

OLD AGGIES

President: Frank Doughty, (02) 9481 8787, fdoughty@tpg.com.au
 Secretary: Graham Linnegar, (02) 9527 1830, helgra@linnegarplumbing.com.au
 Treasurer/Membership: Colin Short, (02) 9876 1018, cbshort@bigpond.com

Alstonville luncheon –

September 2023, venue to be decided. Contact Geoff Jacobs 0412 107 727 or gajacobs@bigpond.com

Armidale/Tamworth luncheon

– To be advised – contact Dr Barbara Vanselow 0434 344 992 or bvanselo@gmail.com

Gosford luncheon – November

2023 – Venue to be decided, contact Geoff Warr (02) 4342 3226 or 0411 128 936 or warries@optusnet.com.au

Laurieton luncheon (cancelled)

– Laurieton United Services' Club, contact Geoff Jacobs 0412 107 727 or gajacobs@bigpond.com

Orange luncheon – October 2023, Best Western Ambassador Motel. Contact Len Banks (02) 6361 7677 or banks@lmbanks.com.au

Sydney luncheon – August, City of Sydney RSL Club, 11.30am. Cost \$35 pp. Contact Col Short (02) 9876 1018 or cbshort@bigpond.com

Wagga Wagga luncheon –

May 2023 – contact James Hamilton 0447 225 875 or jnch1950_1@bigpond.com

Subscriptions \$10 per annum now due

Subs can be paid by direct deposit into the Commonwealth Bank BSB 06-2263, Account No 00903542, Account Name Agricultural Retired Officers Association (please add your surname) or by cheque to Colin Short, 27 Chesterfield Road, Epping NSW 2121.

From The President's Desk

Last year 2022 (our 40th year) has been another challenging year for individuals and communities. I hope 2023 will bring us back to pre-Covid times allowing us to hold all our regional gatherings/luncheons.

Old Aggies luncheons are a great way to renew friendships as well as get to know former colleagues from different sections of NSW Department of Agriculture. I encourage your continued support of our Association. Stay in touch with each other, stay safe and healthy. Regional luncheons have generally strengthened Old Aggies.

Best wishes to all, Frank Doughty, President

George Bennett, 9/2/1925–9/7/2022

George had a long and distinguished career in agriculture and rugby union. After a short stint in the Army he returned to Hawkesbury Agricultural College to complete his diploma and after working as a Junior Farmer Supervisor, eventually joined the College staff in 1969.

He worked as a Junior Farmer Supervisor for twenty-one years first working with schools and clubs in Forbes before returning to Sydney to continue that work. He was a volunteer and co-ordinator of the judging competitions at the Castle Hill, Sydney Royal Easter and Hawkesbury Shows for many years. George worked at Sydney Royal Show for more than sixty years after attending his first one in 1941 and was crowned the 2015 show legend in recognition of outstanding service.

In his spare time, rugby union was his passion. He began refereeing in the 1970s and continued for more than thirty years. His lifelong commitment to helping youth develop their skills on the farm and on the rugby field was recognised with the award of an OAM in 2016.

George was a valued member of the Old Aggies Management Committee and a life member of Hawkesbury Agricultural College Old Boys Union.



He is survived by his two children and four grand-children – Frank Doughty

George, well dressed as we all remember him, with Castle Hill Show Society with President Dr Frank Doughty in 2014.

(Frank was a past member and President of Epping Junior Farmers Club when George was the Area Supervisor)



Vale Eric Clyde Darley

6/5/1927–11/5/2022

After graduating from Sydney University Eric began his career in Horticulture in Northern Queensland. He relocated to Hawkesbury College to pursue his relationship with

Wynta, whom he met on holiday. After marrying and the arrival of their baby girl they moved into their first home at South Windsor. He became a member of the local Rotary and Camera Club and worked in the Department's Parramatta Office for several years before accepting the role of District Agronomist at Moree in 1964. With the addition of two boys in the family, they sold their home and moved to the large country town. Eric & Wynta's relationship with local residents and farmers fostered friendships over many years. They then moved to Balgowlah Heights where Eric worked in the Sydney Office.

During his lengthy career he was involved in Extension work with farmers engaged in crop production as well as producers in a specific range of broad area crops such as wheat, oats, barley etc. and vegetables including potatoes, onions, legumes (peas and beans), tomatoes, swedes and other root vegetables. He enjoyed visiting farmers and often recalled his trips to the bean growers at Tumby Umbi on the Central Coast.

After retiring in 1982 Eric maintained his horticultural background judging vegetables at the Royal Easter Show. He was also a volunteer guide in the Sydney Botanical Gardens for over 20 years. A keen golfer for decades before taking up bowling at his nearby Club and a member of Probus. He was also a regular attendee at the Old Aggies Dinners in Sydney. After the sad loss of Wynta in 2017 he moved into Aged Care where in spite of dementia, he lived a long life before departing his loving family – *Jillian Links, daughter*

End of a stellar career supporting the NSW grains and pulse industry

Well known NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Technical Specialist (Pulses and Oilseeds), Don McCaffery is wrapping up his stellar career with 40 years of significant contribution to the NSW cropping industry.

DPI Director General Scott Hansen congratulated Mr McCaffery on his dedication to the industry through research, development and extension to support profitable farming systems.

"Mr McCaffery has made an exceptional contribution to growers, continually providing the best agronomic advice and support they need, playing a pivotal role in growing the grains industry of NSW," Mr Hansen said.

"Well known by farmers and industry, Mr McCaffery has consistently led key agronomic research and extension work into the production of canola, soybeans, safflower, pulses, rice and maize."

Mr Hansen noted the versatility of Mr McCaffery's skills and service, across irrigation and dryland cropping enterprises in NSW.

"Mr McCaffery spent his early career in the Murrumbidgee and Coleambally irrigation areas, promoting furrow irrigation and bed farming in



the maize and soybean industries, a catalyst for a more efficient water use efficient farming system now supporting the southern cotton industry," Mr Hansen said.

Mr Hansen said Mr McCaffery has played a key role either leading or as a key contributor to many of DPI's flagship publications and research projects.

"For 20 years Mr McCaffery has co-authored the annual *Winter crop variety sowing guide*, a comprehensive publication enabling farmers and advisors to make better cropping decisions and increase profitability," Mr Hansen said.

"Mr McCaffery has played a key author role in developing the *Canola best practice management guide for south-eastern Australia* and the *Insect and mite control control in field crops*.

Mr McCaffery commenced working with DPI at Yanco Agricultural Institute as Technical Officer in Rice Agronomy and Physiology, managing rice variety and agronomy trials and glasshouse physiology experiments.

He was then appointed as Agronomist-in-training

at Wagga Wagga and Coleambally's District Agronomist specialising in rice, maize and soybean production.

Mr McCaffery then moved to Orange to take up the role of Technical Specialist (Oilseeds and Pulses), specialising in canola, soybeans, sunflower, safflower and pulses.

Mr McCaffery's tireless efforts and research has been acknowledged through the award of Life Membership of the Australian Oilseeds Federation in April 2022.

Mr McCaffery is Chair of the Canola Sub-Committee of the Australian Oilseeds Federation from 2002 and holds significant working relationships with Pulse Australia and the Irrigation Research and Extension Committee – *Courtesy NSW DPI*

Girls lunch, outstanding service here

We try to do this couple times a year together.



Left side: Heather Griffith, Bronwyn Dorahy, Kay Carey.
Right side: Carmel Romano, Helen Vella (nee Gregory), Bev Mason – Photo Heather Griffith

Old Aggies Luncheon – Alstonville/ Ballina

We are again in the process of organizing this year's Annual Luncheon to be held at Cherry Street Sports Club, Ballina in September 2023.

This will be our first one for a couple of years due to you know what and we felt it was more central to people travelling from North and South to exit the highway straight into Ballina.

If you aware of any other old employees or acquaintances please feel free to invite them along.

There is no need to officially advise me if attending as we advised the Club we will have approximately 20/25 people and they are happy with this see you in September to relive old and good times.

– Geoff Jacobs

Memoirs of Tasmania – David Croft

In 2001, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service reported that three men were sighted deliberately releasing between 11 and 19 foxes into the wild on the eastern agricultural areas of Tasmania; an island that had previously been free of foxes. This unfortunate introduction of foxes to Tasmania heralded a potentially catastrophic consequence for agriculture and wildlife if they became established in this small state.

This activated a one-month consultancy through the Invasive Animals Co-operative Research Centre to conduct awareness workshops throughout rural Tasmania. This program was co-ordinated by Anthony Szell with Suzy Balogh, Matt Gentle, and I, enlisted from NSW Agriculture, to tour the agricultural regions of Tasmania. We did a series of day-time presentations at venues such as shearing sheds, with night-time farmer meetings in halls and pubs. Night-time meetings culminated with the playing of fox calls and vocalisations from the tape player in the hire car. This vocalised rendition was always accompanied by the howls of domestic dogs all over the town.

The three of us delivered what the Tasmanians referred to as the most highly regarded practical methods training in fox biology, ecology, and control, to farmers, government agencies and wildlife people throughout Tasmania. Our presentations included everything about fox identification and sign, biology, ecology, damage, control methods and the safe use of 1080 poison. We spoke at 22 different venues including the Campbell Town Show. Our trademark was a stuffed fox called Rupert, who was mounted on a plank pouncing on a stuffed rabbit. Rupert was transported between venues on the rear parcel shelf of the hire car, nodding at the stuffed rabbit whenever we hit a bump. It was great fun watching the reactions of the following drivers."

During the fox program, I was summonsed to a boutique lettuce farm to see what could be done about a major mouse issue in a 100 acre crop of lettuces. I knew that there was a Permit available for Zinc Phosphide aerial mouse bait and that Linton Staples at Animal Control Technologies in Melbourne had stocks available. In a matter of hours, a joint effort had bait delivered to Hobart, the crop aerially baited, and a major disaster averted. I had the address of the Houston's Lettuce Farm at Cambridge so drove there for a look. Only a few foreign workers who spoke very little English were present, but I got to see the paddocks 22 years on, which are now just grassland, as they bring

the lettuce from other farms and only process and package at this property. The main growing area is now on the fertile soils near Sorrell.

David Croft returned to Tasmania in 2022 after a long absence and revisited some old haunts he had frequented while he was there. Midway through our Tasmanian trip, we ended up at Derwent Bridge and a free camp at the Wilderness Hotel, where the condition of stay is that you have a meal at the pub.

To the hotel for dinner with Indian and Sri Lankan cooks, with a lovely fish curry with basmati rice and papadums followed by a delicious sticky date pudding. We were seated at a table that got some warmth from a big open fire in an extraordinary dining room. The high roof and the timber walls and ceiling were quite stunning. On the wall was a bedspread made from what I believed to be fox pelts. Talking to Mine Host, David Fitzgibbon, he confirmed my observation. David was originally from Texas, Queensland. Then we got talking about foxes in Tasmania, feral cats and dingoes. Out of the blue, David appeared with a hat that was adorned with the pelt and skull of a young fox and a black feral cat skin hat band. We had a great yarn, and I will send him a copy of my memoirs.

Report on NSW Department of Primary Industries – Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute, May 2022

WWAI continues to support 139 staff and has seen some major investment into the site as viewed by the Former Aggies at the lunch in May 2021. That was a terrific day to have you all back at WWAI to view the recent investment of over \$11M from the State Government and co-investor Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC).

The second component of the Advanced Gene Technology Centre (AGTC2) will be centred around the old khaki coloured shed that contains the circa 1990 growth rooms and glasshouse. The glasshouse will be upgraded to PC2 and completely refurbished with a new shed which will hold a modular laboratory area and growth rooms for phenotyping of plant material. This will enable researchers to take the AGTC1 genetic material directly to a PC2 area for the phenotyping phase. This should be completed by December 2022 and will finalise the last \$5M invested by the State Government into WWAI.

The official Ministerial opening of the Wagga Wagga Agricultural Research Facility (WARF) that was inspected last May happened on the 16 June

2022. The Bilateral Agreement Grains Agronomy & Pathology Partnership (GAPP) with GRDC does come to an end on the 30 June 2022 but all Technical staff have been moved onto other GRDC co-invested projects for the next two to three years. No Research Officers were affected by the end of the GAPP in southern NSW as they all have other non GAPP projects to lead.

NSW DPI are negotiating with GRDC for further investment into pathology and agronomy projects and already have been direct tendered for several project areas that should be contracted in July or earlier.

Due to a massive canola season last year, there has been a large increase in the canola laboratory work from disease detection, field phenology for private companies and lab oil and feed services. Hoping for another great year and it has been a good start with rainfall arriving in a timely fashion and with excellent soil condition for sowing.

Apologies, this article was held over from last year (ed.).

Riverina/Murray former Aggies – Annual luncheon held on 12 May 2022

All people were welcomed to the 2022 Aggies annual luncheon. We especially welcomed Barbara and Andrew Read who travelled from Canberra, Greg Fenton who travelled from Victoria, and Ian Links who travelled from Sydney. The annual luncheon is the first luncheon post COVID19 in our normal location at the Thomas Blamey Tavern, Lake Albert. There were 18 in attendance including 2 x OIC's and 1 x RDA. There were 22 apologies.

We reminisced about the BBQ luncheon and tour of new facilities at the WWAI in 2021. Dr Ian Links and Prof. Ted Wolfe gave account of the visit to WWAI stating how they appreciated the fellowship of former aggies and with some staff and the viewing of the new facilities. Returning to our former stamping grounds was a real buzz. All the aggies who attended were fully appreciative of the hospitality extended to the group by Deb Slinger – thank you Deb.

Peter Hawkins retired in January 2022 and a farewell function was held recently. Peter & Leanne Hawkins are one of a number of couples who met through work.

David Croft gave an account of his Tassie experience of 2001 and 2022 – Please refer to separate report of his memoirs. David has the ability to keep people intrigued and entertained. Thank you, David.

Deb Slinger Director of the WWAI 2021/22 report was read out – please refer to separate report. The main aspects were the \$11m Investment in the expansion of research facilities with official opening occurring on the 16th of June. That 10 GAPP staff will cease engagement of the program on 30th June 2022, but they will be engaged in other positions. 139 Staff are presently engaged at WWAI. A photo of the facility was in the daily advertiser on 9th December 2021. Thank you, Deb.

George Stevens (Former Manager of Yanco AI) was not able to attend the luncheon, but he sent the following report “A little bit of news which will be of interest I heard today, and not really the sort of news we would like to hear. After 2 reviews (surprised it was only 2!!), it seems that the Rice section at Yanco will be closed down, possibly as soon as the end of June. This includes the Rice Breeding, Chemistry and Agronomy will be lost, and at least 2 permanent staff, Rachelle Ward and Peter Snell will be redundant. Most of the technical staff are on contracts which would have come up for renewal at the end of June, so they won’t be renewed. I gather that the breeding work will be taken up by a private company, (name or location not yet known) which had been quoted by the Department for the use of the facilities at the Institute, but of course, this quote was far higher than they anticipated, and they said no. I do have a recollection of reading something about rice research to be undertaken by a local company in the local paper recently but just thought this would be something additional to what is done at Yanco, but not be leading to the likely demise of the rice work at Yanco. If I come across anything more, will let you know

Alex Macdonald was present, and he was asked to come to the front. Alex and Laurel celebrated their 60th Wedding recently with a photo on the front page of the daily advertiser dated 9th March 2022. Alex was asked what the secret of such a long marriage is, and he responded do what you are told to do. The gathering congratulated Alex & Laurel of 60 years of marital bliss.

It was reported that Jean Korn (98) and Yolanda Gedellei (89) passed away recently. Jean and Yolanda were cleaners at the WWAI and WRVL respectively. Jean used to clean Gary Osborne’s laboratory and other laboratories. Both Jean and Yolanda were held in high regard. Ian Links praised Yolanda’s services and that she was one of the family.

The CSU recently announced a new Ag Water & Environment Institute to be based in Wagga Wagga employing up to 20 research staff. Also, CSU

announced a new centralised research & teaching hub to protect Australia’s \$90B agricultural industry from pests & diseases. Also, \$600M Federal funding was announced to reduce the amount of red tape for farmer’s looking to export, carbon farming and biosecurity.

The main issue during the past 12 months was the mice plague eating their way through grain, hay, and cables. It is estimated that on the average most primary producers lost \$50,000 to \$150,000 due to mice. Floods in northern NSW as south-eastern Queensland has caused losses of crops and infrastructure. Embargoes imposed on a number of Australian primary industry products by China is having an adverse impact on many businesses. A Trade deal with India will alleviate some of the consequences of the embargoes. Other markets are being sought including UK trade deal.

Reminders – If not already paid, that annual subscription of \$10 is due to the Association.

BSB 062-263 a/c no 00903542 title NSW Agriculture Retired Officers Association

Just a friendly reminder that coffee morning happens on the 1st Thursday of each month at the Rules Club, Wagga Wagga at 10am.

The Association newsletter editor is seeking articles for the newsletter. Please forward articles to John Bowler (former Manager of Yanco AI) on jkpbowler@bigpond.com

The fellowship, the reminiscing, and reflections were enjoyed by all – *James Hamilton, Coordinator*



From the Treasurer

Would members please note that only members born before 1 January 1934 are entitled to free membership.

Subscriptions for 2023 are now due. Please contact the Treasurer by email if you wish to know your subs status.

Orange Old Aggies get together

Retired staff from NSW Agriculture, and the subsequent name changes (e.g. NSW DPI) met for a reunion in Orange.

Affectionately known as Old Aggies, the Agriculture Retired Officers Association has branches in Sydney and regional areas in NSW. Many of our members served the Rural Industries in various locations through their employment with the Department for many years, some up to 40 years, showing their commitment to both the industry and their employer for their whole career.

Retired Officers from the various roles within the Department have always been a close knit and caring organisation, a significant change from the employment situation today.

The Orange gathering at the Ambassador Motel was the first in three years due to Covid-19 restrictions, so it was a special occasion for a get together and catch up on colleagues and reflect on the agricultural industry, changes in policies, and the new organisation.

Some noted achievements amongst the group included rice breeding for the Australian industry, exotic disease control, increasing awareness of sustainable resource management, targeted pest and weed control, international agricultural development programs as well as leaders in agricultural policy and advisory services.

The move of the Head Office of the Department of Agriculture to Orange in 1991 expanded the scope of the Department in the region, already serviced by Research Centres at Orange, Bathurst, Cowra, Condobolin and Trangie. These facilities provided experimental and demonstration trials to ensure the advisory officers throughout the region had the necessary up to date technical information to service the agricultural, horticultural and livestock industries of the area.

Story and pictures courtesy Len Banks, Orange Area Co-ordinator.



Rod Hoare Meg and Graeme Thwaite



Don McDonald, Don Saville and Richard Walker



Mike Curl, Bill Kirsop and Bruce Mackay



Sally Spence Cathy Kelly and Graham Bailey



Maria and Len Banks, Chris Weale and Colin Foster

John Walker Obituary – 1930–2022

In 1925, after graduating B. Sc. Agr. (Hons) from the University of Sydney, John Walker joined the NSW Department of Agriculture as a Plant Pathologist. He worked on diseases of various crops until 1960 when he took over the Herbarium, focusing on the fungi until he retired as a Principal Research Scientist in 1990. He then published 24 more papers, working from the Forestry Commission at West Pennant Hills and later from home. He was honoured as a Fellow of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society in 2019.

Scientific Achievements

John was internationally-renowned for his enormous contribution to reliable plant disease diagnoses and biosecurity in Australia. His work provided a sound basis for both the recording of plant diseases in Australia and the provision of biosecurity advice to both State and Commonwealth Governments. He had found many incorrect identifications when he began examining the Herbarium specimens.

One of his most lasting legacies is the *NSW Plant Pathology and Mycology Herbarium* (DAR), Australia's largest plant disease collection. He had the foresight to safeguard its future by establishing a legislative framework, the *Agricultural Scientific Collections Act 1983* (NSW). The computerisation of the Herbarium records, which he began at an early stage, led to the Plant Disease Data Base used by both State and Federal jurisdictions in international trade.

He published 126 papers, most of them of original research. They cover a particularly wide range of fields and have many different co-authors. He made major advances on cereal take-all, rusts, smuts and other diseases of grasses.

He was invited to write several chapters for the introductory volume of *The Fungi of Australia*, including the classification of the fungi, keys to orders of the fungi with an extensive bibliography totalling 320 pages, by far the largest contribution to this major Australian work.

He was also invited to deliver the Daniel McAlpine Memorial Lecture in both 1980 and 1992.

He regarded the fungi as a particularly interesting and diverse group, important in many areas such as regenerative agriculture, soil health, food, pharmaceuticals, mouldy feedstuffs and mycoremediation.

In the early days when John was the only mycologist in Sydney he assisted on matters outside agriculture:

He identified fungi for a medical microbiologist and “Magic Mushrooms” (*Psilocybe* spp.) for the police.

He wrote *Fungal spores in the air, asthma and respiratory disorders* for the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

He pointed out that the pattern of distribution of the rust pathogens in the genus *Acacia* may help to sort out the contentious debate on its classification.-

John was exceptionally hard-working, thorough and efficient.

Personal Contributions

John was a widely-respected, wonderful person. He was good-natured, great company with a delightful sense of humour and a broad general knowledge that came from extensive reading.

He gave excellent help to colleagues, particularly young plant pathologists when they joined the staff. He provided moral support for many people.

He was a caring husband for his wife Else who died in 1999. They were excellent parents for their four children, Andrew, Paul, Stephen and Marion. His sons had distinguished academic careers and his daughter Marion is an esteemed violin teacher.

He prepared a particularly detailed family history. He wrote up some of the history of the local Roman Catholic Church where he worshipped. He had a deep faith.

The online tribute by Dr Angus Carnegie sums up John's way of working:

“I'll be forever indebted to John who opened my eyes and mind to broader skills in fungal taxonomy and diagnostics and the importance of taking the time to explore and learn”.

An earlier account of John's work by Drs Michael Priest and Jordan Bailey was of considerable assistance in preparing this obituary.

Barbara Ballantyne



Aggie Authors

Interesting to note that three ex Department of Agriculture staff have published books in 2022. Was it their training, the exposure and interaction with our colleagues, the sense of responsibility to the wider community or serendipity that led them to write. All three were initially employed in the Division of Animal Industries

John Drinan graduated from Rural Science UNE in 1964 and started work as a Livestock Research Officer at Trangie ARS in early 1960's before moving into various educational, academic and administrative roles with the Tocal Agricultural College Hawkesbury Agricultural College, CSIRO, University of Newcastle, and Dairy Research and Development Corporation, Dairy Adjustment Authority and the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Committee as well as actively running a beef operation north of Singleton in the Hunter Valley.

From his family farm at Glendon Brook, he has watched the impact of coal mining and electricity generation on the farming industries, community and health of the area. For the last three decades John has been active in resisting the environmental damage of the coal mining industry.

John has used his scientific expertise, his work as an educator, his family background and environmental passion to write well documented study of the effects of the explosion in mining on the Hunter Valley.

The Sacrificial Valley – Coals Legacy to the Hunter is a must read for agriculturalists, the environmentalist, the community as well as the coal miner as it explores with well researched data the various impacts of the coal industry. Water quality, air pollution, the impact on human health, agriculture, community and social issues are addressed along with the cavalier attitude of some miners, with the tacit approval of the Government of the day.

The Sacrificial Valle, Bad Apple Press is available by contacting John at sacrificialvalley@gmail.com or through Amazon as an e-book.

Des Stewart came to Australia in with his Irish parents in 1953 who were then employed on Sir Graham Waddell's property at Bethungra. A frequent visitor to the property was Lorna Hayter of ABC Women's Programme fame who saw potential in the young Des and encouraged him to go to Wagga Agricultural College. After graduating he

was employed as a Poultry Officer at Seven Hills, providing advice to farmers in the Parramatta/Hills district then appointed as Lecturer in Poultry Husbandry at Hawkesbury Agricultural College and in charge of the Random Sample Testing for the commercial Poultry industry.

This was the time that the commercial poultry industry rapidly advanced with a couple of major players moving into large corporate intensive systems and employing their own geneticists, nutritionists and veterinarians. Des resigned from the Department to take up a position with Tegals as their Livestock and Farming Manager at their Nucleus Farms at Camden.

Des remained with Tegals for most of his working life, ending up in a Manager position on their Turkey farms at Quirindi and Wallabadah.

Des has a strong Christian faith from his days at Wagga in the Student Christian movement and ran Bible studies at Quirindi as well as becoming involved in the Kairos Prison ministry in the early 2000s. A chance meeting with Myan Subrayan, a sports motivation and Christian speaker, in early 2022 encouraged Des to publish the notes from his Bible Studies, in particular addressing the much debated question of Predestination and Man's Free Choice.

Two Sides One Coin sets out the Biblical explanations and reasoning to address the question of God's sovereignty or Man's choice in how he responds and free will in receiving Grace. Des has used his 40 years as a Bible teacher to highlight the complementary roles of God's sovereignty and Man's free will as two sides of the one coin not two coins in opposition.

Despite the complexity and, in many cases, divisive nature of the topic, Des has written this in an uncomplicated format with excellent references and a balanced view to encourage all readers to arrive at their own conclusion.

Two Sides One Coin is printed by H2O Hope to Overcome and is available direct from Des on who can be contacted on desmer2340@bigpond.com

Roland Breckwoldt. His childhood was not easy, growing up in a German migrant family on the fringes of western Sydney. He describes in detail how he was shaped by his parents' interment and post-war tensions. He struggled with school and left at 15, but the pleasures he found playing in the nearby creek with its waterholes, lizards and animals kindled an early love of the bush. In

his early teens he discovered horses and visited the weekly horse sales at Flemington where he dreamed of being able to afford to buy a horse and escape the city.

Against his mother's wishes and before turning 16 he quit his job and left home for the bush. Without skills or experience he struggled at first, but soon got his break. And so the New Ringer arrived on the DC3 mail plane at Augustus Downs in March 1960 to begin his new career.

After three years mastering his skills as a ringer, Roly was ready to bow to his mother's wishes and enrol at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, where he struck a lifetime bond with Beef Lecturer, Ben Andrews. After completing his Hawkesbury College diploma, Roland joined the Department of Agriculture's Beef Section and trained with Jim Beck at Lismore for 6 months. He then returned to Hawkesbury as Ben Andrews' assistant.

Roland's experience as a ringer must have played a part in inspiring Bill Murphy PLO Beef Cattle to include a season on a traditional cattle station as part of the in-service training of all new Beef Livestock Officers from the 60s and into the 70s. Lloyd Beeby was first to benefit and it became a custom for new recruits to the Beef Section for more than a decade. For some including myself, that year inspired a love of the northern cattle industry and personal connections which are still alive today.

Roland was appointed as District Livestock Officer (Beef Cattle, Horses and Goats) at Tumut. He was soon lured across into the National Parks and Wildlife Service before reviving his interest in education, buying a farm at Candelo and writing his first book "Wildlife in the Home Paddock".

The New Ringer

I love Roland's book which is essentially the story of his interesting life. Its centrepiece is his entry to the beef cattle industry as a highly motivated, but very naïve, 16-year-old ringer on Augustus Downs in Queensland's Gulf Country in 1960.

His book is beautifully written and will appeal to anyone interested in the northern cattle industry. Roly's eloquent descriptions depict a ringer's life in the 1960s which was challenging but quite uncomplicated, with its focus on horses, cattle and teamwork. He discretely adds his observations and reflections with the perspective and insight of someone who has an enduring, deep love and understanding of the land and its history.

Roly's descriptions of his first horse ride, his first muster and the station characters are wonderful

and bring back my own memories of station life so vividly. The work ethic and pressure to perform are implicit as Roly throws his heart into becoming the best stockman he possibly can.

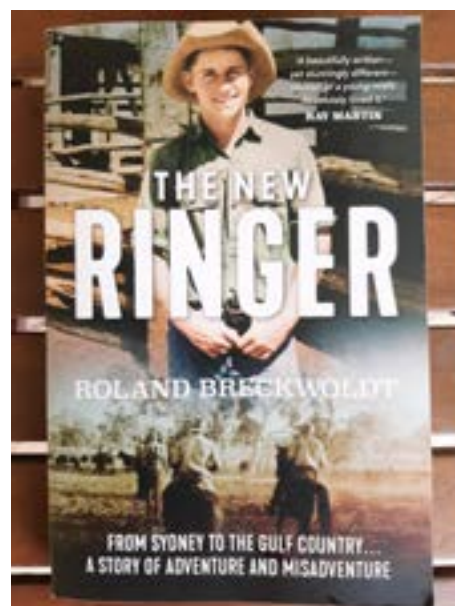
His first season is full of delightful character descriptions and details of life in the stock camp. Throwing mickey bulls from horseback, roping calves to the bronco panels for branding, fresh killed beef and no fridge, and the camp cook's "Burdekin Duck" making salted beef palatable.

Roly's insightful descriptions reveal his incredible memory for the detail. The characters are live and real. His description of a "rush" during a droving trip highlights one of the risks and brought back my own memories of a similar event.

He reflects on the relationships between these men who work long hours and live remotely together. They all respect each other and strive to work cattle as a team but most of them have chosen the isolated life for a reason. Everyone has baggage and there is little discussion of personal lives or aspirations. News and current affairs exist in another world, their world revolves around yarns of rough horses, iconic cattle stations and stories shared at the rodeos and races in the social calendar.

Recent visitors to any of the iconic northern cattle stations will appreciate how times have changed... today's ringers are likely to be motor-cycle riding females and foreign backpackers who have completed formal induction training and whose working conditions are built around accredited training programs and workplace health and safety rules.

After a lifetime of living and working in the bush across Australia, Roly has a rare understanding of the forces that have shaped our land since the beginning of time. He brings his experience into his observations on the changes brought by resettlement of aboriginals and the impact of pastoralists, including exploitation of the well-watered river country.



The book is neatly rounded off with a candid and personal insight into his very productive later life, starting as a Beef Advisor in the Department of Agriculture but soon expanding to wildlife, farming and conservation where his academic and practical work is widely respected, across aboriginal communities and major government environmental projects.

The New Ringer Allen and Unwin is available at most good bookshops

Thanks to Bob Gaden for this review and details of Roly's background.

Gosford Old Aggies Lunch, 3 November 2022

After a gap of three years our Old Aggies group finally got together to see old friends and share stories of the past three years. Twenty members enjoyed a pre-lunch chat and then a menu lunch at Archie's Brasserie in Central Coast Leagues Club (no buffet anymore). President Frank Doughty and Secretary Graham Linnegar attended and Frank spoke briefly on the current DPI and where it now sits in the Department of Regional Services.

Apologies were received from 12 members who either were away or unable to attend due to health issues. We wish them all the best and hope to see them next year – Geoff Warr



Frank Doughty, Graham Linnegar and Jacqui Priest



John Heckendorf and Yvonne Unitt



Gerry Bolla and Alan Bishop



Joan and George Slennet and Bill Trimmer



Sandra Hardy and Lorraine Spohr



Bevan Sommerlad, 22/12/1936 to 19/01/2023

Allan (Bevan) Sommerlad was born at Tenterfield on the 22nd of December 1936 to Allan and Vera Sommerlad the oldest of three boys. The family had established the first orchards in the region in the late 1800's which became well

known across Northern NSW.

Bevan attended Tenterfield Intermediate High School and was granted early entry to Hawkesbury Agricultural College at the age of 16. After the completion of his studies Bevan spent some time working on the orchards and in Marulan (Goulburn) where he designed and built wombat accesses to protect the fence lines.

In 1958 he joined The Department of Education as a Junior Farmer Supervisor stationed at Deniliquin and was transferred to Casino in 1959 where he stayed until 1966. As well as his work with the Junior Farmers he was an active member of the Advisory Committee for the Casino Tech College from 1960 to 1965. Whilst at Casino he met and married Leila Walsh in 1964. Bevan also began a passion for flying, gaining his private licence and eventually his commercial licence in 1964.

Bevan was posted to Broken Hill in 1966 as District Supervisor of the Junior Farmers. It is here that his flying training proved vital as the Department of Education authorised him to charter an aircraft to visit clubs in the area. He was the first Rural Youth Supervisor to be able to fly around his territory. He was also heavily involved in the community working as a relief pilot for the Royal Flying Doctor Service as well as doing some work for the PMG (Telstra).

In 1969 Bevan transferred to Inverell where he had the opportunity to travel to North Carolina in the United States as a member of a Rotary Group Study Exchange before moving to Richmond for a year to complete some post graduate studies back at Hawkesbury College. The family moved back to Inverell in 1971 and then onto Lismore in 1973. It was in 1973 that the government moved the Rural Youth Program (formally Junior Farmers) across into the Department of Agriculture. During this time, he was the co-initiator of the Farm Business Management Program in conjunction with UNE. He went on to serve as the State Co-ordinator of the Farm Business Management Program and Director of Studies until his retirement in 1995.

Bevan's next move was to Orange in 1977 where he had a number of roles, including Regional Advisory Officer Liaison for Education and Training, Central West, South Coast and Tablelands 1985–88 and Departmental Representative Central



Bevan (bottom left) working with a group of Junior Farmers

West Committee for the Board of Adult Education.

Bevan continued his life-long work in Agricultural Education and Training with a move to Maitland in 1993 working with Tocal College. Bevan was also very active in supporting his colleagues through the Public Service Association (PSA). He was the chairman of the Workplace Group for PSA and was a representative in two major Industrial Commission Cases.

Bevan retired in 1995 and he and Leila moved back to the North Coast in the Clarence Valley, firstly at Townsend before settling at Gulmarrad. Sadly, Leila passed away in 2001.

Bevan had a great love of cars and in particular VWs. He was an exceptional backyard mechanic constantly rebuilding and reviving cars and engines. He was active in the local car clubs, Probus and U3A during his time at Gulmarrad.

Bevan is survived by his four children, Margo, Megan, Glenn and Ronnie, twelve grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

*Information provided by Bevan's son-in-law
Gervase Bertus.*

Ian Coffey died August 2022

Ian Started work in the Department of Agriculture as a Sheep and Wool Officer at Trangie in 1962 after completing Wool and Pastoral Science at University of NSW. Following in service training he was appointed District Sheep and Wool Officer at Cooma. He resigned to take private consulting with Hassall and Associates. Ian rejoined the Department in the mid 1980s to take a position in Extension Services, then Director of Animal Production. He was seconded to the Australian Trade commission in London in 1986–87. On return he was appointed to the Executive Director Regulatory before being appointed to the position of Executive Officer Sydney Market Authority in about 1993.

Ian is survived by his wife Sally and children Julia, Michael and Sarah – *David Harris and Geoff File*

Roger Cohen, died 21/7/2022

After completing his degree in Rural Science at UNE Roger was appointed to the position of Livestock Research Officer (Beef Cattle) at Agricultural Research Station, Grafton January 1967, Roger progressed to Special Livestock Research Officer after completing his Ph. D. (UNE) 1980.

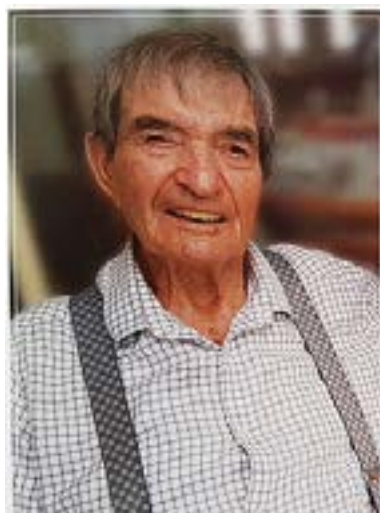
He resigned and moved to Canada to the position of Assistant Professor, Department of Animal Science, University of British Columbia, Canada 1980. Then moved to Assistant Professor, Department of Animal Science and Director of Research, Termuende Beef Research Station, University of Saskatchewan, Canada 1982 (U of S).

Rogers special interest was in nutrition, physiology and management of beef cattle and the environmental effects of beef production. Additional appointments were as Science Director, Centre for Studies in Agriculture, Law and the Environment (CSALE) at U of S 1993 and Executive Director 2001.

As well as teaching undergraduates and supervising Ph D students Roger authored or co-authored 72 peer-reviewed scientific journal papers, 3 book chapters, 3 review articles, 49 invited and 96 contributed conference presentations in Australia, Canada and the USA and 62 Technical Reports.

Roger was recognised internationally and was invited to China in 1987 on a Range Management lecture tour in north-east Changchun province and to Argentina, 2000 to establish a cooperative program for post-graduate training between the Universities of Saskatchewan and La Pampa, Argentina. In 2001, he went to Guatemala for 3 weeks to teach tropical Animal Science to International Studies students, from the Universities of Guelph and Saskatchewan, who were resident in Guatemala for a year as part of their curriculum. He was invited to Mongolia, 2002, to review research projects funded by the Swiss Bank and returned to Mongolia, 2003 for an invited lecture tour on Range Management.

Roger was survived by his wife Carol and have four children, 9 grandchildren and two great grandchildren and lived in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada since retiring in 2003.



Ben Andrews

The Department of Agriculture and the beef industry were well represented at Ben's final farewell which was an amazing expression of love from family, friends, NSW Ag, Hawkesbury, the wider beef industry, golf club and more.

Both Judy and Roland Breckwoldt said Ben viewed his years with NSW DPI as the highlight of his life. But there were many highlights.

Below is a short tribute I managed to put on our Facebook page (Old Beefos) with a borrowed phone. We're away from home just now with limited coms.

Bob Gaden sent the following note:

Such a heartwarming farewell last week to Ben Andrews . . . a wonderful person, mentor and leader. We remember him pulling NSW Ag together out of doom and gloom as we climbed on board with him to support the exciting era of industry change. New Japanese markets, feedlots, residues, welfare, crossbreeding, genetics, and the meat quality revolution, he made his mark on all. He left massive amounts of love and respect in all his staff and their families whose careers flourished under his guidance. He loved those years and there was so much more to this amazing man. How lucky we were to be part of his incredible life.

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