my debt to Emmanuel College. I believed that I would be able to do enough study for the exams in my spare time.

Never in our family did the question of paying our parents for our keep arise, and I am glad that it did not. I am sure we all, (parents and children alike), felt that home was a place where one was welcome—so long as an agreed plan was being followed, and that each one was doing his best. This unspoken tradition was carried on a generation later with my own children, when certainly it would have distressed my wife and me had our children ever wanted to pay us for being at home.

About Christmas time in 1939 the position of Agriculture master at The Armidale School (TAS) — a GPS boys' day and boarding school on the Northern Tablelands of NSW — was advertised. I applied for the post and was appointed; so, from the beginning of February 1940 I took up my first position — as a school teacher. The trip from Toowoomba to Armidale was made by rail, changing trains at the Qld-NSW border. I arrived on Armidale platform at some unearthly hour (2 or 3 am) but was met by a cheerful Headmaster, Mr G.A. Fisher, who, like myself, was new to Armidale. He had only recently been appointed Head and had come from a well-known Sydney school.



Fourth form boys beside their seed plots, outside the Ag Science building, The Armidale School, NSW, early 1940. Their instructor was the author, then in his first job.

My recent training in agricultural science, plus my experience in earlier years as senior prefect at Toowoomba Grammar, made the job quite straight forward and I settled in quickly. As I had hoped, I was able to find spare time for my own study and I was also able to make small monthly payments to Emmanuel College after each pay day.

In due course I sat for my honours examination, not at the University of Queensland but in Armidale. The University had arranged for the papers to be sent to the Shire Clerk in Armidale, who was to supervise my examination. When I arrived for the first paper he broke the seal, read all the instructions aloud and then, before allowing me to start writing, asked me to turn out all my pockets for a search! This completed, he then left me to myself. Unfortunately, however, at frequent intervals the phone on the desk at which I was writing would ring and disturb me. Rather than suffer its long ringing, I picked up the hand piece on each occasion and, with a few curt words about being "only a visitor" and that "nobody else was around," I quickly replaced the receiver. I often wondered how seriously this damaged the Shire's public relations!

As indicated earlier, I obtained first class honours — a result far beyond my earlier dreams.

With all my exams over, and the pressure off, I joined with another TAS master in going to a series of late-afternoon lectures in Science German at the then University College, Armidale. Little did I realise that I would be back and on the staff of that institution in years to come, after it became the University of New England and had expanded almost out of recognition. In 1940, practically all that existed was the original old homestead of "Boooloominbah," former home of the White family, which is now classified by the National Trust and serves as the administration building at the centre of a far greater complex. The history of the University from the time of its first establishment as a College of Sydney University, the events which led up to that, and its eventual autonomy, are fully described in a book by D.H. Drummond, "A University is Born".

TAS is a school which has always set great store by encouraging its students to participate in extra-curricular activities, including sport. The masters play an important role in this, and my contribution was to assist a group of juniors at cricket and to share with G.A. Fisher the coaching of the first and second rugby XV's. Mr Fisher had been a very fine footballer himself — certainly gaining a "Blue" and, I think, captaining the University of Qld XV in his undergrad days.

Soon after my exam results were known I received a letter from the University of Queensland which marked a turning point in my career. It was written by H.J.G. Hines, (Head of the then sub-Department of Biochemistry in the Sir William Macgregor School of Physiology) — the man who had been in charge of my Animal Nutrition specialization in fourth year.

The letter invited me to apply for the Robert Philp research scholarship, with a view to working in the Physiology Department on the physiology of domestic animals in relation to climate. Subject to my applying and being awarded the scholarship, which was for one year and worth about £120, the proposal was that another £180 would be contributed by CSIR, making a salary of £300 available for the year 1940-41. Approval for this latter grant had been obtained by Professor D.H.K. Lee, head of the Department of Physiology.

Coming as a complete surprise, this letter was a tremendous boost to my morale (though the latter was by no means low). It showed that I was held in high regard by the department and that my credentials were such as to make the scholarship award likely. I realised that a research position of this type would be an important step towards an academic career; this appealed to me and I lost no time in applying.

In due course I learned that my application had been successful — that the Faculty of Agriculture had indeed awarded me the Robert Philp scholarship, and that I would be joining the Physiology Department.

It then became necessary to tell the Headmaster of TAS that I would be resigning and I was thankful that, at the time I accepted the TAS post, I had made it clear that I might not stay long. I must have guessed, or hoped, before going to TAS that my future probably lay in the pursuit of professional agricultural science.

I was able to give ample notice of my departure which, it was agreed, would be at the mid-winter break, (the school year at that time comprising four terms). Mr Fisher was very understanding about the matter and, when the time came for me to leave, he said he was sorry I was going and that in his opinion I had the makings of a good school master.

In the closing weeks of my stay at TAS another event occurred which turned out to have a great significance in my life. It was a chance meeting with Professor Robert Dickie Watt, the Professor of Agriculture at the University of Sydney. I took a class of TAS boys to a field day at Glen Innes, and during a bus ride to see various demonstrations I sat next to the Professor who had come up from Sydney for the occasion. It was our first meeting and we got on famously, but neither of us then knew that I was later to marry his only daughter, Marnie, nor did I even know then that he had a daughter!

The fact that TAS was and still is an independent school for boys, comprised mainly of boarders, deserves comment. Anything to do with non-state education is controversial nowadays, whereas when I went to TAS as a master 40 years ago such matters rarely received mention and certainly generated no heat.

My own ideas on secondary level education are clear and quite simple. First of all, to accommodate a broad range of public preferences, variety in the types of schooling available is, in my opinion, desirable. Besides allowing choice, this has the advantage of keeping each system efficient through competition.

Second, on the question of whether schools "should" or "should not" be co-ed, again I say that by having both types, public preferences can better be met. For myself, I am completely neutral in the matter. I liked my own school of Toowoomba Grammar which was just for boys; but I am sure that if it had happened to be co-ed I should still have gone there and I should have liked it just as much. One of my own sons who went right through TAS and then had two terms on an exchange studentship at Gordonstoun in Scotland, which is now co-ed, likes both systems. I think that whether or not an independent

school "goes co-ed" is best decided by that school's council in the light of parents' wishes, school numbers, finance, other schooling opportunities in the locality, and so on.

Third, on the question of boarding, it seems obvious to me that the opportunity for pupils to reside under proper supervision away from home is an absolute necessity for some (e.g. rural) families, and very helpful for others (e.g. those with working mothers). Any suggestion that, by catering for boarders, a school should be given the tag "elitist" or "snobbish" is preposterous to me — provided those terms are not justified for other reasons.

At anyrate, when the day came for me to leave TAS, I did so with appreciation for what it had done for me and with regret that I had to pull out before doing a really worthwhile job. It perhaps says much for my opinion of the school that, when I returned to Armidale a good many years later, with a family which finally included three boys, they all attended TAS. Over the whole period of my association with the school I have been impressed by the boys' bearing and gentlemanly behaviour, combined with some special stamp of ruggedness, in the best Australian tradition. I would back a bunch of TAS boys against most comers when the going was tough and I ascribe these special qualities in the boys to the school's accent on total education as opposed to just "swot". Each boy is appreciated for the talent he possesses, wherever it may lie and is encouraged to develop it seriously.



The Armidale School (TAS), Armidale, NSW. (Courtesy Central Photographic Lab. UNE).

When I arrived at the Physiology Department, which in those days was in William St, Brisbane, immediately opposite the old lodge of Queensland's Parliament House, the job was described to me. First I was to study the heat tolerance of domestic fowls, using the special high temperature chamber which formed part of the department's facilities; then I was to test various types of building materials and designs for poultry houses; and, finally, I was to recommend the best strategies for safeguarding poultry in hot weather.

The need for this work had been precipitated by an unprecedented heat wave which struck Brisbane at the end of 1939. For 10 consecutive days the temperature passed the century Fahrenheit mark and on at least one day it reached 110°F. Whereas temperatures such as these are commonplace and relatively innocuous in the dry inland, they caused great stress (and even death to some humans) when combined with the humidity of the more coastal atmosphere of Brisbane.

Needless to say I was pleased with the prospect of this work: it was new, challenging, and a happy blend of fundamental physiology with practical agriculture.

After acquiring suitable experimental hens, Professor Lee said that I had better have a trial "run" in the hot room and this was arranged for the next day. He said there was no need for me to turn on the hot room switches: the lady who came in early to do the cleaning would do so at about 4.30 am and all should be ready for me to start at about 8.30 am. This I did, and I was hard at work — taking rectal temperatures, heart rates and breathing rates — when the Prof came down at about 10 o'clock to see how I was progressing. In later years, wherever I have run into him in various parts of the world, he has always recalled the story of what he saw that morning!

I hadn't been told at what temperature to run the hot room, and in my absorption with other matters I

had paid no attention to that. The room temperature had continued to climb and was discovered to be 120°F when Prof Lee appeared. He claims that the sweat was pouring off me, that I was red in the face and that I merely looked up and said, "Gee, it's pretty warm in here". I was then shown how to set the automatic wet and dry bulb controls, and I never again failed to check room conditions at frequent regular intervals when running hot room experiments. At anyrate, on that first day in the hot room I gained a wholesome respect for my own heat tolerance, and decided that I'd be able to give the fowls a run for their money in the months ahead!

I soon settled into the work which was all the more interesting because others, who became close colleagues, were conducting trials with a host of other species including marsupials, echidnas and even snakes.

One day Professor Lee brought a little boy down from the General Hospital to the hot room. The little fellow had a skin ailment and a history of severe discomfort during the summer months. Two or three of his brothers and sisters were said to be similarly afflicted, and Prof Lee, who had been consulted, suspected some sort of inherited sweat gland deficiency. This indeed proved to be so: whereas our skin would be glistening and cool in the hot room, his was dry and hot. And whereas we could maintain normal body temperature by virtue of our skin surface evaporation, he could not and had to be taken from the hot room with a high temperature after quite short exposures.

My own results were quite clear cut, and besides adding to the knowledge of heat regulation in the fowl, they allowed useful recommendations to be made to the poultry industry. Two joint publications in scientific journals arose from the work. Overall, therefore, the outcome was entirely satisfactory for a single year's work. Often in later years I was to smile when I thought of this, for it rather belies the sometimes quoted students' impression of research as being "like reproduction in the elephant: much trumpeting in high places and no results for two years"!

Briefly, the work showed that 80°F was the air temperature at which reaction of the fowls to heat first became discernible; that they could not withstand 100°F for several hours unless relative humidity was below 75%; and that a body temperature of 113°F represented the birds' upper limit of safety. At that body temperature prostration was imminent. Simple immersion in cold water proved to be the most effective way of reviving a bird on the verge of heat prostration. At the practical level, it was found that White Leghorns were more heat tolerant than Australorps; that fine water sprays, internally located in poultry houses, offered the best protection against heat prostration — especially if air movement could be encouraged; and that if the air temperature had climbed above 80°F by 9 am, farmers should expect trouble later in the day, and hence make early preparations to combat it.

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In the second half of my year in the Physiology Department I decided to "join up" as enlisting in the armed services was called. I also decided to apply for the University of Queensland's Walter and Eliza Hall Travelling Fellowship, believing that, if I were successful, I would probably be allowed to defer actual tenure until after the war.

I forget the order in which I acted on these two matters, but I think joining up came first. At anyrate I decided to apply for the Navy. Sometimes, later, I wondered if long hours in the hot room had turned my thoughts to the cool blue sea — but in fact I believe I had a genuine liking (later proved correct) for what I imagined the service to be.

Every few months the Navy selected twelve new recruits from round Australia, many of whom were graduates from science-based faculties, to train as sea-going officers with special accent on anti-submarine warfare. I decided to apply for entry under this scheme, as I was in the required age bracket and had, I believed, at least some of the desired qualifications, including a knowledge of physics.

I was summoned, with others from Queensland, to attend at Brisbane Naval Depot for tests and to be interviewed by a Selection Board of three senior officers.

The medical examination, with emphasis on eye-sight and hearing, seemed favourable. Then came a whole series of psychological tests — such as assessing the speed with which one could read the time, by looking in a mirror, from a clock held up behind one's back. Finally came the interview, and, after much earlier questioning, I was asked if I had had any boating experience. Yes, I replied, I had been a fairly regular crew member of a sailing boat which I named; that experience was gained on Moreton Bay at week-ends. What about off-shore boating, where compass steering would be necessary. I was asked, Yes, I again replied truthfully, I had been to Barrier Reef islands, well out of sight of land. I saw no reason to add that on the latter occasions I was a paying passenger on a motor launch. After all, I had taken an interest in the navigation and I had stood alongside the skipper watching the course and asking questions!

I sensed that my interview had proceeded well, so I was not altogether surprised to be informed, in due course, that I had been selected for training and, on a date soon to be notified, I would commence duty as a temporary acting sub-lieutenant on probation! I felt just as one does when on the threshold of some big new adventure.

I was also summoned to an interview for the Travelling Fellowship. This proved to be before a formidable group of Professors. I recognised some of those present as Heads of Departments in which I had taken courses as an undergrad, and, in retrospect, I imagine the group was a committee of the Professorial Board, with expertise in the fields covered by applicants being interviewed.

After the interview I felt that the clear cut outcome to my present research might help me; however, I was not too hopeful, for the Hall Fellowship is open to recent graduates in all faculties, and, to enable the holder to have two years of study, it is only awarded in alternate years. In addition, a good friend of mine who had a fine undergraduate record was also interviewed and I knew that he would be a strong contender. I never learnt how many others applied or were interviewed; but the award went to me and I was both surprised and elated.

One worrying duty for me was to tell Professor Lee that I would be leaving the Physiology Department to join the Navy. Although I would be completing the one year of my original appointment in his department, I expected some hostility, as he had originally gone to considerable trouble to secure my exemption from military service. I still have the form he obtained, stating that I was in a reserved occupation. Prof Lee was a Major in the Army Medical Corps and he exercised considerable influence in man-power control. He was indeed annoyed with me at the time, and I can understand this. After a year's "apprenticeship" I had become reasonably useful and I imagine he had funds to support my work for a further period. However, he did not try to prevent my going, as I feared he might at one stage, and, when the time came for me to leave, we parted on good terms.

I requested the University of Queensland to defer my Travelling Fellowship until after my return from war service. This was just a formality, for overseas travel to study would have been quite inappropriate, if not disallowed altogether, at that time. My request was immediately approved.

In mid 1941, then, the way was quite clear for me to start my Naval training, and I can recall my sense of relief. I had thought about the war a great deal, especially during the previous six months. There was no sign of a conclusion to it, as I had earlier thought there might be, and my own honest opinion was that to call my work with the fowls "essential", required too much stretch of the imagination.

As things turned out, I was always, and still am, convinced that I made the right decision about joining up. Apart altogether from arguments involving patriotism etc, which I shall leave unstated, I found that the complete change away from university research and from the academic environment gave me a better perspective of the real world. I came to realise how wrapped up in my own little affairs I had become. I am sure that recognition of this parochialism or egoism (which, I am afraid, is common among academics) made me more aware and appreciative in future years of what others in the community do.



"Devoncourt", Langside Rd, Hamilton, Brisbane, where the author lived with two brothers prior to all three joining the armed services in World War II.

During the second half of my year at the Physiology Department, I shared living accommodation with two of my brothers, Bert and Fergus. Finding ourselves all located in Brisbane and all single, we pooled resources and rented the lower floor of the gracious old home, "Devoncourt" in Langside Road, Hamilton. We had sole use of a superb grass tennis court, and for good measure we employed a resident house-keeper. Being relieved of household chores we devoted much off-duty time to entertaining friends — usually by arranging small dinner parties and week-end tennis.

Our time together at "Devoncourt" gave us many pleasant memories to take away to our respective war postings: one of us to each of three different services.

CHAPTER 9

THE NAVY: 1. PREPARATION.

Once the Navy selected me for training, events moved quickly. I had heard stories of other people suffering delays and frustrations on enlistment in one or other of the services, so I felt I was having a lucky start. But there was more to it than luck, for I can honestly say that never, in the 4½ years of my naval service, did I strike anything but speed and efficiency in the postings I received.

I was commissioned on 9 June 1941, on which day I was to report to the Brisbane Naval depot. There I was joined by three other Queenslanders who had been selected. We were to have about 10 days in Brisbane, mainly acquiring items of uniform, before proceeding south by train to be at HMAS "Cerberus" (Flinders Naval Depot), in Victoria, by 23 June.

At Flinders we met the rest of our group of 12 and were shown to our quarters where much animated discussion ensued. We soon discovered that our training would comprise a month at Flinders, about three months at the anti-submarine school at Edgecliff in Sydney, and two separate months of sea training.

The 12 of us quickly became a closely welded group of friends. All our training was arranged especially for us, with no others included, despite the fact that many hundreds of other officers and ratings were undertaking various courses.

We knew that part of the Flinders training was designed to instill discipline and naval tradition and we took pride in absorbing all we could. There was no "slouching around" or strolling to and from work — but brisk marching, sometimes double marching, wherever we went on foot. On each such occasion one of the class would be in charge of the other eleven, and whenever a more senior officer was passed, a crisp salute would be thrown and a dozen pairs of eyes directed at him.

Our work dress comprised grey flannel trousers, black boots, gaiters, a white polo neck sweater and an officer's cap. At night we wore full uniform with white collar and black tie, in fact a wing collar and bow tie on formal mess evenings, when dinner would be eaten in the crowded wardroom to the strains of delightful music from the "Cerberus" band.

We received all our vaccinations and inoculations, we were drilled, we drilled others, we went to lectures, we received training in all manner of subjects; but mostly, in keeping with the Flinders tradition of "making something" out of raw recruits, the accent was on gunnery practice and parade ground smartness and efficiency.

It was also a tradition, unofficial in this case, for each departing class to celebrate on its last evening at Flinders. We certainly did that, and no doubt in expectation of it most of the senior officers drifted out of the wardroom early that night. Quite a few of our 12 had to be helped to bed and there were many sore heads when we caught the train next morning, 21 July, for Sydney, where we were to report at HMA Anti-Submarine School.

The life and atmosphere in Sydney were entirely different. The only real formality was at "divisions" each morning, when the whole School would be paraded and reported as correct to the Commander, who might make an inspection before our dispersing for the day's work. On these occasions one of us "subbies" would be in charge of the parade which comprised perhaps a couple of hundred officers and men. Beyond that, conditions were relaxed and more in keeping with a study situation.

We settled down to an intensive course of lectures and practical work on the latest submarine-detecting equipment then being fitted in the most modern destroyers in Great Britain. This was followed by a course on the tactical use of "asdiscs", as the detecting equipment was called. Interspersed with this theoretical work we had about a month's sea training in an old, re-conditioned, coastal steamer from Western Australia, painted in warship grey and wearing a white ensign, known as HMAS "Kybra". One of her holds had been converted into three cabins, and we lived there — four to a cabin. By day, the "Kybra's" small wardroom could be converted into a school-room, and a naval schoolmaster was one of our instructors, to teach us navigation among other things. There was never a dull moment with all the new work to be absorbed, from watch-keeping and signalling, to general seamanship.

While in "Kybra" we were allowed a little shore leave at night, and there was plenty of opportunity for recreation, mainly in the form of sailing the ship's whaler when we were moored in Sydney Harbour.

While doing the A/S (anti-submarine) course ashore, we were allowed to board privately. The four Queenslanders stayed together, first in the building of a one-time girls' finishing school, called "Doone", in Darling Point Road; then later at an old mansion overlooking Garden Island, at the end of Elizabeth Bay Road. It might be thought a pity that there were no girls finishing their education with us at "Doone". But in fact we were quite well placed for female friends, and the life at night and at week-ends was gay, busy, varied — generally perfectly healthy.

One not-so-healthy occasion followed a 5 o'clock cocktail party when we four Queenslanders, sandwiched into a 4-seater open sports car, with hood down, did a wild drive round some of the harbour-side streets below King's Cross. I was in the back seat, stone cold sober, and I knew that there just had to

be trouble. I said so, but one is in a difficult position in such circumstances in someone else's car. In fact, the car rolled right over on a U-bend, throwing us all out and coming to rest again on its wheels. The seats and other paraphernalia were strewn over the road, the windscreen stanchions were crumpled and the car was un-drivable.

Fortunately, none of us was injured badly. We pushed the car to the kerb and all went to a nearby doctor's surgery. There was one cut scalp, a grazed face and a bleeding knee. Otherwise the only outcome was the close scrutiny to which we were subjected at divisions next morning — especially as the grazed face was by then accompanied by a black eye.

This episode, in my opinion, was culpable. A genuine accident is bad enough, but to be concerned with something of this type, which is totally avoidable and which could have had serious consequences, is a contradiction of everything to do with living, and responsibility to others. To be an unwitting party — sitting, as I was, in the back seat, is no real excuse: it shows a lack of judgment in having set out in a car under such command in the first place.



Class V ("v for victory" we called it) of 12 sub-lieutenants under training at HMA Anti-Submarine School, Edgcliff, Sydney in 1941. The Commander and Chief Petty Officer instructor are seated in the centre; the author is fourth from the right of those standing.



Recreational sailing in naval whaler, Sydney Harbour. The author (left) with fellow trainee sub-lieutenant.

On a much happier note, it was during my time at the A/S school that I met the girl who in later years was to become my wife. One Sunday morning I decided to go to church — a fairly rare event for me. I took my seat, and, looking along the pew, saw not only a distinguished looking gentleman whom I knew, but also a girl with clear grey eyes, sitting next to him. The man was Professor Watt, my companion on the bus trip at the Glen Innes field-day some 18 months previously, and the girl was obviously his daughter. Sitting beyond both of them was a lady whom I judged to be the Professor's wife.

Although I regret that I am unable to recall what the sermon was about, I can state for certain that on filing out of the church I lost no time in speaking to Prof Watt — reminding him of our earlier meeting and, in answer to his questions about my uniform, confirming that I was now in the Navy and training at Edgecliff. After introductions and a little more chat I was invited home for the evening meal by the Prof's wife, and so started a relationship with their daughter that was to keep me a very busy and persistent visitor to the Watt home. Marnie Watt was then 19 years old and nearing the end of second year Vet Science at Sydney University. It says much for her ability, that despite the inroads on her time made by me, she finished the year in her usual way: with a string of credits and distinctions. However, for a reason which will be stated later, she was to transfer from Vet Science to pure science, in which she took her degree, majoring in Botany.

During the next three or four months, whenever time permitted, we entered into some pursuit together. In the evenings it would be pictures, dances, parties or just walking, talking or listening to music; by day (and that mostly meant the week-ends) we would go surfing, take long walks in the bush with picnic lunches, row round the bays and inlets near her home at Vacluse, or swim in the family pool, right on the harbour edge. Those were great days for me, only occasionally blighted by the "interference" of some other character — i.e. if the calm-eyed girl felt obliged to do the "right thing" on receiving an invitation from some old friend. I certainly felt bad when that happened.



Marnie Watt, the second-year Sydney University student whom the author first met during his naval training in Sydney in 1941 and later married.

The Navy called a temporary halt to my socialising by sending our class to sea again — this time for a reasonably lengthy cruise in the sloop HMAS "Moresby", a much more glamorous ship than the old "Kybra". We had all looked forward to this, and we were not disappointed. Discipline was strict and the ship was kept absolutely spotless. We realised that the purpose of this cruise was to give us a final polish before we all went off to our various war postings.

We returned to our working rig of white polo-necked sweaters, we were fallen in at 6 o'clock each morning for physical training and we executed most tasks at the double. But we learnt much and gained experience of watch-keeping at sea by day and by night, and maintaining anchor watches if we spent a night in shelter, such as at Twofold Bay or Jervis Bay. At both these places we practised taking away the sea boat while the ship was under way, and we also had brief expeditions ashore.



HMAS "Moresby's" fo'c's'le. Sea training in this immaculate ship gave us our first experience of some heavy weather.

After our return to Sydney the final exams were soon upon us. We had often been warned that only the top few of each class were posted to the UK, and (dread thought) if anyone failed he would most probably go to a shore station. We understood that continuous assessments were made of each one of us throughout the whole of our training, but the final exam, which was mainly on asdics, was very important. In fact, 34 years later, on a visit to the gunnery school at Flinders, I learnt that every facet of our work there had been marked, and that the results of any trainee, from however far back, can still be found in the "doomsday books". The CO asked the month and year of my Flinders training, and in no time, from one of several huge leather-bound volumes, he showed me the 12 names of our class, with marks neatly alongside in columns. I felt reluctant to pry, but I did notice that I came top or equal top in power of command, one of about 10 categories listed.

* * *

All 12 of us passed our finals and eight, including the four Queenslanders, were to go to England, where we would serve with the Royal Navy. This was confirmed a few days later, when I received my official posting instructions, dated 11 Dec 1941. I was to take a short pre-embarkation leave, then hold myself in readiness in Sydney for passage to the UK.

First I went home to Toowoomba to spend some time with my mother and father. Then I travelled north to Bundaberg where my brother Fergus, as medical officer at an elementary flying training school, was a Flight Lieutenant in the RAAF. He had arranged for me to stay in the officers' mess for a few days. That was a great experience, added to which we were able to make trips to the beach sometimes by day and to town at night. I met some of Fergus' friends but on our last evening just we two dined together in town. We lingered over a bottle of good wine, both reluctant to make the first move — though both knowing that I had to catch the night train south.

I was still in Australia on Christmas day, for I spent that with the Watt family on a long drive — through the Royal National Park and down Bulli Pass to the beautiful little beach at Austinmere, where Marnie and I had a surf, followed by a picnic-style Christmas lunch with the family. The journey was made in a hire car, as the Prof and his wife had never taken up driving.

About this time, Marnie and I had a few serious discussions about our future and I mentioned the possibility of becoming engaged or even getting married. However, we both agreed that the most prudent course was to let things stand and see what happened in the uncertain future. In fact we corresponded regularly throughout my whole period of overseas service, without there being any definite commitment.

Although I don't know the exact date of my departure for England, it must have been very soon after Christmas day. Our ship turned out to be the "Capetown Castle", a liner of some 27,000 tons. The astonishing thing was that with its huge staff of stewards and all its immense accommodation space, the eight of us sub-lieutenants, plus three or four other people with UK postings, were the only passengers in the first class section. And I don't think it was much different in the tourist part of the vessel. However, as we were to learn in a few weeks' time, the last leg of our journey was so crowded that it was hard to see the deck for swarming human bodies.

The "Capetown Castle" sailed unescorted through the then quite safe waters of the Pacific, via New Zealand to Panama. We were also without any escort on the much more hazardous route up the coast of Florida and further north to Halifax in Nova Scotia, Canada. However, once we took troops aboard at Halifax, we were given massive protection for the final leg across the north Atlantic. How familiar I was to become with all these waters in the years ahead!

An unexpected opportunity for sight-seeing came with the ship's call at Auckland. For some reason or other it took the best part of a week to load frozen lamb and other food into the holds, and we were told by the Chief Officer that we could go off on leave. A friend of mine and I decided to go walking in the mountains. We each took a couple of ship's blankets and some food, and set out with only a motorist's road map to help us find our way. The food quickly ran out, there was absolutely no habitation let alone wayside food stores, and each night we were first plagued by mosquitoes, then extreme cold. We lit dung fires to ward off the mosquitoes, but we woke early in the morning, bleary from the smoke, and stiff from the cold. We found our way back to the ship after three days and two nights and replenished our inner reserves before setting out again.

However, the second trip was much more comfortable. Local folk who had been most hospitable organised a trip for us to the thermal lakes district. All eight of us went, making the journey by train and staying in pre-arranged billets. One highlight was a Maori concert, put on specially for us, with a dance to follow. I got on really well with a charming Maori girl whom I learned was a princess. The sequel to this was that she and another Maori girl showed me and the subbie with whom I was billeted round during the rest of our stay. The girls came to see us off at the train, bearing all sorts of little Maori gifts, and as we waved good-bye they had large shiny tears on their cheeks.



On passage to the UK in the "Capetown Castle". A division of Canadian soldiers came aboard at Halifax for the last leg of the journey.

By the time we reached Canada the eight of us almost felt we owned the "Capetown Castle". We had our favourite chairs round the fire at night and we could choose our times for deck games or sun-basking during the day. Imagine the change, then, when a whole division of Canadian soldiers poured on board!

As soon as we put to sea again each of us "subs" was placed in charge of a life-boat. I don't know on what basis the troops were allocated to the boats, but officers and other ranks seemed to be randomly mixed. I had some quite senior officers in my boat, but my colleague in the boat next to me had a General in his. It amused me to hear my friend, at abandon ship drill the next morning, bellow in best parade ground fashion, "Hurry along there, fall in at the double," when the General and others were arriving somewhat casually. The General was fallen in with the others, and the squad numbered, seat positions allocated and drill proceeded with in very brisk fashion. If I had any doubts about how the General took this, my concern was allayed that night, for when I walked into dinner, there was my colleague, seated as a guest at the General's table!

Our entry to England, up the Mersey to Liverpool, on a dull winter's afternoon, struck me as terribly gloomy. Fog sirens were hooting dismally and all one could see at first were the masts and rusted bridges of sunken ships along the channel. Then the docks and the city itself came into view. The overall scene served as a grim reminder that here at last we were in a country which had withstood many a blitz and was still very much at bay.

But if I had experienced momentary gloom I soon cheered up. Our arrival was expected, so we were met and taken to Lime Street Station for transit to London in the famous LMS train — not so smart in war-time as the coloured pictures I remembered from my boyhood.

Again we were met in London, settled in a hotel and given instructions for the next morning. Breakfast was a stern reminder that food rationing really meant something here; nevertheless we were a very jolly band of eight as we trooped round to Admiralty to obtain our identity cards and see about our first appointments. We were told we would most likely go to destroyers; but before joining our ships we were to have ten days' leave.

In London there were organizations set up to arrange visits to private homes for overseas troops on leave, and most of us utilized this service. A place in Cornwall was recommended for two of us, so off I set, with one of my mates, for a week's stay. We were given the address and instructed to take a taxi from the station. Over the years I have often chuckled on recalling our arrival. The house was a lovely old two-storied granite home, set well back from the road. The taxi rumbled down the drive, and two men appeared in the big doorway at the top of the front steps. As we pulled up, one of the men, dressed in striped trousers and black coat descended the steps; the other one, in all-black, stayed at the top. I quickly decided that the first character was the butler, come to help with our suitcases, and that the other was our host. So I alighted and quickly ascended the steps, with out-stretched hand, to greet him, no doubt with the word "Sir" thrown in. It turned out, however, that the first man was the footman and the second the butler; and in fact I didn't meet my host until very much later!

The stay at that home was a memorable introduction to England. We went for walks along the cliff tops, sought out some old Druid ruins, explored the little towns and villages, and at night we sat by the fire talking — mainly about England. The daughter of the household was a VAD (volunteer nurse) who worked long hours in the local hospital. We saw little of her, as she had generally left for work in the mornings before we were astir. However, she did take us for a drive in her Sunbeam-Talbot one day.

At the end of our leave, all 8 subbies met in London, exchanged news, and once again made our way round to Admiralty. This time there was no delay and we were given travel warrants to several destinations. I and one other of our group were to leave that day for Liverpool and report to Captain "D" — the officer commanding destroyers at the headquarters of the Western Approaches Command.

This seemed exciting indeed, and all the more so when I learned that I would be joining HMS "Havelock" immediately and sailing with a west-bound convoy within a few days. My colleague's appointment was to a destroyer based in Halifax. He was to take passage in one of the other escorts accompanying our convoy — in fact in a "Flower" class corvette.

Now, it seemed, the time had really come for me to enter the war. The long period of preparation was over, and I was about to put my training to the test: I was to join the Battle of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER 10

THE NAVY: II. WITH THE R.N. ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

HMS "Havelock" was one of six destroyers being built in the UK for Brazil when war broke out. Under the changed circumstances due to the war, all six were retained by the Royal Navy. The other five were: "Havant" (the name used to describe their class), "Hurricane", "Harvester", "Hesperus" and "Highlander". Prior to my joining "Havelock" the "Havant" had been sunk by a German bomber off Dunkirk in 1940. (Later losses were to be "Hurricane", torpedoed in the Atlantic on Christmas Eve 1943, and "Harvester", torpedoed in the Atlantic in March 1943). (35).

"Havelock" was fitted out as an escort destroyer. This meant that her main role was to protect convoys and to hunt and destroy enemy submarines (U-boats). Being relatively modern and having a top speed of about 32 knots, "Havelock", like each of the surviving members of her class, was a group leader. "Havelock's" group was known as B5 — a veteran escort group which had been operating in the north Atlantic since late 1940. On normal runs across the north Atlantic her group generally comprised one other (older) destroyer and about four or five corvettes. Since escort vessels were in very short supply, a group such as that usually had to protect an average of perhaps 30 or 40 merchant ships in each convoy.

When I went aboard "Havelock" she was lying in the destroyer base at Gladstone Dock, Liverpool. The quartermaster conducted me to the wardroom where, he said, I would find the First Lieutenant. In fact I found an animated group of officers, some of whom were from nearby "chummy" ships, talking ten to the dozen and enjoying a pre-lunch drink. I was immediately presented with a drink, welcomed as the "Digger" whom they had been expecting, and from then on I was treated as one of them. My welcome couldn't have been more friendly, and the nickname Digger stayed with me thereafter.



HMS "Havelock", leader of B5 Ocean Escort Group, and already a veteran of north Atlantic convoying by 1942. This is the ship which the author joined.

I was given a tiny cabin situated amidships. It had two bunks, but at first I was the sole occupant. Access to the cabin was by a steel ladder mounted below a circular steel hatch in the main deck. I mention this point because I very soon discovered the hazards of going through that hatch, particularly at night, when solid sea water was breaking across the deck. Even when closed, the hatch leaked, hence in bad weather the vestibule immediately outside my cabin generally sloshed water back and forth as the ship rolled. In a full gale this extended to my cabin as well. As an accompaniment to this noise I also had the continual back and forth clatter of .303 rifles and sabres which were mounted in racks on the bulkhead immediately outside my door. The sabres were never used during my stay in the ship; but I always presumed they were intended for hand to hand fighting if boarding parties had to be repelled!

A few duties were assigned to me and very soon we put to sea. I was moderately sea sick for the first day or so, but I knew from my experience in the old "Kybra" that the feeling would soon pass, and it did.

After we formed up the convoy and headed west round the north of Ireland I experienced a tremendous sense of exhilaration. This, I felt, was what I had trained for and hoped for — though not dared to ex-

pect. As I watched the columns of merchantmen, the escorts with their signal lamps flashing and the heaving sea all round, the scene was just as I had imagined it would be, if ever I got there! In case the above remarks might be misunderstood, I was not a war-like person. I hated the fact that there was a war. It was not of my making; but if there had to be one, and I was to be in it, then I felt I had made the right choice. Not only had I entered the "best" service, but good fortune had placed me in a theatre of war which I wouldn't have wished to change with anyone.

In "Havelock" the custom was to have one officer of the watch on the bridge in daylight hours and two at night. Besides the captain there were six executive (watch-keeping) officers in "Havelock", with me making a seventh. As this was my first ship I was to take my turn along with all the other executive officers but as assistant to someone more experienced, even in daylight, until I gained a watch-keeping certificate.

To combat the cold, the rain and the spray which often swept right over the bridge, we wore a couple of sweaters, big sea-boot stockings, rubber sea boots, oilskins and huge gauntlets. Then, over the top of all these came a "Mae West" inflatable life jacket to which was attached a water-proof battery-operated red light and a whistle. The latter two items were to attract attention if one ended up in the sea. Finally, we wore round our waist, a length of rope with a loop spliced into it, this being to facilitate rescue from the water if one were covered in oil.

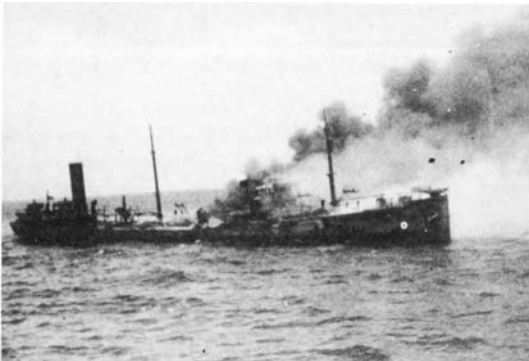
All this impedimenta made passage through the hatch above my cabin quite a feat, not to mention traversing the length of the iron deck and ascending the 30 feet or so of vertical ladder to the after part of the bridge in anything approaching gale conditions. When a full gale was blowing the captain would order life lines to be rigged along the upper deck, and, on rare occasions, order cessation of all traffic between fore and aft. (Destroyers have no other fore and aft passage-way).

On that maiden convoy of mine we delivered our charges safely and had two or three days' respite in Newfoundland. However, instead of returning to the UK with another convoy, we were diverted to Bermuda and fitted out with tropical gear. We were destined for the Caribbean and the eastern seaboard of the USA, where convoying had not previously been necessary, but where sinkings by U-boats had suddenly become catastrophic.

Our first assignment in this area, under an American Admiral, was to escort convoys between Key West (Florida) and Trinidad. This was a busy sea lane, not least because of all the tanker traffic to and from Port of Spain in Trinidad and the Dutch islands of Curacao and Aruba, which had large oil refineries.

My first real adventure was to come quickly. At about 8am on 21 May 1942, some 200 miles W-N-W of Trinidad, an oil tanker, The "Sylvan Arrow", was torpedoed. The ship rapidly listed and fire broke out. One of our escorts, HMS "Lavender", went alongside, and, with their own fire hoses, brought the fire under control. However the "Sylvan Arrow's" crew had abandoned ship and refused to return. "Havelock" took the helpless tanker in tow, but it was soon evident that she would be unmanageable. The tow wire finally broke and, in the early morning of 22 May, our captain (Commander E.H. Thomas, DSC, RN) asked me if I would like to volunteer to board the ship with a small party of ratings and remain in charge until assistance was sent from Trinidad.

I of course welcomed the proposal! so a boat was lowered and I was ferried to the "Sylvan Arrow" with a leading hand and four seamen. We took food, water, semaphore flags, electric torches and I carried a .45 calibre service revolver with ammunition. After "Havelock's" boat returned and was hoisted, "Havelock" circled us and departed, blowing "Good luck" in morse code on her siren!



On 21 May 1942 the tanker "Sylvan Arrow" (left) was torpedoed 200 miles W-N-W of Trinidad and abandoned by her crew. The author (right) and five ratings from HMS "Havelock" boarded the disabled vessel and remained with her for three days until help arrived.

I kept a record of events in a log-book which I still possess; but I don't need that to help me recall details. We spent three days and three nights on board, which was longer than I had anticipated. It turned out that we had drifted a long way from our original position and so we were not found by two US search sea-planes until the third morning. Early on the second night a fire flared up on board but we were able to bring it under control with buckets of sea water. Evidently some of the woodwork had continued to smoulder following the original fire.

During our time on board we observed strict black-out at night, kept a look-out posted day and night, and avoided showing ourselves on the open deck. It was my hope that the U-boat which torpedoed the "Sylvan Arrow" might still be around and surface, in which case we would be well placed to surprise and fight it: the tanker had a 4" gun on the after deck, and early in the proceedings we had fired practice shots and stored plenty of shells at the ready. I had in mind the exploits of Q-ships; but, alas, (or perhaps fortunately) no U-boat surfaced!

Finally, the US destroyer "Barney" arrived with clear instructions from the Admiral that the "British officer and ratings were to be taken aboard "Barney" for transit to Trinidad". I was unhappy about this, but the order clearly superseded that of my captain, and I was assured that arrangements were in hand for the "Sylvan Arrow" to be salvaged.

I heard later, however, that the "Sylvan Arrow" broke in two while being towed, and that the fore and aft portions were sunk by gunfire. I was not altogether surprised, for while we were aboard, the weakened plates on the side opposite to that struck by the torpedo had already broken open.

I was pretty disreputable looking in my one set of oil-smearred work clothes when I went aboard the "Barney". However, I was treated in an altogether friendly way and quizzed non-stop about Australia. On reaching Trinidad I was able to obtain clean gear from the RN store. This was necessary because "Havelock" had already departed with the next convoy, leaving me stranded. However, while waiting for her return, I explored a good deal of Trinidad's hinterland. I hitched a ride to the far side of the island, where I had a surf opposite the delta of the Orinoco River, and I spent one whole very interesting day at the Imperial College of Agriculture (now, I believe, a part of the University of the West Indies).



28 June 1942, issued by Captain with a watch-keeping certificate for destroyers and recommended for promotion to Lieutenant; this was approved.

Having rejoined "Havelock", shortly after the "Sylvan Arrow" incident, on 28 June, the Captain issued me with a watch-keeping certificate. As I had also completed one year of mobilized service, I now became eligible for promotion to Lieutenant. The Captain recommended my promotion to the Admiralty, through the Flag-officer-in-charge, Trinidad, and the submission was approved. I accordingly added a second stripe to my uniform.

Six months after leaving Australia I received my first mail — in Trinidad; and what a mail it was! There were letters and food parcels galore, and even a few newspapers from my old home town of Toowoomba. When the wardroom officers actually sighted copies of the "Toowoomba Chronicle" they at last believed that such a place existed! Later, when Havelock succeeded in scrounging a small sailing skiff from one of the stores, someone painted the name HMS "Toowoomba" on it!

Each food parcel sent by my mother contained a couple of tins of "Havelock" pipe tobacco — my favourite brand in the old days at home. This rather remarkable coincidence caused quite a stir, as no one on board had heard of the brand before. Visitors to the wardroom who saw one of the green tins with its gold lettering were most impressed, believing the tobacco to be a private ship's blend!

Amongst much good news in my mail there was one nasty shock: my close friend, Marnie, had contracted diphtheria when doing Land Army work on a country property during the university long vacation, just after I left Australia. She was in hospital for a long while and of course had to defer her studies. After a full year of recuperation on doctor's advice she transferred to Science — a less "strenuous" faculty than Vet Science, and so became a botanist.

* * *

During the second half of 1942 our convoy route was changed. We took over the run between New York and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. This must have made us the envy of all the escort groups, for the climate was kind and the hospitality in New York was incredible. The sailors would return to the ship with amazing accounts of the friendliness with which they were treated ashore, and just one of my own experiences illustrates the point.

When the ship once docked in Brooklyn for a boiler clean, each watch was allowed a week's leave. A hospitality committee at the White Ensign Club, located in the Barbazon Plaza Hotel on Sixth Avenue, was happy to organise up-country visits for anyone interested. I availed myself of this service, and I said I would like a fairly quiet time and that the chance of a little horse riding would be really appreciated.

I was given an address in Wilmington, Delaware and it was suggested that I take a taxi from the station on arrival. I asked the driver if he knew the place. "Everybody knows that", he replied. I wasn't sure



A week's leave in Wilmington, Delaware, USA included some country riding on superb horses. Author in centre.

whether that was good or bad; however, when we turned in at the drive I understood. We were approaching a huge home, with numerous cars parked round the front. I suggested to the driver that there must be a party on; but he said the cars would belong to various members of the household. Though I did not know until later, this was a branch of the family which practically owns Wilmington — indeed much of Delaware!

Although material things were luxurious, I had come to a place of really homely people and my stay was a very happy and memorable one. After I settled in, the matter of riding was raised by my hostess and it was decided that some of us would "go over to the farm" and have a ride. I soon discovered that quite a large farm was maintained, not only for the horses but for riding and even hunting. A permanent groom was in attendance and he led out from a row of stables, sufficient mounts for our party.

I felt some trepidation, for here were some of the finest horses that one could find anywhere in the

world — and my riding had been both meagre and of a pretty rough and ready type. My horse wanted to jump every gate it saw, but I wasn't going to be in that! Fortunately the first ride went well and we had more outings during my stay.

I was taken on drives and visits, and to one novel event to me: a beagle hunt. As I felt I would like to do something in return for this hospitality I asked the attractive daughter of the household if she would care to go to the movies with me on the Saturday night. She said that would be great. However, when I wanted to phone for seats she said not to bother doing that. Then when I wanted to phone for a taxi, she said to drive her car — so went the story all night . . . There was no need to buy tickets, yet mysteriously we were shown to a couple of the best seats. Finally, when the time came for supper she said there was a very nice restaurant in the same building (which was a veritable sky-scraper); but again, when I tried to pay, nobody seemed interested and she said "not to worry"! I enjoyed the evening and she seemed to; she certainly said she did and thanked me—but I was left in some doubt as to who had entertained whom! I thought she or the family had organized everything in advance; but I was given to understand later, from another source, that the family owned the whole building including the cinema and restaurant!

By Christmas 1942, which we spent in the Caribbean area, it was clear that the convoying had brought a halt to U-boat activity in those parts. Instead of travelling all that way to use torpedoes, the enemy was concentrating on the nearer, mid-Atlantic longitudes, where allied shipping was without shore-based air cover.

No doubt for this reason we were withdrawn from the Caribbean. Instead of departing by the normal, north-about route however, we received orders to take a small but important convoy direct from Trinidad to the Mediterranean. I think that, of all our encounters with the enemy, that trip was to provide my starkest memory.

We set off in January 1943. The convoy was designated TM1, the initials representing the departure and destination locations, and the numeral the fact that it was the first such convoy. Our charges comprised nine tankers, some carrying Admiralty fuel oil and others petrol. In addition, the ships carried deck cargoes of lubricating oil. These supplies were badly needed for the North African campaign. The journey was longer than the escorts' fuel endurance, so at least one of the tankers was equipped to re-fuel the escort vessels at sea.



HMS "Havelock" (left) oiling from tanker in mid-Atlantic, while maintaining convoy speed.

Since November we had had a new captain, Commander Thomas having been relieved by Commander R.C. Boyle, RN. Besides "Havelock", he had only three corvettes with which to guard the convoy, and two of those had faulty radar. Trinidad at that time did not have the technical staff nor spare parts to service the sophisticated radar sets on which we relied so heavily for detecting surface vessels and aircraft.

Unfortunately, the convoy was sighted and reported by a U-boat fairly early in the trip. Our destination was then correctly guessed by the enemy and other U-boats in the central Atlantic were directed towards us. When we were some 1,100 miles north-east of Trinidad we were attacked and one tanker was sunk. Apart from the seriousness of that loss, our captain was faced with the possibility, if there were further sinkings, of the escorts being unable to re-fuel. Accordingly, from then on, whenever conditions seemed propitious, the escorts would be directed to take their turn at a "top-up" of oil fuel. This was done by rigging a hose between the tanker and the escort, without the need for either to stop.

All this time we were receiving daily wireless reports from Admiralty of U-boat dispositions and it was clear that great trouble was in store: a large pack of U-boats was converging on our area. We went into a two — instead of three — watch routine, and often stayed long hours at action stations. Course alterations were tried at dusk each evening, but, without aircraft, there was no shaking off the enemy.

Six nights after the first attack, when we were 600 miles north of the Canary Islands, the full blast was delivered, and five ships were sunk. Some of them exploded in a holocaust of fire which turned the night into lurid brightness — seemingly lighter than day. That was a terrible thing to observe and when some of the ships blew up, I thought it impossible that there could be survivors. But there always were, and we did our best, whenever a lull came, to rescue them.

On the following night another tanker was sunk. This made a total of seven ships lost. We journeyed on with the remaining two and were joined by some fleet destroyers for the last few hundred miles. These had been sent from Gibraltar to help us; but the fury of the onslaught was over before they arrived.

At one stage during the battle, when a petrol tanker blew up, I saw four U-boats on the surface amongst the convoy! On such occasions, the remaining merchant ships would open fire with tracers, firing everything they could bring to bear, and the nearest escorts would counter attack. But the U-boats would crash dive. About all that could be done was for a couple of the escorts to stay with the convoy and the others to hunt the submarines, depth-charging any asdic contact and at least trying to keep the U-boats submerged.

As to survivors, I have always been thankful that we did our utmost to pick up everyone possible. "Havelock" was crowded with them, and the corvettes had their share on board too, even though there was grave danger in stopping to pick them up.

One of the tankers was crippled in the attack without being sunk. There was no hope of its being salvaged, so our captain decided to take off the crew which had remained on board, and then possibly sink it ourselves so it would not be a danger to shipping. While "Havelock" stood by, taking the crew on board, one of the corvettes circled both ships on a protective sweep with its asdic. However, no sooner had the last man clambered aboard "Havelock" than an enemy torpedo slammed into the tanker and it sank before our eyes. The U-boat commander must have watched the whole operation and presumably might just as easily have torpedoed us. Events such as that made me think a lot about luck or fate; but such thoughts came later, when there was time.

One of the survivors we took on board died from having been immersed in oil. The body was sewn in canvas, weighted with a shell and buried at sea, with due solemnity. Should anyone who lost a relation or a friend on convoy TM1 ever read this account, I hope that he or she will feel some comfort in the knowledge that everything was done to pick up survivors; and that anyone who died on board the escorts was buried with dignity. This latter act also served as a way of paying sailors' tributes to the many who died in their ships or went down in the sea without formal burial being possible.

* * *

In early 1943, after our long stay in tropical waters, we were quickly moved back to Group B5's old run across the north Atlantic. The weather was foul, even by north Atlantic standards, and the delays caused by gales, requiring the shepherding of stragglers back into the convoy, sometimes necessitated our making a dash into Iceland to re-fuel. Sometimes, too, to avoid known U-boat concentrations, a convoy would be routed quite close to Greenland. Icebergs then had to be avoided — a remarkable contrast to the Caribbean!

March 1943 is regarded by historians as the crisis point in the battle of the north Atlantic. This view is expressed, for instance, in "The Battle of the Atlantic: The Official Account of the Fight against the U-boats 1939-1945" (HMSO, 1946). All I can say, as one person in one ship, is that my feelings of "how things were going" tended to be influenced by how our own convoys fared. In the main this was satisfactory: many convoys, amounting to hundreds of ships, might be brought to their destinations unscathed; then would come a calamity (like TM1) or a bad mauling like some of our other convoys suffered, and my thoughts would be much more solemn, though I never really doubted a successful final outcome.

March 1943, in fact, provided a good example of these "up-and-down" feelings for me. Early in the month we brought convoy ON168 from England to Canada in safety, despite the fact that the journey was drawn out to 17 days by bad weather on the far northern route. One old destroyer of our group sustained leaking plates and had to go into dry-dock; but in general the news was good.

But immediately after that successful convoy there was to be bad news: our sister ship, HMS "Harvester", leader of another group, was sunk during a fight with a U-boat in mid-Atlantic. Of more direct concern to us, however, was the running battle we had, taking convoy SC122 on our return journey to England.

We left St Johns, Newfoundland after three days' rest, and rendezvoused with our convoy of 50 merchant ships. The escort comprised "Havelock", the frigate "Swale", five flower class corvettes, an old US "four-stacker" destroyer named "Upshur" and an armed trawler. A rescue ship had also been allocated.

It so happened that another slightly faster convoy, (HX229), also east-bound, escorted by Group B4, left two days behind us on a nearly parallel course. The two convoys were to face the greatest concentration of U-boats that had ever been assembled along the north Atlantic route.

A factual account of what followed is the subject of a well documented book (35) by Martin Middlebrook. Middlebrook chose to describe this battle because it was "a major turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic" and because it "could be the story of any of the hundreds of convoys that sailed the oceans in these years". Since the detail has been so ably covered by another writer, I shall merely give the bare statistical results for which I make acknowledgement to Middlebrook.

A total of 42 U-boats participated. Our convoy (SC122) lost eight merchant ships and the armed tug "Campobello"; convoy HX229 lost 13 of its 41 merchant ships. Ninety German torpedoes were used to sink the 22 ships — 30 being fired at our convoy and 60 at HX229. Our escorts made seven counter attacks, dropped 69 depth charges and damaged two U-boats; the escorts of HX229 made 11 separate attacks, and dropped 229 depth charges, damaging five U-boats.



HMS "Havelock" fires a pattern of depth charges. Three ships in convoy are just visible far astern, between the two main splashes.

It is significant that the battle took place in the so-called Air Gap, mid-way between Newfoundland and the UK, an area of ocean which was out of the range of shore-based protective aircraft. No doubt the seriousness of the pack attacks on these two convoys hastened the Allied Command into taking the several measures which closed the gap — thereby turning the tide of the sea battle in the allies' favour.

As the year progressed, we were given more land-based air cover, by planes with longer range; and, if we were lucky, one of the incredible "MAC ships" would be included in the convoy. The initials stood for "mercantile aircraft carrier" and the ships were just that. They were mostly converted grain carriers which, as well as carrying their cargo of grain, had a tiny flat top — just large enough to allow Swordfish aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm to take off and to land. The planes carried rockets which could be lethal to a surfaced submarine, and the U-boat commanders came to fear the planes, their rockets and their intrepid young Navy pilots.

I really took my hat off to those pilots. Our captain would ask the MAC ship if there were any chance of an evening sweep astern by a Swordfish before we changed course to throw off surface followers. The ocean was almost invariably heaving round and the MAC ship, pitching and tossing; but the pilots were ever ready to unleash an aircraft, take off (and hopefully land again) on the tiny deck which seemed a mere pocket handkerchief in size. The effect of such a sweep was tremendous. More often than not, when we were in the Gap, the pilot would find "hearses" (as the U-boats were graphically code-named) on such an evening sortie. Then there was no question that he would make them submerge and hold them down — hopefully long enough for the convoy's masts and tell-tale smoke patches to disappear from view, with all ships set on a new course.

Then, too, came support groups, sometimes even with a "Woolworth" aircraft carrier, the latter being cheaper, smaller, slower versions of a traditional fleet aircraft carrier. This was a sign of the growing

numerical strength of our escort vessels. A support group had no commitment to any particular convoy, but could be deployed to assist at any trouble spot within range. Unlike the convoy escorts which had to remain with the ships under their charge, the support groups could hound down any U-boats they contacted, carrying out deliberate attacks for hours or even days. Naturally they made many more "kills" than the convoy escorts — and so helped to swing the battle the allies' way.

Our group was in St Johns, Newfoundland just before Christmas in 1943 and I knew that we would be at sea on Christmas day. The whole landscape was covered in snow, and by making polite enquiries I was able to borrow a horse and sleigh. So with a young Canadian subbie who had recently joined "Havelock", I set off into the country to acquire a Christmas tree. In fact we obtained two beauties — one for the seamen's messdeck and one for the wardroom. We lashed these on the sleigh and drove right through the dock gateway and up to "Havelock's" gangway to delivery our booty, which was much appreciated. The subbie (whom I had nicknamed "Klondyke") and I also enjoyed the relaxation: to me such activities were preferable to wandering round the town or sitting in some club.



With a colleague, the author was seeking a Christmas tree for "Havelock" in the Newfoundland country-side, Dec 1943. Transport: a horse and sleigh.

Besides our main north Atlantic convoy runs we were sometimes diverted to other duties which always added to the interest. Some of these were the taking over of an air field in the Azores; escorting troops to the Mediterranean and remaining round Gibraltar for a time; a long spell during winter, doing anti-submarine sweeps between the Faeroe Islands and Norway; and, not least, quite a long period in the English Channel before, during and after the Normandy landing ("D day").

Although the allies commenced to gain ascendancy over the U-boats by about mid 1943, there was still a long way to go, and new strategies had to be used against the ever resourceful enemy. The U-boats fitted "schnorkels" which allowed them to charge their batteries submerged, instead of rendering themselves vulnerable by having to surface for that purpose. But worse for us was the Germans' use of acoustic torpedoes. These were used mainly against escorts, and would home on to the screws of ships towards which they were aimed. It was a diabolical weapon, and many an escort (including a sister ship of ours) had its stern blown off by one of these. We countered by trailing "foxers" which made a greater noise than the ship's screws, but they were an impediment to speed and manoeuvreability, and we hated using them.

Early in 1944 I was recommended by the captain for QO or "qualified officer" status. This was a concession to reserve officers having the appropriate qualifications, which placed them on a par, seniority-wise, with permanent (straight-stripe) officers. I was granted the new status, and this was to have an important bearing on my last eleven months in "Havelock".

In April 1944 the old B5 ocean escort group was disbanded and "Havelock" joined with several other destroyers, to become the 14th Escort Group whose leader was HMS "Fame" (Commander R.A. Currie, RN). We also had a change of captain at that time, Commander Boyle being relieved by Lt-Cdr Raymond Hart, DSC, RN. Ray Hart was a much younger man than our previous captains, but he already had a fine

record. He had a bar to his DSC and he had been mentioned in despatches. We very quickly perceived that he would be an aggressive captain in combat, for he had no compunction in ordering "full ahead both" — a ship-handling order which many regarded as reserved for rare emergencies, and which seemed to bring engineer officers to an almost apoplectic state! Our new captain therefore first became known as "full-ahead Hart". Later, as we came to know him better, the more homely appellation of "Father" gained preference.



HMS "Havelock" had a top speed of 32 knots.

Soon after his appointment, the new captain called me aside and asked if I would like to be his First Lieutenant (or "number one" as the Navy calls that position). I was really stunned, for acceptance of the offer would make me second-in-command of "Havelock" and responsible to the captain not only for its maintenance as a fighting unit, but for the discipline, efficiency and well-being of the crew.

I accepted of course, and the appointment was approved. So started a period which I have always looked back on with special pride — as well as with gratitude to those who co-operated so well with me.

The destroyers of our new group were each fitted with a "pom-pom" (an automatic gun, firing explosive shells of higher calibre than a machine gun) in the very eyes of the ship, right forward on the fo'c's'le. This meant one thing: that we were likely to engage in close-range fighting and would almost certainly be involved in the coming invasion of Nazi-held Europe. This was soon proved correct, and we moved from our old base at Liverpool to the English Channel, working first from Portsmouth and later from Plymouth.

The whole period in the Channel was full of interest; and it was a special privilege to be busily engaged there during the build-up of the colossal invasion force as D-day approached, then to be a part of it. Our usual duty was to keep U-boats away by making A/S sweeps, in line abreast, from the south coast of England to the Channel Islands. The latter, of course, were occupied by the Germans and whenever we came within the range of their big guns we could be sure they would open fire. They did this when the range closed to about 15,000 yards which we could anticipate precisely on our radar and so turn round for the sweep back in the opposite direction.

Two engagements and an unusual incident remain very clearly in my mind from this period. One was the sinking of a U-boat which tried to pass through our screen, just after D-day. Having once made asdic contact, the group was able to carry out a systematic, deliberate attack — so different from the old north Atlantic convoy routine, when we had to make crash attacks and quickly rejoin the convoy. As part of this group action, "Havelock", in firm asdic contact, fired its "hedgehog" — an ahead-firing weapon. The pattern of depth bombs festooned out in a circle and disappeared in the water, to be followed first by a single detonation, then, seconds later, by a great reverberation as the rest of the bombs struck the sea bed. Clearly, one bomb had hit some object in the water and minutes later we saw plenty of evidence that the U-boat had been struck. In due course, one survivor appeared from the sunken vessel and he was rescued, then later taken ashore as a prisoner of war.

The second engagement was with surface craft. Intelligence reports suggested that several German destroyers, possibly accompanied by U-boats, might try to move north through the Dover Strait, very close to the French coast, on a specified night, soon after D-day. A group of British "Tribal" class destroyers was to engage the surface craft, while our group was to stand by — either to attack the U-boats

or to assist in any surface action. As a precaution, in case through some misadventure in action we became beached on the French coast, all confidential books were taken ashore before we departed. The "Tribals" found and engaged the enemy destroyers causing great damage, as judged by the explosions and fires which broke out. The "Tribals" departed, but our group remained. When daylight came it was clear that at least one enemy destroyer had been sunk and a great many survivors were in the water. Orders were given for some of our ships, including "Havelock", to close in and pick up what survivors we could, while others were to lay a smoke screen as a protection from any shore batteries. We did come under fire from shore, but the only damage sustained was a few shrapnel holes in the funnel. The Germans in the water were simply amazed to be taken prisoner in clear sight of their own occupied shore.



The author (right foreground), as First Lientenant of HMS "Havelock", organises the transfer of German sailors to another vessel, for passage to England. The German's ship, a destroyer, had been sunk near the French coast the previous night.



"Havelock's" sea-boat crew pulls away with German prisoners of war who had been picked from the sea at day-break, in sight of the German-occupied French coast.

In this action, one of the officers on board the "Tribal" destroyer "Ashanti" was Lieut R.K. Morton, RANVR, one of the eight from my old training group of subbies who came over to the UK together. Bob

Morton and I had a great re-union in Plymouth, and we met again professionally, in later years. He was a distinguished scholar in my own field of Agricultural Science and became Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Adelaide. Sadly, he was killed in an explosion in his laboratory while still a relatively young man.

The final event in the Channel period which I single out for mention occurred while I was officer of the watch during one of our sweeps. Daylight had come; but patches of mist lay about, making visibility poor. I was extra careful because of this, for we had only recently had a torpedo launched at us by a Ju88 aircraft. We saw the torpedo and avoided it; but a cruiser, also in the Channel, was not so lucky and was sunk from the same cause.

Suddenly straight ahead, I noticed two patches of broken water in skewed disposition. They were quite definite, quite unusual and my immediate instinctive belief was that they were dangerous. If we had carried on with our course or if I had waited to call the captain we would have gone straight over a part of each of them. So I acted at once and ordered the wheel first hard to starboard; then, as the bow slid between the two patches I called for wheel in the opposite direction, to prevent the stern swinging out over the left hand patch. To give quicker thrust to the turns I also called for alternate increases to the port and starboard engine revolutions.

This made the ship heel over and pound as the increased revs came on, and the captain was up the bridge ladder in a flash, quite reasonably demanding to know "what the hell" was going on. While I was explaining, two almighty explosions occurred astern of us and water sprayed up in the air. That supported my explanation so well that the matter was never mentioned again. I have often wondered what those things really were. My guess is that mines or depth charges had been dropped ahead of us in the mist, perhaps by an aircraft flying low to escape radar detection. After all, the enemy knew our sweep routine so well — and was probably frustrated to the point of wanting to try some new deterrent. To this day, I feel confident that our ship would have been a casualty if that immediate avoiding action had not been taken.

* * *

In September 1944 our captain was relieved by Lt Cdr H.A. Stewart Menteth, RN. Ray Hart left to take command of a group of ex-US four-stacker destroyers. We were all sorry to lose him, but that was the way in the Navy. At least we gave him a great farewell, which ended with all the "Havelock's" officers rowing him ashore in the ship's whaler. It was not very long before Ray Hart's new group sank three U-boats in a single voyage, for which that already much decorated officer was awarded the DSO. After leaving "Havelock" he wrote me a letter which I prize. Parts of it follow:

HMS "Conn,"
2nd Oct 1944

Dear old No 1,

Just a hurried line to wish you all & the splendid Havelock, Good Luck & Good Hunting.

My five months with you was all too short & it broke my heart to leave the ship, but unfortunately one has no option in this Service.

I do want to thank you for making life so very easy for me and also for bringing the ship up to her present state of efficiency & happiness.

I always felt she was a happy ship and was quite confident during our spell in the Channel that no matter what turned up we would have been able to give a good account of ourselves.

I look forward to the fleet destroyer with enthusiasm and hope sincerely you are still about to come along and help me build her. Do give my regards to Doc & the rest of the team . . . and please say my farewells to the ship's company.

Let me know the news sometime.

Yrs
[signed] Ray Hart
"Father"

My last winter in "Havelock" included quite a lengthy sojourn round the Faeroe Islands. We would sweep those waters for a week or ten days at a time, hunting for U-boats which were either returning home to northern bases or putting out on patrol again. We would re-fuel at a tanker moored in a fiord, spend a night or two there, then commence another sweep. But it was like hunting for needles in a haystack and I am sure I missed being with the convoys. The weather was such that hail, sleet and snow often swept over the bridge, and the ship's superstructure sometimes iced up badly. On looking back, however, I believe I enjoyed the experience and made the most of things as they were. I cajoled groups of officers to come for long walks or climbs round the crags once we reached the shelter of the fiord, and on one occasion I even organised a dance. The latter was a great success, despite the fact that we all had some difficulty with communication — the locals, of course, being Danish.

* * *

On the subject of relaxation more generally, the Navy's policy was to allow sea-going personnel leave whenever reasonably possible. I certainly had my share; and, to facilitate travel, the RAN at Australia House would issue me with up to four rail warrants to any stations in Great Britain, in each 12 months.

Sometimes leave would be for only a few days, sometimes a week, or, more rarely, when a ship was refitting, it extended to a month. Always I met fine people and visited interesting places. These included the north of Scotland, Wales, the English Lake District, the Cotswolds, Northern Ireland, Cambridge and of course London, where I frequently experienced air raids. I walked along portion of the Pennine Chain; climbed Penyghent, Cross Fell and Ben Wyvis; hunted with the Old Berkeley; helped on a farm near Huntingdon; met and dined at his home with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir Basil Brooke and Lady Brooke; stayed with the ship's doctor Chris Savage twice in Essex and sailed with him on the Blackwater River, and invariably seemed fortunate enough to meet up with enchanting English girls. One didn't have to be absent from one's base to find good company though, for we had many fine friends among the Wrens, Wren officers and the QARNNS nursing sisters. Besides many parties with them, some of us would go to the free Sunday afternoon symphony concerts in Liverpool, conducted by Malcolm (later Sir Malcolm) Sargent.

One unusual leave incident perhaps deserves special mention. I was travelling north on a night train (to Penrith I think), my final destination being a private household on the edge of the Lakes District. A couple of fairly senior looking Army officers, so well wrapped up that I couldn't tell their rank, opened up conversation with me.

They learnt where I was heading and one of them (who turned out to be a half-colonel) came up with a fine suggestion. He said that we'd be arriving at the station in the middle of the night. Instead of my having to huddle in the waiting room till morning, then appear too early before my hostess, his suggestion was that I should come to their mess with them, have a comfortable sleep, then look round next morning, after which I would be driven right to the house where I was to be a guest.

I accepted this invitation of course, and my short stay proved to be both pleasant and memorable. They were officers of a Commando training unit and my "look round next morning" included a jeep ride, up one of the adjacent fells! There was no hood on the vehicle, so I had an excellent view. On the steep ascent I gripped my seat hard, so as not to go out over the back, while turf and pieces of rock flew out from under the wheels, and the jeep slewed from side to side. Then on the descent there seemed to be nothing in front of me. I felt we would never be able to stop!

I am sure those Commandos were giving me "the treatment": something to remember. In fact they succeeded! Before I left, the CO said he'd like me to sign the visitors' book. Then, "just as a formality" he asked me to show him my identity card! He took the opportunity to check my photograph and my signature.

* * *



HMS "Havelock" as the author so well remembers her.

The first few months of 1945 gave clear indications that the war in Europe was almost over. From the moment I sensed that, my thoughts turned more and more to the Pacific. So I was pleased when the one and only request I ever made to leave "Havelock" was approved. With my knowledge and concurrence, Ray Hart had recommended me for the position of First Lieutenant of a new fleet destroyer in the Pacific. I accordingly received instructions to undertake a destroyer gunnery officer's course at Whale Island, Portsmouth, before proceeding to HMS "Golden Hind" — the RN base in Sydney, Australia.

My last day in "Havelock" was 9 March 1945. I had served in the ship for 3½ years — far longer than any other officer. The reason for this was that when asked what I would like to do next by departing captains, I had each time requested (except when Ray Hart left) to remain in "Havelock". This was because I thought it a splendid ship, I liked the officers and crew, and I certainly had no desire to be in a shore job.

As a send-off, the officers took me to London. It was a fine gesture and we had a gay time; but it is not the London farewell that I remember best: it is the ship herself and all those officers and men with whom I shared active sea service for so long.

After I returned to Australia, I received a letter from "Havelock's" Navigating Officer, a Lieutenant RN, whom we called "Pilot". He was letting me know that I had left "too soon", for the ship had just been on a victory visit to Norway and been feted in a way which I would have enjoyed. His letter portrays the friendship and good-will which prevailed among us all. For this reason I now include part of it here:

HMS "Havelock"
C/o GPO, London
3rd June, 1945

Dear old Digger,

I'm afraid this letter is long overdue but . . . now I have something worth telling you . . . We have just been to Norway! Leaving Liverpool a week ago with SS "Andes" and the "Hesperus". "Andes" had the whole of the Norwegian Government on board. We reached . . . Oslo Fjord early on Thursday morning and were treated to three hours of beautiful scenery up to Oslo. All the way up the Fjord the route was packed with small boats with cheering Norwegians who were scattering flowers of all descriptions in our track! We reached Oslo at 1100 . . . As we approached the jetty, all we could see was a mass of cheering people. The jetty . . . was right in the centre of the town alongside the Town Hall and main street! We had no sooner secured than the ship was covered with a seething mass of blondes!! It took me half an hour to get from the bridge to the wardroom!

Doc and I rapidly got organised and were supplied with a large Ford V-8 tourer by the headquarters of the Home Front resistance movement . . .

It's impossible to tell you all we did during Thursday and Friday but it was a non-stop session, interspersed with motor drives . . . The party on Thursday night . . . finished at 0730 [and] by 1000 the first visitors were arriving [again]. And so it went on all day, sometimes ashore sometimes on board until we sailed at 0800 yesterday . . . The ship left covered in flowers and Norwegian flags . . . So as you can see old boy, once again "Havelock" made its mark. We all wished very much that you could have been with us . . .

Everything is very peaceful here now, and it seems strange going around with navigation and other lights showing at night.

I hope by now you've had or are having a grand leave. We all miss you very much. Drop me a line sometime.

All the best old lad.
Yours very sincerely,
Pilot.

CHAPTER 11

MARRIAGE — THEN CAMBRIDGE

After leaving HMS "Havelock" I went through a period of terrible deflation. For the previous three and a half years I had been completely absorbed in my naval work and I had adapted fully to the life associated with the ship. Whether at sea or ashore, whether I was among friends or making new ones, the fact that I belonged to that ship evidently gave me a sense of security which I didn't appreciate until I was suddenly bereft of it. The bottom seemed to have fallen out of everything and I felt as though I was just wandering round, lonely.

I completed the destroyer gunnery officer's course at Portsmouth, during which time I lived aboard the one-time Royal yacht "Prince Albert"; but I didn't really have my heart in what I was doing.

Even when I made a quick trip to Cambridge, to sort out some details about my future study, which I hoped would be undertaken there, I felt as though I was acting mechanically — not with zest. V-day was celebrated while I was in Cambridge and I joined the press of people in the market square — but I didn't know a soul, and to me it all seemed flat.

The feeling of let-down remained with me for quite a few months. It was very real and I am sure that it made me more sympathetic than I might otherwise have been to university students, who, in future years, had this kind of problem — mostly over their studies. In retrospect, I think I know how I could have avoided the problem; but discussion of that will be more appropriate in chapter 15.

I made the trip back to Australia in a transport crowded with troops, most of whom had not long been released from prisoner-of-war camps in Germany. This cheered me up considerably, not only because I was on my way home, but because the tricks those characters thought up to outwit some bureaucratic rule would cause anyone to smile. I remembered again what a race apart the Aussie digger is!

Once I reached Sydney, my first act was to contact Marnie Watt. I couldn't assume that after all the time I had been away she would welcome me back wildly; nor, I suppose, could I be certain how I would feel when we met. At least we were still firm friends — as shown by our non-stop letter writing. As my arrival would be a complete surprise, I decided to phone first. From then on, it was just as though I had never been away. We took up all our old pursuits, and so started for me a really happy period.

I settled into HMS "Golden Hind", the Royal Naval barracks which were situated immediately opposite the racecourse at Warwick Farm. When the Commodore-in-Charge discovered that I was an Australian, he set me up with an office, and asked me to assist British sailors who were interested in settling in Australia. I was known as the "Re-settlement in Australia Officer"! This meant finding out all about the latest government immigration rules and conditions, ex-servicemen's privileges, transport to Australia of families, etc. Many of the things I discovered were a help to me, too, in my re-settlement!

A fine aspect of that period was the fact that my brother Jim, who had recently returned from years of overseas service, was also in Sydney. He was then a Lieut-Colonel and acting CO of a military hospital at Herne Bay. We were able to get together quite often — sometimes just the two of us, sometimes in a foursome in the city at night. Once or twice he was my guest for a meal at "Golden Hind", and I felt very proud to be entertaining this tall officer of high rank. At one stage we had two or three days' leave together at Bowral, where Jim was keen to play golf. We hired some clubs for me, and, as I had never taken up golf, his playing with me was a genuine display of brotherly patience! One of the few times I have ever been to the races was with Jim. We went out to Randwick one Saturday afternoon, while Marnie Watt, with whom I spent most of my off-duty hours, was playing basketball: she was then captain of the university women's team.

At that stage Marnie already had her B Sc degree and was about half way through her honours year in Botany. Before long we became engaged and since we planned to go to Cambridge as soon as possible after our marriage, she decided to withdraw from her honours programme. I was pleased at this sign of the importance she was attaching to the engagement; in fact I probably abetted her. Looking back now, however, I think I was selfish, and should rather have encouraged her to finish the year. I am sure that she would have done well, and our other plans could have been fitted in somehow. My change in attitude on this point over the last 30-odd years no doubt partly reflects society's different outlook on women's roles; but as well, I now think that a good working rule is always to finish a project once it is started.

It says much for Professor Watt's character that he accepted without fuss his daughter's decision to withdraw from her university honour's year. I know that her withdrawal would have disappointed him; but he respected her judgment and he certainly never tried to enlist my aid in seeking a change to the timing of our programme. He was a kindly gentleman and a fine father for Marnie.

Robert Dickie Watt was born into a farming family in Kilmaurs, Ayrshire, Scotland on 23 April 1881. His elder brother Hugh studied for the ministry and in his later years was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and Professor of Church History at New College, Edinburgh. His sisters all married and remained in the UK. Robert, however, was to be the traveller of the family. During a distinguished career in agricultural science at the University of Glasgow and the West of Scotland College of Agriculture he was awarded a gold medal, gained a Carnegie Research Scholarship and an MA degree.



Professor Robert Dickie Watt (left), foundation professor of agriculture in the University of Sydney, and his wife Madge about 1916.



Bathing party about 1920. Prof Watt second from left; his wife Madge kneeling in water in front of him.



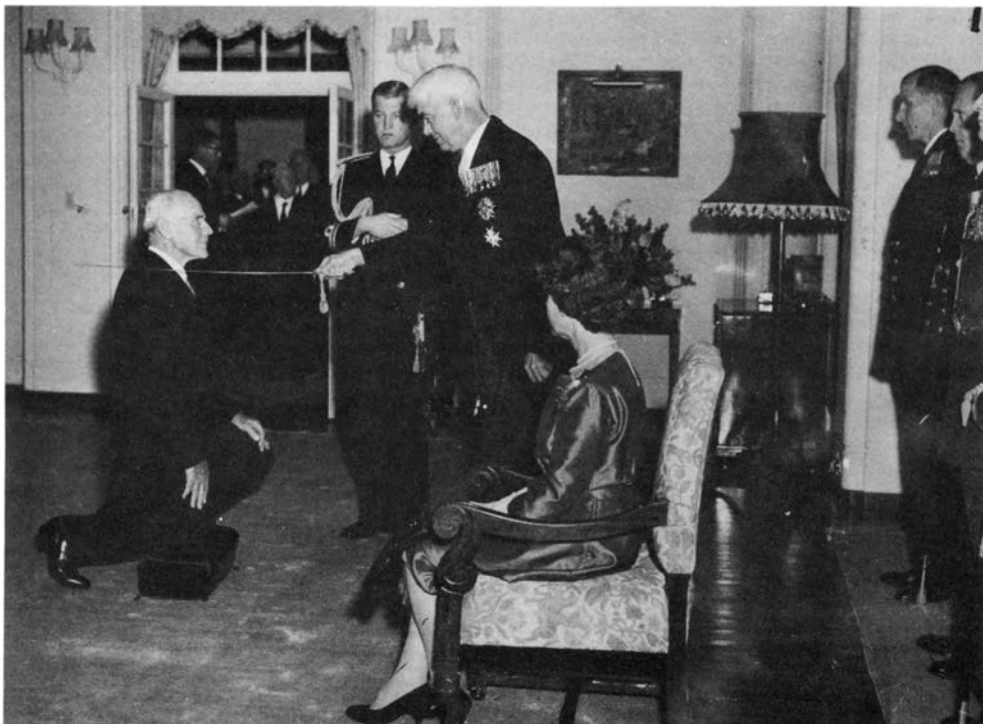
Robert Dickie Watt with his three first-born grand children at Pitt Water, Sydney, Nov 1951.

He then spent two years at Rothamstead Research Station in England before proceeding to the Transvaal where he became Chief Chemist in the Department of Agriculture. In 1910, when only 29 years of age, he was appointed Professor of Agriculture at the University of Sydney. He occupied that position — the first Chair of Agriculture to be established in Australia — with great distinction, until his retirement 36 years later.

Some examples of R.D. Watt's service and distinctions include: member of the Senate of Sydney University; trustee of the Public Library of NSW for 30 years; member of the Council of CSIR (later CSIRO) and chairman of its NSW committee for 20 years; foundation member, President and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science; President of the Royal Society of NSW; Farrer Memorial Medallist in 1950; published a book, "Romance of the Australian Land Industries" in 1955; and distinguished himself in many more ways. For example, he was active in team work which ultimately defeated the prickly pear scourge, and he was chairman of a committee which at one time saved the banana industry from virtual extinction by bunchy-top disease. But perhaps most of all he is remembered for his teaching. As a measure of the esteem in which he was held by his old students, so many of whom reached positions of eminence, they and other well-wishers commissioned a portrait painting by the artist Murch of Robert Dickie Watt, which hangs in Sydney University.

On retirement he was made an Emeritus Professor and in 1960 he was knighted for his distinguished services to education and to agriculture.

Sir Robert Watt died on 10 April 1966. He is survived by his widow, Marjorie (Madge), daughter of the later John Forsyth and Majory (nee Dymock), whom he married in 1916, and his only child, Marnie, my wife.



Emeritus Professor R.D. Watt being dubbed Sir Robert by the then Governor General in 1960. (Photo: Manuka Photographic Centre, Canberra).

In 1945 as the war against Japan was so obviously coming to an end, I applied formally for demobilisation from the Navy. This was approved in principle, and on 28 August 1945 I was transferred back to the RAN — indeed to the old Brisbane depot, where my service had begun — to await discharge. During part of quite a substantial period of leave, Marnie came to Queensland and stayed with my mother and me; then all three of us also had about a week together at a guest house at Palm Beach, near Sydney.

Marnie and I were married on 20 October 1945 — in the church where we first met some four years earlier. A signal from the Navy, authorising my demobilisation, effective from 14 November 1945, had



The author and his bride, Marnie (nee Watt), following their marriage in St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Macquarie St, Sydney, 20 Oct 1945. Best man and groomsman: brothers Bert (left) and Jim Yeates respectively. Bridesmaids: Pat Kay (left) and Morjory Robertson.



The bride and bride-groom leave the church.

arrived that day and was read out at the wedding reception. So, following the honeymoon, we set about trying to speed up our departure for Cambridge — for that is where my deferred scholarship was to take us, and indeed where I had already been accepted.

My father's death on Christmas Eve 1945 was a sad blow. Marnie and I were living in a small flat in Brisbane at that time, so at least we were able to go to Toowoomba to help my mother and attend the funeral.

In setting off to England with my bride, finance was something that needed close attention. I had paid off my debt to Emmanuel College some years previously, and had managed to save several hundred pounds from my Navy pay. The Walter and Eliza Hall Travelling Fellowship was worth about £250 per annum less tax, and was paid six-monthly in advance. Fortunately, through Professor Lee's good offices, the CSIR agreed to contribute a further £150 per annum less tax. I also successfully applied for an Australian Government Post-war Reconstruction Training Scheme (PRTS) Overseas Scholarship;



Passports and tickets in the bag, a walk along Sydney streets to join the "Rangitata" for passage to England, 2 Feb 1946.

however, news of that came long after our arrival in England, and I eventually received the difference between the full amount of that scholarship and my other emoluments. That brought in another £100 per annum. Overall, therefore, what had at first looked a tight situation, turned out to be comfortable. After paying for our two sea passages to England, we had about £500 capital. With frugal living, and even though our first child was born in Cambridge, we maintained our reserve of capital at about the £500 level throughout our stay in England.

We sailed from Sydney on 2 February 1946 in the SS "Rangitata" — a ship I had once escorted, east-bound across the Atlantic, loaded with troops. Now I was a civilian in this equally crowded ship. It was one of the earliest post-war passenger vessels to sail for the UK and conditions were austere, to say the least. Marnie was in a cabin with seven other women and I was in a dormitory which slept two or three hundred men in row upon row of rough pine triple-decker bunks. The only "wardrobe" for me was a nail or two banged into the bed-head!

These were pretty severe travelling conditions for a newly married couple; but we did our best to survive. At least we could eat together! There was very little hope of ever finding one empty deck-chair — let alone two together, so most afternoons we would curl up in a rug, under one of the life boats. Later, when a ship's concert was held, a couple put on an act — obviously in imitation of us: the struggling that went on under the actors' rug was of course grossly exaggerated, but it brought the house down and we had as good a laugh as anyone.

After landing at Tilbury and making our way to London, we had a happy train trip to Cambridge, realising that we were now on the threshold of a whole new life. At 10 o'clock that same night we settled into the comfortable Garden House Hotel beside the River Cam, determined to be up early next morning, looking for somewhere suitable to live.

The local Council told us that there were several thousand people on the waiting list for a house. However, this didn't deter us. We bought second-hand bicycles, obtained a good map and started exploring some of the delightful villages on the outskirts of Cambridge. Most of the house agents were very pessimistic; but on only our second day in Cambridge, one well-disposed agent looked us up and down and informed us that he might have the very thing. He said that the owners of a manor farm-house, five miles out of Cambridge, had converted one wing into a small self-contained furnished flat, and were waiting for a "quiet young couple" to come along. We, of course, were very excited on hearing this good news—and desperate to get to the place and clinch the deal before anyone else out-manoeuvred us.

It was arranged that we were to visit the Manor Farm next morning and, when the time came, everything worked perfectly. The owners were friendly, farming folk who seemed quite excited at the prospect of having an Australian couple as tenants. The place itself was a picturesque, old Elizabethan building, on a curving drive-way some 300 yards long, with the church and Rectory at one end, the Manor house at the other and the Manor Farm through which the River Cam ran, behind. Just out of sight around the corner was the tiny village of Little Shelford with one store which also served as a post-office, a village pump, a cluster of cottages, a pub and its own village green. The green was used for cricket and was bounded on one side by the River Cam. The rent for our attractive little cottage in this wonderful setting was £2 per week!



Enchanting walks in every direction from Little Shelford.

Moving in and exploring the district were the next big excitements, and fortunately my work did not interfere with this, for the university was in recess.

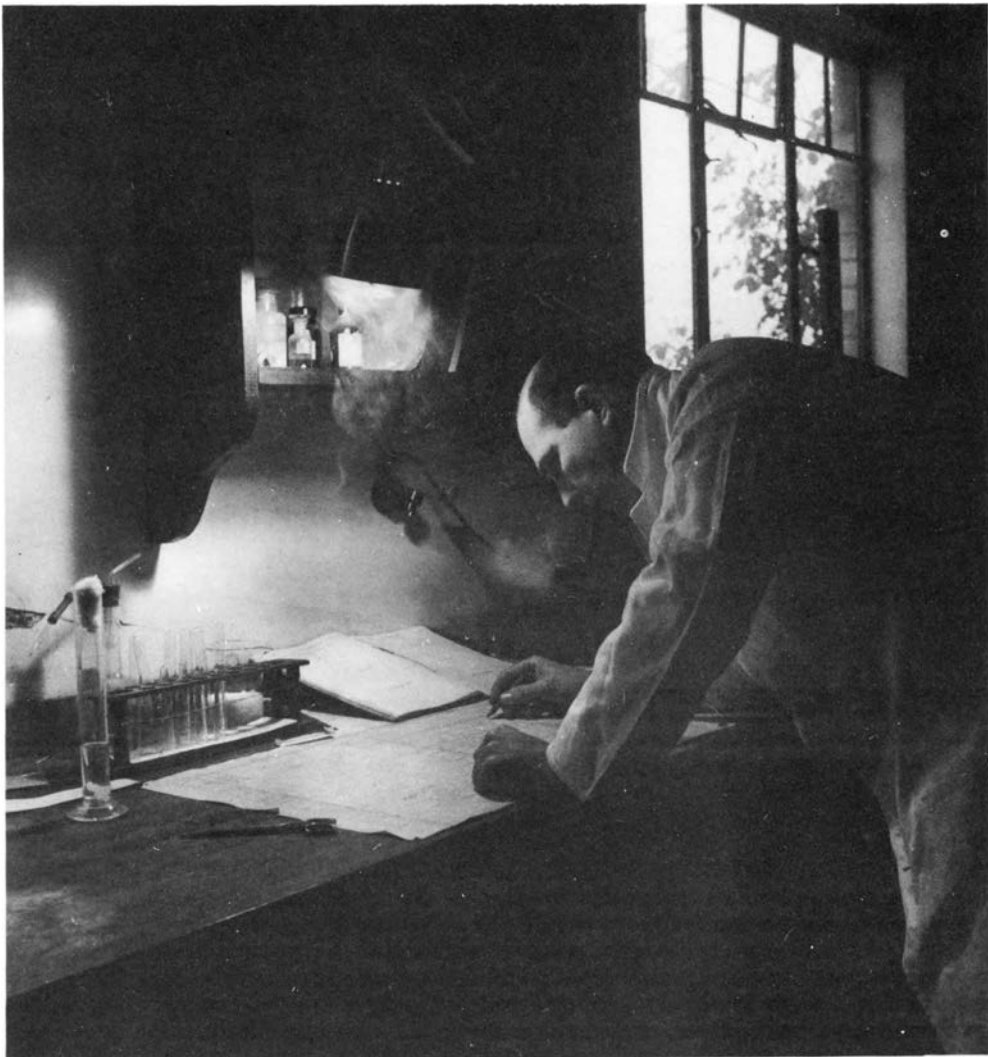
Our new home comprised a ground floor living room, kitchen, and pantry with an adjoining woodshed and a septic-toilet system; then up a tiny winding staircase there was an upper story bedroom with two casement windows — one looking out over the farm, the other giving a wide view from the Rectory to the Manor. But we could find no bathroom! We soon discovered that when bath day came round, the

procedure was to take a tin hip bath down from its hook on the kitchen wall, put it on the red tiled kitchen floor in front of the stove, and add hot water heated in every vessel which could be fitted on the stove! The farmer said that I could cut wood fuel from certain trees on his land and he gave me a carpenter's hand saw with which to do it. With our ration of coal and much cutting of firewood by me, we managed to keep two fires going most of the time in the winter months — one in the kitchen and one in the living room. Nevertheless we sometimes felt the intense cold — especially during the winter of 1946-7 when snow lay thick on the ground for three months, without a thaw.

We had a front and a back garden, and the latter even included a fenced-off portion in which I was allowed to grow vegetables.

I already knew and loved England very well from my war-time leave periods; but it was new to Marnie and she revelled in everything we saw and did. In every direction from Little Shelford there were enchanting walks. Then, further afield, there were hosts of other villages to explore on our bikes. Quite early in our stay we even put our bikes on the train to a destination in Suffolk, cycled across the Fens to Ely to see the Cathedral, then entrained again for Cambridge.

Once my work started I found that I quickly fell into the ways of research and study again. There were many tales in those days about ex-servicemen not being able to "settle down", so either the stories were exaggerated or I was lucky.



At work in a lab at the Animal Research Station, of which my Supervisor, Dr Hammond, was Director. The Station was on the Huntingdon Road, opposite Girton College. (Photo: Illustrated, London).

I was enrolled as a PhD candidate in the School of Agriculture and my supervisor was Dr (later Sir) John Hammond, CBE, FRS — a man whose work was then, and still is, known and respected by animal scientists in every corner of the world. I was granted MA status on the basis of my previous studies so, though I was attached to a College (Jesus), I was excused living in residence.

After a good deal of preliminary thought and reading, plus one false start, I eventually settled on a piece of research which Dr Hammond approved and which turned out "trumps" for me. The work broke new ground, and the result was so decisive and interesting that it received wide coverage in the lay press and other media, as well as in scientific literature.

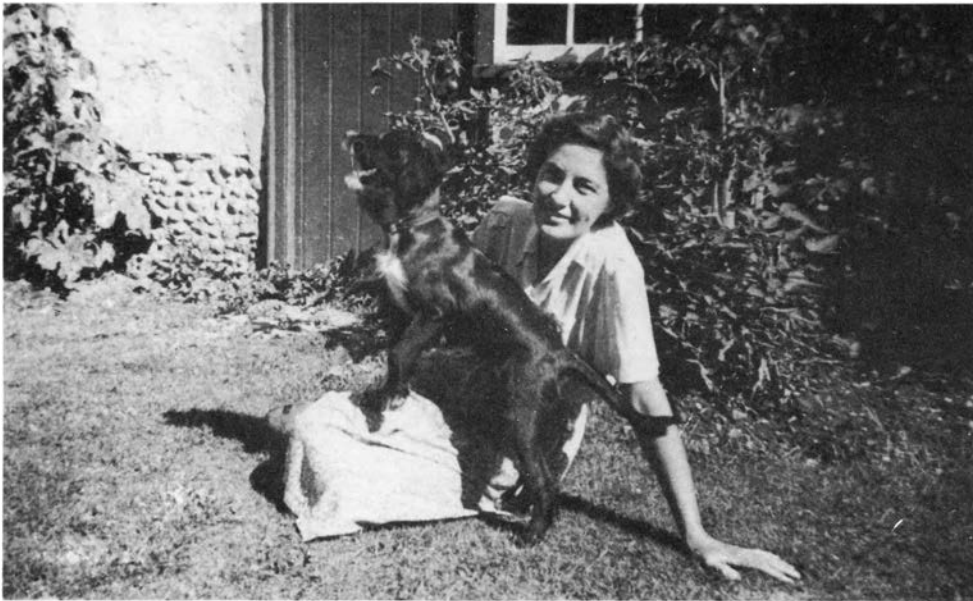
Very briefly, I set out to try and find why the British breeds of sheep lamb at one particular season of year only, namely the spring and early summer months. Some textbooks of the time suggested that nutrition was the controlling factor; others stated that the onset of sexual activity (which is in autumn, corresponding to a spring lambing) occurred "when the nights grow cold" — thereby implying that temperature was causal. Work with poultry, a few mammals including ferrets, and, most recently of all, goats, suggested that seasonal change in the duration of daylight (and darkness) might regulate the breeding of sheep. I was very interested in this possibility and decided to test it experimentally.

Accordingly, I set up light-proof pens at the Animal Research Station (two or three miles west of Cambridge), stocked them with control and experimental groups of Suffolk ewes, and started a long photoperiodic study in which the various groups received different light:dark schedules. Rams were also treated in individual pens, and their semen production and quality monitored.

In case this experiment should fail, I concurrently conducted a "safe", back-stop piece of work with cattle — but though useful to my training, it was not needed for my thesis. In addition, I went to numerous lecture courses in my special areas of interest. All this added up to quite a busy schedule, but I enjoyed the work and made many friends.

One of the remarkable things about Cambridge has always been its wealth of great scholars and scientists. Down almost every corridor in the various departments, famous names could be seen on the doors and all that was needed for an interview was a knock and a succinct statements of one's problem. Most of these great people lived quite simply too; they rode to work on a bicycle, wore homely grey flannel trousers and a tweed jacket, and spoke in a quiet way — all so different from their counterparts in the top echelons of big business. I well recall, for instance, how the great Sir Ronald Fisher would gladly chat to some of us following his 5 o'clock genetics lecture to post-grads, then suggest we go and discuss some point further over a mug of beer.

While my work was proceeding, things were also busy on the home front and round Little Shelford. We became known in the village and, far from being "reserved" as the English are sometimes labelled, folk in all walks of life were helpful, hospitable and kind to us.



Marnie Yeates, with recently acquired puppy, in the back garden of the Elizabethan Manor Farm cottage which we occupied in Little Shelford, Cambridge.

I was invited to attend cricket practices; then, when the matches started, I found I was selected to play for Little Shelford. This became a regular event and I had two whole seasons of fine cricket on various village greens with that team.

An incident connected with the cricket remains very clearly in my memory. Quite soon after I had started playing in the matches, the groom from the Manor arrived at our house one day. He presented his master's compliments, gave us a basket of apples and asked if we would care to come to tennis on the next Saturday afternoon. We thanked him very much but I had to decline because I was playing cricket for Little Shelford. I can see to this day the shocked look on the groom's face — shock presumably that the village cricket could take precedence over an invitation to the Manor! At anyrate, our neighbours at the Manor were very gracious about this, and thereafter asked us to tennis on Sundays. Besides tennis, they invited us to many other functions and even arranged tickets for us to see a test match at Lords. In return, we could do little more than invite them to our tiny cottage, but they seemed to enjoy that.

Besides his friendship and hospitality I remember two other things about the owner of the Manor house. One was that, having learnt I had been in the Navy, he thereafter called me "Commander" Yeates when making introductions. I did my best to disillusion him, pointing out that I had been a mere lieutenant and was no longer even that — but my protestations were always brushed aside. The other thing I remember was the loving care he bestowed on his grass tennis court. It was impeccably kept, but a pair of ducks which were allowed to roam in the garden sometimes wandered across, and occasionally soiled the court. With eagle eye he would see this; and, even when tennis wasn't on, execute a swift clean-up. Once we even saw him following the ducks across the court, dust-pan and broom in hand! I learned years later, with sorrow, that he had been killed in a hunting accident.

Fairly early in our stay we bought a cross-bred puppy, of Labrador type. This animal loved accompanying us on our walks through the woods or down by the river, but it was rather frowned on by the farmer — solely, I fear, because it was not a pure-bred.

Soon after that, too, we took the big step of buying our first motor car. I don't think the farmer thought it pure-bred either! Our finances were sound enough to stand a very modest purchase and with the small private petrol ration we would get, plus some extra petrol coupons that my work would provide, we thought the venture worth while. This turned out to be an understatement indeed.



Morning shave, 17 June, 1946, at a camp-site in an East Anglian lane. The car: our faithful Morris Cowley (1926 model) purchased for £ 26.0.0.

The car we bought was a 1926 model Morris Cowley costing £ 26. It was standing in a yard, with flat tyres, looking generally decrepit; but when I turned the ignition to "magneto" and swung the crank handle, the engine throbbed into instant life and continued to run sweetly. The purchase was confirmed there and then, subject to the tyres being put right and the car giving a satisfactory road test the next day.



Cambridge bound, in John Constable's country, at the end of a three-day camping trip through Norfolk and Suffolk.

We drove that car home very proudly, then effected improvements to it as time permitted. Despite a few rude remarks from small boys, especially when the squeeze-bulb horn was used, the car served us faithfully during the rest of our stay. Finally, when we left England, I sold it to my good friend, Graeme Wilson, the Rhodes Scholar from my under-grad days, who was by then at Oxford. When he, in turn, left England, he sold it to two Australian joint owners in Oxford. One of these latter was a classical scholar, and I understand he took the car to Europe where he followed Hannibal's route over the Alps! This record bears testimony to my garage man's intuitive recognition of quality, for, when he first opened up the bonnet, he exclaimed with reverence: "That's a Hotchkiss engine!" I didn't know what he meant then, but I think I understood the intent later.

* * *

In April 1947 our first child, a son, was born. As if this was not excitement enough, the next month was to bring fantastically good results in my research. My main group of experimental ewes, numbering 12 in all, started to come on heat — first one or two, then more, and by the time two or three weeks had passed, every one of them had become sexually active, as shown by service from a vasectomized (sterile) ram which ran with them. This was quite outside the normal breeding season of Suffolk sheep; not a single animal of the control group came on heat.

I decided to keep three of the 12 ewes with the sterile ram, to see how long this induced breeding season lasted, and to mate the other nine with a fertile ram — to see if normal pregnancies would ensue and if lambings would follow. The ewes did conceive and the lambs were born in October. This was a complete reversal of the normal time of year for lambing, and the only possible explanation of it was the reversed light-darkness regime to which the animals had been subjected prior to mating.

In consultation with my supervisor, it had been considered appropriate, as lambing time approached, to make a brief, first report of this work to the scientific journal "Nature". This was done and the article appeared just before the lambs were born.

One or two news reporters in Fleet Street who saw the "Nature" article were interested and rang from London to ask if they could come and report the story. I checked with Dr Hammond about university protocol in such matters and he said to give the reporters any help I could — that most times all too little prominence was given to the extension of agricultural research.

The "London Times" and the "Daily Mirror" were among the first newspapers to print a photo of the lambs and publish a brief statement about the work and some of its implications. Then followed a bewildering succession of enquiries. I was literally besieged by reporters and photographers from dailies, weeklies, newsreels, the BBC and the International Wool Secretariat. One amusing side-light to this,

which I heard later, was that the lady who was secretary in the office which administered my PRTS scholarship in London had seen one of the newsreels. I was told that she burst into the office in Australia House next morning and said "I saw our Mr Yeates on a newsreel last night and they called him the man who was going to put an extra chop on the British breakfast table!"

The news was cabled abroad too, including to Australia, so that even my old home town newspaper in Toowoomba carried the story, with a bit added about my being a "local boy"!

I was cabled from the USA by newspaper people wanting the "latest figures on new lambs born" and letters soon started to arrive from Spain, Argentina, other foreign countries and many from the UK. Some of the letters asked questions, some told of other odd sheep breeding experiences, one even expressed concern that I might be "interfering with nature".

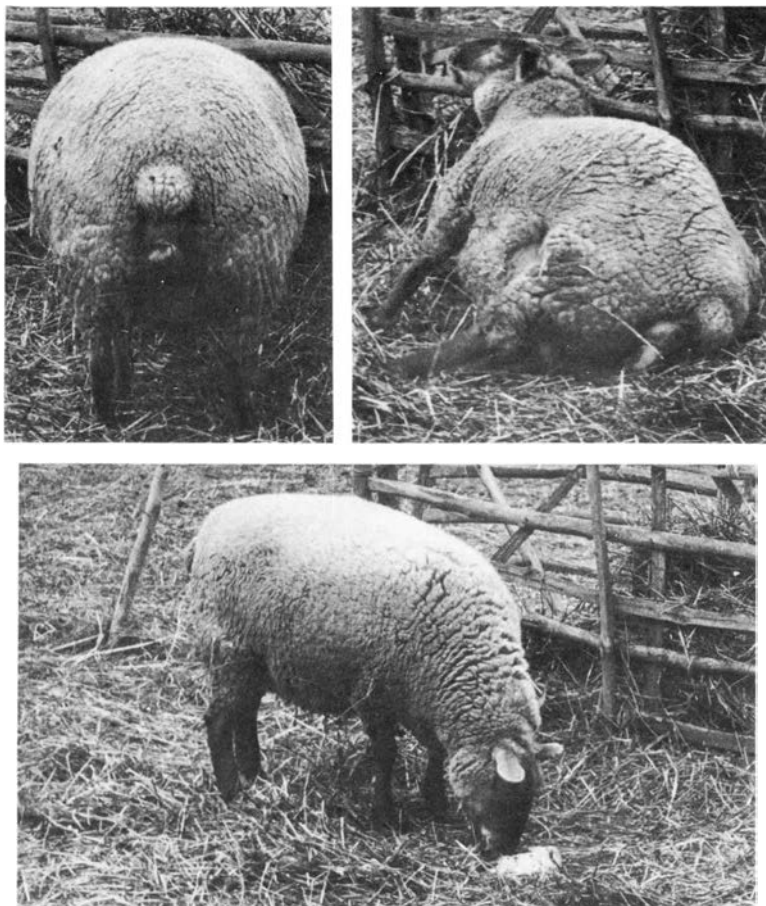
When the publicity died down, my big remaining task was the writing of my thesis. At least during all the furore I had gained some fine photographs from the professionals, with which to illustrate the thesis; one or two others, less "scientific" in flavour are reproduced, with acknowledgement, in this book.

One remarkable, and at the time unexplained, result of the experiment was that the out-of-season lambs were grossly under-weight at birth. The ewes were well fed and in good condition; the lambs were carried to full term; tests showed no vitamin A deficiency in ewes or lambs; and there was no suggestion of any disease. All I could do at the time, therefore, was to report the fact in my thesis — but the solution to this problem became one of my research aims later, in Australia.



The lambs born out of season, though full term and well nourished, averaged only a little more than half normal weight. These twins, for instance, weighed only 4 lb each, instead of a more normal 8 or 9 lb each. (Photo: Illustrated, London).

One day at the Animal Research Station, I had a camera with me when one of the experimental ewes was lambing. I hid myself and managed to secure three photos. By coincidence, the birth which I photographed proved to be of a full-term lamb weighing only 2 lb — the lowest recorded birth-weight in the whole series. Enlargements made of these previously unpublished photos are reproduced here. Although this lamb was dead when I went to it, the ewe moved away and gave birth to a second, (twin), live lamb weighing 3 lb. The normal average birth weight of Suffolk lambs is 8-10 lb so these low birth weights and the photographs illustrate the nature of the problem to which I later applied myself. Incidentally this problem was soon to be shown by colleagues in Australia to have special significance in the hot sheep breeding areas of north Queensland.



Birth of an incredibly small lamb. The midget lamb problem was later found to be a consequence of raised body temperature.

Once I began the writing of the thesis it progressed reasonably quickly, partly because I had earlier done all my reading of relevant literature and reference collecting in the wonderful library facilities which existed in Cambridge. All the same, I was under pressure towards the end and glad that I had taken the chance earlier (in August) to show Marnie something of Scotland in our trusty old car. We travelled via the Lake District and of course had our young son and heir with us. Whereas we had often camped in the car on short trips before the baby's arrival, we now required more substantial shelter. To this end, we depended on obtaining inn or guest house accommodation, without booking, as we went along. At the first place at which I enquired, I detected some hesitation on the proprietor's part when he saw our old car and our extremely homely accoutrements. I therefore developed a more skilful and highly successful technique in obtaining our night's lodging. This was to park the car out of sight before asking for accommodation; then, while the request was being pondered, volunteer casually that "a lock-up garage would be appreciated if possible". This invariably worked wonders; but whether a garage was provided or not, there

were some long faces when our "outfit" finally came into view and we commenced to unload.

Being anxious to have a job to go back to in Australia, I applied for a position which was advertised while I was working on my thesis. The post was with CSIR who required someone to devise an objective method for defining the quality and composition of beef carcasses. Although not closely related to the work I had been doing, I was confident that I could quite quickly meet the requirements, and after the lapse of a couple of months I learnt that my application had been successful. It was agreed that the appointment would commence in England, as soon as my university commitments had been met, and that I would work for a short time in the UK, finding out all I could there about my new assignment, before returning to Australia.

When I finally had my thesis typed, bound and given its title in gold letters on the spine, I am sure I felt the same pleasure and pride which all Ph D candidates come to know. But at Cambridge University there is another requirement: to face an oral examination, and this was still before me.

After submitting the thesis I was informed that my oral examination had been arranged, and that I should present myself for that purpose at the School of Agriculture on an appointed day and hour. My two examiners were distinguished reproductive physiologists — each a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. One was F.H.A. Marshall of Cambridge, the other A.S. Parkes of London.

I wore a gown to the exam and found that both examiners had done so too. Then came about half-an-hour of close and probing questioning, after which I went home reasonably satisfied and confident.

In remarkably quick time I received the great news that I had met all requirements, and the Ph D degree would be conferred on me. Dr Hammond was delighted and said that he would like to see the thesis published in its entirety in the *Journal of Agricultural Science, Cambridge*. This in fact was arranged, and the work appeared as the first 43 pages of Vol 39 in 1949.

In case it might be thought that the period that my wife and I spent in Cambridge reads like some sort of fairy-tale, I must redress the balance a little by saying that everything was not straight sailing. In particular, we faced long periods when Marnie was dreadfully sick during two pregnancies — the one leading to the birth of our first child, then during my thesis write-up when our second child, a daughter, was on the way. On both occasions she had to go into hospital; but as well as that, there were weeks of illness at home on each occasion. We thought prior to these pregnancies that we knew what "morning sickness" was; but in her case the sickness seemed to go on all day, most days, during many weeks. It seems incredible to me that the medical profession doesn't know more about the physiology of this complaint and doesn't seem to be able to combat it satisfactorily. Perhaps by now it can, but it certainly couldn't in 1946-7.

However, to anyone who might be similarly afflicted, Marnie's message of cheer would be that there is apparently a good correlation between dreadful morning (sic) sickness and robust, healthy offspring.

On our last full day in Cambridge we lay on the turf at historic Fenner's cricket ground, in beautiful warm sunshine, watching the University XI play Australia. Miller and Harvey and their team-mates of that period were there and it seemed a thoroughly fitting end to our stay.

Next day, 13 May 1948, we boarded the "Strathaird". The ship sailed down the Thames in the late afternoon and we took with us many happy thoughts of England, and of Cambridge in particular. In my bag were two fine souvenirs: a copper tray, hand-beaten in a neighbouring village, and given us by our landlord at Manor Farm cottage; and an English willow cricket bat, presented to me by the Little Shelford Cricket Club. Many an innings I played with that bat in later years, and it is still doing duty — for the son of ours who was born in Cambridge 33 years ago.

CHAPTER 12

CSIRO AND SOME PRACTICAL FARMING

On returning to Australia after our two and a half years in Cambridge, I was plunged into the work in what was my first career appointment with CSIR. Earlier jobs, such as the teaching post at TAS and the hot-room research with Prof Lee, had always been recognised as temporary.

Being enthusiastic and confident, I set to work with vigour on my beef carcass assignment. It had been decided that the best place for me to do the work was at the abattoir at Cannon Hill, Brisbane. That was run by the Queensland Meat Industry Board but within the main building, CSIR (as it was then called) had a laboratory which formed part of the Division of Food Preservation and Transport and that is where I was to be located.

The slightly unusual feature of this arrangement was that since I was a research officer in the Division of Animal Health and Production, my position in the Food Pres lab always had something of the "guest" flavour about it. Further, when I wished to use any abattoir facilities, I most certainly needed the QMIB's permission. Being in that situation could, I suppose, give one an inferiority complex; but, looking back, there wasn't any serious unpleasantness about it. However, the knowledge of always having to be beholden to somebody else was certainly in my mind and was not conducive to an ideal working environment.

The abattoir people at all levels were most co-operative. The "high-ups" invariably approved any reasonable requests; all the same, before starting any new procedure or test — whether on the slaughter floor, beside the inspectors, in the chillers or in the boning rooms — I made a point of quietly letting the rank-and-file workers know who I was, what I was attempting, and why. This avoided any resentment or suspicion on their part, and in fact they often volunteered suggestions.

At Cannon Hill I had a wonderful opportunity to see a broad range of cattle types. As one way of capitalizing on this, I made a point of going to the big sale-yards, only a mile or so away, on each sale day. Cattle arrived there from far and near, and were literally of all types, ages, sexes, breeds and weights. Their origin would generally be announced at the sale (or could be ascertained) and it was fascinating to follow right through the sale and slaughter processes a consignment, say, of big S-W Qld bullocks which had been fattened on Cooper's Creek — then compare these with similar-age beasts from, perhaps, the Burnett or some other near-coastal region. I was in a position to see them killed and weighed; then make all manner of measurements when they reached the chillers; and often enough, if needed, I could obtain bone-out data.

Though making quite good progress with my work I was somewhat unsettled — even a little unhappy. Small problems arose every so often to nettle me; but perhaps more important was my feeling that the work was too restrictive for my liking. There is no doubt that the actual assignment was a challenge which I enjoyed. It is also true that I was given a free hand in undertaking my specific task the way I wanted to. The problem was, I think, that I wanted to see my task in a wider context and to be associated with issues such as supply and demand for beef, efficiency of production and marketing. That no doubt sounds presumptuous on my part and perhaps it was.

Some of the "niggly" things arose out of this attitude of mine which, (in fairness to myself) I suggest might have been enthusiasm, interest, drive, ambition. An illustration which comes to mind is that a senior man in the United Graziers' Assn invited me to membership of some committee that was being formed. It was really stimulating to have been asked and it would have been an outlet for my enthusiasm. But perhaps because it would mean going to occasional meetings, my superiors vetoed the proposal completely. In truth, I think their refusal was associated not so much with the probable absences at meetings, as with the feeling that if someone from CSIR were to be on such a committee, then the last person to be considered would be this "young colt" who would be alright when he was "broken in" (the words used by my immediate superior in one of these tussles).

The work environment (but not the work) seemed so foreign to my ways of operating, that my wife and I even discussed the possibility of going on the land. This, of course, had always been a deeply ingrained wish of mine — but I was realistic about the virtual impossibility of doing so without substantial capital. We thought about ex-servicemen's land settlement schemes and we sent for maps and details of a few of the land ballots being advertised at the time.

I remember so well, on one of the occasions when I was feeling pretty unhappy, going for a confidential "heart-to-heart" talk with Professor L.J. Teakle whose opinion I knew I would value. I told him the problem and asked if I should leave my job. His reply was emphatic: that I should first finish my assignment — then go to something else if I were still of that mind. He pointed out that to leave something unfinished, however "browned off" I might be, would always count against me; but that to finish the job — and do it well — would always be to my credit.

I accepted that advice, and how correct it was! Years later I was to offer similar counsel to unsettled students who came to my door.

All this time I had kept in close touch with my old friends at the University of Queensland and there was a happy turn to events in February 1949 when I was invited to conduct a series of lectures and practical classes for third year veterinary students. Fortunately, after diplomatic overtures were made by more influential people than myself, this was approved by CSIR. Although the equivalent of only about one day a week for one term per year was involved, this work gave me a wider interest and I really enjoyed the contact with the students, as well as planning what I believed to be interesting lectures and practical classes. The "appointment" was formalised as a part-time lectureship in the Physiology for the Production Processes. In fact, the course was very well received and I continued giving it for the rest of my quite lengthy stay in the Brisbane area.

When I was well into my second year of the CSIR work, the Chief Executive Officer paid a visit to Cannon Hill and spent an hour or so with me, talking a little about my work but more about things in general. I told him that I could see a successful end to my immediate assignment; that I was enjoying my contact, small though it was, with the Physiology Department and that I wondered if my secondment to the Physiology Department would be possible, in due course. (I knew that the new Professor viewed this idea favourably). This suggestion was to bear fruit later.

When I had compiled all the data I needed for the reporting of my Cannon Hill work I decided to be on the look-out for other appropriate appointments. I had tried unsuccessfully to obtain from my immediate superior in CSIR some indication of what my next assignment might be. The trouble was, I think, that the National Cattle Breeding Station, eventually sited near Rockhampton, Qld had not yet become a reality — and that was where my carcass appraisal work was expected to have its application. In fact my paper entitled "The quantitative definition of cattle carcasses" was published (37) before "Belmont" (the Rockhampton district property finally acquired) was even purchased, much less stocked or producing turn-off cattle for appraisal.

Because of my rather unhappy work associations and the fear that I might have to "drift round" some lab waiting for a new assignment, I applied for quite a senior academic position right in my own field of interest, at a major Australian university. But only two weeks later, a 64 acre farm at Moggill, about 12 miles from Brisbane, came on the market at a price which we could just afford. The farm was on the north bank of the Brisbane River and it also had a frontage to Pullen Creek. It was so attractive to us that we decided to buy it.

Then, after only another 10 days, when the sale was finalised and a deposit paid, a telegram arrived inviting me for an interview at the university to which I had applied! This gave me much to think about over the next couple of days; but Marnie and I agreed that I should withdraw my application for the university post. The fact that I did withdraw, when such a fine position seemed near, is evidence of the store which I set on having a farm, and the preference which my wife and I felt for living in the south Queensland environment as opposed to a southern capital city.

For a few weeks I thought about that post on which I had turned my back; but there was much to see to in my spare time at the farm, and before long the way was clear for me to move into the University of Queensland Physiology Dept on a full-time basis. This I did at the end of June 1950 — just two years after starting work at Cannon Hill.

In making this change of location, I was to remain an officer of CSIRO, as the organization had by then become known; but I was to do research of an applied physiological type, working in consultation with the Head of the School of Physiology, Professor W.V. Macfarlane.

The whole work atmosphere was now of the type which I understood. I could write an article for the rural press if I wished, whereas earlier I'd have got into trouble if I did so, without consultation and approval. I was asked to supervise the research programme of a Ph D candidate and I didn't have to seek permission to accept. I was elected to the Board of the Faculty of Agriculture, without the worry of any possible veto from above. I also gave my short course to the Vet III students, which I enjoyed. So, with a congenial work situation and the spare-time interest of the farm I settled into a very happy period.

* * *

From the time we bought the little farm I resolved never to let it interfere with my professional work. While employed full-time by CSIRO, or anyone else for that matter, I recognised that my responsibility was to serve my employer fully — not to be led into doing farm business in working hours. I can honestly say that in the seven years we owned the farm I stuck to this principle. Even if I saw that the cattle had got out when I was on my way to work, they either stayed out till I arrived home again in the evening, or I arranged by phone for somebody else to round them up. In this way my conscience was always clear.

The farm had a tiny cottage on it. This was far too small for our family which by the addition of a second daughter had by now increased to three children. We therefore rented it for a nominal sum to a pensioner couple, on the understanding that they would act as caretakers during our absence. We then set about building a modest home for ourselves, making sure that the plans would allow for later extensions. The finance for this took some arranging; but the bank finally agreed, and a building contract was signed for £2,744 (later increased by £300), part of the understanding being that I would act as

builder's labourer during my three weeks' annual leave, and that Marnie and I would undertake the entire painting of the house, inside and out, ourselves. The house was of timber construction on a concrete slab, and the skillion-type roof was of corrugated fibro cement.

Well before we took up residence, however, we started our week-end farming pursuits. Having purchased the place on a walk-in-walk-out basis, we found ourselves the immediate owners of about 12 dairy cows, two farm horses and sundry farm equipment such as a plough, harrows and scuffler. I sold the dairy stock and then commenced doing week-end farm jobs of all types. The family would all come with me on at least one of the two week-end days and we would boil the billy, and have picnic lunch in some well-chosen spot. This might sometimes be near the river, or, if the day were windy, we would more likely seek shelter in what we called the bush paddock.

These were great times, for the farm was a really beautiful place in which we found complete relaxation. The 64 acres were so disposed that we had some four or five hundred yards of river frontage. We were on the high side of the river, so we were safe from floods and we had a commanding view both up and down stream. The river bank was studded with blue gums in which we would occasionally see koalas and there was an abundance of bird life. We found that our friends liked to drive out for a visit at the week-ends, and we enjoyed seeing them.

It didn't take us long to select a site for the house, which gave lovely views of the river. Marnie even went to the extreme of working out dispositions of rooms and windows to ensure seeing the full moon reflected in the river, while lying in bed! Then, too, came the question of what name we should give our farm. I don't know which of us suggested "Havelock" — the name of my old ship — but from the moment



Our home at Moggill, after a sitting room and fire-place were added. Numerous windows gave views of the Brisbane River both up- (left hand picture) and down-stream.

it was mentioned, that is what the name became. I forthwith had a name-plate professionally painted and I took special pride in bolting it on the entrance gate myself.

Some of my practical farming ventures turned out to be far from straight forward. In this connection I think I had most trouble with the horses. I was keen to commence cultivation of a paddock which was already fenced; but to achieve this a good many week-ends of ploughing were necessary. My custom in the days before the house was built was to drive out, catch the two draught horses, harness them into the plough and on I would go with the work. But unfortunately the horses came to know this routine and cunningly avoided being caught! It was terribly frustrating chasing them round on my own and wasting precious time, so I had to erect a wing fence to facilitate yarding them. Sometimes, too, because of rain or too many visitors, the ploughing would progress so slowly that a thriving crop of nut grass would be growing on the early ploughed section by the time I was finishing the last area intended for my crop. All these problems made me thankful that I was not dependent on the farming for my living. However I enjoyed the tasks and I knew that things would be much easier once we started living on the site.



The pony had other uses besides mustering cattle.



By about 1952 the children were old enough to keep some pet sheep.

When the builder commenced work we were extra busy at week-ends, for we had agreed to supply tank-stand poles and property poles for the electricity and phone, as well as to do the house painting. We knew that if we fell behind, for example on priming the chamfer boards, the builder would press on regardless, and the job would be less thorough.

When it came to getting the poles, I was grateful for the little bit of experience I had gained at the timber camp, away back in my third year as an undergrad. We would select straight iron-barks or stringy barks of appropriate diameter from the bush paddock, then fell the trees with a hand cross-cut saw — Marnie often taking one end of the saw, if only to support its weight. Finally, after de-barking and trimming to the desired lengths, the poles would be hauled by horse and chain ("snigged"), one at a time, to their required destinations. As the house building progressed, we of course derived the satisfaction which all couples find in seeing their own first home materialise. Visitors would be walked between the studs and over the bearers, (less perilous than it might have been, because of the concrete slab), to see the location of various "rooms" — and as the visitors continued to come, either our enthusiasm was infectious or they were true friends!

At anyrate the great day came when we moved into our new home, on 14 June 1951 — three years to the very month after our return from Cambridge. But instead of one small boy as there had been with us then, there were now three very mobile children, including two girls, to explore the house and to share the delights of "trying out" double decker bunks and other unaccustomed contrivances.

After having lived in rented accommodation, we really appreciated being in our own place in such a delightful setting. There were numerous glass panels and low-set windows, so even sitting at breakfast we could see the river — or perhaps some of the cattle pass by. We had managed to buy some in-calf beef cows and by the time we moved into the house some of the calves had arrived. The elder children quickly learnt the names of the cattle and came to be very observant in spotting unusual details or events which they would then report to us.



When we entered a Hereford in the show, the judge rightly passed it by; our two daughters, however, approved. (Old Country Life photo).

Some of the cattle were stud Poll Herefords which I obtained from a fine old cattleman at Eidsvold. When I had struck what I thought was the final bargain with him, he added another in-calf cow with bull calf at foot for "good measure". He told me that whenever he was setting up an ex-serviceman with new stock he did that. In addition to these cattle, I bought locally a few cheaper dual-purpose Red Poll cows for future vealer production. The Poll Hereford bull was later used for the joining of both types of cows. We also acquired a pony for mustering and use by the children, laying pullets for egg production, and day-old chicks for future table consumption. With the addition of a dog, a few pet sheep and some geese, plus the establishment of a modest irrigated citrus orchard the farm quickly assumed a state of productivity.

* * *

While this week-end practical farming experience was being obtained, my professional work at the Physiology Department was progressing well. Additional animal pens were built and some of them fitted out for photoperiodic experiments. I successfully repeated the Cambridge light reversal experiment, this time using Merino sheep instead of Suffolks. Then I attacked the problem of the midget lambs. Not only was I curious to know why my out-of-season lambs in Cambridge had been so small; but an answer to that might explain the smallness of February and March-born lambs, which was being identified as a problem in the sheep breeding areas round Julia Creek in north Queensland.

Apart from any value the work I was doing had "per se", it fitted very well with my teaching programme with the third year vet students. It was fine to be able to show them actual experiments in progress, then to discuss the outcome and implications in lectures — often showing slides illustrating earlier findings as well.

After a few years the research was extended to cattle and results from the experiments explained some of the adaptational problems which cattle of the British breeds encounter in the tropics. Seasonal coat changes were found to be sensitive to photoperiod; and, if the animals did not shed their coat properly, as was shown to happen in an unsuitable light environment, their heat tolerance was adversely affected.

During the period that I was working on coat type in cattle I became President of the Queensland branch of the Australian Society of Animal Production. By the end of that year sufficient results were available for me to make the cattle coat research the subject of my presidential address. The work received wide coverage in the rural press, but did not appear in the scientific literature (38) until a good many months later. I was quite taken aback, therefore, when I was suddenly invited to South Africa by the Africander Cattle Breeders' Society.

The invitation came in the mail. I read the letter several times and there could be no mistake: I was invited to be a guest of the Society for two to three weeks and they would pay my air fares and accommodation. I would attend a special national exhibition of their cattle in Bloemfontein for the first week, then be taken round some of the leading Africander herds. All that I was asked to do in return was to give an address on my coat and heat tolerance work, on one night during the show week, in the Bloemfontein Town Hall.

This was a great opportunity for me to study at first hand the cattle industry of another country, climatically somewhat similar to our own. Professor Macfarlane was greatly pleased, but for such a major expedition I knew I would have to obtain CSIRO approval, and I was uncertain how I would fare in that. I made the request and somewhat grudgingly was allowed to go, provided it was regarded as "leave without pay": it was made pretty clear to me that my being invited was irregular.

I did go and the trip was indeed a great experience. I brought back information and colour slides which were helpful to me in my teaching and research for years to come. Because the return flight's departure was delayed I had several extra days in Pretoria where I spent some time with Ralph Hirzel, the South African meat industry scientist, and I was also asked by Professor J.C. Bonsma to give a lecture to his students at the university.

Another interesting trip, this time within Australia, was to two of the Australian Estates' cattle stations north of Cloncurry, in Queensland. I was invited to be a guest speaker at a cattle managers' school to be held at Canobie. I accepted; but I asked if I may go a week ahead of the school's start — in order to familiarise myself with local conditions. This was arranged, and I stayed on Milungera for the pre-school period. I moved round with the manager and overseer on the many jobs they had in hand, I took colour slides of the cattle and the country, which were later most useful in my teaching, but most of all I learned the value of getting out and seeing at first hand the practical industry problems on which I was working.



Guests of the Africander Cattle Breeders' Socy in South Africa, May 1955: the author (left) and Dr Jao Veiga, Brazil (right). Holding the cow at Bloemfontein Show is the then Vice-President of the Socy, Mr Dodds Pringle. (Photo: Farmers' Weekly, Bloemfontein).

The following year the Australian Academy of Science held a symposium with the overall title of "Man and Animals in the Tropics" and I was elated to be not only included, but invited to give a paper. My contribution was on "Tropical seasonal cycles of mammals". At the final session, at which resolutions and recommendations were made, I argued for the safe (disease-free) import of useful tropical cattle breeds. During the discussion, the need for an island quarantine station, possibly to serve the Pacific area, was raised. It was stated that this was already under consideration by FAO. The meeting decided "that progress might be expedited if the Academy were to stress the importance of introducing new genes which could be used in breeding Australian cattle selectively for adaptation to tropical conditions". Twenty-three years later there is still no such quarantine station!

Later that same month (May 1956) I also gave a paper at the Australian Veterinary Association's Annual Conference. It is fairly rare for a non-veterinarian to be thus invited and I really appreciated the gesture from my veterinary colleagues.

I was now on the crest of the wave as far as my research went. But I sensed that the time had come to take stock and think ahead. The fact that I did that was to have a big bearing on my future career.

* * *

During all this time, we enjoyed tremendously our life on the little farm. The financial position had eased sufficiently for us to make an addition to the house which took the form of a study-sitting room with a brick fire-place. This extra space made a great difference to our comfort and we enjoyed many an evening round the open fire during winter months, either with friends or just as a family.

In August 1953 we had a fourth child — this time a boy, so the sexes were equal. The older children were a great help to my wife by then, and this eased the burden for her.

The farm had plenty of "ups and downs"; but the mistakes or the misadventures were not too serious when our income was assured from my professional work. Our worst experience was from a bad bush-fire which swept through the property before a strong westerly wind at about lunch time one day. Marnie, who was without transport, rang me and also raised the alarm among nearby neighbours as soon as she saw the fire directly approaching, driven by a howling westerly wind. Then she closed all the windows and doors, woke the children, dressed them in stout footwear, and spent the rest of the time playing water

from a half-inch hose on the western walls, eaves and roof of the house, also on as much of the grass as she could reach or had time to wet. When I arrived home, a policeman and three or four neighbours were helping her; but the smoke and heat were driving them back, and the decision was made to abandon the house. We all drove to the safety of the roadway and watched on tenderhooks as the fire and smoke swept up to the house. It was some time before we were able to return and find that our house still stood. The walls on the windward side of the house were blackened — but only by soot and embers which had adhered to the moistened walls. I believe that Marnie's handling of the situation probably saved our home that day.

For many months the blackened pastures over most of the property remained unsightly and useless, as the weather had been very dry before the fire, and rain was a long, long time in coming, after it. Fortunately, however, we had 20 acres of good feed in a paddock across the road, which escaped the fire. This just kept the cattle going.



1954 and the youngest in the group just a year old.

There is no doubt that the cattle raising proved to be the most successful part of our farming venture. Turn-off animals were always readily saleable, and not much expense was involved in maintaining the herd. We had built a crush, bail and loading ramp into the existing yards, and we performed all the husbandry tasks ourselves. After all, Marnie had obtained a distinction in zootechny in her early vet science days, so I was able to remind her of this when jobs like branding or spraying for ticks were necessary and a second pair of hands was either essential or helpful.

From poultry, too, we did quite well, though in their case a good deal was spent on feed. Initially we lost many chickens kept on open range, from hawk attacks; but we overcame this by using mobile, netted coups or "night-arcs" as English folk call them. We sold some of the produce and of course we were never short of eggs or table birds for ourselves. Our few geese were taken by dingoes and some of the pet sheep which we reared from lambs for the children were also ravaged by these predators.

As for the cultivation, we grew potatoes and maize for our own use, and several times I had tremendous crops of cowpeas and vetch as rotations. But on the whole the nut grass was too difficult to combat, so eventually I bought several hundred tubed Eucalypt seedlings from the Forestry Department. Flooded Gums and Blackbutts were the chosen species, and these were planted out, at nine foot intervals, at the rate of about 50 per weekend.

In planting my forest I must have thought we would be remaining on the farm for many more years. At any rate they thrived from the very start and the earliest planted ones were well over 10 feet tall and thick stemmed when we left the farm only a year or two later. Quite recently (1978) I made a trip back to the area to visit my old friend and neighbour, Frank Twine. He told me the trees were still there, so we both went to see what a further 21 years' growth had produced. I was really proud of my forest and very pleased to see that its new owner was evidently keeping the lovely trees.

As though the gods were determined to give us a sample of all sides to rural life, we were treated to a massive flood in March 1955. Despite cyclonic rain for several days, the local scene was fairly normal. By the time I got home from work one evening, however, the huge volume of run-off from higher up the Brisbane Valley had reached our part of the river. My first thoughts were for my pump and home-built rowing boat — both at the river's edge. But the swirling yellow water had long since covered them, and its level kept rising. The river rose to 47 feet above normal height and it flooded right out across the nearby creeks, completely covering bridges, so that we were cut off from Brisbane for four days. In some places only the very tops of telegraph poles could be seen. Nevertheless, we were amazed one morning when an

Army "duck" or amphibious vehicle arrived and one of the crew asked if we needed bread or help of any kind.

When the flood finally subsided I found my pump, unharmed, still safely bolted to its foundations.



The Brisbane River in high flood. Our row-boat, tied to a sapling, was 40 feet below the swirling water.

The boat was there too. I was specially pleased about the boat, for I had built every inch of it myself. I had secured it to a sapling by means of a strong manilla painter, tied with a bowline. The sapling, though knocked flat, had held; and the painter had been alternately untwisted and re-twisted into an incredible tangle, but it, too, had held. The boat's gunwale had been rendered "furry" from all the chafing it had received in the best part of a week's total submersion in fast-flowing, swirling water. Structurally, however, the little vessel was perfectly sound. When we sold our house, I gave the boat to the new owners — a middle-aged couple. I learned later that they, like us, experienced a bad bush-fire; however, unlike us, (and being only two in number) they made their escape by going down to the river and pulling out into mid-stream in my worthy little craft.

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The time at which I paused to take stock of the future was about nine years after I joined CSIRO. By then we had been living on the little farm just over six years. I had enjoyed my work, both by reason of its interest and the congenial atmosphere of the Physiology Department. I was in the process of writing a thesis which I hoped might merit award of the degree of Doctor of Agricultural Science in the University of Queensland. It was based on my research into the mechanism of seasonal coat changes in cattle and the relevance of that to tropical adaptation. (The thesis was submitted in April 1957 and I was admitted to the degree on 8 August 1957).

Although happy at the university, I knew that further advancement within CSIRO would be hard to achieve, partly because I was separated physically from the rest of my Division in that organisation and partly because I seemed worlds apart, in my philosophy, from my Assistant Chief of Division. At the back of my mind, too, was the old worry of being a "guest" in someone else's department.

As always at such "cross-roads", I had close discussion with Marnie, and it didn't take us long to reach full agreement on all the major issues. We both liked living on the farm, but we didn't think it should take precedence over my career. And, as to the work, there was no doubt by now that I would remain in science: all notions of going on the land as a main occupation had gone. The conclusion we reached, therefore, was that I should try to move into a new position in animal science. It was agreed that if I could find the right post, considerations such as having to leave the farm, losing superannuation benefits and even level of salary should be regarded as secondary.

The abandonment of any ideas of going on the land full-time, resulted from a combination of events and considerations. First and foremost, the research had progressed well and I felt I could contribute most to agriculture, and certainly to my family, by staying in science. Other factors were that I had rid my system of the old urge to do battle physically with the land; also that my age and family responsibilities were by now too great to be embarking on a new career which, with our meagre financial resources would certainly be hazardous and quite probably disastrous.

Soon after I reached these conclusions an advertisement appeared, calling for applications for a staff position in the newly established Faculty of Rural Science at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW. This excited me greatly, for I knew that I would like the university work and the pastoral (grazing industry) environment of New England. I also felt that my previous background should give me a good chance of appointment.

I lost no time in applying and was delighted when, on 12 Feb 1957, I received a telegram from the university offering me appointment as Associate Professor of Livestock Husbandry. I immediately accepted the position. At last I was to have a job where I would be on my own home ground (no longer someone's "guest"), where I would have unlimited scope and complete freedom in research, and where I would be a senior member of a brand new team charged with making the Rural Science Faculty a name to be reckoned with in agriculture.

Following my acceptance of the position, events moved fast. I resigned from CSIRO, sold the farm stock, arranged for some sub-division and sale of the land and, during a week-end visit, decided on the purchase of a house in Armidale. We actually left finally for Armidale (after the children came out from school) at 4.30pm on 23 April 1957. We travelled as far as Warwick that night, and on to Armidale next day.



Our family of two boys and two girls towards the end of our nine years in the Brisbane area, the last six of which were at Moggill.

By great good fortune, we sold our house and the farm block on which it was located, before leaving Brisbane. We had placed the sale of the house in several agents' hands and, purely by coincidence, two agents each asked to bring a prospective buyer to see the property at the same hour on the same day. Instead of putting one of them off, and staggering the times, we let the appointments stand.

The season was so dry at that time that the folk in the City were not allowed free use of garden hoses. So, prior to the arrival of the inspecting parties, I set the river-side pump in action and had three sprinklers operating in prominent positions round the garden when they arrived. This created a fine impression; but even more noticeable was the "competitive" effect of having two potential buyers inspecting the house and grounds at the same time — one with me and the other with Marnie. Each gave the impression of fearing that the other might get in first. I am sure that this expedited the sale, for one of the parties decided there and then to buy the house. In defence of my probity, however, I should add that I have never been one to put too steep a price on anything I have had for sale; this way, quick business has been done, and I am sure it pays off in the end.

CHAPTER 13

TEACHER: RURAL SCIENCE FACULTY, ARMIDALE, NSW.

The house we bought in Armidale had a spacious garden with many eucalypts and exotic trees. We felt that the grounds more than compensated for the slightly cramped accommodation of the house itself for our family of six. We reasoned that the house could easily be enlarged and this was in fact achieved within the first year.

Armidale is situated on the Northern Tablelands of NSW about 80 miles from the coast and 350 miles north of Sydney. Its altitude of 3450 ft gives it a cold winter climate characterised by five or six months when heavy frosts and occasional snow falls may occur. The surrounding country is devoted to sheep and beef cattle raising. The so-called "eastern fall" or escarpment of the Great Dividing Range is extremely rugged and dissected by deep gorges. It acts as the watershed between the east- and west-flowing streams. The district offers much scope for a family which enjoys outdoor pursuits, and we were destined to spend many a pleasant week-end of gem-hunting, bush walking and trout fishing.

We moved into our house, which an earlier owner had named "Trees", on 24 April 1957 and at once experienced a taste of what was in store for us in the way of Armidale's cold winter weather. A very early acquisition was therefore a heating device in addition to the one existing open fire place. We bought a "Kosi" room-heater which burnt coke and was alleged to keep alight all night. I soon found that this promise was not always fulfilled, at anyrate measured from the time that I went to bed. Sometimes the fire would die by about 4 am — and when this happened I was faced with the awful task, when frosty daylight eventually broke, of emptying out all the coke, re-starting the fire, re-loading the coke, then cleaning all the surrounds and myself of black dust and soot. In preference to such a penalty I soon opted for getting out of bed for a re-stoke of the fire each morning at about 2 or 3 am. This terrible procedure was followed every winter night for five or six years. Then oil-burning heaters became commonplace and we changed over to one of them, with very satisfactory results.

During the period of the "Kosi" we billeted two visiting University of California footballers for a few nights one winter. They were amazed at the "primitive" heating arrangements used by us Australians in a place of such cold winters as Armidale. They feared going to their bedroom at night and to the bathroom in the morning, they had never seen coke before, and they considered open fires were only used by US Indians! One of the visitors speculated on the fortune he could make if he came back to Armidale and sold pre-fabricated, insulated houses with central heating.



With the addition of two rooms, our home in College Ave, Armidale suited us well; but it was the leafy garden which we all appreciated particularly.

On my first day at the university (29 May 1957) I was shown round by Professor McClymont, the faculty's first professor and Dean. At that early date I could not know of the honoured place he was to earn as the founding father of Rural Science; but I was quickly made aware of his immense enthusiasm and energy. I had literally to run to keep up with him on our whirlwind tour. After introducing me to the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. R. B. (later Sir Robert) Madgwick, we swept on to the offices of most other senior people in the administration. So fast was the speed that I had difficulty remembering who was who. One introduction which did remain vividly in my memory, however, was when we burst in on Mr. A. J. A. Nelson, the then Director of Adult Education. It was he who, ten years previously, had, from Australia House in London, supervised my welfare during my postgrad study days at Cambridge. We immediately recognised each other and he recalled the incident of "the man who was putting a second chop on the British breakfast table" (see p142).

As I look back now on the 1957 diary which I kept at the time, I am amazed at everything that was packed into the first eight months of my new post. The immediate requirement, of course, was to start teaching livestock husbandry at second year level to the first-ever class of Rural Science students. Being

the only appointee in my subject I had to cover all species and industries including pigs, poultry, dairying and horses, with which I was less familiar than with sheep and beef cattle production. Preparation of the lectures took considerable time and on occasions I was only one or two jumps ahead of the students.

The students themselves were a cheerful and able group. They realised that we were all pioneers in this new venture together; and, if facilities were lacking, they had no hesitation in turning-to with us few staff members to improvise in order to see us through a practical class. I have often felt that they enjoyed this, and perhaps learnt more from it than their counterparts of twenty years later who had everything supplied for them.

I wanted my students to be competent in practical procedures, as well as good scientists, and to this end I arranged some afternoon classes on skills such as horse riding, killing sheep and cattle, dressing carcasses, curing the skins and even preparing raw-hide. Professor McClymont agreed with this policy, even to the point of stating that it was as important for a Rural Scientist to be able to ride a horse as it was to use a pipette. He and I defended this belief by instancing a hypothetical young graduate being asked by a stock-owner to ride out and see the latter's animals. If the graduate had to apologise for not being able to ride he would be "finished" as far as that stock-owner's confidence was concerned.



In Aug 1957 the author visited Brisbane for the Univ of Qld Conferring of Degrees ceremony, at which he received a Doctorate in Agricultural Science from the Chancellor, Sir Albert Axon (left).

The only stock available for me to use at the university in the early months were dairy cows on the univeristy farm, "Laureldale". Accordingly I arranged to take my students to the CSIRO's property at "Chiswick" for some horse riding experience. As a safety precaution I first asked if anyone had never ridden before, but there was deadly silence. Students don't like owning up to such deficiencies. The practice started and all went well for a time, some riders showing great competence and others moderate ability. Then one lad climbed into the saddle and set off, revealing at once that he was totally inexperienced. In his endeavour to stick on, he clamped his legs frantically round the horse's flanks and this made it stride out all the faster. As he went past us on the first lap of the paddock we shouted numerous instructions, but the situation only got worse and he soon lost his footing in the stirrups. Then

someone shouted to him to head for the fence. He did this and I shall never forget my anxiety nor his chalk-white face as he and his mount came on, straight at the wire fence. In fact the horse did stop and the rider managed to hang on, even though he ended up half round the horse's neck. The student had a rest — then, to his great credit and everyone's admiration, asked for another try and he never looked back in his horse riding thereafter.

Next morning, my first call was on the university accountant to ask about insurance and university liability in such circumstances. An answer was hard to obtain then; but later the rules were made clear: students engaged on duties connected with their training were covered. This gave me a good reason, when I later obtained two horses for my department, of refusing rides to non-Rural Science students.

After I was allocated some fenced-off university land, "Chiswick" transferred their horse to me on semi-permanent loan and I was given a fine chestnut mare by Maurice Wright, well-known local grazier and horseman from "Dyamberin". The mare surprised us all by producing a colt foal a few months after it arrived and I kept that, too, until it was a little over 12 months old.

One day a Rural Science student asked me if it would be alright to have a ride on one of the horses. I approved and mentioned where a saddle and bridle could be found. An hour or two later this person came back looking anxious and dishevelled. He had chosen the unbroken colt for his hoped-for ride, probably because it looked the smallest; but it had never before been saddled, let alone ridden!

After the mare foaled, I rang Maurice Wright and suggested that he should take the foal back. This was agreed, but we arranged that I should keep it until it was weaned and much more mature. Then, when the animal was about a year old, the question of castration arose and I thought it would make a useful practical class for the students to see Maurice Wright in action, first demonstrating his method of horse handling, then doing the castration, just as he would have done if the animal had been on his own property.

The "prac" went smoothly, but the local veterinary practitioner, who heard what had taken place that afternoon, rang me at night and abused me roundly. "Is it a fact that you are training Rural Science students to castrate colts?" he demanded. He described it as a "very serious matter" which he would report to the Veterinary Association, etc. When I got the chance to speak, I said that the colt belonged to Maurice Wright; that Maurice did the operation; that I knew and respected the "boundaries" of our respective professional callings; and he had no need to worry. He was evidently mollified by my explanation, for the matter was never raised again and we became good friends for the rest of my stay in Armidale.

I mentioned the little incident to Bill McClymont who, knowing I had not erred brushed it aside. One of McClymont's greatneses was his recognition of every scientist's contribution. He was not concerned with the particular degree they might hold. He was a veterinarian himself but unlike some members of that profession he did not regard animal science as a "closed shop" only for vets.

* * *

The fact the facilities were so limited when I first started at New England would have offered excuse enough to postpone doing research that first year. However I was specially determined to break the ice, as though to prove to myself that no difficulty could impede me.

To this end, within a month of my arrival, and in consultation with the officer-in-charge of CSIRO at "Chiswick" I asked staff-member W. H. Southcott if he would join me in a co-operative experiment on the cold tolerance of cattle, using the natural winter conditions as our "laboratory". This was agreed, and by June we had started our trials at "Chiswick", using the station Herefords, clipped versus un-clipped and stall-fed versus paddock fed, with some very woolly-coated (Scottish) Galloway breed of cattle (which I borrowed from Wallace Coward at Hernani) included for comparison. The results were published (39) within about a year, and so many interesting points arose that I believe there is scope for more research in this little studied field.

Another piece of research to which I quickly applied myself was beef carcass appraisal. An idea I had carried in my mind since my two year assignment at Cannon Hill eight years before, called for development, and I was able to give that project full rein. As a result, I eventually devised a very accurate, yet extremely simple way of measuring the conformation (shape) of a carcass. And since shape as well as age and composition is important in carcass appraisal, I soon found that my method was being sought by show societies for judging their beef carcass competitions.

As the years went by, it was gratifying to find that my judging system gave very good agreement with the live animal evaluations made by experienced cattle-men; that others commenced using the method; and that I was repeatedly asked back to judge at the same shows, including perhaps most of all at the Sydney Royal. As I write these words, I am reminded that I am engaged to judge soon, for what must be about the tenth time, at Warwick in Queensland, then shortly after, at two other shows in NSW. So even in my retirement, and more than 20 years after developing the method, I am still being invited to judge.



The author (right), judge at Warwick, Qld. Show Society's beef carcass competition, with Mr David Cory, MLA (left), showing the champion exhibit to their Excellencies, the Governor of Qld, the Hon Sir Alan Mansfield and Lady Mansfield. (Photo: John Harrison, Warwick).

The virtual non-existence of teaching and research facilities on campus was something that demanded much thought and action. As a result of an earlier benefaction by Mr (later Dr) P. A. Wright, the university owned the 300 acre dairy farm called "Laureldale"; but on campus itself there was only one vast paddock of black soil hillside, extending north and west from the little wooden building we occupied.

Professor McClymont was never dismayed by the deficiencies. After all, when he came, there wasn't even a "little wooden building". He was wont to tell us that although he was appointed to the first Chair, he didn't have a chair to sit on when he arrived! No doubt his philosophic outlook filtered through to the rest of us in those early days, when, by the start of third term 1957, our faculty staff numbered four: McClymont (Nutrition) and Dr. R. F. Passey (Biochemistry) had held the fort right from the start of the year, I commenced teaching at the beginning of second term, and J. V. Evans (Physiology) arrived in time to introduce the students to this subject in third term.

At that time we all used the same teaching lab and we shared the equipment. If a few sheep were needed for a practical class, we had to go out and catch them from a group of perhaps 10 to 12 crafty old Merinos that Prof McClymont would buy from time to time for about five shillings each at the saleyards, then release on our extensive hillside. Having once rounded up and cornered the sheep, failure to make a catch would mean repeating the whole round-up procedure until success was finally achieved.

I shall never forget the catch on one wet, muddy day. We only required one sheep but the need was urgent. Just as we were edging in to corner the sheep they broke away in all directions and it seemed certain we would be faced with another long and muddy round-up. But with a look of desperation on his face, Dick Passey, wearing his white lab coat, executed a flying tackle. He went headlong in the black New England mud but his hand held firm on the hind leg of a lanky old Merino wether. The sheep was bundled into the lab in triumph and prepared for the afternoon's class.

To overcome some of the out-door deficiencies which of course were critical in my particular subject, I had the hill-side paddock sub-divided, piping laid and water troughs installed. Yards and a tiny shearing shed were erected, and the area stocked with breeding ewes. Then later in that first year the Vice-Chancellor allowed me to have a large area fenced off on Dumaresq Creek which ran through university land. This had previously been a private dairy belonging to a family named Tombs and I stocked the area with cattle.

All this sounds easy but it required money (which was hard to obtain) and much good will on the part of quite a few benefactors. P. A. Wright gave me some Herefords, A. W. Cameron saw to my needs for a line to twin-bearing Poll Merinos, Grazcos gave me a shearing machine and I bought a dozen breeding age Red Poll heifers (for vealer production) from Kentucky Station.

My biggest problem was with the university Works Department, unthinking members of which would decide to do contouring or some such major operation across my hill paddocks, without telling me. The fences which contained my sheep would be cut to facilitate their work and they would then depart without a thought to repairing the fences. On such occasions I would see red and the telephone would spark with strong verbal cross-fire. It took me something like 10 years of experience to remain calm at such times.

On the other hand I was sometimes regarded as the malevolent one by members of the Physics Department who had a field lab in the hill paddock. I was so roundly abused for putting a gate across the road-way to one staff member's lab that I agreed to install a grid. Then, to keep the peace with his colleague, who evidently preferred to walk across-country, I erected stiles at strategic points along the relevant fences.

The sheep yards were purchased, as prefabricated steel panels and gates, for about £100. This, however, did not include erection, so the students volunteered to help me do this during a week-end working-bee. We started at about 9 am on a Saturday and all were present save the one and only girl student, Bridget Ogilvie. I heard the students muttering among themselves about the absentee, but all turned to smiles when she appeared at about 10.30 with a large basket of smoke-o. The work had to continue on the Sunday morning too, and, when at starting time there was no Bridget, I am sure they all assumed she would be appearing again with refreshments. However, smoke-o time came and went without any sign of her or the refreshments, and the muttering again became evident. Perhaps Bridget didn't know that Sunday was to be a work day too; but I discovered later that she paid a pretty harsh penalty: being thrown into the pond (later known as Lake Madgwick) beside Mary White College.



The first students to graduate in Rural Science are seated in the front in this picture taken during their final (fourth) year at UNE in 1959. The lecturing staff (middle and back rows) included two part-time helpers from the CSIRO.

In my third month at UNE I was initiated into contributing at what became for me one of the highlights of my stay at the university—the Rural Science Schools conducted by the then Department of Adult Education and, in particular, the ones organized by Mr. Campbell Howard. My first taste of these was a school which Cam Howard arranged at Narrabri, in July 1957. A couple of hundred graziers enrolled and similar attendances became the pattern at numerous other schools which followed over the years in many parts of N-W NSW. I was always stimulated by the graziers' interest in the lectures, the searching questions and discussion which followed, and the general atmosphere of good will which prevailed.

Cam Howard was adept at arranging a well-balanced programme; but he was also a master story-

teller. Many of the best jokes that I have heard and subsequently used myself I owe to Cam and his after-dinner speeches.

A technique which Cam developed was to have an "A" series of lectures for the graziers who constituted the majority of those attending and a "B" series for any townsfolk or graziers' wives, whose interests lay more in cultural matters. To accommodate the latter group Cam sometimes invited speakers from the university's Arts Faculty, and for the Narrabri School Dr John Gabriel, a specialist in child psychology, was coerced into making what for him was this unusual foray into the bush. I had a university car in which to drive to Narrabri and John was my passenger. After he had given his lecture, however, his duties were over and there was no point in his staying on for the remaining days of the school. It was therefore arranged that he would drive my car back to Armidale and I would get a lift with some of the others. Perhaps out of our good feelings for John or maybe some sub-conscious concern, we all trooped out of the hotel to wave him away. He started the car and headed off, as we thought, to turn; but in fact he continued straight on along the road to Bourke. If someone had not pursued him, he would probably have arrived there! However, even after being set in the right direction, John struck me as bothered. He told me later that he had forgotten to release the hand-brake and so was stopped along the road with a boiling radiator, a seized-up motor and burnt-out brakes.

At another of these schools Associate Professor Ted Tapp (UNE History Dept) was holding the fort for the Arts. During the day Cam Howard took him to a near-by cattle sale — no doubt to absorb some of the rural atmosphere. Having successfully seated himself on the rails, Ted soon forgot what he was there for and started talking animatedly to Cam. Unfortunately, Ted's enthusiasm for his subject led him to much arm waving and thereby great concern to the auctioneer. To avoid undue embarrassment (and possible commitment to a pen of bullocks) Cam hastily led his charge well away from the arena.

In addition to the many Rural Science schools held in out-lying centres, we sometimes arranged residential ones on campus. Over the years these covered most subjects of interest to Rural Scientists; but my most memorable ones were connected with the beef industry. At the first of these which I ran, the graziers took up a collection which they donated to the university to help my research. I had the money put into a special Sundry Donors' fund which, unlike the annual budget, could remain available, if unused from year to year. My thought was to save it for a special project; in fact the whole sum remained intact until my last year at the university. Then I decided to put the money towards further developing the beef cattle section of the university's McMaster Field Station at Warialda, that being a project for which I had been a keen advocate many years before it was allowed to start, and the main initiator when it did begin.

At the second of my residential beef schools the graziers, using Colonel A. L. Rose from the Northern Territory as their spokesman, presented me first (in fun) with a meat tenderising hammer, then (more seriously) with a huge and I am sure costly vacuum flask. Both gifts are still in good working order and reminders, if such were needed, of those extremely happy gatherings.

* * *

With all that was happening in this new life I was leading it is not surprising that I had hardly a thought, let alone any nostalgia, for the little farm on the Brisbane River which we had left, although I think Marnie missed it at first. The new job had everything that I could wish for: university atmosphere, contact with students, complete freedom in research, sheep and cattle to run as though they were my own, and an increasing number of friendly graziers whose co-operation was always there for the asking.

At home, too, the family soon seemed thoroughly content. The children attended the Demonstration Primary School which was only a few blocks away from our home, and in no time they made new friends. For Marnie and me, too, there was plenty of social activity. We quickly came to know numerous town and country people, while Armidale itself offered a wealth of cultural pursuits and entertainment opportunity.

During the summer months I fell into a pattern of taking the children to the city baths at about 6.30 each morning. Those who couldn't swim soon learnt to do so, and those who could, trained to be better. All very soon out-stripped me!

In our first short break away from Armidale, in September 1957, we hired a caravan at Grafton and for several days explored the coastline east of the New England Ranges. It was then that we discovered the little seaside resort of Woolgoolga, at that time a quiet timber and banana town. This led to the purchase of an allotment on Woolgoolga headland, with superb outlook to the north, east and west, and on which we soon had built the smallest and simplest holiday retreat allowed by the Shire regulations. We managed to squeeze everyone in, even after May 1959 when our fifth and youngest child, Richard was born, by using double-decker bunks for the children and the one or two friends who sometimes accompanied them.

Woolgoolga remained such a favoured spot with us all that Marnie and I now live there; and the family enjoy coming back for holidays with their own children. Needless to say, we have enlarged the house, but it still occupies the same site.



Our modest cottage (left) at Woolgoolga, NSW, gave an unbroken view of sea and coast to the north. As an alternative to surfing, the home-built pram dinghy could be used in Woolgoolga's shallow lake.



Not all the big ones get away! A 40 lb Jew fish from Back Beach Woolgoolga.

During my first December at UNE I was guest speaker for Speech Day at my old school, Toowoomba Grammar. Marnie assured me that I acted normally; but to me it seemed unreal to be back on the old scene — now speech making instead of listening (or dozing!), and clothed in a scarlet and green doctoral gown instead of the erstwhile blue serge suit. In my speech I extolled biology as a career. I also tried to comfort the boys who had not won numerous academic prizes, pointing out that none (for academic work) had come my way at TGS.

The last activity for me in that first calendar year was a quite memorable trip to the Channel Country in far south-west Queensland. I had never been there before and I wanted to see the country and its cattle at the hottest time of the year. I made the trip privately, in our family car, so I could take Marnie and two of the children. We were away about two weeks altogether, and except for a couple of nights at Thylungra and Tanbar stations, we camped in a tent or slept under the stars. I arranged the itinerary so that we would be out in the sand-hill country on the longest day (21 December) when I was proposing to take tem-

perature and solar radiation readings. We carried sufficient petrol and water as well as extra food, and I arranged a series of safety check-in points with the Windorah police.

The Channel Country was gripped in a bad drought that summer and the heat was intense. However the trip added to my experience and on a much later visit, after the greatest flood on record, I was able to see an amazing transformation: mile upon mile of green feed, waist high, sandhills covered in flowers; and fat cattle the like of which coastal country cannot match.

In the years which followed 1957, the Rural Science Faculty not only grew, but thrived. In successive years, third and fourth year teaching became necessary and numbers entering first year increased. New students were soon annually topping the 100 mark. This growth meant more courses, more and bigger lecture rooms, more prac labs and of course more staff. So convincingly had Rural Science demonstrated its vigour that approval was gained for the construction of what then seemed a vast new domain — the Rural Science Building.

This was before the days of Commonwealth Government aid, and a requirement was that the university itself had to find part of the finance. A public appeal was launched, an appeal Director was appointed, a secretariat from which he operated was set up in town, and for some years there was much drum beating and cajoling. A sufficient sum was eventually raised from many generous donors, but some criticism of the costly nature of the secretariat was voiced.

Professor McClymont worked hard for the appeal and I am sure that his drive, plus the already successful establishment of the Rural Science Faculty, was crucial. In view of this, it is rather sad that an outside mural which was his idea and for which a specially recessed area was built into the south wall, was never commissioned, for lack of funds. Perhaps the mural will yet, one day, be completed.

I was thankful when the appeal closed. I had never liked fund raising speeches being made at the gatherings at which I lectured — and many such speeches were made, a spokesman often coming along specially for that purpose. To me, this carried the unpleasant inference that contributions might be expected in return for our extension efforts among graziers.

In later years, when Commonwealth aid started, all such capital funding worries were over; the universities generally, including New England, settled into a golden era of development in which buildings arose in numbers and quality undreamed of previously. The honeymoon is now over, government having settled, temporarily at anyrate, on a pattern of "consolidation" rather than further growth which is in accord with a stabilising in student numbers. As a result the universities are dismayed; but perhaps the taxpayers approve.

When the new Rural Science building was occupied, the Physiology staff remained behind in the old area. To a lesser extent my department, too, became separated; the lecturing staff and secretary had their offices in the new building, but our technicians and post-grads were housed in out-buildings in the old Rural Science area where we also had our laboratory space. In later years these out-buildings were extended into quite a large complex of temporary structures which provided separate areas for meat, wool, reproduction and animal climatology research, and laboratory teaching.

The process of physically separating, which Physiology and my own department started, was continued in later years. New buildings, separate from each other and from Rural Science headquarters were erected in succession for Physiology, Agronomy and Livestock Production. One department (Biochemistry and Nutrition) plus the faculty executive, now reign in sole splendour in what we once thought of as the "huge" new Rural Science building.

From time to time some faculty members have regretted the physical separation which went on. Their view is that the "fragmentation" lowered the old Rural Science ethos and morale. I have never agreed with this. For one thing I am sure that the old ethos is thoroughly intact: one has only to attend the traditional annual dinner, and the students' more recently inaugurated "year" dinners, to be convinced of that. Admittedly there is now less frequent mingling of staff of the separate departments; but meetings and seminars still give opportunities for members to mix and it is easy to take up a phone or go and consult personally with someone when the need arises.

My own opinion is that the separation of departments into their own buildings was inevitable, desirable and a sign of the faculty's healthy growth. Most of the departments now teach in other faculties besides Rural Science and they are so large that I shudder to think of them all being together in one vast building. The stresses connected with noise, sharing certain facilities and never knowing the whereabouts or condition of one's equipment, would, I believe, be quite a price to pay for the alleged benefit of being able to have daily chats in corridors or common-rooms with colleagues in other departments.

I must say that when I moved into the new Livestock Production building in 1974, the relative peace and quiet seemed remarkable. I am sure I was able to do more and better work, that I continued to have good and close relations with my colleagues, and that anyone who ever wished to see me, whether staff member or student, was able to do so just as readily as previously.



The Chancellor, Dr. P. A. Wright, opening the John Hammond Laboratory for studying the influence of climate on sheep and cattle. The author (extreme right) collected funds from outside sources to build and equip this laboratory.

As the faculty grew bigger through the 1960's the time-table became very complex and more and more "competition" arose for face-to-face teaching hours. New disciplines, or a greater emphasis on old ones such as mathematics and computing had to be considered. Generally, if a new subject had to be included, this meant the "axe" for an existing segment of the teaching — often much to the distress of the department which received the cut.

In looking back over the faculty's first 20 years, as I can now, I think that the course structure which Professor McClymont initiated was admirable for a Rural Science faculty, which, unlike many schools of agriculture in Australia, intended to give as much emphasis to animal science as to plant and soil science. In later years I think the curriculum suffered from having too much mathematics and too much formal ecology included. If each of these were cut by about a half, students would have more time to think about the application of what they were learning. Any student specially desirous of undertaking a full maths programme could do so by extra study in his own time. As for ecology, it is my opinion that an understanding of the interdependence of species and their environments is not so much a subject to be taught and learnt as such, as a area of knowledge which comes through experience to any good biologist.

As the between-discipline competition for face-to-face teaching hours became keener, some departments were forced to contract their courses. This was so for Livestock Production, with the result that much of the earlier "practical" type of training had to be omitted. The new philosophy was that manual skills would be acquired in the students' own time — hopefully during their compulsory property experience in the vacations.

Inter-departmental competition for postgrad students also accelerated the demise of anything smacking of the "too practical". To survive, each department had to strike the right balance between pure science and application, and the evolution of a balance swinging more towards science than practice is seen in the three successive names by which my old department has been known: livestock husbandry (1957-1971); livestock production (1972-1977); animal science (1978-).

An early interest of mine after arriving at UNE was participation in the build-up of the local sub-branch of the Australian Society of Animal Production. I had been a foundation member and a past-president of the Queensland branch which, though active and successful, had always suffered the disadvantage of having its usual meeting place, in the city of Brisbane, widely separated from the rural community. Armidale, on the other hand, was ideally placed in this regard, having a strong nucleus of CSIRO and university scientists ringed round by a large, near-by population of progressive graziers.

Yet when I arrived in Armidale, this potential seemed to be less than fully tapped. I said as much to Professor McClymont who at once replied that he would nominate me for president. This he did, and I was duly elected, along with a fine team of committee-men. Names like Jack Hilder, Bill Southcott, John Wheeler, John George immediately spring to mind—men who served the Society loyally and well over many years.

We decided to have meetings at approximately monthly intervals during university term-time and to elect our president annually, alternating between a producer and a scientist for that position.

So quickly was the local sub-branch enlivened that before long membership far out-numbered that of our parent NSW branch located in Sydney. As a result, New England became a full branch in its own right and for some time had the highest membership of any Australian branch.

On looking back in later years at the branch's growth, I often thought that the big up-turn in attendances could be traced to a particular meeting at which the guest speaker was Lady Eve Balfour, an organic farming enthusiast from Great Britain. The late Colonel H. F. White from "Bald Blair" had rung me, saying that Lady Eve was to be his house guest and he would appreciate it if she could be given the opportunity to speak. I agreed to this, but said I was sure my committee would wish to have both sides of the case put, i.e. the virtues of chemical fertilizers presented as well as just those of organic farming. And so the meeting was arranged — the second speaker being none other than Professor McClymont who was known as one who referred to organic farming as "muck and mystery".

The meeting was well advertised and people came from far and near. Late comers had to sit in the aisles or stand at the rear, and so many new members were enrolled that future meetings had to be held in a larger lecture theatre. At any rate, on that night the battle of the giants was fought—and giants they were; for Lady Eve was no frail little lady of the drawing-room type. Anyone who knew her would agree that she might even out-pace Bill McClymont over a 10 mile march across her native moors. Added to that, to use her own words, she "always carried a spade", so as to check the soil profiles.

At the end of the "battle" it couldn't be said that either side "won"; but I do know that it was a highly stimulating evening. My skills as a president were tried in seeing fair play and keeping the audience in check, and the New England branch never looked back thereafter.

In later years I was to serve as New England branch president for another term and then be given the honour of leading the Society as federal president during 1966-68. My term as federal president ended with Armidale hosting the biennial federal conference in February 1968.

By 1964 my own department had developed sufficiently to warrant the creation of a full chair. Physiology was in the same situation, and, no doubt through forceful advocacy on the part of Professor McClymont, the university agreed to advertise full chairs in the two disciplines.

I was of course an applicant for the Chair in Livestock Husbandry but I knew I would have stiff competition. However the selection committee soon made a decision and I was elated to learn that I had been successful.

The news of my appointment came in the form of a telephone call from Marnie on the evening of 14 December 1964. I was seated at dinner at "Turaville" the homestead of the Robertson family at Scone, NSW, where I was an over-night guest during a beef carcass judging assignment in that district. My wife told me that the University Council had met that day, and that the Registrar had just rung to say that I had been appointed Foundation Professor of Livestock Husbandry.

I "floated" back to that dinner table and of course told my hosts the news. To them it may not have seemed anything special; but to me it was the attainment of a pinnacle in my career—something not consciously sought nor even contemplated in earlier years, but admittedly hoped for once I became an applicant. I had been very happy in my work as an Associate Professor and I am sure I would still have been, had a new head of department been appointed over me. Certainly I had never been concerned about a higher level of salary.

What, then, is it that makes a full Chair so special, as it certainly was to me and is, I believe, to other incumbents?

One answer is that, to an academic, it represents the attainment of full success; that at the time of appointment no other candidate, following world-wide advertisement, was preferred. But there is more to it than that: a professor's responsibility extends beyond the university. On appointment to his Chair, he becomes the custodian within the community of his particular discipline. In the words of the Oxford Dictionary, he is "a public teacher of high rank". It is probably this more than any other single factor which brings to the office a prestige beyond that due to a well-paid, senior position.

At the University of New England, and probably at most universities, there is a tradition that each new professor shall, after settling in, deliver an Inaugural Public Lecture. This, again, is evidence of the expectation that the appointee will serve a more broadly-based community than just the university. It also suggests that the general public will, or should, have opportunity to know and interact with this person, at

least in questions relating to his own discipline. In such matters it is hoped that he will not only be knowledgeable but a contributor to the community's advancement.

The Inaugural Public Lecture becomes, then, the occasion on which the new professor "displays his wares" so that others may size him up. As such, it assumes considerable importance and is thus also somewhat terrifying. Some professors have likened it to an initiation ceremony, others to a lions' den into which the "new boy" is thrown.

To those who have not given an Inaugural, it probably comes as a surprise to learn that the new professor could possibly be nervous as the occasion approaches. But I was, despite the countless lectures and public addresses I had given, and I know that most other new professors experience the same trauma.

A unique feature of the occasion is the diversity of the audience. On the one hand there are distinguished scholars including numerous professors from all sections of the university, some of whose disciplines don't even remotely overlap one's own. On the other hand there are staff wives, postgraduate students, a sprinkling of undergraduates, and quite a number of residents from the town and district. Some come out of genuine interest; some out of a sense of friendly support; and some probably out of sheer curiosity — to see how the new man measures up.

Clearly the address must be scholarly and interesting; but it must also be understandable to everyone in this heterogeneous gathering.

For my own inaugural I chose the title: "Environment and the evolution of breeds of livestock". This allowed me to outline several of my special projects of past research, and reationalise the separate biological concepts involved, into an overall evolutionary pattern — something I had not previously attempted publicly.

The address was reported in the local newspaper which said that "many graziers joined staff, students and CSIRO workers who made up an unusually large audience". In due course the lecture was also printed in booklet form (50) as are all the New England inaugural addresses.

As if giving my inaugural was not enough excitement for one day, on that very same day I received by air-mail from the publishers in England a sample copy of my first book: "Modern Aspects of Animal Production". I had written most of the chapters in England during 1963 while I was on study leave. Butterworths (London) were the publishers, and in 1967 a Spanish edition was also printed. (40).

Apart from the usefulness of the book to me for teaching, I found that it was responsible for an increase in the enquiries my department received from overseas students, including from Latin American countries, wishing to enrol for Master's and PhD degrees.

In later years several of my colleagues joined with me in publishing two more books. The first of these was "Beef Cattle Production" in 1974, my co-author being an ex-student and later good friend, Peter J. Schmidt. The publishers were Butterworths (Australia). The second, in 1975, was "Animal Science" (Pergamon Press) which was an up-dated version of "Modern Aspects . . ." the latter having by then been out of print for several years. My co-authors for "Animal Science" were senior members of the lecturing staff of my department, T. N. Edey and M. K. Hill.

For the first nine years of our stay in Armidale, i.e. up to the end of 1966, Marnie and I and the children lived at 14 College Avenue. From February 1967 there was to be a very big change. The Principal of Mary White College, a residential women's college on campus, had retired, and Marnie applied for and was appointed to the position. This meant that we would be living at the College.

When it became known that the Principal, Miss Mary Bagnall, intended to retire, some of the students suggested to Marnie that she should apply for the position. Although Marnie had been a member of the College Senior Common Room for some years and President on two occasions, I am sure that the idea of becoming Principal had never before entered her head. However, she was now clearly interested, for she mentioned the students' suggestion at home.

Our children with one accord urged their mother to apply and I, too, supported the move. I think most eyes in the family turned to me, wondering how I would fare as the only adult male in a young women's establishment. But this prospect held no terrors for me, and I said so. I knew that Marnie could do the job well: I believed that we would have reasonable privacy in the self-contained Principal's flat; and I sensed that a married couple with their own school and university-age children popping in and out should bring a homely atmosphere to the College, which most students would probably appreciate.

Three or four "short-listed" applicants were in due course interviewed and Marnie, to my great pleasure though not, I must say, to my surprise, received the appointment. She also continued teaching in the UNE Botany Dept which she had been doing since 1964. We thereupon moved into the College flat for which we paid rent to the university, and resided there until we retired some 11 years later.

The new life in College was stimulating to Marnie and interesting to me. In all the 11 years of our residence there I never ceased to be amazed at the thoroughness with which this wife of mine guided the affairs of Mary White College and still kept the flat running like any normal home for me and the children (when the latter were at home).

In our first year at the College our elder daughter Diana was already a resident member of Mary White. We asked her if she would like to transfer to another college but she promptly dismissed any such idea. She said she would continue exactly as she had before — except that now it would be all the easier for her to pop in and see us — and of course this made us very happy.

Then, with our second daughter, Rosalind, due to start university only one year behind Diana, we received the same sort of reply to our suggestion that she might like to reside elsewhere. Rosalind made clear that Mary White College would probably have been her choice in normal circumstances and now the preference was merely strengthened. So, for three or four years, both our daughters lived the normal student life in College, occasionally dropping in to our flat to have a meal or just a short chat. Both Diana and Rosalind met their future husbands during their period of residence at Mary White.

Meanwhile, satisfactory arrangements were in hand for the boys. Anthony, the eldest, was studying Science at UNE and living in Earle Page College; Greg was a boarder at TAS and Richard, the youngest, stayed in the flat with us, travelling by bus each day to primary school. It was not to be long before Greg finished his secondary schooling and studied for a Science degree, he too joining Earle Page College. In his early days at UNE Greg became engaged to, and married, a Mary White girl, so we saw a good deal more of Greg than might have been anticipated. Richard was perhaps the least pleased about living in the precincts of a women's college. He seemed glad when the time came to be a boarder at TAS; even there he preferred to give his address as Woolgoolga (site of our sea-side cottage) rather than Mary White College!



The Principal's flat (left), attached to the end of Block III, Mary White College, which was "home" for the author and his wife, Marnie, during the latter's 11 year term as College Principal.

By living on campus I became a close neighbour of our then Vice-Chancellor, Professor (afterwards Sir) Zelman Cowen. We soon discovered that we played tennis of a similar standard, and, until he left to go to the University of Queensland, the Vice-Chancellor and I engaged in a singles tussle on almost every week-end that we could both be available. Sir Zelman was a tireless worker for the university. Whenever our

phone rang between 7.00 and 8.00 in the morning, we could be almost certain that the Vice-Chancellor would be the caller, already engaged on his day's administrative programme. After leaving Armidale, Sir Zelman Cowen served for another distinguished (but perhaps more turbulent) period as Vice-Chancellor in Queensland; then he became Australia's Governor General.

For sport and physical recreation generally I found that living on campus offered many advantages. Rarely a day went by without my having a run, generally at sunset, through the lovely grounds along the banks of Dumaresq Creek. How different this was from running in a town or city area where dogs bark, people stare and where hard pavements and petrol fumes make quite the wrong setting! For cricket, too, which I played regularly in the earlier years, I was close at hand, while for a game of tennis Marnie and I had merely to walk across the Booloominbah front lawn to find a vacant court — vacant for sure, if we went early enough on a Sunday morning, before the students were astir. Throughout the seasons of the year the Booloominbah grounds were so beautiful that we frequently felt the urge to tarry and take photographs.



Marnie Yeates, soon after assuming duty as Principal of Mary White College, chats with husband Neil following Degree Day ceremony, 1967. (Photo: Armidale Express).

Although I was a senior academic, I had no official position within Mary White College — and this was the way Marnie and I wanted it. Once or twice the students asked if I would accept nomination to the Senior Common Room but I declined with thanks. One Yeates (and that the one in full charge) was sufficient family representation in the College's government, we believed. All the same, I took a fairly active part socially. I always accompanied Marnie to the College Ball; I attended many of the concerts, debates, art shows, and sporting events arranged by the girls; and I invariably accepted invitations to dinner when other male guests were to be present.

For all the above reasons, I sometimes felt a little like the Duke of Edinburgh — or at least I came to understand his position vis-a-vis the lady in charge! Like the Duke, too, I enjoyed the role. My relations with the girls of Mary White were always pleasant: most of them called me "Prof"—a designation which I have always regarded as both friendly and respectful.

Occasionally, especially in my early years of residence, I found it necessary to intervene when persons visiting the College, generally late at night and sometimes in a drunken state, caused undue rowdiness. Then, I was acting not as an official of Mary White College, but as a staff member of the university and as the husband of the lady whose concern such matters within the College really were. Most of the offending intruders were of course males, and frequently they turned out to be some of my own students. When I appeared on the scene they would generally disappear very fast.

One night a car pulled up noisily below our bed-room window to the accompaniment of clanking and slamming as bottles were being unloaded and doors closed. I jumped out of bed, threw open the window



Marnie and Neil Yeates caught by the roving camera-man at a Mary White College Annual Ball.

and demanded to know what the noise was all about. Quickly came the reply: "It's all right Prof we're just going!" — and off they went. The students soon learnt and remembered that I was around and certainly behaved more quietly, at anyrate in areas within earshot of our flat.

Before long, Marnie in consultation with the College Committee, introduced the principle of accepting married couples in residence when either partner, male or female, was a Tutor. This proved popular, as many young married graduates were suitably qualified, keen to retain association with a College and pleased to be paying only the nominal rent applicable to a Tutor. If the applicant for the Tutorship happened to be the husband he would be considered on his merits; and, over the years, Mary White College was well served by a number of married male resident Tutors. One of them had the distinction of apprehending a prowler one night, and holding the culprit (a person from town who was caught in the act of stealing) until police arrived.

There is no doubt in my mind that the 11 years we spent in Mary White College added a new dimension to our lives: for Marnie it was a challenging, rewarding and altogether happy experience; for me, it rounded out my academic experiences into a fuller and richer total university life.

* * *

During my early years in the Department of Livestock Husbandry I saw it as something of a duty to share my research efforts approximately equally between sheep and beef cattle. In later years, however, sheep and wool research became increasingly well covered by newly appointed staff, thus enabling me to concentrate on beef cattle — which I had come to prefer.

Unfortunately the university's facilities were for many years quite inadequate for running worthwhile numbers of beef cattle. Laureldale had developed as a dairy farm, with some cropping, fruit growing and a sizeable poultry unit; and, as its total area was only about 300 acres, these uses were appropriate.

As a compromise, I used about 60-70 acres of lighter soil land at the northern extremity of Laureldale for a small teaching herd of cattle, and did a good deal of my field research on the properties of co-

operating graziers. As indicated earlier, I made several attempts to persuade the management committee of the university's Rural Research Station at Warialda to run beef cattle there; but approval for this was not to be granted till many years later.

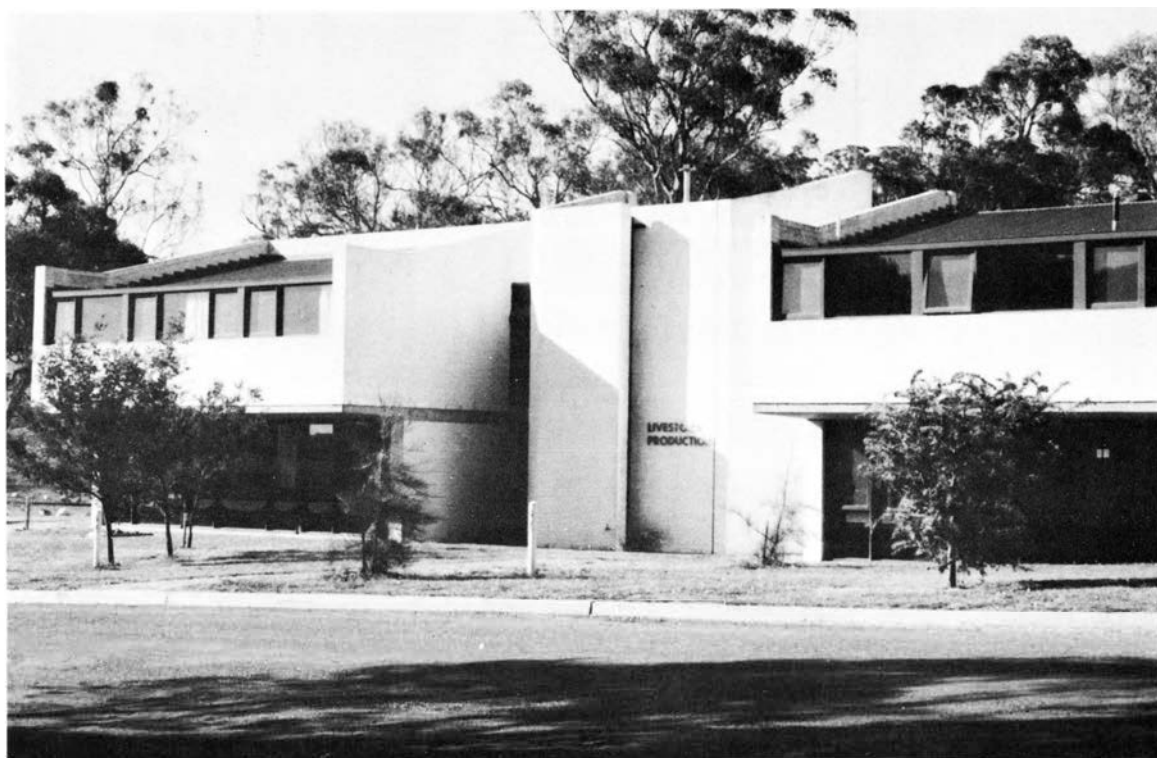
A real windfall and a very important milestone in the history of the Rural Science Faculty came in the form of a bequest which allowed the purchase of a 1700 acre grazing property only about five or six miles from the university. This was named the Kirby Rural Research Station after the benefactor. As its development proceeded the circumstances seemed ripe for a submission from my department to use part of the property for beef cattle.

Before going into such a long-term venture, however, I wanted to be sure that the rest of the academic staff in my department were solidly behind the scheme and would carry it on after my retirement (which I knew might be only a few years ahead). We held a departmental meeting at which there was unanimous agreement that we should mount a long-term departmental beef cattle enterprise. Breeding and husbandry programmes were planned, with commercial profitability as well as teaching and research interest, as the main criteria.

Two projects came to the fore in our discussions, and, since the Warialda property was at that time in need of an injection of faculty interest and would be suitable, we made a submission for part use of both research stations: Warialda and Kirby. In due course both projects were approved and the Deputy Chancellor, Dr. R. C. Robertson-Cunninghame (Chairman of the Lands Committee) arranged finance for the purchase of additional cattle to those already on hand at the university. When I left the university at the end of 1977, the cattle projects at both properties were flourishing, and I have no doubt that now, in 1979, with cattle prices at an all-time high, the department, the faculty and the university will be specially pleased that they finally launched into beef cattle breeding.

With the rounding out of the department's field facilities as described above, and through improvements to the sheep unit (which, however, had never suffered the same inadequacies as the beef cattle arrangements) I experienced a feeling of contentment and achievement. At last, the department had matured. Though not large by most standards, it now seemed balanced, tidy, compact.

The new building, as well as being pleasing in appearance, was proving to function as well as we had hoped. The grounds, too, were becoming a delight, due mostly to the work and interest of the university's grounds staff, but also partly to our own concern for such matters. When selecting the trees I asked for a



The new Livestock Production building, opened in 1973, not only added to the department's material facilities and efficiency, but was aesthetically pleasing.

few particular native fodder species. I jokingly told the students that when they re-visited the department in years to come, not only would they have shade in which to eat lunch but they would have feed in the form of browse for their horses — as by then there might not be sufficient petrol for cars! In fact the trees which were chosen seemed appropriate to our department and they are now proving to be both graceful and harmonious.

But besides these physical improvements I also had much to be thankful for in the human relationships which existed within the department. The senior academics, Associate Professor Terry Edey and Senior Lecturers Merv Hill and John Thwaites had worked with me as loyal and trusted colleagues since their more junior days. Never, to my knowledge, had there been a harsh word, let alone a real "row" among any of us through all the years. Occasional differences of opinion were openly discussed and calmly resolved.

A continuing and steady stream of pleasant and generally able postgrad students added vigour to the research, and animation to the department — though supervising an average of about 12 of these young people each year, in addition to our teaching and other duties, kept us members of the permanent teaching staff busy. The technicians, headed by Winston Hewitt, played an important role in maintaining the stock, safeguarding the equipment, helping us all, and tactfully informing new postgrads of the "rules" by which we operated as a team.



Typical end-of-year scene when staff and postgrads of the Dept of Livestock Production held their Christmas barbecue. This one was in 1970.

A pre-Christmas barbecue staff party, (for which the Professor supplied and personally selected the steak!) was a long-standing and unbroken tradition; and never a staff member or senior postgrad left the department without something "special" being arranged at the tea break, a few words of good wishes being said and a souvenir of his or her stay being presented.

This, then, was the atmosphere in which I worked and in which, as my twentieth year with the university approached, I experienced the feeling of contentment already alluded to. I discussed this with Marnie and found that she, too, felt the same about her work: satisfaction that Mary White College had come of age and was running smoothly and happily.

It is a good thing to retire when one's career is at a peak and we agreed that 1977 seemed appropriate in our case. But we also agreed that we must give the university adequate notice and considered that this should be at least 12 months. We thereupon had a cordial joint interview with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alec Lazenby, after which I told my senior departmental colleagues that I would be retiring on 31 December 1977, three years before necessary but after nearly 21 years' service in the Faculty of Rural Science and the University of New England.

CHAPTER 14

SOME ASPECTS OF UNIVERSITY LIFE

The English word “university” is derived from the Latin “universitas” which, since about the end of the 14th century, has meant a recognised community of teachers and scholars, often incorporating colleges or other places of residence. (In more recent times the definition has been widened to include the conferring of degrees by faculties).

The operative word in the above definition is “community” and as this means brotherhood, fellowship, body of people living in the same locality, the original intention of “universitas” must be favoured by a collegiate residential system. In this respect the University of New England is well served, for it has always had a strong college system — probably the strongest of any Australian university. The reason for the latter is two-fold: first, its country location necessitates travel to it from afar by most students who then require accommodation; second, an intentional accent was placed on combining the academic and residential components of university life by the university’s early leaders who hoped to model New England on the Oxford-Cambridge pattern.

Since I have spent over 20 years as an academic at New England, the last 11 of which were in residence on campus, most of my remarks in this chapter will be based on that experience. However, my undergrad days as a resident of a church-run college in Brisbane, my postgrad experience at Cambridge and my observations on residential systems in other countries, during a joint sabbatical leave with my wife (whose main study was residence), provide an enlarged background.

To an academic, probably the greatest feature of a university is its freedom. In simple illustration of this, there is no signing on and off for work, the teacher or the researcher being trusted to be on the job as necessary for its proper execution. This may entail long hours through the night — perhaps in a laboratory, or writing, reading, marking essays or papers at home, or preparing lectures and tutorials. Accordingly, if an academic occasionally goes to town briefly during what are normally regarded as working hours, no-one is going to be unduly concerned. A head of department knows very well who is, or, (rarely), who is not pulling his weight and can easily take steps to correct any deficiency. Equally, other staff know a great deal about their head of department and any indolence in such a senior person would soon become evident. This, too, could be corrected. The absence of “clock-watching” promotes an atmosphere for new thought and creativity.

There is also freedom of the choice of one’s research. A private company or a government reasonably requires its researchers to undertake assigned work, planned by seniors. But it is good to know that in the universities opportunity still exists for one to pursue some independent research trail, however unusual it might at first seem to others.

Then there is the freedom of expression — the opportunity, for instance, to address the news media (if they are interested) or to write articles on practically any subject. This opportunity is denied to many other workers, including most public servants. Unfortunately this freedom is sometimes abused by university staff who use their position to advance some cause or argument outside the scope of their own academic training or expertise. The Vietnam war and the dismissal of the Whitlam government by Sir John Kerr gave many examples of academics using their rank or title, as though to lend weight to what they had to say on these two highly political issues.

Students, too, enjoy great freedom. At New England they may choose their faculty, select combinations of subjects which appeal to them, and make up their own mind whether they will live in a university college (co-ed or women only, church-run or non-sectarian), a university-run 6-or-8-student flat, a town flat, a house or a boarding house (shared or otherwise), or live in the country — perhaps in shearers’ quarters on someone’s property with a group of friends, or in a hippie commune.

Standards of dress, hair length, cleanliness and behaviour are all left largely to the individual, provided they are within the law and provided other students are not unduly disturbed. Peer-group pressure may exercise some restraint in a college. At lectures there is rarely a roll-check and so attendance is generally voluntary, except that some lecturers take more than passing interest in chronic absenteeism. Tutorials and practical classes, however, are often compulsory.

In the matter of student residence, considerably more than half the 3,200 full-time internal students at New England (1978-79 figures) elect to live on campus, in one or other of the eight colleges (1836 places) or in the university’s flats (238 places). At the beginning of each academic year the residences are usually full; but by the second half of the year the colleges and flats generally have an average of about 10 percent of their rooms empty. This is explained partly by first-year students leaving the university following a poor result in their first semester examinations and partly by a drift of students to rented private accommodation to experience a different or, as some say, a “less regimented” life-style.

But really there is very little regimentation in colleges. Formal dinners to which academic gowns are worn are restricted to three or four colleges for one night a week or even less frequently, and though gross personal and room untidiness might be frowned on, this is about as far as regulations go, except that damage to property or rowdiness which distrubs others is not permitted. At New England, and indeed at

Australian universities generally, colleges provide a separate study-bedroom for each resident. In many other countries students often have to share rooms. In the United States of America, for example, sharing is the norm and not only two, but three and sometimes four persons may occupy the same room with not even a desk each. They complain about the lack of privacy and the difficult study conditions . . . and often with good reason.

By comparison with the USA our colleges are also run more liberally in such matters as allowing "scrambling" of male and female rooms on the same floors of co-ed residences, allowing opposite-sex visitors into one-sex institutions at virtually any time of the day or night, and allowing students to help frame regulations as well as to administer them.

At New England, most (but not all) of the colleges arrange evening tutorials for students who find difficulty with particular subjects. Most of the colleges also organise a wide range of cultural, social and sporting meetings and events throughout the year, thereby providing opportunity for the education of the "whole person". In many other respects, however, intentional differences have been incorporated into the overall residential pattern. Mention has already been made of the flats which are intended for people who prefer to cater and cook for themselves, who don't like to think they are being "organised" too much — people who don't want tutorials, who don't like even an occasional formal dinner, who don't like Heads of Colleges, Tutors or anything else that suggests "authority". As indicated, too, one college is reserved for women; another, though co-ed, is run by the Dominican Fathers and arranges religious observances for those who wish to participate. Most of the colleges are in charge of a resident Head (generally an academic) in whom final responsibility rests for the academic and personal welfare of the students, for good order and discipline and for financial management. Until recently two colleges were, for a time, run by a student dominated committee, helped by an executive officer who was expected to implement the committee's instructions. This latter arrangement was introduced during a cycle of mild student radicalism. It proved largely unworkable, and, in 1977, at the students' own request, was being phased out in favour of having a senior person as resident Head in charge. Now (1979) it seems that another, different, college is about to try a system of joint supervision: by a full-time bursar and an academic who gives some time to college.

We see, then, that in so far as residence is concerned, the University of New England has two characteristics for which its members might be grateful: a collegiate system which aims to cater for the academic, social and personal welfare of the occupants (instead of merely providing food and shelter, as some "halls of residence" do); and such a diversity of campus living that the only groups inadequately catered for are married couples, the very independent, those who believe they can live more cheaply elsewhere and perhaps a few hippies.



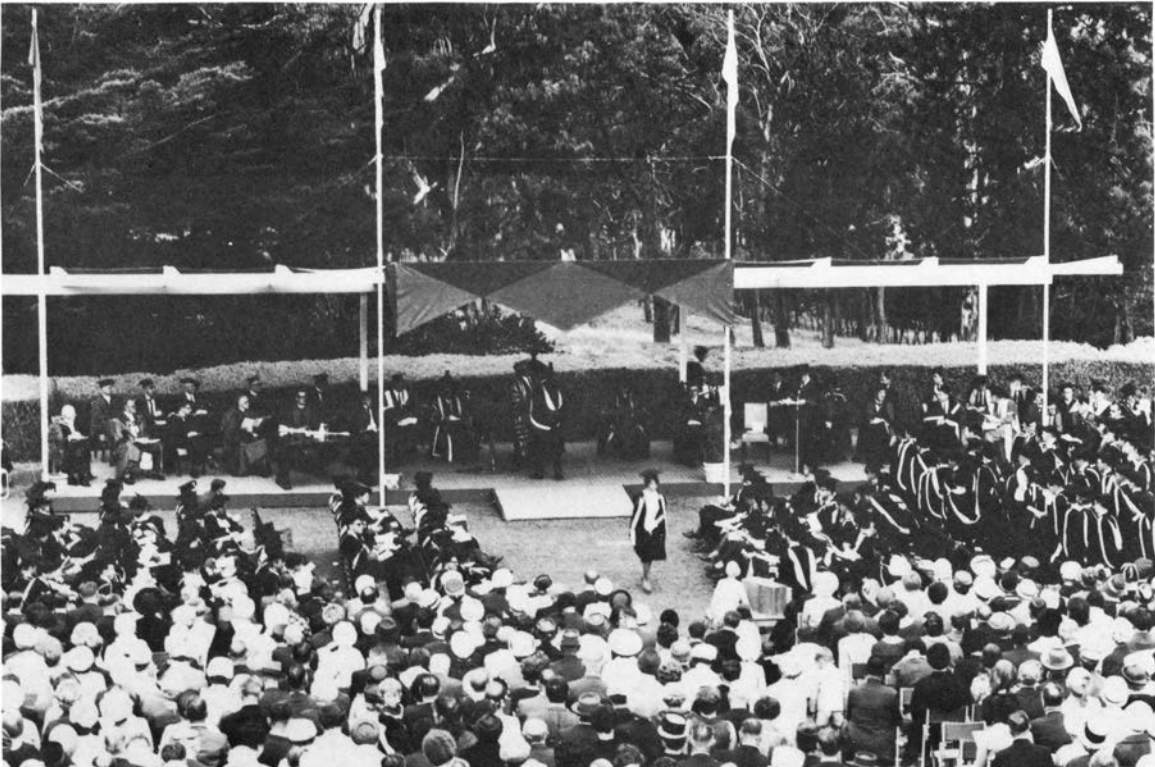
The peace and charm of the UNE campus at Armidale, NSW, are exemplified by this picture of "Boooloominbah", the administrative centre, a National Trust building.

The above description of UNE campus living arrangements probably sounds attractive enough; but add to the picture the architect-designed colleges and flats set in park-like grounds, with sporting ovals dotted here and there, with the gently flowing Dumaresq Creek winding through the middle, and any reasonable citizen would be within his rights in calling the conditions Utopian. But so, too, are the college precincts at, say, Cambridge, Berkeley and many other universities throughout the world. This raises the question of whether university people are pampered.

My own opinion is that the comfort and pleasantness are not over-done; that the community is well repaid by the enhanced output which good conditions promote. All the same, too many young Australian students who arrive at the university are unappreciative, immature, and/or are unwilling to face up to the discipline of study. More than a quarter of those who enrol are in these categories. They fail their exams and disappear from the scene, so the good conditions and the scholarly atmosphere are wasted on them. It is likely that a proportion of these "failures" benefit in some ways from their short stay at university, but they represent quite a cost to the public purse and they have an unsettling influence on other students during the time they are present.

A few more who do manage to stay on, fall into such categories as sincere radicals, destructive radicals, alcoholics and vandals; but the proportion of these is less than in society as a whole and so, even including them and the short-stay transients, the majority of students at New England are dedicated, interested, well-behaved and probably appreciative. It is for this majority that the whole system is worthwhile; but some of the small minority certainly tarnish the Utopian image.

To the average person who has no direct contact with universities, campuses seem to be regarded as hot-beds of radicalism and places where staff and students are regularly at loggerheads with each other. This image is unfortunate and erroneous — but understandable in view of the media's preoccupation with confrontation. Protest marches, strikes, rallies, disruption, occupation of buildings all attract great attention on TV, radio and in the press. Moreover, TV cameras generally focus on the most disruptive scenes and on the most unkempt looking participants. Rarely does anyone seem to point out that for the hundreds who might participate in protests, thousands do not.



Typical scene on Degree Day at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW. The weather in April favours an open-air ceremony in the beautiful grounds. Thousands of people attend. (Courtesy Central Photographic Lab, UNE)

If the TV cameras would focus on the many charitable and public service acts organised and carried out by students or give appropriate coverage to functions such as graduation ceremonies, a completely opposite image would be presented. At the latter, thousands of people including a large proportion of students take part, in a dignified, orderly and moving ceremony which marks the successful conclusion of the students' undergraduate studies and which is notable for its seemly dress and behaviour of all present.

Any fair-minded person would also have to acknowledge the close staff-student relationship which prevails. This is particularly evident at UNE where the university's relatively small size and the opportunities for after-hours contact enhance communication.

The staff-student discontents and most other problems that can lead to riotous confrontations in universities are fairly rare and seem to extend round the world in cycles. France, USA, Japan, Mexico are a few of the countries which have experienced serious rioting. In comparison with those places Australia has been relatively free of trouble, and the little that has occurred has mainly involved a few of the large metropolitan universities.

There is some evidence that left-wing student activism precipitates "waves" of trouble round the world when some suitable cause can be espoused. Syndicated articles in student newspapers suggest this. However, students soon become aware of blatant attempts at manipulation; and not all the ferments are either of "left-wing" origin or related to generalised rather than some purely local issue.

During my time at New England, only occasional staff-student confrontations rippled the otherwise calm waters. The few that I recall arose out of distress by the students that they had so little say in special cases of policy making, in administering the disciplinary by-laws, in deciding the content of courses; unhappiness with the pre-1963 college room-visiting rules, at that time imposed from above by the University Council; disenchantment with the examination processes (1973); dissatisfaction at there being no alternative campus accommodation to the traditional college system; and, in 1974-5, concern by the students of two colleges that first one of them (Mary White) and then another (Wright) were to be closed.



A well-conducted demonstration (title: "Death of a College") mounted by serious-minded students outside the administration building at Armidale when one of the campus colleges was under threat of disbandment.

The heat was taken out of most of these issues by introducing a variety of new rules and arrangements. Thus two student members are now (1979) included on the University Council; two students sit on the Proctorial Board; a university Ombudsman has been appointed; and each faculty provides for the membership of student representatives. College room visiting rules are now generally formulated with the co-operation of students; academic performance tends to be assessed periodically throughout the year, instead of there being a single "do-or-die" examination at the end of the year; the university flats were built to provide an alternative to the college life-style; and finally, any moves to completely disband a college were withdrawn in the face of very forceful opposition. This was fortunate as there was a strong demand for college places in the years immediately following.

Such compliance with student wishes or "demands" must not be interpreted as weakness, for most of the changes were made by consensus after rational debate. In fact, little relaxation was allowed in respect of academic assessment, for the virtual abandonment of examinations sought by a small minority of radical students would have led to the breakdown of university standards and loss of public confidence.

My personal opinion is that the university did go too far with the building of the flats. Finance happened to be available for large-scale flat development; but half the number would have saved someone's money, rendered the existing colleges less vulnerable to the mid-year empty room problem, yet still provided the desired diversity.

One interesting point following the changes was that once students were given the right to faculty membership, recruitment of nominees for the positions soon became difficult. This suggests that university students are more concerned with the right to be involved in university government than with time-consuming participation.

Another interesting point was that the up-rising by students to preserve the two threatened colleges was no "show-off" by a vocal minority, but a spontaneous, heart-felt and unanimous out-cry by an angry and dismayed total membership — including even the five or six nuns among Mary White's total of 146 students. This demonstration of loyalty and concern belied any suggestion that students don't care about tradition or are unappreciative. It is to be hoped that the university will remember this if ever the temptation exists for traditional institutions to become threatened again: there is always a temptation on the part of university administrators to consider economics rather than people.

Finally, on the subject of staff-student relations, I must say that my own experiences were thoroughly happy ones. My students, practically without exception were friendly, attentive and cheerful as well as successful. But what impressed me perhaps most about them was the happy knack with which they combined respect with informality. This promoted a genuine bond of friendship in our relations.

Sometimes when I fronted up to the first lecture with a new class of students who had not previously heard from me, I found that chatter among them and shuffling of newspapers, etc, went on while I was preparing to lecture, and that this might continue after I had started. At this point I would stop and inform them that if they wished to chatter or rustle newspapers they could do so outside; but if they remained they would be expected to attend without distracting me or interrupting their neighbours. I never remember anyone leaving; and I never had any problems with a class once it had been warned. At the same time I made clear that questions or discussion of points made in the lecture would be welcomed; but that if anyone wished to participate in that way they should indicate the fact clearly, so everyone could hear — not mumble to their neighbours.

If a student fell asleep during a lecture (generally the result of a "heavy night") I always stopped and asked the person next to the sleeper to give him (or, more rarely, her) "a prod". This invariably caused great mirth, so it had the double benefit of waking the sleeper and re-vitalising the rest of the class.

I found that attendances at lectures were excellent among the Rural Science students: seldom would more than a few be absent from classes averaging some 30, 40 or 50 in fourth, third and second years respectively — and this was so, even on the last day of a term or on the first day of a new one. For some reason known only to themselves, however, numerous Agricultural Economics students were not satisfied with a mere three weeks' vacation but "disappeared" for the last day or two of term and failed to appear for the first one or two days of the following one. This caused me some disappointment.

In my 20 years and eight months at UNE I believe I only exercised my disciplinary powers to fine one student and that was for the princely sum of £2. The misdemeanour earning that penalty was sliding on the newly-surfaced floor of one of my labs. One of the old out-buildings, which was all that I had in those days, had just been refurbished. This included complete interior painting plus sanding and re-finishing the floor with clear plastic. I was proud of the "new look" and arrived 10 minutes early for the first afternoon's practical class to be held in that lab since its renovation.

As I approached I heard great shouts of merriment. Then, just as I entered the doorway, a student minus his boots and sox, sitting on a wooden-legged stool, with his hands and legs out-stretched, was sailing down the length of the lab, using the stool as a slide on the newly-finished floor. As he came abreast of the door he saw me; but he couldn't stop and so continued on until, using his feet as buffers, he crashed into the end wall. I have never seen a quicker pack-up and preparation for a class than that which occurred that day. I reprimanded and fined the student and that was the end of the matter. He and I remained good friends thereafter and he elected to do his final-year honours project under my supervision.

Other breaches of discipline or good behaviour might have merited fines; but unless damage to property occurred I preferred other penalties. Thus a dinner-suit clad student of mine woke me up with great noise below my bedroom window at Mary White College at about 5 o'clock one Sunday morning. When I got out of bed and asked what the disturbance was about, his friends told me that he had been to a wedding. Mention of the word immediately caused the noisy one to be sick on the concrete path. I told the group that I would make an inspection at 10 am and unless the precincts were spotless the offender would be in trouble. In fact, shovel, hose and broom were in action long before 10 am, and later that day I received an apology, in person, from the culprit.

* * *

Although drunkenness, vandalism, bad language, rowdiness and theft are probably less in univer-

sities than in the community at large, they are common enough. One must also recognise that some of the disturbances are caused by outsiders. In 1977 the Council of the University of New England expressed concern at the poor behaviour and appointed a committee to enquire into the problem. Submissions were invited from anyone interested, and some of these, including one from me, mentioned alcohol as an important cause of some of the problems (but not theft). Finding a solution is not easy, for the common use of alcohol is deeply rooted in society. Most people think that drinking is harmless when they do it; but reprehensible among others, particularly the young.

The incredible thing is that while recognising that most of the campus vandalism follows drinking, university people at all levels provide alcohol liberally at almost every function, and all too frequently without even a thought to arranging for good quality non-alcoholic drink as an alternative for those who might prefer it.

I have been to an annual dinner at one of the university colleges (not Mary White) where, for the pre-dinner drinks, non-alcoholic beverages or water, although requested by me, were not available. At the dinner table, expensive wines were provided; but when I again asked for a soft alternative, a sweet, weak cordial with some diced orange peel and mint leaves floating in it was produced. This is common-place at dinners within the university — whether they are organised by the students or by senior academics or administrators. Great thought and expense go into providing the wines; but if anyone bothers about providing soft drinks at all, the greatest economy seems to be exercised in respect of them. At faculty, club or sporting dinners and barbecues for which the students buy costly tickets, the absence of high quality fruit juice, cider or equivalent soft drink, is grossly discriminatory against those who would prefer this type of drink. The cheap substitutes that are so often provided are certainly no incentive to abstinence from alcohol. Anyone who does persevere with the inferior cordial or "lolly water" feels resentment on two counts: first, that he is subsidising the wine drinkers; second, that he is being treated as a second-class citizen.

In case it might be thought that I am singling out the universities generally or the University of New England in particular as suffering from these unfortunate practices, I hasten to emphasise that the problem runs through the whole community.

I am sure that banning alcohol from the campus or from colleges would be useless — even counter-productive, especially if the "high-ups" continued to use it at their functions. However, I do believe that progress could be made by the dual approach of seniors setting a good example and by always offering high quality non-alcoholic beverages as alternatives to alcoholic ones.

Another worthwhile approach would be to encourage girls to refuse invitations from young males who drink too much alcohol. This could have a powerful long-term influence on behaviour, as well as being an immediate step towards enhancing the girls' self respect and their own safety in motor cars.

Measures such as these, if taken seriously, could reverse the present slack attitude towards alcohol — just as has already occurred with cigarette smoking. Only a few years ago, practically every home in the nation had a cigarette box full and ready, so visitors could be offered a smoke on arrival. Public awareness of the medical problems associated with smoking is now so strong that the boxes have gone. Those people who continue to smoke are increasingly avoided by others.

* * *

On the question of enforcing discipline in universities, discretion is needed by all those in authority. Much has already been said about cherished freedoms. These must not be eroded by over-zealous law-makers and supervisors: rules must always be necessary and just, and arrived at by a consensus of all those affected, senior and junior.

On the whole I think the universities, and particularly UNE, have done well in this regard. By-laws and regulations are published annually for all to read. They are fair, reasonable and subject to review. And, by the large, the university administrators act quickly and firmly against any wilful and wanton transgressors who are discovered.

There is very little trouble in classes at the teaching level, and heads of academic departments seem to cope thoroughly with the few isolated incidents such as insubordination or the rare student strikes which do occur.

In those colleges which have a Head (as opposed to committee-run residences) disciplinary matters are also generally dealt with firmly, fairly and speedily. The fact that student representatives have an important say in framing regulations, at all levels, has helped in this regard; they are willing to help enforce regulations which they have had a hand in drafting and they carry much delegated responsibility. In some colleges, however, the tutors can be a weak link — by "turning a blind eye" too often; by joining in with students on drinking forays and suchlike, so as to be "popular"; and by being too weak to take decisive action in unpleasant circumstances, such as the start of some wild fracas in the middle of the night.

The post of tutor has sometimes been said by students (generally the more radical ones) to be an unnecessary cost to the residential system, which the students have to bear. In fact, good tutors are an essential part of any well-run college. The small privileges they enjoy — part remission of residence fees

and use of a small flat — are small recompense for the responsibilities they have and for the long hours they are “on call”. A good tutor must be a person who interacts well with others; of high moral fibre; firm, but fair; helpful; deserving of respect; academically able and having the welfare of the university at heart. Such persons are not easy to find but they are worth their weight in gold. Without them, colleges quickly go down hill.

The eradication of some forms of unpleasant behaviour becomes the responsibility of every well-meaning person in a university. I refer now to such diverse practices as daubing paint slogans on the walls of buildings; painting obscenities on footpaths and bridges (this is fortunately rare); thieving; using bad language, especially in the presence of women; wantonly strewing litter around; and driving dangerously.

Some of these offences might seem minor; but it is regrettable that even the minor ones should happen in a university — where a better attitude might be expected among such a privileged population. Time after time I have been to university sporting fixtures and seen the beautiful grounds left littered by the student onlookers. Although white-painted containers are provided alongside the areas occupied by the observers, most of the latter are too lazy or too unaccustomed to tidiness to bother using the garbage cans: they simply toss the litter away. Then of course the Sports Union has to pay someone to go round after each match cleaning up the mess. Though the mess was never as bad as that at certain other public places which come to mind, my point is that it shouldn't happen at all. Not infrequently, too, some of the onlookers at football matches which I attended became drink-affected and commenced calling out obscenities to the referee or to the players. I presume many a spectator has felt embarrassed, as I have, to hear this. But what can be done about such a problem, save the gradual build-up of peer-group pressure, is hard to say.

Earlier in this book a comparison was made between my undergrad days and the present. To take that a little further, I must say that despite certain improvements, much of the humour has gone out of present-day student life. It was a tradition on “Commem” day in Brisbane in the 1930's, for instance, for the students to perpetrate harmless but often extremely clever pranks on the community. Other universities were also noted for this, and an example will illustrate what I mean. There was an occasion on which workmen were digging up the road in an inner-city street of one of the State capitals. Some students rang Police headquarters and reported that university students, dressed as workmen, were digging up the street. The same students waited a short time, then rang another nearby Police station and reported that students dressed as police were interfering with workmen digging up the road in such-and-such a street. The resulting melee is said to have taken quite some sorting out!



“Rags” are infrequent now; but this was a fund-raising regatta on Lake Zot, UNE, about 1965 . . .

... and during the football season the girls sometimes challenge a men's team.



This type of humour is now fairly rare. One view is that we can well do without such “childish pranks” — but another is that we can ill afford to take life too seriously. Perhaps over-full study programmes, the relatively recent practice of continuous assessment and the need to pass exams militate against the fun ethos; but this can hardly be the sole explanation when some of the other non-academic pursuits of students, mentioned earlier in this chapter, are practised.

My own view is that the work load is much the same as it ever was; that students study just as much and achieve about the same results as they ever did; but that their pattern of socialising has changed

dramatically from one characterised by practising songs for Commem, working up floats or "rags" for the procession and organising impromptu dances or songs round a piano, etc. — all without even a thought about alcohol . . . to the present "booze"-dominated parties, costly dances, loud bands, and, for a few irresponsibles, the aftermath of hazardous car-driving and some vandalism.

If my assessment is fair and accurate, some action must be taken about the alcohol problem, and I have already given my suggestion for this, stressing the role that everybody in the community has to play.

* * *

One of the long-standing traditions in the Australian universities has been to allow certain categories of staff, including all the academics of senior tutor and lecturer status and above to take approved sabbatical leave — or study leave as it is sometimes called — for a maximum of one year in each seven, or some pro-rata equivalent for lesser periods. The practice arose, and no doubt became specially entrenched in Australia because of this country's academic isolation before the days of air travel, from important seats of learning in other parts of the world. An occasional year away, to work at other chosen centres, gave academics a much better chance of keeping abreast of new ideas and technology, while it also enabled overseas people to recognise some of the talent and come to know some of the scholars whom Australia was able to produce.

At first the leave conditions were not so generous that staff members could easily avail themselves of the travel opportunity. For example, at Sydney University in the 1920's and 1930's the academic proceeding on leave had to find his own fares and pay a substitute lecturer. Gradually, however, conditions have been liberalised, so that during my time at New England the leave-taker's full salary was continued and travel grants to cover part of the fare to his destination were made — not only for himself, but for his wife and children if they, too were accompanying him.

No one has ever seriously questioned the benefits to teaching and research in our universities that study leave must have contributed over the years. Many, however, have questioned the rationale of academics being singled out as the one privileged group to receive this advantage. Perhaps the answer is that a line has to be drawn somewhere, and that if at least tenured tertiary teachers are accommodated, the benefit will filter down to all those who are taught by them.

A more serious challenge to sabbatical leave than the envy of those who do not receive it, has come quite recently in the form of government cost-benefit enquiries. When the present Australian government commenced to cut back on spending on education, the question of whether sabbatical leave was any longer necessary or justifiable came under close scrutiny. The chief argument against continuation, though not in fact a valid one, seemed to be that if approximately one seventh of the country's university teachers were on leave at any one time, then the universities must be over-staffed by that amount — and this hardly seemed fair when other government-funded instrumentalities were being made to reduce staff.

Numerous minor and perhaps more valid arguments for discontinuing sabbaticals were also advanced. It was said, for instance, that communication is now so fast and efficient that overseas information becomes available round the world almost as soon as it originates — thus rendering personal contacts and visitations less necessary. (Nevertheless there is often a two year delay after receipt of results, before their publication in journals). The point was made, too, that Australia now has so many of its own institutions of higher learning and research that overseas trips should not be so necessary. Further, it was pointed out that many distinguished overseas academics visit our institutions; . . . but would they come if contact had not first been made by Australian academics visiting overseas institutions? It has even been said by some that a proportion of academics take their sabbatical leave too lightly and that they regard the leave as a holiday and a tourist opportunity rather than a period of dedicated study or research.

After allowing a reasonable period for public debate of the whole issue, during which the universities vehemently stressed the need for personal contact with the world's top researchers and institutions, a government committee came down with findings which now (1979) seem certain to be implemented. Broadly these are that study leave will be granted, but only for really worthwhile projects, and then generally for only six months instead of a year. Greater attention than previously will be given to ascertaining whether the leave might just as usefully be spent within Australia as overseas, and a much fuller report than previously will be required from the staff member at the end of the leave.

The universities appear to have accepted these recommendations as a fair and reasonable compromise. The academics whose leave programmes are approved should not be unduly disadvantaged, and the new system will lessen the work-load on the staff who remain on duty. Although the new rules may not result in any great financial saving (for the same number of staff salaries will be paid), the more stringent conditions should mollify public opinion and perhaps save a little travel money by rejecting inappropriate applications. I have no doubt that in the past trifling or insufficiently explicit applications were approved; that some 12-month leaves need not have been so long; and that some leave-takers spent a good deal more time sight-seeing than their consciences should have allowed. The new rules, if seriously ap-

plied, should eliminate such weaknesses.

During my own 20 years and eight months at the University of New England I went on two sabbaticals, each of 12 months' duration. I certainly did some sight-seeing; but it was always at my own expense and during what would be the fair equivalent of normal week-ends and holidays. My conscience was clear during and following both leaves, and I am sure that my students and the university benefitted from the experience and extended background that I gained as a result of the leave periods. I am equally sure that the same could be said of most academics who have taken sabbatical leave, and that only a small minority would be in the irresponsible category for whom the new and stricter rules are relevant.

During each of my sabbaticals the work that I would normally have been doing was undertaken by my departmental colleagues. They knew that their turn for leave would come, and that when it did, others would fill in for them too. Never was anyone additional appointed — nor could they have been, for university staffing policy did not permit the employment of replacements for sabbatical leave-takers.

* * *

On the question of salary paid to university teachers, I believe that the scales of pay set for the varied categories of staff are both fair and adequate. The base level paid to lecturers is sufficient for persons who are at that stage generally young and just starting a family, while the increments associated with the higher echelons of senior lecturer, associate professor and professor are not only a recognition of the greater experience and responsibility required of those positions, but an incentive to staff in the lower categories to strive for advancement through a high standard of scholarship.

A very important point is that universities must always attract top-quality applicants for advertised positions. To achieve this, the right balance between salary and conditions must be struck. As indicated above, I believe salary levels are, and over the past years have been, appropriate; but it is on the conditions of service that I think administrators will have to keep a watchful eye.

To take an extreme example of the influence which service conditions can have, one has only to recall the concern that was held in the USA in the late 1960's and early 1970's about finding high-calibre persons willing to accept positions as Vice-Chancellors when student confrontation and rioting were at their height.

In the same way, top-quality teachers and researchers are unlikely to be attracted to university positions if there is any serious decline in discipline; if the freedoms of the type mentioned earlier in this chapter are eroded; if sabbatical leave privileges are cut too severely; or if the tenure which has been a traditional feature of university teaching positions is altered.

Of the points just listed, tenure has not previously been discussed. It requires special mention here, however, as some of the universities, including UNE, have started on the path to diminishing excellence by advertising lectureships and senior lectureships as temporary or fixed-term positions, offered for a mere two or three years. This tactic is used by the universities to give them more flexibility in the "steady state" or "no growth" situation which has now come about through a stabilising of student numbers, an over-abundance of CAE's and universities, a need to redress the balance in favour of technical colleges, and a consequent curbing by the government of the finances provided for universities.

I believe that if conditions of service are lowered, top-quality staff will not be attracted but will prefer positions in private enterprise or government instrumentalities. Then, if second-rate people have to be recruited by universities the ideal of a "community of scholars" will become a mere memory.

Although some staff members and the various university staff associations tend to be vocal about salaries, I believe that at heart most true academics are people who are in their jobs because they enjoy them — because they cherish the freedoms and the traditions. The latter must, therefore, be preserved at all costs and certainly given a higher priority by staff associations than fighting for salary increases.

Indeed at times, when certain sections of the working community grasp after every possible pay increment, I believe that members of parliament, judges and academics, as three specially privileged groups, should give a lead by speaking out against such ever-spiralling rises. I regard occasional cost-of-living adjustments as being appropriate, but not the big hand-outs and "benefits" such as holiday pay loadings, week-end penalty rates, overtime, etc, which so many people in the community seem to seek and gain. At least I can end the chapter on a happy note: academics have not yet sought overtime or penalty rates!

CHAPTER 15

LOOKING BACK

When I reflect now on the years that have gone, the over-riding thought that comes to me is that I would not want the major events in my life to have been cast differently. Even my boy-hood desire to be on the land and raise livestock, though not fulfilled in the same terms as my early hopes, was probably resolved for the best: as time went by, my work brought me into increasingly close touch with the pastoral industry and the associated research added interest and excitement.

Selecting what I regard as high-lights of my research is not easy but the Cambridge experiments in which lambs were born out of season (see Chapter 11) heads the list.

Discovering why the out of season lambs were midgets was also fascinating. I reasoned that since the problem followed summer pregnancy, either high temperature or summer photoperiod (long days and short nights) might be responsible. Having both hot-rooms and light-rooms available, it was a simple matter to set up two separate experiments — one subjecting pregnant ewes during the normal season of pregnancy (winter) to summer photoperiod; the other subjecting them, also during winter, to high temperature.

The light reversal had no effect whatsoever on the birth weight of the lambs but high temperature exercised a dramatic, harmful effect on pregnancy. Short, fairly severe heat exposures early in pregnancy caused complete failure with embryo resorption, while more chronic exposure to less severe heat resulted in foetal dwarfing. The degree of dwarfing was roughly proportional to the duration and severity of heat exposure, though breed and individual differences in the animals' heat tolerance were important. Thus Merinos, a relatively heat tolerant breed, needed a higher ambient temperature during pregnancy to induce foetal dwarfing than did Romney Marsh or certain other British breeds which were tested later.

These results explained the small lamb syndrome which G.R. Moule of the Queensland Department of Agriculture had identified among Merino ewes in central north Queensland, where sheep are lambing in February-March. Lambing at that time of year, though inappropriate physiologically, is chosen as the lesser of two evils because at least there is fresh green feed available for the lambs then, coinciding with the highly seasonal summer rains.

The adverse effect of heat on pregnant sheep was later confirmed in the USA where, for reasons of supplying an all-year-round sucker lamb trade, research is now directed at sustaining normal pregnancies in summer. Dr Lemuel Goode's approach at North Carolina State University is to develop a particularly heat resistant strain of ewes based on the black-bellied Barbados breed which originally came from West Africa. Another group, led by Dr L.C. Ulberg, also at North Carolina, is studying the metabolism of the early embryo in the hope of discovering just what goes wrong at the cellular level when high temperature prevails. On a short visit to North Carolina during sabbatical leave in 1973, I was invited to give a seminar on some of my research. I felt specially proud when the chairman introduced me as the pioneer worker in this field. Now, some 30 years after my describing the small lambs at Cambridge and 25 years after identifying the cause, medical researchers in Australia are showing interest in possible adverse effects of heat on human pregnancies due to such conditions as high fever, over-exertion on hot days, or even to taking very hot baths or sleeping with over-hot electric blankets.

The studies on coat type in cattle were also absorbing. Although Professor Bonsma from the University of Pretoria was the pioneer in showing what a profound influence coat type has on the adaptation of cattle to tropical and sub-tropical environments, my own work helped to explain the physiology of the seasonal cycles of coat change.

Thus, by keeping British breeds of cattle, such as Shorthorns, in conditions of controlled light and darkness, and thereby artificially reversing the normal seasonal sequence of day length, the cattle shed their hair in autumn instead of spring. The change-over caused the animals to grow long, thick coats of hair in the summer months (when their coats are normally short and sleek) and for them to have short, shiny coats in the winter. This reaction is the opposite of what happens normally; and, since the only experimental treatment was reversal of the annual light cycle, conclusive evidence was provided that the coat changes in such cattle are photoperiodically regulated.

Subsequent experiments showed that poor nutrition impedes coat shedding, apparently through lack of sufficient growth by new hairs to remove the old ones from the hair follicles. The old, retained hairs then assume a dry, "dead" appearance. Animals with debilitating diseases react similarly, probably for the same reason.

The temperate zone cattle breeds, through evolution and natural selection, are endowed with an insulating coat in winter and a sparse one in summer, thus assisting their heat regulation. However, the mechanism which triggers the coat changes is operated by seasonal change in day length, not by air temperature.

An understanding of the role of light (seasonal change in the ratio of daylight to dark) also provides a rational explanation for the observed behaviour and functioning of the tropical cattle breeds. To take an extreme case, truly equatorial breeds (like the Ankole cattle of Uganda) have a short coat all the year

round. This is an evolutionary adaptation to a climate which has no winter but remains warm throughout the year. In keeping with this, there is practically no seasonal change in day length: at the equator day length varies by no more than a few minutes throughout the year. Furthermore, if Ankole cattle are sent to a country such as Great Britain where both temperature and day length vary greatly from summer to winter, that breed does not grow a long insulating coat in the winter; it lacks the genetic capacity to respond to a changing photoperiod (or to low temperature).

Conversely, if temperate zone cattle, such as most British breeds, are sent to an equatorial region, the seasonal day length variation in their new location is insufficient to trigger their hair shedding mechanism. Most of them therefore quite soon degenerate from chronic heat stress resulting from retention of their insulating coat.

If anyone doubts the severe handicap which a thick coat of hair imposes on cattle in the humid tropics, let him observe such animals, first having clipped the coats off some of them, as I have done. Clipping results in the animals maintaining near-normal body temperature and breathing rate, going out to graze even in the sunshine and making reasonable weight gains. On the other hand the woolly-coated ones run high body temperatures, lie in the shade panting and soon lose condition. Clipping is not a practical husbandry procedure for range cattle; but used experimentally it demonstrates the importance of a short coat, and fortunately shortness and sleekness of the coat is a character for which worthwhile genetic gains can be made by cross-breeding and/or selection.



Clipping experiments demonstrated the need to breed short-coated cattle in the humid tropics. (Yeates, 1977 — Courtesy J Agric Sci Camb). 68.

Although light-room and hot-room experiments can provide much useful information, they have the disadvantage of being artificial; for instance, normal direct sunshine is lacking indoors. To avoid this criticism I tried, whenever appropriate, to supplement the laboratory-type experiments with field counterparts. Our so-called "walking trials" come to mind as an interesting illustration of this.

Instead of testing the heat tolerance of the various types of cattle in the hot-room only, some of my colleagues and I decided to walk them measured distances in the field on hot days. We trained the cattle to lead behind a slowly moving vehicle, to which they were attached in line abreast by rope leads. Having trained the animals, we then took them and all our equipment, at the hottest time of year, to the large circular track at the Moree showgrounds in N-W NSW, a location of known summer heat.

Each walking trial lasted for four hours during the hottest part of the day, and, as the speed of the vehicles was set at 2-2/3 miles per hour the total distance travelled each day was 10-2/3 miles. Each hour a short stop was made to record the animals' body temperatures, breathing frequencies and sweating rates. After each such stop, the next hour's walk would traverse the circuit in the opposite direction, so as to equalise the distance walked by animals at each extremity of the line abreast. If any animal showed symptoms of heat exhaustion it was withdrawn and hosed.

In this way we were able to compare cattle of different breeds, different coat types, different sexes and different nutritional states under natural atmospheric conditions, yet in circumstances which allowed a reasonable degree of objectivity.

When making these tests with my colleagues, one of us would drive the vehicle and another would walk behind the cattle to watch for any beasts showing signs of over-heating and to keep any slack ones properly on the move. On one such occasion, while I was the one walking behind, a couple of ladies who came into the showground to attend a meeting stood by the rails and watched us do a whole circuit. As I came abreast of them, one of the ladies complained that this was unpleasant treatment to be giving cattle. I replied that we were in fact very thoughtful and very watchful of the animals' welfare, and that we were doing this with the main aim of improving the ability of cattle to survive under far worse conditions, such as the hot dry plains of the Northern Territory. This logic failed to impress my critic, so, feeling hot and

tired myself, I said: "Lady, the cattle are not doing any more than I am — and they have four legs each on which to do it, compared with my two". With that, the ladies departed to their meeting.

In due course the walking trials gave way to an even more practical study, i.e. making detailed observations of the walking and watering behaviour of whole herds of cattle on the shadeless plains of the Northern Territory. This work was done by my colleague Peter J. Schmidt for a Master of Rural Science degree, and it proved so interesting that he and I included much of the detail in the book "Beef Cattle Production" which we jointly wrote some years later.



Measured walking trials with cattle in summer to test the animals' suitability for hot climates. Note vertical pipe to divert vehicle's exhaust emission and open doors to ventilate the driver's cabin.

Schmidt described graphically how, in great heat and without the benefit of any shade, the cattle elected to rest beside their single water-point by day. Then, in the afternoon, generally as air temperature fell to about 97°F, they would stir and commence to walk out to their grazing area some four or five miles distant. Having reached their destination they would remain for the night, grazing and resting by turns. Then, when morning came, they would make their return journey to the water — invariably setting out at a time which ensured their safe arrival at the water-point before air temperature exceeded about 97°F. Presumably the cattle had learned by experience to avoid walking in the shadeless country during the worst heat of the day, when in summer the air temperature regularly reached 110-115°F.

Young calves often made these walks with their mothers, though some stayed behind in groups tended by one or more "nurse" cows. Many calves died from heat exhaustion. Among both cows and calves Peter Schmidt found a considerable range of both behaviour and heat tolerance. This lends support to the argument that in country of such low carrying capacity, selection and breeding of heat tolerant cattle which can withstand high temperature and walk long distances, may be a more worthwhile strategy than increasing the frequency of the costly water-points. Unfortunately the planting of shade trees and the provision of artificial shades for the 900 or so breeder cattle generally accommodated by each water-point has proved to be impractical.

The final piece of research which I shall mention as being specially memorable is the beef carcass grading trial which I undertook with another colleague, who enrolled for a Master of Science in Agriculture degree, C.R. Luckock. Ever since arriving at the university I had advocated the grading and branding of beef carcasses for the Australian domestic market — so producers would receive just recompense for their product; and so Australian consumers could identify the likely quality of the cuts they purchased.

Despite some support from graziers for a grading method which I had evolved, nothing was ever done by the state government department whose responsibility the grading or classification of meat for the domestic market would be. Another system of classification, evolved soon after mine by a colleague in Queensland, Dr Don Charles, was treated in like manner: much interest being shown, but no action taken.

After some 10 or 12 years of fruitless endeavour by me in verbally promoting the cause of grading, Russell Luckock came to do post-graduate study in my department. As he was interested in meat marketing, the idea occurred to me that we should be able to carry out a grading trial ourselves, in the city of Armidale. This would make a practical, as opposed to a laboratory or library study for Russell; and, if

successful, our trial might be expanded and continued officially by the relevant state government department.

I lost no time in seeking some necessary approvals and help. Almost by return mail the then Minister for Agriculture, Mr G.R. Crawford sanctioned our proposal to grade and brand beef for sale in Armidale for a period of three months, the Homebush Abattoir supplied us with blue and red vegetable dyes for branding carcasses and the New England County Council agreed to our using the Guyra Abattoir for the purpose of grading and branding selected sides of beef. Russell Luckock had aluminium roller brands cut and assembled and he also recruited two meat retailers to sell the graded and branded beef.

The result was that in little more than a month after formulating our plan, graded and branded beef was actually on display and being sold in two Armidale outlets. One of these was a traditional butcher's shop and the other a self-service display in a supermarket.

In no time news of the venture spread and great interest was created. Both shops reported increased trade and many visitors from centres beyond Armidale came to see the trial in operation. Favourable reports flowed in from householders who appreciated having the characteristics of their meat identified by brand. Almost without exception the reports indicated that folk felt they could at last rely on the quality of the meat they selected.

The system of identification was fairly simple. Symbols were branded on each carcass to denote the age of the animal, (this being determined at the abattoir by inspection of the incisor teeth). If carcasses had desirable conformation and fat thickness (both determined by simple measurement) their age symbol was branded in blue dye. If, however, conformation and/or fat thickness were less desirable (but acceptable) red dye was used to imprint the age symbol. Lesser quality or old cattle carcasses (which received no brand) were excluded from the trial. The technique was a combination of grading and classification, as it gave a guide to quality as well as denoting age.

After three months the trial was judged to be so popular that extensions of time were sought and approved by the Minister — first for another three months, then for a further six months, making 12 months in all. At the end of that year it was necessary for Russell Luckock to write his thesis and move on to his next appointment which turned out to be with the Australian Meat Board (now the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation).

So ended another highly practical, stimulating and at times quite exciting piece of research. But alas, though I was hopeful that official grading or classification might follow quickly, there is still (in 1979) little sign of it eight years after the trial and 20 years after my first advocacy of grading.

* * *

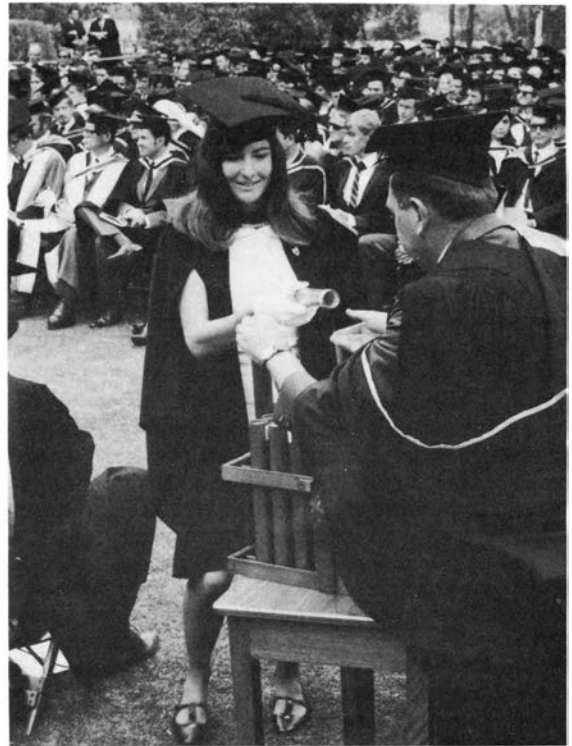
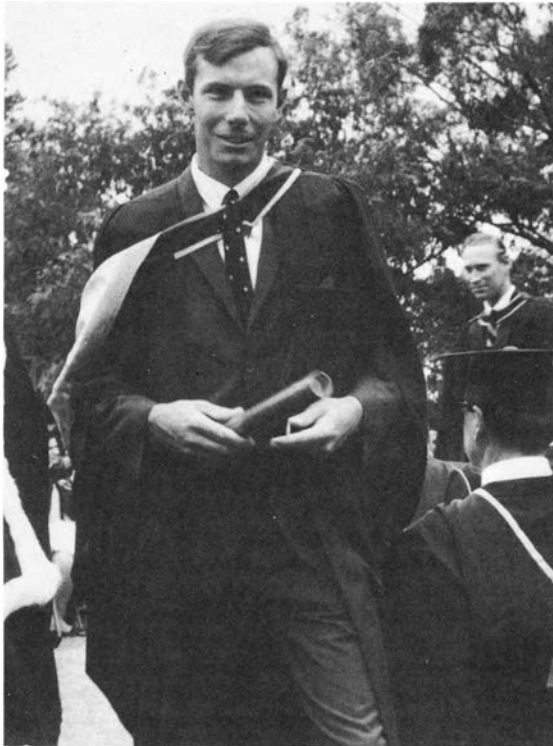
Turning now to family life, my own children brought a greater sense of purpose to my work than might have been without them. Responsibility towards them also probably acted as a brake on my occasional notions about going on the land during the Brisbane era.



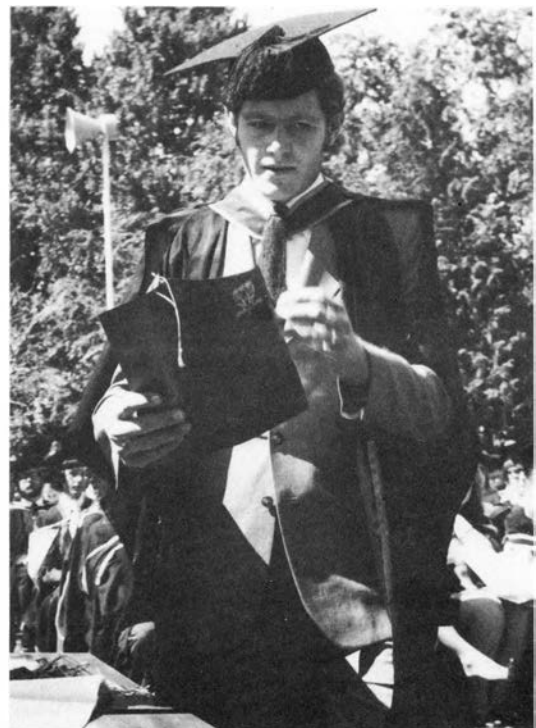
Richard, about 1974. Keen fisherman.
Now (1979) second year university student.

By having five children within a span of 12 years, the children themselves were never short of playmates. I, too, had grown up in a family of that size and can testify to the advantages of having brothers around — even though I was the youngest! Marnie, who was an only child, recalls how she missed not having brothers and sisters, and was always determined to have a sizeable family of her own.

As the children grew up and went first to school, then to university and the eldest four were married and had children of their own, Marnie and I were always deeply involved in what they were doing, and pleased with their progress, outlook and attitude.



Tony (left) receives his B Sc with first class honours in Geology; and for Diana (right) a B A degree.



Rosalind (left) B A with first class honours in French, and later M A (Hons); Greg (right), B Sc and Dip Nat Res (with merit).

Over the years we had occasional anxious times medically. One of the girls suddenly commenced to lose her vision and was rushed to Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney. The problem was diagnosed as optic neuritis which can be very serious. Fortunately, however, she responded to treatment and made a complete recovery. Some years later her sister had ear drops put into her eye, by mistake, in the school sick-bay. The drops caused gross damage to the eye but again there was a happy final outcome. Then, quite out of the blue, one of the boys was struck with cervical spine trouble, caused by injury to his neck while surfing a couple of years previously. Two long and hazardous, but necessary, operations in Sydney corrected the trouble.

Such anxious times must occur in most families. I believe they draw brothers, sisters and parents specially close together and, when the outcome is favourable, an enduring sense of gratitude is felt.

At school, the children combined sport and study sensibly. They were all good swimmers and some of them were equally proficient in one or two other sports. Academically, one of them always did very well, seemingly without much effort. She gained numerous school and some university prizes, graduating in Arts with first class honours, and later MA (Hons). Another worked hard, shared the prize of school Dux, then graduated B Sc, Dip Nat Res (with merit). One had to struggle with school study but went from strength to strength at university and graduated with first class honours. I am sure that his improvement was due to motivation once he settled on a field of study to his liking. A fourth had to work hard for every pass, both at school and university but pass she did, graduating with a BA after a happy time during which she did well at sport and made many good friends. The fifth is now a second year undergrad majoring in Geology, thereby following in his eldest brother's footsteps.

Since graduating, the eldest boy has spent a good deal of time doing geological survey work with field parties from the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources. This has taken him into some of Australia's most remote places, such as the Simpson Desert, the Great Sandy Desert, the Tanami Desert and the Gibson Desert. While leader of a mapping team in the Gibson Desert in 1975 he discovered a previously unknown meteorite crater. With official approval, he named this the Veevers Crater (41) after a colleague who some years previously had surveyed the field area adjoining his own.



Meteorite crater in the Gibson Desert, W.A., discovered by A.N.Yeates in 1975 while on a mapping survey. Named Veevers Crater after a colleague geologist, it has a diameter of 90 yards and a depth of 23 feet below the 22 yards wide rim. (Photo: courtesy of A.N.Yeates and Bureau of Mineral Resources, Canberra). (41).

* * *

An event which I can now look back on with pleasure and pride was the send-off I was given at the time of my retirement.

The students acted first. A deputation arrived in my office one morning and invited me to the annual Rural Science Undergraduates' Association dinner, making clear that I was to be their guest. No mention was made of any special treatment for me; but at the dinner, when the speeches started, I was astonished to find myself in the limelight. A student representative made quite a moving speech about my time in office and the fact that I was leaving. Then, on being summoned to the dais I was presented with an in-

scribed tray and an enlarged "candid-shot" photograph taken at a student gathering, then given a standing ovation. As though that were not enough to make my evening memorable, I was to receive after the speech-making, not only a warm hand-shake from many of the lads present but a spontaneous kiss from the more senior of the girl students who I expect felt that they had come to know me pretty well. If one ever had any doubt about whether the work was all "worthwhile", or appreciated, that evening would certainly have dispelled it.



Farewell presentation to the author by spokesperson for students at Rural Science undergrads' dinner.

Then at the last Professorial Board meeting for 1977 the Chairman drew attention to the fact that it would be my last meeting with the Board. He mentioned some rather unusual but altogether pleasing personal attributes which he claimed fitted me. Again after this speech there was sustained applause. All this really amazed me, because I had never held high office on the university's committees but had played a rather un-dramatic "rural" role.

Marnie, on the other hand enjoyed committee work. She was elected to the University Council, was several times chairman of the Board of Colleges and later the Colleges' Committee, and was involved on school and art gallery committees. She, too, was farewelled right-royally, first by Mary White College and then by the combined Heads of Colleges. The Mary White girls and friends of the College commissioned a painting of Marnie which was hung in the main common-room. The students then asked and received permission of the university to have that delightful room named after her.

Finally, Marnie and I were given an official farewell dinner by well-wishers from the university with some town and district folk joining in. It was a happy, relaxed evening during which Marnie was given a painting and I a typewriter. I am sure that word must have got out that I intended writing a book, for the typewriter proved an opportune gift and has certainly been working "overtime".

Just before leaving the university I received a letter from Professor Norman Tulloh, Federal President of the Australian Society of Animal Production, telling me that I had been elected a Fellow — the highest honour that the Society bestows. Marnie and I were invited to the Society's Biennial Conference dinner at the University of Melbourne the following February, where, along with several others who had been similarly honoured, I formally received the Fellowship.

Then, to cap all the above, some really wonderful news came soon after I had left the University. A letter from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ronald Gates, dated 15 February 1978 contained the following paragraph:

It gives me very great pleasure to tell you that, at the Council meeting held on 13th February, it was resolved that you be invited to accept the title of Professor Emeritus in recognition not only of your long and distinguished service to the University but also of your standing as an academic and your contributions to the beef industry.

Naturally I accepted this great honour.

* * *

Long before any idea of retiring became a reality for me, I had heard stories about people becoming bored, "going to seed", falling ill and even dying prematurely soon after they left their active life's work and "went into retirement". These stories are given such credence that I think some people actually fear

to retire; then, when they do, they virtually talk themselves into a mental and physical state which predisposes to the very ills that they fear.

If there is any truth in the above, my wife and I have fortunately been spared the problem. But I am sure that neither of us was ever worried: we always felt that there would be plenty to keep us occupied and we looked forward to having extra time in which to do the many things which we had postponed during our very busy working lives. Now, after more than one year's retirement, we feel at least as fit as we ever did and we sometimes jokingly complain that each week has only seven days in it.

However, as I indicated in an earlier chapter, we did plan our retirement. Our aim was to improve our knowledge of Australia through travel; to give scope to some chosen hobbies and to gardening; to fish, surf and take bush walks; and to keep fit with active sports such as tennis and (for me) running. (I had never succeeded in talking Marnie into having runs for pleasure; whenever I suggested it in earlier years she replied that I could do the running and she would be the control in the experiment!).



In preparation for retirement we built a new home, of which our little holiday cottage became part, on our land at Woolgoolga, central North Coast, NSW.



View to N from verandah



Topmost point in Australia. Reward of superb views at the Mt. Kosciusko cairn after walk from Thredbo Village.

Often in life, when plans are made well in advance, something intervenes to render their execution impossible; but in our retirement the way has been clear and we are continuing to achieve what we set out to do.

To assist with our travel we sold our car and bought a VW Campmobile. This is a vehicle specially fitted out for camping. The rear seats can be folded down to form a comfortable bed and there is plenty of cupboard and hanging space. A small refrigerator, a table, a stove and a stainless steel sink with water tank and pump to the tap, add to the comfort of camping, especially in poor weather when the interior of the van offers all the protection of a little house. We generally pull in for the night at some recognised camping area where other facilities are available, including electric power for our 'fridge, stove and lighting. If electricity is unavailable the 'fridge and stove can be run on gas, a bottle of which forms part of the van's equipment.

Trips that we have undertaken so far include to Wilson's Promontory National Park (the southernmost point of mainland Australia) via the east coast, returning through the Bogong high plains and Victorian Alps; to Kosciusko National Park; via the Riverina to Adelaide and the South Flinders Ranges around Melrose and Mt Remarkable National Park, returning via Broken Hill; to Proserpine and Bowen in North Queensland, returning via the Carnarvon National Park, the Anakie gem fields and the Bunya Mountains; and to the Charleville-Adavale district in south-western Queensland.

On some of these trips we have taken the opportunity to visit and perhaps stay a few nights with our married sons and daughters and their families. So far, too, most of the trips have had an additional purpose to that of "learning more about Australia" or seeing the children and grandchildren: I refer mainly to research for this book. The trips to the South Flinders Ranges, to Bowen and to Adavale, for instance, all enabled us to visit the properties on which my grandfather spent many years. And while in Adelaide, Brisbane, Bowen and Charleville material for the book was gathered from various libraries, archives, Lands Departments and newspaper offices. The trip to Wilson's Promontory was coupled with our visit to Melbourne to attend the Animal Production Conference.

Our visits to national parks are not merely fleeting ones; nor are they just to find a convenient camping spot for a night's rest. At every opportunity we have undertaken the wonderful walks which are available — taking a lunch pack if an all-day outing seemed to be indicated, and always carrying a camera. Some of our all-day walks included the climbing of Mt Kosciusko from Thredbo Village and visiting the Blue Lake; climbing Mt Remarkable and exploring the spur of which it is a part as well as Alligator Creek gorge in Sth Aust; and wending our way through the Carnarvon Gorges in Qld.

Many more trips remain on our list and hopefully they, too, will include enjoyable walks and climbs. Though the climbs are sometimes hot and tiring, the reward on reaching the top is always sufficient compensation. For me, there is also a feeling of gratitude that we are fit enough to undertake these ventures. Perhaps doing them, in moderation and with care, helps to keep us in trim for more in the future.

Among our various hobbies, Marnie's pottery deserves mention. She first took up and loved the craft when we lived in Brisbane. She continued for a time in Armidale, but then gave it up while she was Principal of Mary White College. One of her main retirement ambitions was to start again and this she has done. She attends a weekly class in Coffs Harbour and is a member (in fact currently secretary) of the local art group. An electric powered wheel (made by me) and a small kiln of her own have increased her output to the extent that she now joins regularly with other members of the art society in exhibiting and selling their work.



A small sample of the many pots now being made by the author's wife, Marnie.

More or less in self defence, I have taken up a little very modest jewellery making, using silver and gem stones (the latter of my own finding) as materials. The relative delicacy of this work is a foil for the somewhat grosser stone and concrete wall-building which has become the most creative part of my gardening activity. I am not sure yet which of the two I prefer — jewellery making or stone wall building! However, I do feel bold enough now to suggest to anyone contemplating retirement that each out-door activity needs to be balanced by an in-door one, in case it rains. Moreover, for anyone like myself who enjoys a daily surf, but is liable to be frustrated by day after day of rain, my recommendation is to grow a patch of bananas. Then, when the rain streams down, one can rest content that the bananas are growing so fast that they can almost be heard! In such contentment it is easy to write or perhaps start making a new item of jewellery.

* * *

In an earlier chapter I mentioned that in my undergrad days some of my specially close friends were very good athletes and that I fell into the habit of training with them. After the day's work we would often go round to Brisbane Grammar School oval which we were allowed to use and have about half an hour's running. This was followed by a shower and the evening meal in College which in those days was on Wickham Terrace. Although my participation was purely for relaxation I enjoyed it so much and felt so much better as a result of it that I continued the habit in later years. My wife confirms this regularity and recalls that I have been a devotee of recreational fitness running since before she first met me — and that was in 1941.

Finding pleasant surroundings for one's run is not always easy; but in most towns a park or a sports oval can be located. For the 20 years that I lived in Armidale I was fortunately placed, having access first to the beautiful Teachers' College parklands which lay opposite our home; then to the university grounds, after we started living in Mary White College. When I commenced having my runs at UNE I occasionally received "hoys" from students. However they soon became accustomed to seeing me and, as the years went by, so many others also started running that the practice was no longer regarded as eccentric.



Simple jewellery making as a foil to outdoor wall building.

I recall that when I was in my mid-40's in age, I wondered if I would soon have to give up running. I even determined the sorts of activities that I might substitute for it if this became necessary. Far from having to give it up, however, the regularity and amount (though not the speed) of my running increased over the next 20 years. My performance seems to have "plateaued" at a level such that I rarely miss a day and my average distance is about 2-2½ miles.

There is a long-standing tradition in the Rural Science Faculty that the students organise a day of outside activities once a year, in first term. They encourage staff to participate. Years ago, on the occasion of one of these, I joined in several sets of tennis and some hockey and volley ball. Then, as all the organised games had finished, the students drifted over to the area which had been set up for drinks and an evening barbecue. They invited me to have a beer but I replied that I hadn't yet had my run and wouldn't some of them join me in that first. They were obviously taken aback, but some accepted the challenge and we completed six circuits of the football field together. Then I had a beer.

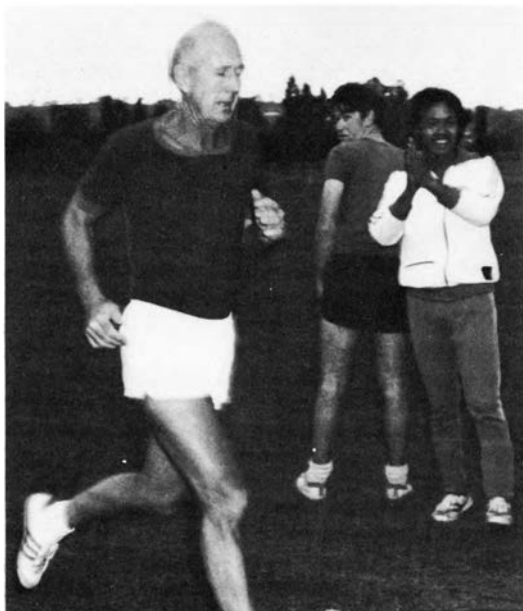
I thought no more about the matter but the following year the organisers of the sports day approached me and said they would like to include "a run like they had with me last year" in the new

programme. I was interested that they had remembered, and pleased that they had followed the matter up in this way. I agreed at once and said that I would ask the Sports Union Athletics Club to devise rules. I agreed to provide a trophy which the winner would keep and which would be engraved with his or her name. It was to be called the Rural Science Staff-Student Fitness Trophy.

In due course the rules were established and the race was held. Everyone proclaimed it a great success and the "big run" became a feature of each sports day from then on.

The original rules provided for a 2-mile handicap event in which male competitors over 25 years received 33-1/3 yards start for each year by which their age exceeded 25; women up to 21 years of age started at the 40 year old men's mark, and women over 21 received 33-1/3 yards additional start for each year above 21. This proved very successful for a few years until I won! Naturally, I presented that year's trophy to the runner who came second. On arriving home that night I reported the news to my wife who, with a gleam in her eye, replied that if I kept on long enough with that sort of handicapping I wouldn't have to run at all!

This challenged me so much that I asked the Committee to re-look at the rules and try to evolve a scheme which made everyone run the full distance. They did this most effectively and the present position is that 7½ seconds' start is given for each year over 25 for men; women who are 21 and under start at the same time as 40 year-old men, and women over 21 receive an additional 7½ seconds start for each year of age above 21. Under the new rules, for my last few years at the university, I was able to face my wife with honour when I returned home after the sports day run!



The author finishing the 2-mile Rural Science staff-student race, about 1975.

1978: Invited back to Rural Science students' dinner to present the 2-mile fitness trophy — won for the first time ever by a girl.



When I left the university I wondered whether I should do anything about providing a trophy for future years. I decided against that, for it would have appeared to be foisting the scheme on the students. On their own initiative, however, they bought a trophy themselves for competition in perpetuity. This was used in 1978 and they invited me back (to the annual dinner) to make the presentation. As I read the inscription, I noted a change of name: it is now "The Professor N.T.M. Yeates Fitness Trophy".

The over-view that I, as a biologist, take on running for fitness is that our bodies are designed for activity and that the increasingly sedentary life-style that people lead gradually impairs a number of important body functions unless an appropriate amount of time is allocated to exercise them. The cardio-respiratory system, the muscles and the joints are specially relevant in this context and they require regular, vigorous, smooth use. Running is one simple way of providing this, without having to depend on other people, on special facilities or on particular weather conditions. But it must be regular and sustained, and this means building up very gradually to a run lasting 15 to 20 minutes, at least three or four times a week.

Some people complain that they "can't spare the time" to have regular runs; but I found, even in my busiest years, that if the run were regarded as an "appointment" it could be fitted in very easily. For me, the best time seemed to be immediately after work, at about sunset. That had the added advantage of seeming to shed the day's cares.

Whenever I travel away from home, whether it be for a day or two, or for more lengthy periods, I take my running gear and generally find suitable places to use it. Even on a tightly packed schedule of visits to some 20 universities in New Zealand and the USA during 1973 I seldom missed my evening run. Sometimes when others were arranging my programme I asked in advance if an hour could be kept for this purpose between about 5 and 6 pm. There was never any bother, for colleagues respect such a request and are pleased to assist.

The one time in my adult life when I did have to miss my runs was when I was on board ship during the war. I lost the habit then and I don't believe I took it up quickly enough on leaving HMS "Havelock". I mentioned in an earlier chapter the deflated feeling I had after leaving the ship, before returning to Australia. Had I realised it then, I think settling on to a good training programme of daily runs would have alleviated my malaise.

My running suits me and, if nothing unforeseen happens, I expect to continue. I am curious to determine when my frame will ask to walk instead of to run. This appeals to me as a specially interesting experiment in one who is fortunate enough to be reasonably fit.

* * *

My story started with pioneers — tracing the endeavours of my great-grandparents after their arrival in Australia by sailing ship in 1839. Then attention was focused on their three hardy sons: George, John and Sidney. These three brothers entered the Australian pastoral industry at its very beginning — successively in South Australia, in far north Queensland and, in Sidney's case, also in far south-west Queensland. They battled honestly, enduring all the hardships of their locations and times, and they lived full, upright lives, well into old age.

Since no great pastoral empires and no country mansions exist to mark their passage, it could be concluded that they were failures. But I see it differently: they found and married fine women who endured the hardships with them; they had the courage to follow close behind the explorers; they reared their large families well; and they played leading roles as citizens.

George, the eldest, always demonstrating a warm concern for his younger brothers, was the trail blazer, pioneering the properties at Baldina, Baroota, Wild Dog Creek and Myall Downs. Then in his later years, at an age when most men are retired, he was active in the civic and church life of his community of Jamestown. The respect in which he was held there is exemplified by the stained glass church window. John, the Alderman and Mayor, the hospital trustee, the school patron was immersed in the public life of early Bowen, ever ready to serve on committees and pull his weight. But I feel sure he must have left there a disappointed and disillusioned man. Sidney worked hard to develop the property Baroota in South Australia. At Melrose, near Bowen, he started a school where none had been before, supervised the stock routes, helped form a P and A Assn, served as a Divisional Councillor . . . Then, on moving to the Warrego, he became a Justice of the Peace and a Magistrate, spending long hours on the bench, doing public duty while still effectively managing Boondoon in a difficult environment.

These men never became wealthy, but through lives of constant endeavour and service they achieved other intangible benefits and satisfactions of a type which money cannot buy. Through their example, their families grew up in similar fashion. My father, Herbert, for instance never spent an idle day in his life. He was not affluent but through hard work he managed to provide for his wife and five boys, even through the depression. As well, he gave his spare time to public service: the Ambulance Committee, Church Committee as Treasurer, Chamber of Commerce, City Alderman, and finally Member of Parliament — the only public office for which he ever received payment.



Retirement allows time in which to reflect — as here, at sunset on a vantage point, Wilson's Promontory, Victoria.

The generation of Yeates men and women to which I belong seems also to have carried on the tradition. One thinks of Alexander Barr Yeates, ex-Surveyor General of Queensland; John Norman Yeates, the one-time South Australian Highways Commissioner, awarded a CBE; Frank Arthur Yeates, the West Australian OBE with all manner of public positions; my own brothers — and so the list could go on . . . with never a sign, so far as I am aware, of anyone unworthy.

For my part I have no regrets at the absence of pastoral empires and family country mansions. I prefer to have come up the way I did: to have had a father who knew how to look after himself in the bush, who worked hard, who was straight in his dealings, who never knew the meaning of the word "snob" and who set an example in self-reliance, perseverance and initiative which I could follow. This, in retrospect, I regard as better than having been handed my start on a silver platter.

In short, I am proud of my Yeates forebears and their manner of living. I salute them and I wish the present and future generations of this now very large family, good will in their endeavours.

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