

OLD AGGIES

Orange # Staff snippets # Gunnedah # Obits # Sydney luncheon

Diary Dates

Alstonville luncheon -

Alstonville Bowling Club -
contact Geoff Jacobs 0412 107
727 or
gajacobs@bigpond.com

Orange luncheon -

Wednesday 11 October 2017,
Eighteen70 Restaurant 11:30
for 12:30 - contact Peter
Witschi (02) 6369 0011 or
jfpwitschi@bigpond.com

Gosford luncheon - Central
Coast Leagues Club - contact
John Stone (02) 4362 1834 or
jgandjastone8@gmail.com

Sydney luncheon - Tuesday 13
December 2016, City of
Sydney RSL Club 11:30 -
contact Col Short (02) 9876
1018 or
cbshort@bigpond.com

Wagga Wagga luncheon -
Thursday 11 May 2017 -
contact James Hamilton 0447
225 875 or
jnch1950_1@bigpond.com

Laurieton luncheon - Monday
27 February 2017 Laurieton
United Services' Club 11:30 -
contact Ray Buxton (02) 6559
7001 or
rhu87351@bigpond.net.au

Armidale/Tamworth luncheon
- Wednesday 8 March 2017
Bendemeer Hotel - contact Dr
Barbara Vanselow
bvanselo@gmail.com

From the President's desk

Well, here we are with yet another year under our belt - for which we must all be grateful as far too many of our members won't get to celebrate the coming Christmas and New Year period.

Many of you would have read of the passing of former Director-General George Knowles in January this year and there is other sad news reported in this newsletter.

On a happier note, the Association has generated some great camaraderie with regional luncheons held throughout the State during the year allowing former work colleagues to enjoy each other's company and talk about "the good old times". Special thanks to Ray Buxton who has volunteered to organise the Laurieton luncheon, following Alan Lee's huge effort over many years.

And my personal thanks to members of the committee who have provided strong and sustained support during the year.

Thank you too, to members who have submitted editorial contributions for possible publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately some of these contributions are pretty lengthy and will require substantial editing or serialisation to fit - so a plea for brief items is issued. We are looking for a replacement editor for the newsletter, so please call me if you would like to take on the job.

It's been my pleasure to have been President and I encourage your continued support of the Association.

Happy Christmas to you all and I trust that 2017 brings good health, great wealth and lots of happiness and peace.

Frank Doughty

ORANGE LUNCHEON REPORT

Attendance at the lunch in Orange exceeded 50 this year, of which seven were first-time attendees. These included Rod Hoare and Helena Warren from Binda, David Hartley from Lake Macquarie, Paul Lukins from Condobolin and Barry Jensen, Ian Roth and Peter Blore from Orange. Over 40 apologies were received from members who were travelling or had family commitments. The XPT train arrived on time delivering President Frank Doughty, Treasurer Col Short from Sydney and Col Foster from Wentworth Falls. John Bowler kindly provided transportation from the train station to the venue and also took some great photos, due to Col Begg's absence overseas. (Thank you John - CB.) Pat Hood and daughter Debbie Hart attended from Springwood, Keith and Philippa Woodlands travelled from Parkes, Graham Linnegar from Sydney, Don Hayman from Jindabyne, Bob Sproule,

Peter Simpson and Bill Muldrew from Goulburn, John and Glenys Dymock from Boorowa and Roy and Jenny Menzies came up from Bathurst. President Frank Doughty welcomed everyone to the lunch and conveyed the sad news about the passing of George Knowles and Jack Keogh, as well as Marlene Ward from the Central Coast who frequently attended the Orange lunch. Our sincere condolences are offered to the families of these former work colleagues. Next year the Orange lunch will be held at the same venue on Wednesday 11 October 2017. If you know of anyone who should be sent an invitation in addition to the present invitees, please advise them of my email address or phone number which is listed here.

Peter Witschi
jfpwitschi@bigpond.com
(02) 6369 0011



L to R: John Seaman, Helena Warren, Rod Hoare, Graham Linnegar, Sally Spence, Ian Roth.



L to R: Col Foster, Bob Colton, David Hartley, David Harris, Barry Jensen, John Mullins.



Dick Gammie, Bob Trounce, Nancy Trounce.



Roy Menzies, Peter Simpson.



Don McDonald and Bob Sproule.



Pat Hood and daughter Debbie Hart.

The story of Bob Estoe's leg - as told by John Wildman (Hawkesbury Old Boy 1947-1949)

My father, Perc Wildman, organised the 1934-35 western tour for Hawkesbury Agricultural College students through north-western NSW, visiting areas including Tamworth, the Pilliga Scrub and the northern Tablelands. There's a good chance the tour involved the famous Jim O'Reilly who was acknowledged as one of the great cereal agronomists of his time. E. A. Southee (Bert) was officer in charge of the tour. Bert later became the Principal of the College.

The tour was mostly by train using Pullman carriages which had "up market" sleeping berths and shared bathroom facilities at the end of the rail car.

"What happened to Bob's leg" I hear you say? Well - he reportedly went to the toilet in the Gosford tunnel but fell out of the train in the tunnel, resulting in the amputation of his leg by the train wheels. However Bob had the presence of mind to use his belt as a tourniquet and he obviously, lived to tell the tale.

The tour arrived at Central Station and found that Bob was missing, so fettlers were sent along the line and into the Gosford tunnel, where they found Bob, striking matches to attract attention. He was immediately taken to Newcastle Hospital (and incidentally, put into a ward where my mother's sister was nursing.)

Postscript for Bob: The loss of a leg did not impede the highly-regarded Departmental officer from any activity ... he was a good dancer and reportedly, the more whisky he consumed, the better dancer he became.

(Editor's note: Bob's wooden leg has been the subject of many, many hilarious stories over the years, however we claim indemnity in the honest re-telling of some of these tales. Thank you John Wildman.)

So ... what do you do when you retire from NSW Agriculture?

Seen at the Australian National Field Days Orange during November, Old Aggies Bob Wickson (right) and John Fisher and Bob Trounce (below)



doing what they've been doing for many, many years ... talking to producers about how to increase yields and profits.

You just can't knock an Old Aggie down with a stick!

Kerry Wickson/John Bowler

OBITUARY - JOHN (JACK) KEOGH 1925-2016

Jack was born on 10 October 1925 in Earlwood and following high school education at Christian Brothers Lewisham, entered Veterinary School at the University of Sydney in 1943. Following graduation in 1947, he worked in a mixed veterinary practice in Hamilton, New Zealand.

In 1948 Jack was an assistant in a dairy cattle practice owned by Maffra Milk Products Co Ltd. He then moved to Sydney where he was employed as a Veterinary Officer at Drug Houses of Australia (DHA).

In August 1952 Jack moved with his new wife Wilma to Norwood in South Australia where he was a Veterinary Officer with the Department of Agriculture, South Australia until 1960 when he moved to the Department of Primary Industries in Canberra.

Jack joined the NSW Department of Agriculture in 1963 as DVO Wagga Wagga, a position he held until 1979 when he was promoted to Head Office (Sydney) as Director Disease Control. As Director he was responsible for TB and Brucellosis eradication in NSW. He retired in 1985 and was a regular attendee at Old Aggies' luncheons in Sydney up until late 2012 when he moved into a Retirement Village in Strathfield and then into Aged Care at Marrickville in 2014 where he passed away peacefully on 18 September 2016.

Jack was a loyal friend, colleague and mentor. Our condolences have been passed onto his children and their families.

Frank Doughty

MUDGEES REFLECTIONS WITH GERRY HENNESSEY

From what I can gather, Mudgee's Ag office must have been among the first to be established, back in the 1940s. The northern boundary was around Premer (near Gunnedah) and the south eastern boundary was Penrith.

DAs included Frank Morris, Felix Filan, George Nicholson, Bob Johnston, David Frame, Mal McNiven, Gerry Hennessey and finally Jenene Kidston.

Horticulturists included Clarrie Beckingham, Bruce Brown and Sue Marte, while livestock officers include Barry Trimmer, John Fitzgerald, Sandy Yeates and Brett Littler. Our field assistant was Richard Plummer and clerical support was given by Rory Myer, Colleen Page and Fay McDarmont.

Bob Johnson gained quite a reputation through his work on responses to boron giving rise to the nickname of Boron Bob! Prickly Pear Destruction Commission staff at Mudgee contributed significantly to the control of pest pear species and increased carrying capacity of many properties in the area.

It is sad to see the district office closed with some staff members going to head office and others retiring in the local area. Clarrie Beckingham is still living in Mudgee but battling ill health. Sandy Yeates took a redundancy and is now retired from a successful consultancy business with Brett Littler still working at Mudgee with the LLS.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON GUNNEDAH H/Q WITH COL FOSTER

Reading Col Begg's account of the 1980 move of Regional H/Q of the (then) New England, Hunter and Metropolitan Region from Tamworth to Gunnedah brought back a lot of memories for me.

I was appointed to the position of Inspector Plant Diseases Act at Gunnedah in July 1968. Gunnedah was then the Regional H/Q for the North Western Region with district offices at Coonabarabran, Narrabri and Moree. Well-known staff at Gunnedah office in July 1968 included Ben Hall (Regional Director), Bob Komoll (District Agronomist), Lloyd Beeby (Beef Cattle), Alan Luff (Sheep and Wool), Doug Lackey (Machinery Officer), Jim Elston (Economist), John Cameron (Publicity Officer), Joe Collier (Field Assistant) and front office staff Bertha Tyrell and Jan Wilkinson (later Bennett).

A lot of the staff Col referred to came along in later years and it was mostly enjoyable working together in the cramped conditions under the Ex-Servicement's Club, even though at one point ... I thought I could find myself setting up office in the squash courts at the rear of the Ex-Servicemen's Club building. I well remember the regional restructure which was to see the demise of Gunnedah as a Regional H/Q for the North Western Region. At least that was how it appeared when the political masters came to play ... and I guess, the rest is history.

NEW CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER FOR NSW

Dr Christine Middlemiss, from Scotland, has been appointed to the prestigious position of NSW Government Chief Veterinary Officer. Dr Middlemiss has extensive experience as a senior policy and veterinary manager throughout the United Kingdom and will also fill the role of the Department of Primary Industries' Group Director Animal Biosecurity and Welfare. As NSW Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Middlemiss will represent the State on the National Animal Health Committee and lead the development of animal health and welfare policy and operations at both a State and National level.

Old Aggie "snippets"

Ray and Marie Storrer have changed address and report that they are in reasonable health at 86 and 85.

Ian Roth - former CVO has joined the illustrious ranks of Old Aggies.

Graeme Wigmore of Prestons, **Paul Armour** of Lismore and **Rod Tabrett** of Wentworth have also all joined up.

Bob Gulliford - former Apiculture Officer Tamworth - has been very active in "matters political" in his local region.

Bill Trimmer - Cabonne East Ratepayers' Chair - has also been involved heavily in protesting local government amalgamations.

Paul Lukins recently returned to Australia following his extensive missionary work in Ethiopia. Would love more details on your work overseas Paul.

Sadly missed:

John Keller, Sawtell.

Don Herps, Inverell.

Joan Gray, Ballina.

Marlene Ward, Gosford.

George Knowles AM.

Jack Keogh, Marrickville.

Don't mess with oldies

Employment application forms always seem to ask who should be called in case of an emergency. It's obvious ... "an ambulance".

* The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a brand spanking new replacement.

* Eventually everyone reaches a point where they stop lying about their age and start boasting about it!

MEDAL IN THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA (OAM) Queen's birthday honours

Mr George Henry BENNETT, 6 Peter Street, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153. For service to agricultural education, and to rugby union. Service includes:

Hawkesbury Agricultural College (now part of Western Sydney University): Supervisor of Applied Studies, 1970-1986. Director, Hawkesbury Foundation, 1993-2006.

Inaugural Committee Member, Hawkesbury Assembly of Convocation, 1976. Executive Member, Hawkesbury Agricultural College Old Boys Union, 21 years and Secretary, 1974-1988 and Life Member. New South Wales Department of Agriculture:

Supervisor, Junior Farmers (now known as Rural Youth), 1958-1970. Foundation Member, Retired Officers Association of the New South Wales Department of Agriculture.

Rugby Union: Senior Vice-President, Parramatta Rugby Referees Association (now Sydney West Rugby Referees Association), 'for several years during the 1990s'. Referee, 1971-2005. Life Member. Inaugural Recipient, 'Chris Cunliffe-Jones Spirit of Rugby Award', 2014. Sydney Royal Easter Show: Administrator, Junior Judging Competition, since 1962. Life Member. Recipient, 'Show Legend Award' (for over 60 years of service), 2015. 'Contributor of the Year', 1990. Volunteer, Castle Hill and Hawkesbury Shows, many years. Recipient, Greater Western Sydney Community Award, The Hill's Shire, 2013.

Contributed by Frank Doughty

OLD AGGIES' SYDNEY LUNCHEON - TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2016

I will attend the December 2016 Old Aggies' Luncheon to be held at the City of Sydney RSL Club, 565 George Street, Sydney and enclose \$35 cheque/money order, made payable to NSW Agriculture Retired Officers' Association.

11:30 am for fellowship - 12:30 pm for lunch

Please tear off this form and post it with your remittance to Col Short, 27 Chesterfield Road, Epping 2121 **to reach Col no later than 8 December 2016.** Please phone Col to confirm (02) 9876 1018 if your "cheque is in the mail".

