

The First Roseworthy Diploma in Oenology (RDOen) Graduates

The initial delivery of the Roseworthy Diploma in Oenology course commenced on 4 May 1936. The announcement of the establishment of the course at Speech Day in early 1936 included that it would provide a thorough theoretical and practical training in winemaking and allied arts.

The number of students entering the course each year was to be limited to six, were to be 18 years before the first of April of the year of admission, and hold an agriculture diploma or degree from an agricultural college or university, or be a student of Roseworthy Agricultural College having successfully completed the first two years of the ordinary (agriculture) diploma course and have convinced the Principal of being sufficiently well equipped to enter the advanced course in oenology.

At that time the annual fee for the Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture course was £50. The annual fee for the Roseworthy Diploma in Oenology course was £100, reflecting that Diploma in Agriculture students undertook work on the College farm, partially offsetting the cost of their attendance.

Finding that the fee was limiting enrolments, the South Australian Wine Association provided a £100 Scholarship for each of the first three years of the course.

Four students commenced the first year of the course and all subsequently graduated.

Charles Worthington Kelly

Charles Worthington Kelly, born at Glenelg on 30 May 1912, was 24 at the time of commencement of the course.

Charles had studied agricultural science at the University of Adelaide for one year before transferring to Roseworthy Agricultural College, graduating with a Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture (RDA) in 1933.

Charles was the grandson of Alexander Charles Kelly, the founder of, with others, the Tintara Vineyard Co. at McLaren Vale in 1862, and the son of John George Kelly who established the Lyndale Winery at Lyndoch.

Between his RDA graduation and commencing the oenology course Charles gained experience at various wineries before managing the winemaking operations at Lyndale, which was sold to Gramps in 1939.

Following graduation as Dux of the course with First Class Honors in 1938, Charles was employed by Caldwells Wines, working at both the Company's Head Cellars in Sydney and their Corowa Cellars.

Charles married Margery Hudson at Corowa in 1940. It is not currently known if Charles and Margery had children.

Following the outbreak of WWII Charles resigned from Cardwell's and after a short period of employment with the South Australian Emu Wine Company enlisted on 28 April 1942, serving as a radar mechanic with the rank of Sergeant, serving in Australia, including in the Northern Territory.

On 17 July 1945, Charles received an early discharge to enable him to provide urgent assistance in operating his wife's family farm at Corowa, his father-in-law having died in 1943.

In 1946 Charles moved to Western Australia to manage the Emu Wine Company owned Valencia Vineyards at Caversham in the Swan Valley. The Emu Wine Company also bought Houghton Winery, which brought Charles into contact with Jack Mann and son, Dorham (RDOen 1964).

Aged 86, Charles died at Bull Creek in Perth on 10 July 1998 and is buried at the Karrakatta Cemetery.

Noel Burge

Noe Burge, born at Gawler on 27 January 1917, was 19 at the time of the commencement of the course.

Noel was raised on a mixed farm at Lyndoch, where grape growing and winemaking was initially just part of the farm mix. As winemaking started to be more prominent in the mix Noel's father, Percival, established Wilsford Winery.

Noel commenced studying for the Roseworthy Diploma of Agriculture in 1934 and, after successfully completing his second year, and as allowed for by the minimum qualification for entry, was able to move into the oenology course. Noel was the initial recipient of the £100 South Australian Wine Association Scholarship.

Following graduation with Second Class Honors, Noel was employed at the Berri Growers Co-op Winery and Distillery, where he stayed until 1950 before returning to the family farm and assisted his father with winemaking.

Noel married Margaret Miller in Adelaide on 22 November 1945. Noel and Margaret had five children.

In 1986 Noel's son, Rick, purchased the interests of other family members in the farm and, with Noel, commenced trading a Burge Family Wines.

Aged 92, Noel died at Lyndoch on 1 June 2009 and is buried Centennial Park in Adelaide.

Walter Maxwell Champion Hackett

Walter Maxwell Champion Hackett, born at Kent Town in Adelaide on 8 July 1915, was 21 at the time of the commencement of the course.

Walter commenced studying for the Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture in 1933, and on graduation in 1936 immediately commenced the oenology course, from which he graduated with Second Class Honors.

Following graduation Walter commenced employment at the Renmark Growers Winery and Distillery but soon after commencing took four months leave to visit South Africa and study the wine growing practices in that country.

Walter listed in Adelaide on 3 September 1939 and served during WWII as a Bombardier, including in the Middle East, and was discharged on 20 July 1944.

In 1946 Walter was appointed Manager of the Tarac Manufacturing Company at Angaston, a position he subsequently held as Chief Executive Officer until 1975. From 1955 to 1987 Walter was also a Director of the Company. The Tarac Manufacturing Company had been established by Alfred Allen in 1930 to make products, including Cream of Tartar, from the parts of the grapes not used in winemaking.

Walter married Gwen Davis in Adelaide on 8 July 1948. Walter and Gwen had three children.

Aged 73, Walter died in Adelaide on 1 August 1989 and is buried in the Payneham Cemetery.

Hector Roy Malcolm Allan

Hector Roy Malcolm Allan, born at Broken Hill on 20 July 1913, was 23 at the time of commencement of the course.

Hector had graduated from Hawkesbury Agricultural College with a Hawkesbury Diploma in Agriculture in 1931.

Following graduation from Hawkesbury and prior to entering Roseworthy Hector worked at the Trangie Experimental Farm, a property at Gilgandra and then in Queensland.

Following graduation with a Roseworthy Diploma in Oenology with Second Class Honors, Hector worked for G. Sutherland Smith and Sons at Wahgunyah in Victoria.

Hector enlisted in the RAAF in Sydney on 19 July 1941 and served as Pilot Officer until 13 March 1943 when he was transferred to the RAAF Reserve to fly for Guinea Airways as a staff pilot. After transferring back into the RAAF on 15 December 1944 with the rank of Flight Lieutenant, Hector was discharged on 11 September 1945.

Hector married Mary Yates at Port Pirie on 3 December 1943. Hector and Mary had five children.

Following discharge Hector worked briefly at Great Western in Victoria before managing the Florita Vineyard at Watervale near Clare. In 1950 Hector took up employment with Woodley Wines at Coonawarra and in 1952 joined the South Australian Department of

Agriculture in the role of District Horticultural Advisor for the Southern Hills and in 1956 he was appointed to the position of Senior Horticultural Advisor.

During this period Hector was active in local government, representing the Coromandel-Upper Sturt Ward of the City of Mitcham.

In 1957 Hector moved to Western Australia to take up the position of Principal of the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra. Over the period from 1913 to 1982 Fairbridge, established by Kingsley and Ruby Fairbridge in 1912, was the home of 3,580 mainly orphaned migrant children.

Aged just 53, Hector died on 19 November 1966 and is buried the Karrakatta Cemetery.