"THE DOC."

Gavin G McEwin

Gavin G. McEwin
54 Nairne Road
Woodside 5244

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Gavin G McEwin
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South Australia 5244

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Ph. 8332.7435

11/1 Wynyard Grove,
Wattle Park, S.A. 5066.

Mr. Gavin McEwin,
54 Nairne Rd.,
Woodside, S.A. 5244.

Dear Mr. McEwin,

It was considerate of you to ask us to read the draft of your Appreciation of "The Doc" and invite our comments.

Sir Allan lived a long, active and varied life; you have deftly caught his spirit, his energy and his style, and shown him as many will remember, but few could so roundly describe.

In later years he probably cherished most his time at Roseworthy. You have presented a thoughtful and vivid account of his leadership and achievements in that period, from which emerges a fine picture of the man himself and the community he loved so much.

John, Kerry and Margaret grew up as part of that community and have lively memories of what it was like. We are delighted that you have written this Appreciation and pleased that copies will be placed in the Mortlock Library and the National Library, Canberra, where the bulk of Sir Allan's papers and records are already held.

With our best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Callaghan.

(Lady Callaghan)

PREFACE

I have been hoping to produce this Appreciation of "The Doc" since I graduated from Roseworthy College in 1937.

I believe, I owe it to him, for he taught me so much about Agriculture, Farming, and many other topics. I hope I have committed to paper the real effect he had on South Australian Farming, and its Economy.

Because this Appreciation has been written from memory I am most grateful to a number of people for the help and encouragement they gave me -

To Lady Callaghan, for proof reading, permission to reproduce a photograph of "The Doc", and for her unlimited support and advice.

To Andrew Michelmore for proof reading and correction of some historical errors in the text.

To Elizabeth Michelmore, who kept my English on an acceptable level.

To Betty Hill, for the loan of her Father's (Rowland Hill) maps of the Kangaroo Island development, and photographs of the projects in the South East and Eyre Peninsula. Also for her proof reading and verification of some historic facts in the text.

To Robert McEwin, my son, who took so much trouble taking the coloured pictures included in the Appreciation. Unfortunately, only three or four Buildings remain of the Roseworthy I knew.

May those who read on, be aware of the enormous influence that "The Doc" had on the Agriculture and the Economy of South Australia and Australia during his appointment as:-

Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College
Chairman of the Land Development Executive
Director of the South Australian Department of Agriculture
Agricultural and Trade Adviser to the Australian Embassy in Washington
Chairman of the Australian Wheat Board

Gavin G McEwin
15 March 1997

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By Courtesy of
Lady Callaghan.

" The Doc "

As Chairman of the
Australian Wheat Board

"THE DOC"

He came to South Australia, in late 1932, as Dr. Allan Callaghan to take over as Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College.

He retired as Sir Allan Callaghan in 1975, - BUT, the hundreds of Students who passed through his hands, and most of the thousands of Farmers, whose farming practices he so vitally influenced all referred to him as "The Doc".

Six or seven years before he died, I met up with him again, after 45 years, at a Charity Fete, where he was organising The White Elephant Stall.

I said to him, *"Good Afternoon Sir Allan"*.
He replied, *"Gavin, I would much prefer "The Doc"*.
I have always envied his unerring capacity to remember names.

He was a superbly qualified Agricultural Scientist - B.Sc.Agr., Sydney, B.Sc. Oxon, D.Phil. Oxon, Rhodes Scholar to Oxford University. His Thesis on the Oat plant, for his D.Phil, was, in its time, the leading world authority on Oats.

His Sporting achievements were more than commensurate with his Academic Career

Sydney University - Champion Half Miler - 2.01 min
Sydney University - Champion Miler - 4.32 min
Sydney University and New South Wales Rugby Eleven
Oxford University and International Rugby Eleven

After his arrival at Roseworthy he had little time for sport, but he did play tennis, and in his early days, ride his horse around the farm. However, every morning he performed a very strenuous session of physical exercise, including an interval of standing on his head.

He could more than hold his own in any scientific discussion in the Agricultural Field, BUT, he could also talk to Farmers, and explain to them, what farming practices he thought they ought to be following, AND, in a language they could all understand. More often than not, he was able to show them a practical example of what he was recommending. His explanations were short, sharp and very much to the point. Verbosity was never one of his characteristics.

He was only 28 when he took over at Roseworthy, just a few years older than many of his Students. He took over with a firm hold, his first action was to form a Student Representative Council to work with him. He selected one Student from each year, and the Students of each year, selected their representative. The Student Council, and "The Doc", thrashed out and solved many problems, often, before most Students realised that there were any problems.

He was always available to discuss a query with any Student. You always received a welcome, a very fair hearing, a logical explanation, and mostly, a solution on the spot. If not, then, the solution would be forthcoming in a day or so. He never forgot.

He was very strongly and compactly built, superbly fit, and had a seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy. He had an electric presence, a very great appeal to people generally, but to farmers in particular. He made friends easily, and got on well with everyone. His family had been farmers and all his education had come from his ability to win scholarships, he well knew what hardship was.

THE STRIKE

When the Students left for Christmas Leave in December 1931, the then Principal, Mr WR Birks, ordered them to return ready to start work at 7.30 am on the morning of January 1st, New Years Day. They did, but a whole series of demonstrations followed, and as a result he cancelled all Recreational Leave for the entire year. The Students had many complaints, particularly over food served up to them. On one occasion paddock lunches were sent out containing "Blown" meat.

Dissatisfaction simmered for some weeks, but finally in late January 1932, the Students went on strike. Rumour says that they were secretly assisted by some Staff Members.

Authority stepped in immediately, and promised that there would be a full and thorough investigation. Mr WJ Spafford was appointed Acting Principal, and Mr Birks was immediately sent on leave. A Parliamentary Debate followed, and then a Royal Commission. Finally, applications were called for the position of Principal. Some months later the Premier, Mr RL Butler, announced the appointment of a virtually unknown Agricultural Scientist to be the new Principal - Dr. Allan R. Callaghan, B.Sc.Agr., B.Sc., D.Phil.

During the following 17 years as Principal all his decisions affecting the Students were made by consultation with the Students Representative Council. In a very short time he knew every Student by name. He never passed you by, without stopping to have a word with you, or, if too far away to speak, then a wave.

Initially he was well liked by all Students, but later on, when they knew him better, he was revered.

THE S.A. WHEAT AREAS

By far the largest proportion of cereal farming country in S.A. can be split into three separate and distinct areas:-

1. Eyre Peninsula

Popularly the "West Coast". In a good year the most prolific wheat producing area in South Australia. Good crops can be grown on as little as 5" of rain, provided it falls at the optimum time. However, generally, the country is light and sandy.

2. The Murray Mallee

Stretching from the Murray River to the north, the north-east, and the east of Murray Bridge to the Victorian border and beyond. Similar uncertain rainfall like the West Coast, but possible lighter soil and more sand.

3. The Rift Valley

A shallow valley, 40-50 miles wide and stretching from Adelaide north to Port Augusta and beyond. A true Rift Valley formed by a series of geologic faults, bounded on the east by the Mt. Lofty and Flinders Ranges, and on the west by Yorke Peninsula, The Hummocks and their northern continuation.

With our hot dry summers and autumns, the Rift Valley acted like a gigantic funnel when the hot dry northerly winds, which herald each approaching weather front, brought down great thick clouds of dust from the fallows on northern farms.

Prior to the 1930's the largest number of these properties ran a rotation of wheat, fallow, wheat, or wheat, oats, fallow, wheat. The standard fallow was ploughed up in the early winter, and kept weed free, either by cultivating or harrowing, or by using a small flock of sheep as scavengers.

The clouds of dust brought down, were in fact, the top layer, and the best part of these fallows. The duststorms occurred fairly frequently, not quite weekly, but often enough.

The northerly winds were the precursors of the fronts which separated each high pressure cell from the succeeding low pressure cell, wind speed being a direct reflection of the size of the pressure gradient between the high and the next low. The greater the difference in barometric pressure, the greater the wind speed.

I can vividly remember a very bad one, when I was about 8 or 9 years old. I had gone out with my Father to visit patients of his into the farming country of which Balaklava was the centre, and was also the centre of the Rift Valley. There was a strong northerly wind blowing when we left, and the dust started to arrive just as we left the last patients farm. By the time we reached the outskirts of Balaklava the dust was so thick it was hard to see the houses alongside the road. When we reached the Main Street it was so thick it was difficult to see the radiator cap from the front seat of the 1923 Hupmobile car my Father had, a distance of about six feet. How the Old Man managed to navigate home under these conditions was quite a miracle to me.

When first I was at Roseworthy the following advertisement appeared in the Stock and Station Journal of January 1935.

LOST AND FOUND
LOST, yesterday. Top 1" of a
good fallow. Last seen heading
South East.

It would be wonderful to have such a sense of humour in such adversity.

THE DEPRESSION

"The .Doc" arrived in late 1932, to take up his appointment as Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College. A less propitious time could have scarcely been conceived.

The Great Depression started in the early 1930's, when a bewildered State Government, along with the other States, found themselves enmeshed in the so called "Premiers Plan", supposedly instigated by the major Banks. The current Labor Government under Mr Lionel Hill was replaced by a Liberal Government under Mr R.L. Butler, later Sir Richard Butler. The switch in Government could well have been caused by Electoral Backlash, thinking on the basis that:- "The depression started under a Labor Government, lets kick them out and see what a Liberal Government can do". I do not really know.

In any case it was a real Depression. Unemployment reached approximately a third of the working force. Conditions were so bad that the Government set up Soup Kitchens to help the unemployed survive. There was no dole, but tickets were issued which could be exchanged for food.

Mr L.C. Hunkin, Public Service Commissioner, at a Public Meeting of all Public Servants, finally won agreement from the Meeting to, voluntarily, cut all salaries by five per cent, the money saved to be used to help those Public Servants who had been declared redundant, and had lost their jobs.

Another phenomen of the times, which was much more evident in the rural areas, was the number of "Swagmen". Men with no job who wandered from town to town, looking for jobs and asking to be paid in food and or in tea. Almost all of them were more than willing to work.

The most common job was cutting wood for the kitchen stove and copper. At this time every house had a wood burning stove and also a copper in the laundry. While harvest was in operation they helped to stook and cart hay, and sew up wheat bags. They carried, (humped was the common word) their swag, a roll over their backs, about 12 inches in diameter and 4 feet long, containing their bed roll and all their worldly possessions, and ALWAYS a smallish black billycan, tied on to the bottom of the swag and swinging as they walked along.
They were really a reincarnation from the mid to late 1800's when shearers humped their "blueys" on the foot, or on bikes, from shed to shed at shearing time.

Youths leaving school had very little prospect of a job. The intake into Roseworthy in April 1934, just 18 months after "The Doc" had taken over, was the biggest ever. The numbers really stretched the available accommodation. Thirty six Students arrived to start, as against 18 the previous year, some earlier years had been as low as 6.

I was one of the 36 to start at Roseworthy that year. Some of our year came to learn farming, because they had family farms to return to. Two, like Jim and Haig McNeill, came from Western Australia, because, there was no Agricultural College there at that time. Quite a number came, because their parents found it was cheaper to send them to Roseworthy than to keep them at home. Also, if they were able, after three years, to graduate with a Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture, then some would be able to obtain a position in the South Australian Department of Agriculture.

Up to the 1930's or late 1940's the bulk of the appointments to the S.A. Department of Agriculture were Diplomates from Roseworthy. After that the bulk of appointments went to Degreed personnel. However most of our year did graduate, and some were appointed to positions in the Department.

The Main Building.
Built. 1883.

The "Corridor".
Senior Students

PRELUDE TO CHANGE

As soon as he took over at Roseworthy, "The Doc", in typical fashion, launched out into a complete revision of all Curricula, all Experimental Work, the management of the whole College, including the kitchen, and the staff. Staff who were not prepared to adopt his ideas departed. Whenever possible he ate his midday meal with us in the dining room.

He took over lecturing in Agriculture 2 and 3, Animal Husbandry 2 and 3, including Genetics. When we arrived, he was busy working his way through the other Lecturers Syllabi, to ensure that they were in accordance with current trends. The old idea of a Lecturer reading out the lecture so that Students could, and were expected to, write down every word uttered was fast disappearing. Some Lecture Notes were issued and a few Text Books acquired. However, he talked to his subjects and you were expected to jot down those portions that you deemed important to understand the subject. It was a change from schoolroom learning to University type learning.

I remember one Lecturer in Dairying 1, reading out his Lectures, word for word, slowly, so that every word was written down, verbatim. One of our year added the thought that these Lectures we were getting, were exactly the same that the Lecturer had had to copy down, when he was a Student some 25 or 30 years before.

He very seriously read out:- *"The young Dairyfarmer should never put milk into a leaky bucket, or it will run out"*. and a little later, - *"The young Dairyfarmer would be well advised to buy a good Bull and serve the cows himself"*.

The Old Boy was quite oblivious to the mirth that these two pronouncements caused. By the time we had reached Dairying 2 the whole presentation had changed considerably.

COLLEGE

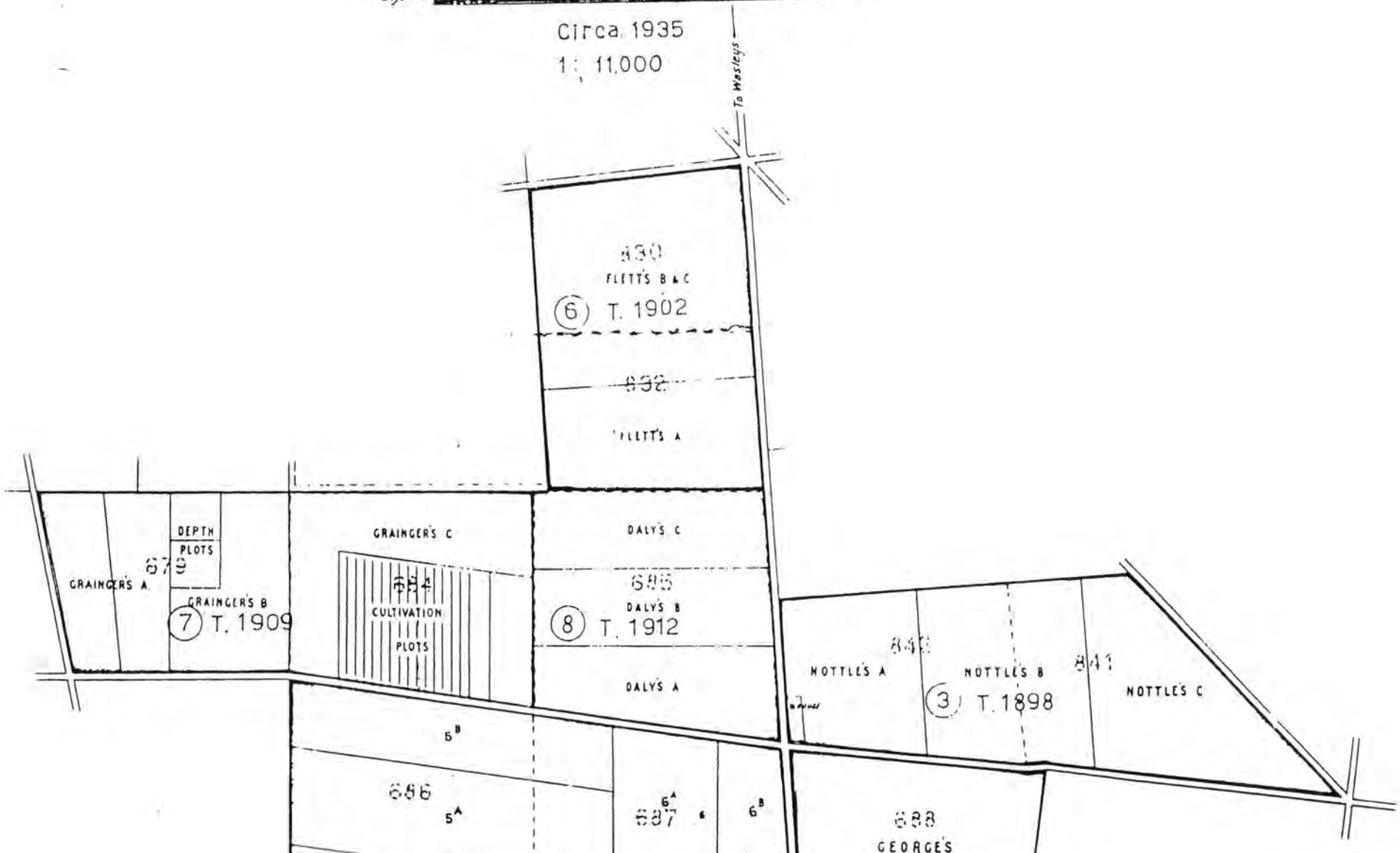
HD. MUDLA WIRRA

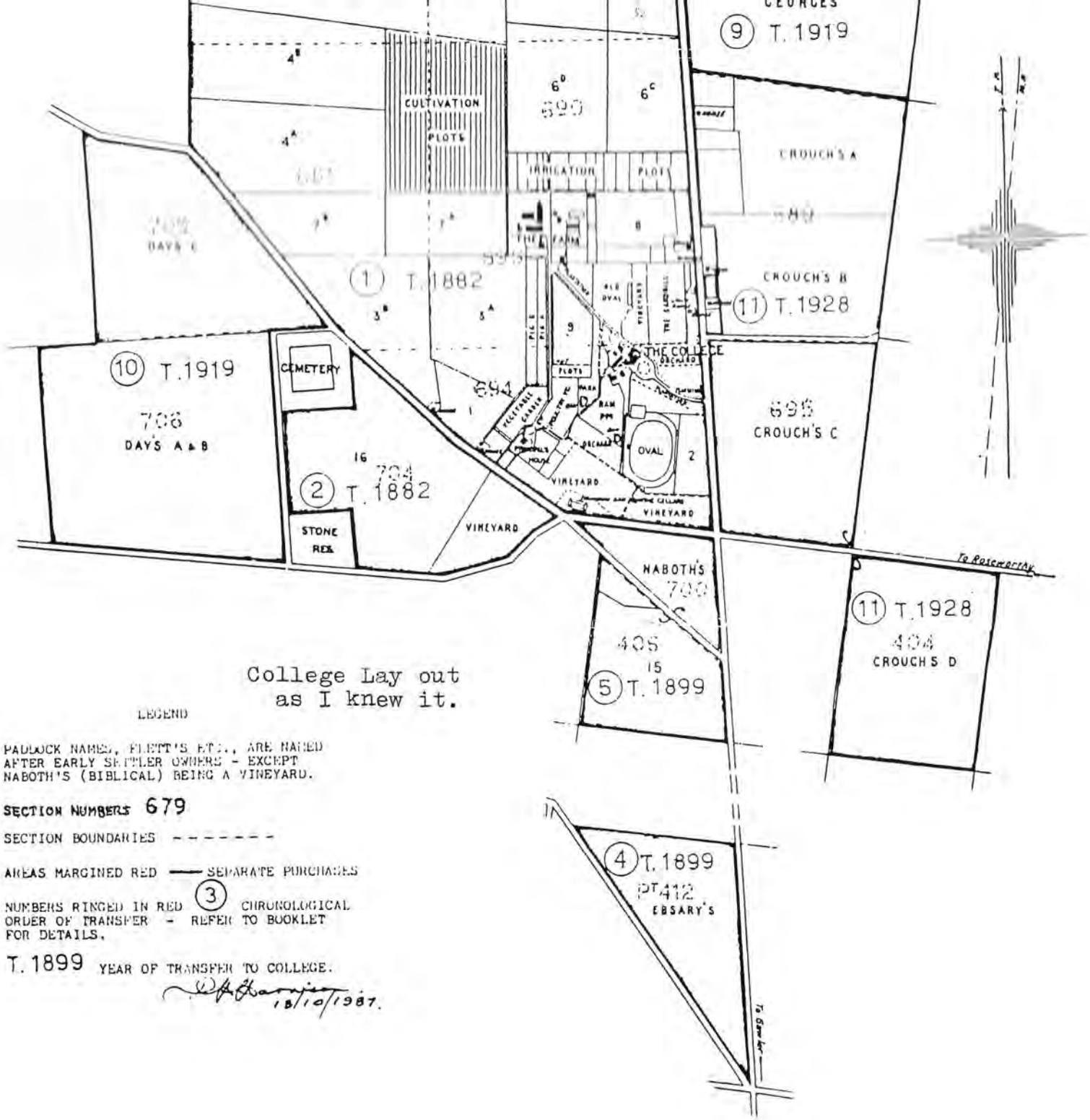
Scale

Chains 0 10 20 30 40 50 Chains

Circa 1935

1: 11,000





College Lay out
as I knew it.

LEGEND

PADDOCK NAMES, PLETT'S ETC., ARE NAMED AFTER EARLY SETTLER OWNERS - EXCEPT NABOTH'S (BIBLICAL) BEING A VINEYARD.

SECTION NUMBERS 679

SECTION BOUNDARIES - - - - - - -

AREAS MARGINED RED —— SEPARATE PURCHASES

NUMBERS RINGED IN RED (3) CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF TRANSFER - REFER TO BOOKLET FOR DETAILS.

T.1899 YEAR OF TRANSFER TO COLLEGE.

W.A. Harrison 18/10/1987.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO CALLAGHAN

The changes "The Doc" wrought affected every facet of Lectures and Farming Procedures then current at Roseworthy.

WHEAT

"The Doc" persuaded Jim Breakwell to leave his Plant Breeding position with the New South Wales Department of Agriculture for a similar position at Roseworthy. Together they ran the Plant Breeding Section, - Jim in the forefront, and "The Doc" in the background, almost out of sight, but NEVER out of mind. Their main objectives were to produce new wheats which would embrace the following characteristics when compared to those varieties currently available to the Farmers of South Australia.

1. Higher Baking quality
2. Better Disease resistance
3. Increased straw strength
4. Less shattering (premature grain drop)
5. Higher yields per acre

Jim, produced over a span of years, a whole series of new wheat varieties. He used "Sword" as one of the parents. Sword had been bred by Colin Scott, Jim's predecessor at Roseworthy, from Sultan x Ford in 1920, released, and named in 1923. Sword was one of the better performing wheats in favour with the South Australian "Cockies" at that time. Incidentally, it is still in favour now (1997) as a hay wheat in the Tarlee - Kapunda area.

They were specifically bred for localities in the South Australian wheat belt which had different micro-climates and or soil types. It was an on going programme extending over several decades. They are still being produced by Plant Breeders at the Waite Institute. They christened these new varieties their Lethal Weapon Class.

In due course Jim produced in succession, not necessarily in the order named (listed alphabetically) - Claymore, Cutlas, Dagger, Dirk, Halberd, Javelin, Rapier, Sabre and Scimitar.

One arduous, and never ending job, associated with the thousands of crosses Jim made, was the hand hoeing of the rows of single wheat plants. It was necessary to keep the soil loose and the weeds down. The rows were as long as the paddocks, several hundreds of yards. There was about two feet between each row, and 6"-8" between plants in each row. The huge replication of crosses was necessary, because the chance of producing a new wheat, with all the required characteristics, was a very low percentage of the total number of crosses made. Hence the more crosses you made, the better the chance to maximise successful results.

The decision as to which crosses to persist with commenced shortly after germination, and continued right through until just before harvest. Early discards would include those with, weak tillering, weak straw, or poor disease resistance, later discards included those which shattered or were low yielders. Each plant was harvested by hand in that first year.

Following that first harvest, Jim persuaded Bert Nourse, the Farm Mechanic, to consider making a miniature harvester for the plots. Bert was an extraordinarily clever mechanic. One of our year was Doug Mellor, whose Grandfather and Father had, over many years, produced small strippers, the "Mellor Mite". Bert, with Doug's assistance, and I have no doubt that Doug's Father also had a few fingers in the making, produced a superb miniature Harvester which performed admirably. Apart from its harvesting ability, it had to have a light draught, i.e. one horse traction, and to be easily and quickly cleaned, otherwise different crosses would be polluted by either the previous cross or the following one.

The final test was Baking Quality. The wheat was ground and then baked. The Mill and Oven were donated to the College by the Flour Millers Association of S.A. Each loaf was about the size of a roll but in the shape of a miniature upright loaf. The baked loaves were then, examined, compared, cut, photographed for size, shape, and texture. Their characteristics were then written up. They were then grabbed either by a Student, or a Staff Member, for morning or afternoon tea. Lucky were those Students who were rostered for Plant Breeding when Baking Quality was being examined.

Jim also bred a new barley which he named Maltworthy, and a new variety of Field Pea, Collegian. Exporters did not really like Collegian because it was a speckled "Partridge" pea and they preferred a white, or nearly white pea. However it grew very well in the Lower North, where its parents, White Brunswick and Early Dunns were not very successful, and was extensively used in grain mixture for different stock feeds or supplements.

By Courtesy of
The Advertiser.

A.V. + K.A. Kelly
Of Urania. 1947

HORSES

All, cultural, tillage, and farming work was carried out with teams of Clydesdales providing the motive power. They were all bred on the farm and there were usually about 110 or 120 at any one time, enough to provide 10 or 12 eight horse teams, plus spares.

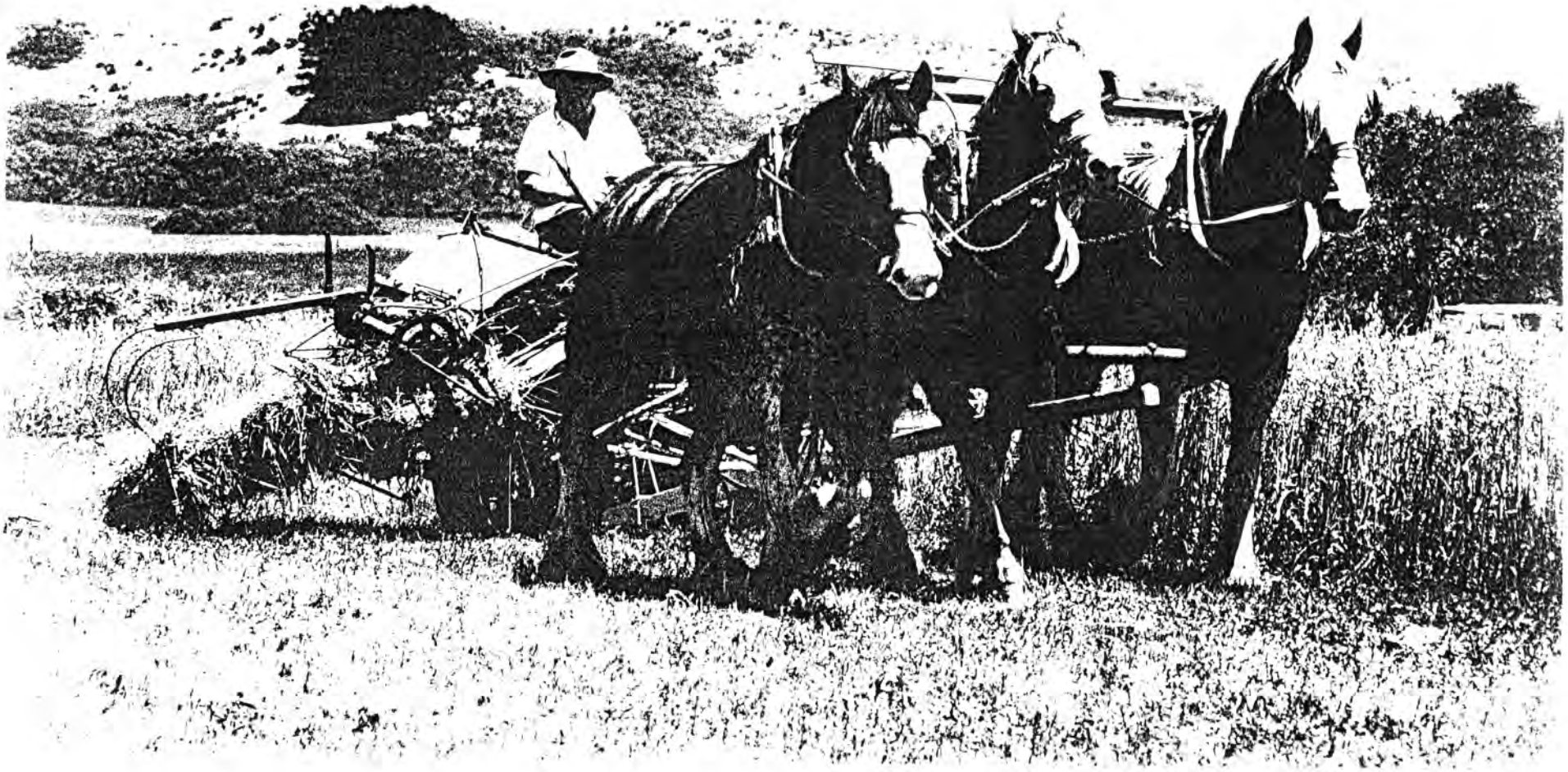
The first tractor arrived late in my third year, a yellow Caterpillar Crawler, of 22 horse power and lent to the College by the Adelaide Tractor Company.

"The Docs" first step was to import a new stallion, "Cyrus", direct from Scotland. He featured in his pedigree the most famous of all Scottish Clydesdales, "Dunure Footprint". Later when the chance of inbreeding arose, a further stallion was acquired, "Harviestown Ernest".

The Clydesdales were lovely animals, calm, quiet, and very biddable. Mostly a rich chestnut colour, with black or white manes and tails, but with a white feathering down the back of their legs. They all had very big feet, almost dinnerplate size. There were only three flighty ones, Ben, Violet and Kate.

In third year, while the roadways were being cut around the crops prior to harvesting, I was told to take the 1918 Binder up to Fletts B & C, with Ben, Violet and Kate as the team. I didn't discover until later, that I wasn't the only one who had never been on a Binder. We went up the road to Fletts, took off the transport wheels, locked the pole in place and harnessed up the horses. They started off just like a dream, all pulling together and the 18 year old Binder working like a charm. The paddock had already been opened up and back cut, so it was straight going. Three other Students had come with me to do the stooking.

All went well until about mid afternoon, on our second last round, when, without warning, a hare jumped up right under Ben's nose. Ben, Violet and Kate, grabbed the bits between their teeth, threw their heads in the air, and bolted at a near gallop. For the first twenty or so yards the Binder took a full cut, churning our sheaves at an alarming rate. Then the strap holding the cross yoke to Ben's collar broke, and he slewed across to the right, dragging the other two horses with him by the couplings, and the Binder out of the crop and into a stook of 30 odd sheaves.



By Courtesy of
The Advertiser

I don't suppose they are
Violet, Ben, + Kids.

Mr. Ron Childs
of Yundi 1985.

Sheaves went up the canvases and jammed the whole works. The main drive wheel was skewed in its axle frame, breaking the transmission, and jamming the whole Binder. Fortunately, by now, not only had the three horses had enough, but the extra dead weight of dragging the Binder was sufficient to pull them up. The Students who had been stooking were able to grab their winkers and calm them down. Then "Sarky" Gurner, Assistant Farm Manager arrived and helped sort out the mess. It was then that "Sarky" told me that Ben, Violet and Kate had been in every bolt over the last few years. However since there had not been a bolt in about 4 years, it had been thought that they had settled down, and also they had never been in a Binder before.

All told, a rather alarming event for a first trip on a Binder. Although the damage looked extensive it was repairable, and Bert Nourse had the machine ready for the next harvest. I finished at Roseworthy early in the next year, but, I couldn't help wondering whether Ben, Violet and Kate were used in the Binder the following harvest.

PIGS

"The Doc" either borrowed, hired, or, as a last resort purchased, Boars of different breeds from Stud Breeders. A complex series of trials was started in an endeavour to find the best cross to produce Porkers and Baconers to marketable condition in the shortest possible time, and, also produce a pig which carried the desirable small amount of fat to lean meat. They were fed on crushed grain, skim milk and lucerne, all produced on the farm. The Tamworth x Large White produced the long lean cross bred carcass which gained the best sales.

DAIRYING

Roseworthy had had a Jersey Stud for many years. "The Doc" brought in two new bulls with proven butter fat production figures behind them, as well as 5 or 6 cows, which had also tested very well. The Dairy Section provided all the milk, butter, and cheese used in the College Dining Room, as well as separating milk to provide Skim Milk for the pigs and surplus cream which was sold to Taylors Butter Factory in Gawler.

SHEEP AND FAT LAMBS

"The Doc" with Sid Whicker, in charge of sheep, arranged very extensive trials, initially with Merino ewes from the North, crossed with various Rams of British Breeds, South Down, Suffolk, Dorset Horn, Ryeland, Border Leicester, and Romney Marsh. I cannot remember whether there were any other breeds represented. The idea was to produce an Export Lamb, in the shortest possible time, dressing out at 28-36 pounds. Lambs dressing our at over 36 pounds were not a success on the British Market. The menu of British Housewives catered for a Sunday Roast, but certainly did not cater for the remains of a large leg to be used as cold meat. They wanted a leg, big enough to give them a Sunday meal for all the family, with no left overs.

"The Doc" and Sid used Merino ewes because they were reasonably cheap, and, because there was a vast reservoir of them in the Pastoral Areas, so that it was possible to obtain a much more even line. The more even the line, the more even the drop of Lambs.

Once the above was in operation, some ewe lambs, sired by Border Leicester and Romney Marsh Rams were kept to set up a similar series using the Crossbred ewes as Dams instead of the Merino. They were then mated back to South Down, Suffolk, and Dorset Horn Rams so that their progeny could be compared with those, by the same Rams, from Merino ewes.

The returns from all these different crosses were carefully recorded so that, finally, a very comprehensive report showed:-

1. Wool return from each Dam, and Sire
2. Cash return for each lamb from the different crossings
3. Lamb marking, percentages and sale price from each cross
4. Finally the most profitable return from each different cross i.e. Wool return plus Lamb return from each cross, and the time to rear to Market condition

The results were printed by the S.A. Department of Agriculture in the monthly journal which all members of the Agricultural Bureaux received, and also as separate pamphlets available to anyone who asked.

SUPPLIES

Over previous years the College had received food supplies from the Government Produce Department in Adelaide. "The Doc" virtually cut this avenue off. The Vegetable Garden was "oomphed" up and expanded.

Most of the supplies used in the kitchen now originated at the College. Mutton, pork, and occasionally beef were killed on the farm. Butter, milk, cheese and bacon were also produced. The poultry section was also expanded to supply all the eggs needed as well as dressed fowls for the kitchen. This increase in production was also part and parcel of the revised Student practical training.

OENOLOGY

Later, when he had all the rest of the College reorganised and under control, "The Doc" turned his attention to the Wine Cellars and Vineyard. In late 1935, he, along with the College Chemist, Alan Hickinbotham, established a new Course, to commence in April 1936. The Roseworthy Diploma of Oenology, replaced the one year Course previously included in the Diploma of Agriculture as a voluntary extra subject.

The purpose of the new Course was to train Students to be Wine Makers. At this time South Australia produced about 75 per cent of Australian wine. Largely, because it was one of the very few vine growing areas in the world which was still Phylloxera free. Phylloxera is a mite which feeds on the vine roots, sapping their strength and shortening their life.

SUNDAY MAIL, March 23, 1997

Our wines lead boom in exports

By ANDY WILLIAMS

South Australian wine is at the forefront of soaring national wine exports, which have reached an all-time high of well over half a billion dollars.

Export orders for Australian wine topped $565 million for the 12 months to the end of February.

Sales to the US alone topped $100 million, up more than 50 per cent on the previous 12 months.

The boom is good news for SA, which accounts for 74 per cent by volume of Australian wine exports.

However, intense summer heat has hit red wine grape production this year, prompting predictions of price increases.

Wine writer Mark Shield said domestic red wine prices could rise 20 per cent over the next 12 months as a result of the poor vintage.

"Not only is the quantity down, the quality won't be terribly good either," he said.

However, the SA Wine and Brandy Industry Association president and Orlando chief winemaker, Mr Philip Laffer, said while the red grape crop was smaller than expected, new vineyards coming into production meant the industry was better placed to cope with seasonal fluctuations than in past years. Mr Laffer said a 10 per cent grape price increase did not translate to a 10 per cent retail price increase, as grapes were at most half the component cost of a bottle of wine.

He said this year would be an average vintage for white wine, with red grape crops down, particularly in the South-East. "But the impact has not been as big as expected," he said.

Mr Laffer said many new vineyards were coming into production each year.

"So while the vintage will not be quite as big as we might have anticipated, it will still be a lot better than what would have been considered in the past as a traditional average year," he said.

While exports to the US soared over the past 12 months, the United Kingdom remains Australia's major export market.

The value of exports to the UK rose almost 30 per cent, Norway 58 per cent, Denmark 39 per cent, Canada 33 per cent and New Zealand 24 per cent.

More than 19,000ha of vineyards have been planted in Australia in the past five years, an investment of $600 million.

ALAN D HICKINBOTHAM

The jewel in this Course, and the master organiser of it, was Alan Hickinbotham, always referred to as "Hick", except when facing him when it was either Mr Hick or Sir."Hick" was the very antithesis of "The Doc", in all ways except one, and that was a burning and all consuming desire to make the Oenology Course a complete success. It was, I think, the first Oenology Course offered anywhere in Australia.

"Hick" was an extremely capable Chemist, with a very well developed analytical mind. A sparse, thin man with an exceedingly dry wit, cast in the "Funny Peculiar" mould. Very quietly spoken, and like "The Doc", verbosity was not one of his trademarks. He delivered his lectures in a most interesting, and absorbing manner. I learnt far more Chemistry from "Hick" in two years than I had learnt in 5 years at a Private School.

ROSEWORTHY DIPLOMA OF OENOLOGY, R.D.OEN

Eligibility to the Course was confined to persons who already held a Diploma of Agriculture, or who had completed the first two years of the Roseworthy Diploma Course.

The first Course had a few names in it which were very well known in Wine circles, Peter Seppelt, Ben Chaffey, Noel Burge, Charles Kelly, and Malcolm Allen. Diplomates from this Course did very well once they were appointed to positions in Wineries all over Australia. These were the men who set, at least, South Australia on the way to the International Reputation it enjoys today.

FODDER CONSERVATION

As a necessary adjunct to the increased stock numbers being carried on the farm, and the change in animal breeding, "The Doc" made revolutionary changes to crop rotation practises. He widened, very considerably, the rotation to include at least two years of Pasture, - he always referred to it as leyland. In some cases even three years was included. This provided more grazing for the stock, and also a bigger area to cut for hay and silage, NOT ONLY to feed out, but also to act as an insurance against drought years.

A few years earlier he had had the opportunity of a guided tour over "Wanganella" and "Boonoke" in the Riverina, the leading Merino Studs anywhere in the world. He had been vastly impressed when shown a paddock which they called the "Silage Paddock". He told us the paddock was a series of low humps, all in rows as though it was a burial ground for enormous giants.

Then he explained that he had realised that it was, in fact, rows and rows of pits containing silage. Every year Falkners put down 2 or 3 or 4 depending on how much feed they had to spare. This was their insurance against drought.

In addition to adding these extra years of grazing to the Rotation, according to the Farmers who visited with the first Agricultural Bureaux to the College, "The Doc" committed the final heresy. This was the broadcasting of superphosphate over the pasture paddocks in the late autumn. From mid winter onwards there was an enormous volunteer growth of Burr Medic, Barrel Clover, Wimmera Rye Grass, and a sprinkling of Cereal plants.

Fodder Conservation was a very high facet of, and indeed the basic plank in his whole theory of better farming, increased farm usage, productivity, and continuity of carrying capacity.

He had a few favourite sayings, which he frequently repeated,
"You cut hay in every paddock you can spare"
"You must have your hay sheds full after each harvest"
"You must strive for continuity of carrying capacity"
"You should always have, as your target, sufficient fodder reserves, not only to see you through the coming year, but at least also the next one in case of drought"

The Barn - the old original Cow Byres, was converted into a grain store. Four large bins, something like 10' x 14' were constructed where the bails had been on each side on the centre alley way. The grain crusher was fixed in the alley way and grain in its various mixes was bucketed into it, crushed and bagged. Different mixes were required for Horses, Cows, Pigs, and Poultry. The grain was mostly wheat, but there were bins for oats, barley and field peas.

Tassie Memorial Library.
Now Gymnasium.

Remains of Drive to Farm.

SILAGE

In addition, we made hundreds of tons of silage. The two concrete silos at the Dairy, which each held 250 tons, were filled every year. Sheaved cereal was fed through a large chopper, complete with blower. The chopped material was blown up a 2 foot diameter pipe on the outside of the silo and then into it at the top. The worst job was being inside, spreading out the chopped material evenly, as it pelted down on top of you.

Any surplus volunteer growth was cut and made into silage stacks in the paddock. Cut by reciprocating mower and pushed into the stack, by push rakes, designed and built by Bert Nourse, several years before they were available on the market. A grab lifted the material above the stack height, and swung over it. Operated by a single horse, "Allan", a 20 year old, Clydesdale, walking and then backing a well worn furrow he had created. Allan worked entirely by word of mouth, from a Student.

THE ROTATION

"The Docs" extension of the rotation, with the inclusion of several years of pasture, AND supered as well, was an extremely radical departure from the long established farming practice of wheat, fallow, wheat. Super had always been for crops only.

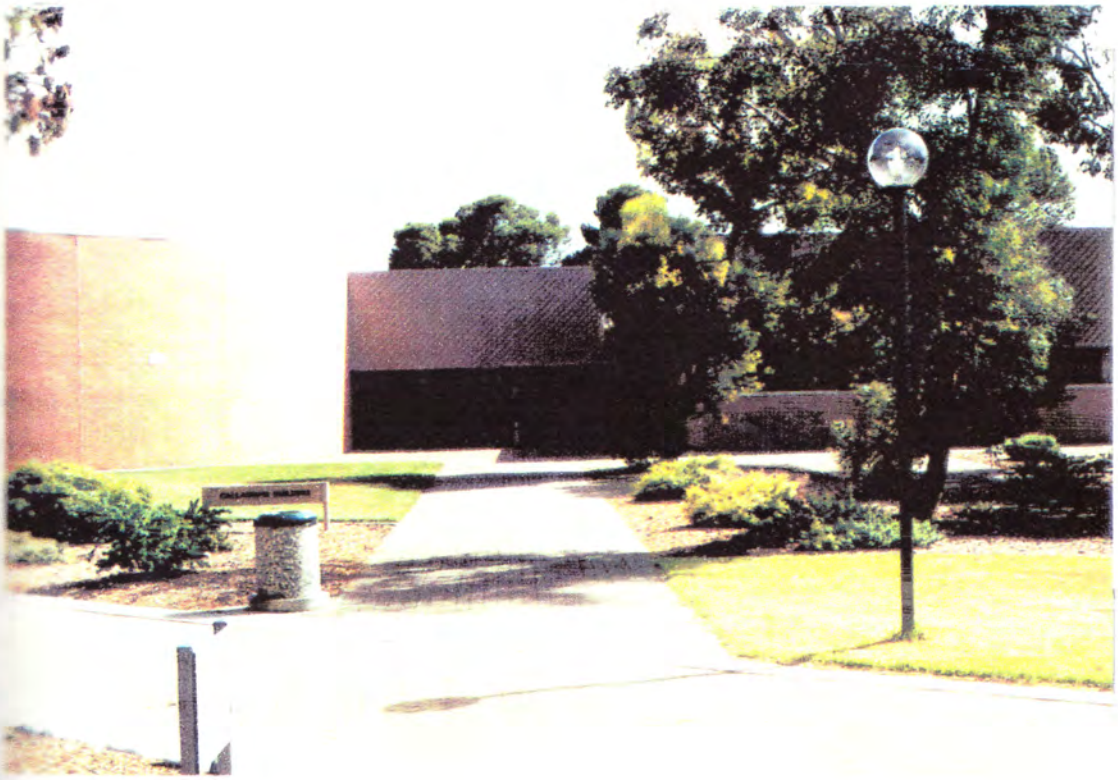
His problem was to persuade the "Cockies" to accept and practise what he preached, and after seeing his results that first spring, they mostly thought about it and a lot did change their method and follow his ideas.

There was, no doubt, a great deal of discussion in the various Agricultural Bureaux, to which they all belonged.

AGRICULTURAL BUREAUX

The South Australian Department of Agriculture had long fostered the formation of Agricultural Bureaux at every farming centre throughout the state. Formed to help farmers to meet, discuss their problems, and to call upon experts from the Department, to visit their Branches and advise on technical problems.

To bring this message home to the farmers of the State "The Doc" invited every Bureau, or who so wished, to visit the College for a Field Day and see what innovations had occurred. These days became so popular, especially in the spring, that Secretaries had to book up months ahead. Often we had two or even three bureaux in each week.



"Callaghan Building".
Opened by "The Doc".

It was an enormous Public Education Scheme, with "The Doc" preaching the gospel of diversification. The farmers came in their thousands, initially, to see what that "Crank" Callaghan was up to.

The Bureaux would arrive at the College about 11.00 am. "The Doc" would talk to them first, either in the big lecture room, or outside if there were too many. He would explain his ideas to them and answer any questions. Lunch then followed in the College dining room. After lunch he led the cavalcade on an inspection, bouncing along in his "A" model Ford, usually with the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer of the branch in his car, plus "Boxer", his Fox Terrier, who was always with him.

These Field Days were a great success and very quickly became the highlight event of each Bureaus annual programme.

The Farmers came to listen and to look. Listen they did, because he never started his explanation at any stopping point, until every vehicle was there, and every occupant out and able to hear. He did have a public address system in his car with a loud speaker on top to make speaking easier.

He talked of what he was endeavouring to do, he showed them the results, and , more importantly, he spoke in a language that they understood. He showed them how to go about solving their Agricultural problems. He never seemed to tire at the barrage of questions launched at him. He answered them all, and was almost always able to point out an example, to back up his explanation.

Initially the farmers came to these days for several reasons:-

1. As unbelievers
2. Out of pure curiosity
3. Because it was a day out with a free lunch
4. Because a few, even in the early stages, were genuinely interested, and most likely had made some progress on their own.

They left either as converts, or, after talking it over with their mates, became converts.

THE NEW AGRICULTURE

The effects on the Agriculture and on the Economy of the State were quite extraordinary. The whole face of Agricultural practise changed in the farming areas. Rotations lengthened, Fat Lambs boomed, Diversification expanded. The Pastoral Areas to the north found a ready market for Merino ewes which, in the Salt Bush areas, had perhaps only one year of use left, if brought down to better pastures in the farming areas would last for another 2 or 3 years.

Breeders of British sheep thrived, especially, those breeding Border Leicester, and Romney Marsh to sire the dams, and South Down, Suffolk, and Dorset Horn to sire the lamb. When I established my Border Leicester Stud, "Lochfyne", at Meadows in 1937, from sheep my Father had given me, my Registered Flock number was 1110.

Mixed Farming became the norm, not the rarity.

Fat Lamb raising replaced the small flock of sheep previously used as scavengers, to keep the fallow clean, and to deal with the stubble after harvest.

The "Cockies" also milked a few cows, separated the milk, sold cream to the Butter Factories, fed the skim milk to a few pigs to raise baconers or porkers, and used up their second grade grain as well.

THE HIGH RAINFALL AREAS

The mid 1930's also saw a great development taking place in the wetter areas of the state, The Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula, and the much larger areas of the South East of the state. Problems arose in the wetter areas because the Merino did not do very well there. The prime dam was the Crossbred. The Border Leicester x Merino, or Romney x Merino did very well. As a consequence a thriving business arose for enterprising farmers in the farming areas to breed these cross bred ewes as dams for the wetter areas. They sold their wether Fat Lambs to the local markets, kept their ewe lambs, shore them, and then sold them as 2 tooths or rising 2 tooths, to be fat lamb dams. I remember very well the special markets each year in the Autumn at Strathalbyn, Maitland, Minlaton and other places in the wheat areas.

This also meant that the State Wool Clip now had an increasing per centage of Crossbred wool. The Merino Clips usually fell within the Count Quality range of 70's down to about 58's, the crossbred was however much coarser and ranged generally from 58's right down to 28's.

Our Lecturer in Woolclassing at Roseworthy was very biased towards Merino wool, and when referring to the increasing per centage of Crossbred wool in the Wool Sales, always termed them as "Inbred 'alf breds from the 'ills". At the same time he always managed to inject a great deal of scorn into the pronouncement.

DIVERSIFICATION

"The Docs" message of Diversification convinced the farmers and they adopted it wholesale. The results, over the next few years were:-

1. It converted their bank balance from red into black
2. It ensured them, that, should the price of any particular commodity fall, they would still have a continuing income from the other avenues
3. It set the State back onto the road to prosperity and out of the depression
4. It reduced the number of dust storms from perhaps a dozen a summer down to one or two per year, and even less
5. Because of the reduction in dust storms, the farmers were not losing the top inch of their fallows.

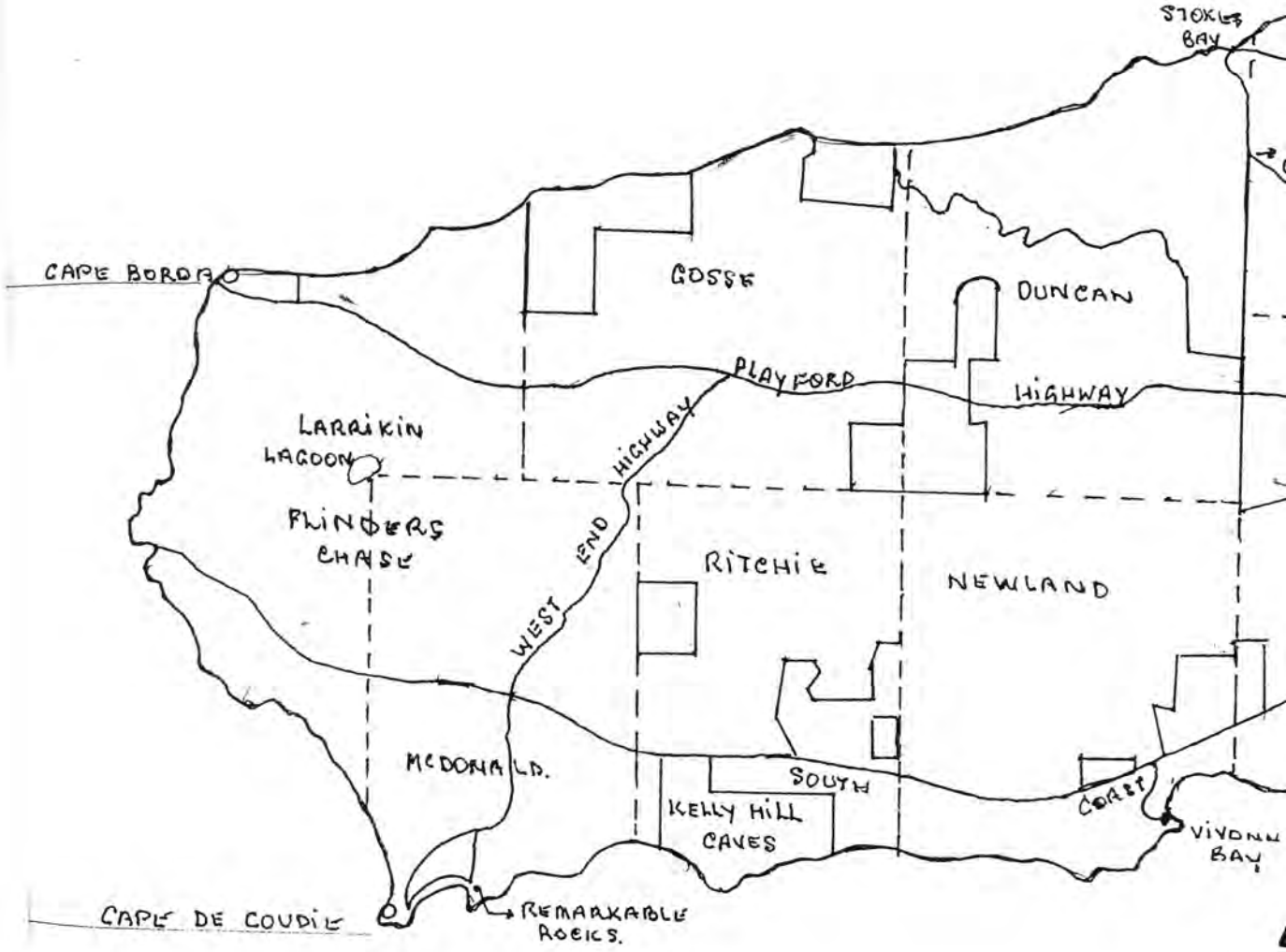
The diminution in the number of dust storms was an extra-ordinary by product of "The Docs" message of diversification. The number of fallows over each summer fell, and the areas sown to wheat decreased, partly due to the arrival of newer and better wheat varieties, and also the spread of mixed farming.

Actual wheat yields increased with the release of better varieties, and also because of the build up in soil of more humus and nitrogen from the pasture years.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Scheme was funded by the Commonwealth Government, but, brought into being by the States. In South Australia the Land Development Executive, (L.D.E.), was founded by the Department of Lands to take charge of the whole development.

KANGAROO


STOKES BAY
CAPE BORDA
GOSSE
DUNCAN
PLAYFORD
HIGHWAY
LARRIKIN LAGOON
FLINDERS CHASE
WEST END HIGHWAY
RITCHIE
NEWLAND
McDONALD.
SOUTH COAST
KELLY HILL CAVES
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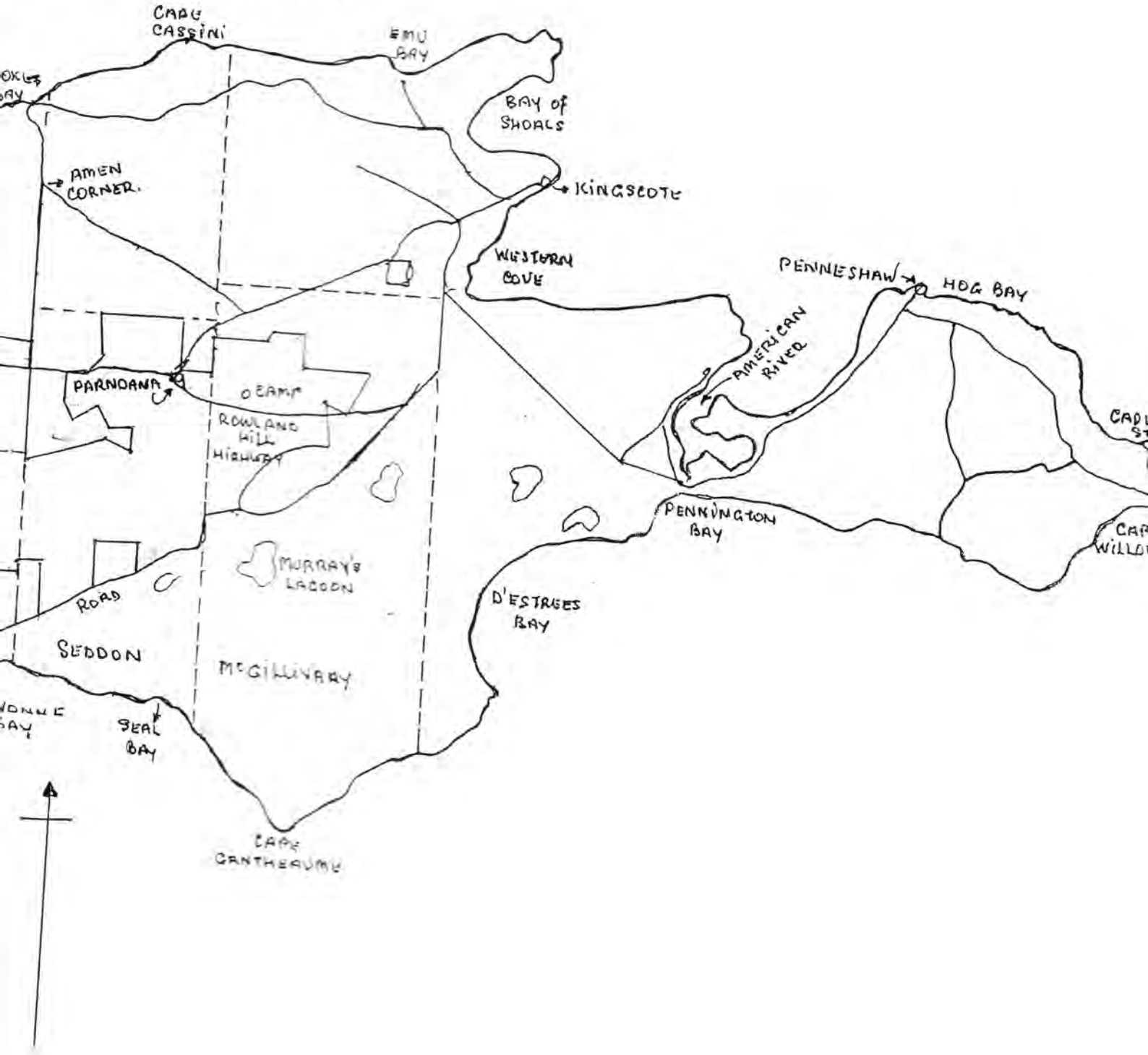
CAPE CASSINI
EMU BAY
BAY of SHOALS
AMEN CORNER.
KINGSCOTE
WESTERN COVE
PENNESHAW
HOG BAY
AMERICAN RIVER
PARNDANA
CAMP
ROWLAND HILL HIGHWAY
PENNINGTON BAY
MURRAY'S LAGOON
ROAD
D'ESTRees BAY
SEDDON
McGILLIVRAY
SEAL BAY
CAPE CANTHEAUME

On January 17th, 1945 the L.D.E. was formed with "The Doc" as Chairman, and Rowland Hill, and Neil McGilp as members. Mr McGilp was, at the time, Chairman of the Land Board, and as such, did not figure in the external L.D.E. operations, but organised the office work.

The basic aim of the L.D.E. was to set up viable farms in the better rainfall areas of the State, which could be allocated to those Service men who wished to pursue a farming career, after discharge from the Armed Forces, and, who were qualified to do so. Interest Rates and Repayment of Capital were arranged for an initial period of years, so that the allottees of the blocks would have a chance to get on their feet, and then, repay the debt involved in the establishment of their particular farm.

The South Australian Government allocated a vast area on Kangaroo Island to the L.D.E., almost 300,000 acres of Crown Land. The whole area was scrub land and included most of the ironstone plateau in the centre of the island and extending down to Flinders Chase and Cape Borda.

"The Doc" and Rowley launched out into organising the clearing, burning, ploughing, seeding, fencing, subdividing into viable farms, water supplies and shedding. The South Australian Housing Trust built their homes.

All the actual work was done by gangs of Exservicemen, employed by the L.D.E. A special, rather basic camp was built to accommodate them and their wives and families, sited near Parndana. Most of those employed were finally allocated farms that they had helped to clear and establish.

In all about 180 Exservicemen were settled on Kangaroo Island. Another nearly 500 were engaged and finally settled in the South East of South Australia, and on Eyre Peninsula, - Binnum, Bool Lagoon, Eight Mile Creek, Glenroy, Killanoola, Mingbool. Padthaway, Pleasant Park, and Wrattonbullie, with Wanilla on Eyre Peninsula, and Campbell Park on Lake Albert and the Coorong.

It was an immense undertaking. "The Doc" and Rowley worked extremely hard on these wide spread developments. A very great deal of travelling was done. A lot of paper work was done in the car both coming and going. The challenge suited their abilities very well.

"The Doc", a scientific Agriculturalist, with his extraordinary ability to communicate with all levels of people. Rowley Hill, Diplomate of Roseworthy College, Ex 3rd Light Horse Regiment and Imperial Camel Corps, Founding Manager Minnipa Experimental Wheat Farm, Agricultural Adviser for Adelaide Hills, farmers everywhere welcomed him as one of their own. He was a very great help to us when we were developing scrub land into a farm, near Meadows.

To be accepted as an allottee, an Exserviceman was required to appear before the Land Board, with the addition of "The Doc" and Rowley, and satisfy the Members, that he had the training, the ability and the experience to successfully manage a farm. Those already suitably qualified were, if possible, employed by the L.D.E. in working to clear and establish farms in the area of their choice.

Those whom the Board felt needed further practical experience were placed with selected Primary Producers for up to 2 years and were then expected to attend a special school at the Wingfield Rural Training Centre, following their Practical Training.

The Wingfield Training Centre was specifically set up for this purpose by its Principal, Mr Lewis McCarter. He developed a Course designed to cover all aspects of Primary Production, with the co-operation of, the Department of Agriculture, Roseworthy College, The Waite Institute, The School of Mines Wool Classing Section and with "The Doc" and Rowley as advisers.

Those qualified were then offered land for allotment. Most of the applicants preferred the South East, or Eyre Peninsula. There were more applications than there were allotments in these two areas, so they then picked Kangaroo Island.

Most of those who accepted the opportunity offered by Kangaroo Island were stimulated by the challenge to their initiative, but also by "The Docs" and Rowleys enthusiasm, which inspired them with faith in the potential, of the land.

"The Doc" resigned from the L.D.E. in 1951 to become the South Australian Director of Agriculture, but he still had a finger in the pie.

Rowley Hill was left, officially, as the only member with Technical Agricultural knowledge. However at least he still had "The Doc" at the head of the Department of Agriculture. I have no doubt whatever that a great deal of consultation between them still occurred.

Finally, in 1956, Rowley himself retired, and the L.D.E. merged into and was absorbed by the Lands Department.

With his life long work for farmers done, Rowley received an O.B.E. from the Queen.

In 1962 the whole development scheme was wound up and a Sale was held to dispose of all the machinery and gear.

The Disposal Sale marked the completion of a tremendous undertaking. Although the work was hard and difficult, and in some cases actually dangerous, there had been not one serious accident. At the beginning some of the odd public utterances were:-
"They will never get it off the ground".
"Settlers will be able to draw the Old Age Pension before their farms are allotted to them".

The persistence, and the ability to get on with the job, that these Soldier Settlers exhibited, combined with the Leadership, the Development, and the Faith in the land to support them, given to them by "The Doc" and Rowley, changed the whole face of Kangaroo Island and all the other areas involved.

The South Australian War Service Land Settlement Scheme remains as one of the great memorials to the two men, "The Doc" and Rowley, who translated that conceived idea into actuality and carried it through such a successful conclusion.

The people of Kangaroo Island were so appreciative of the scheme that they named the Main Highway through the Soldier Settlement area, "The Rowley Hill Highway".

DRY FARMING

Dry Farming was not a result of "The Docs" message, but he did enhance it with the introduction of pasture years.

Apart from his original very narrow rotation of wheat, fallow, wheat, The Australia "Cocky", and particularly the South Australian one, has always been a great success as a Dry Farmer. A successful answer to the old maxim, that South Australia is:-

"The driest State in the driest Country in the World".

Even with his adoption of a wider rotation and the diversification of his farming methods, he still clung to his nine months fallow because it allowed him to:-

1. Eradicate weeds which would otherwise use up plant food destined for the following crop
2. Conserve moisture by keeping the top loose, and decreasing evaporation
3. Store up extra Nitrogen in the fallow, (said to be, with a nine months fallow, approximately, the equivalent of 15 pounds per acre), to go with the increased Humus and nitrogen from the Clovers and Medics of the pasture years.

In latter years since World War 2, South Australia has exported this technique to other parts of the World which have a similar climate. Along with the Dry Farming technique has also gone the Machinery, invented and developed by South Australian Machinery firms, especially for this type of farming.

The Medics and the Clovers of the farming areas, as well as the Subterranean Clover of the wetter areas, have also been exported back to the Lands of their Origin, where they had all but died out. This has started a real farming revival, especially in the drier areas around the Mediterranean Sea, and India, AND with the exports have gone expert Agricultural Advisers to help get the scheme operating.

EPILOGUE

Over all these happenings, and responsible for all the extraordinary changes to the practises of South Australian Agriculture, its Economy, and its Dust storms, looms the shadow of "The Doc".

"Veni, Vidi, Vici" - I came, I saw, I conquered.
Acknowledgment to Julius Caesar

"The Doc" came, and he saw, but he would never have thought of conquering. He led by example.

He came as a highly qualified Agriculturist, who was able to speak with Farmers in their own lingo, and to persuade them, to adopt his ideas, backed up by visible evidence. This he achieved, in spite of the fact, that his ideas were quite a radical departure from the age old customs practised by them, and their Fore Fathers before them.

"He walked with Kings, nor lost the common touch".
Acknowledgment to Rudyard Kipling

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9.2.1997