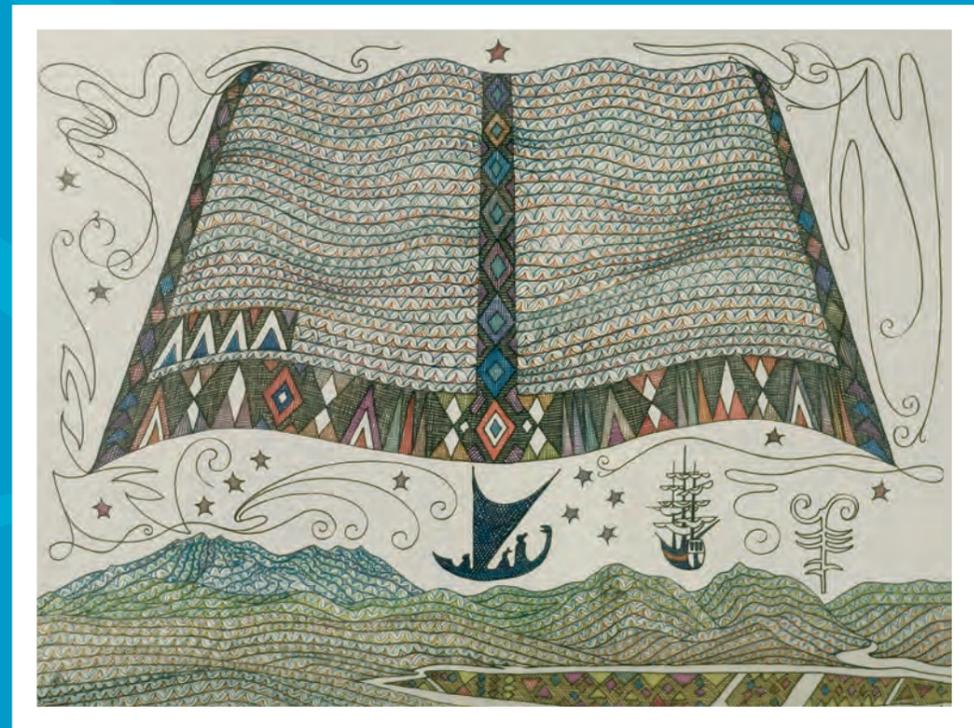
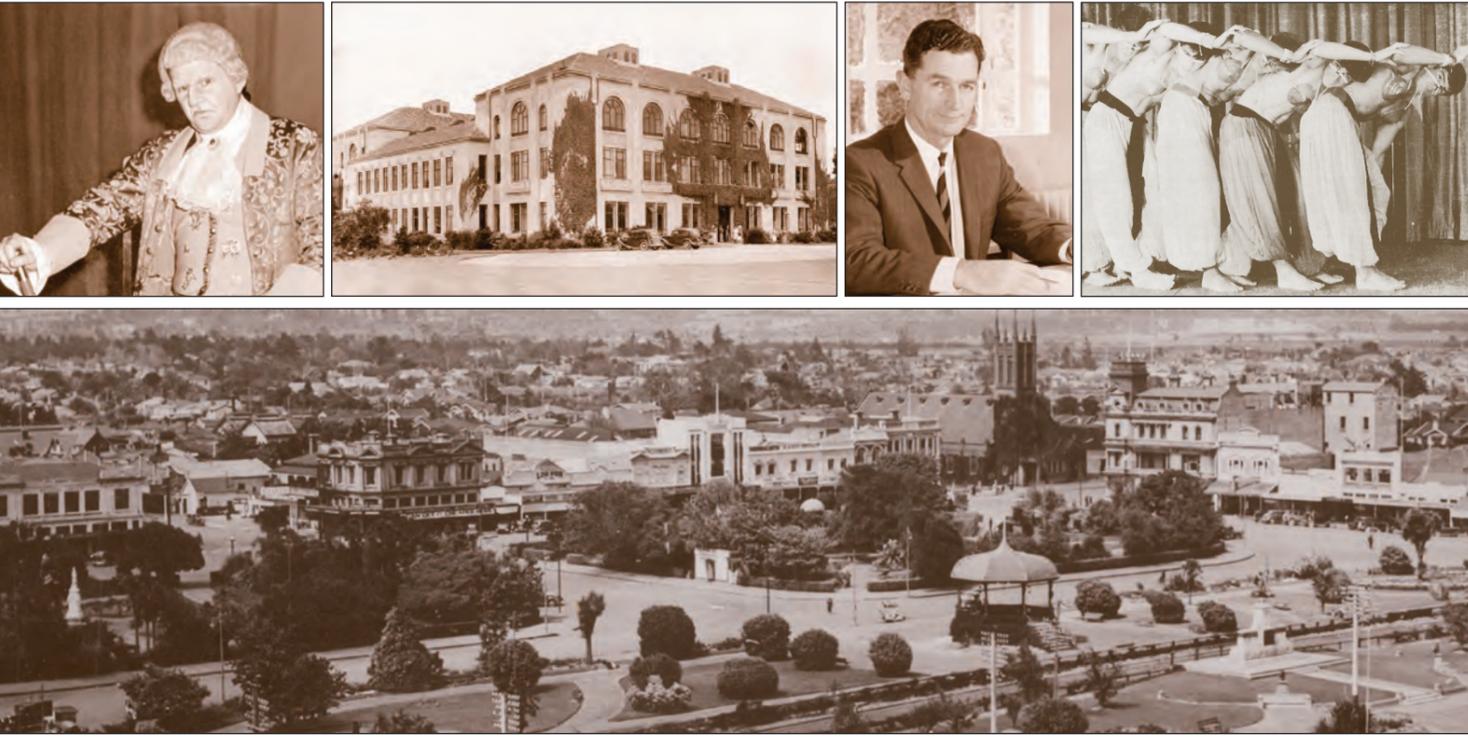


THE MANAWATŪ  
JOURNAL  
OF HISTORY

MANAWATŪ JOURNAL OF HISTORY, MASSEY COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE, 2014

MASSEY COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE



Cover illustration: *The Manawatu Flows On*, 1993. John Bevan Ford. Collection of Massey University Library. Reproduced by permission.

John Bevan Ford (1930-2005) was born in Christchurch. His mother was of Ngati Raukawa ki Kapiti ancestry and his father of English/German descent. He lived in the Manawatū from 1974, when he came to work at Massey University. John was a full time painter for the last twenty years of his life.

This painting has its origins in an invitation to travel to the Netherlands, with a series of works commemorating, and giving a Māori perspective on, the anniversary of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman's arrival in New Zealand in 1642. The artist has used a pen loaded with liquid acrylics, on watercolour paper. The taniko border of the cloak above the land signifies mana, and that the land is a land of distinction; the floating threads emanating from the sacred upper edges of the cloak symbolise the local people's whakapapa (genealogy), and show that the space above the land is an active space. Below, the Manawatū River flows out of Te Apiti, the Manawatū Gorge, and meanders across the plains. The scroll-like figure above the gorge represents the region's first navigator, the pre-Māori taniwha (spirit) Okatia, who became a totara tree and carved out the path of the river on his way from the Wairarapa, east of the ranges, to the west coast. The canoe of the next navigator, Kupe, can be seen to the left of Okatia. One of Kupe's wives was Ruahine, after whom the ranges to the left of the picture are named. The third great navigator was Tasman, and his boat is also in the sky, to the left of Kupe's. Constellations and single stars in the sky are the Māori equivalent of the compasses that Tasman used as navigational tools. The place where the Manawatū River meets the Pohangina was the site of an outpost of the Rangitāne people. The site has since been washed away by floods, but here the artist has 'brought it home' and populated it by including at the bottom right edge the patterns of some very old flax belts from the Manawatū Museum (now Te Manawa). Some of these patterns also appear in the traditional taniko borders of the cloak. The unusual vertical pattern in the centre of the cloak, which is not traditional, was inspired by a very early carved canoe prow cover found in Taranaki by Richard Cassells, when he was working at the Manawatū Museum. Shapes from that carving also appear on the figure of Okatia.

*Lucy Marsden*

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MASSEY COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

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LUCY MARSDEN



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Editorial committee: Cushla Scrivens (editor), Lucy Marsden, Garry O'Neill, Russell Poole, Margaret Tate, James Watson, Noelene Wevell, Marilyn Wightman.

**Contact details:**

Cushla Scrivens,  
2 Seaton Court,  
Palmerston North 4410.  
Email: [manawatu.history@gmail.com](mailto:manawatu.history@gmail.com)

Subscriptions:  
The Treasurer  
Manawatū Journal of History Inc.  
PO Box 1702  
Palmerston North 4440.

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# FOREWORD



When a university turns 50 the various world-ranking agencies start looking at it differently. Once considered young and untested, reaching the venerable age of 50 is a clear signal that the university has established its credentials and is here to stay. From this point on they join the group of universities that have, in some cases, been around for as long as 800 years.

No wonder such universities start looking carefully at their history. This is exactly what Massey University is doing. We are a child of the 1960s (1964 to be precise) along with many other universities around the world. This was a time when higher education expanded rapidly in response to growing economies and burgeoning populations hungry to gain access to the once exclusive domain of the few. All of this activity created what some have referred to as a golden age of universities. Certainly, Massey University enjoyed a long period of sustained growth as its academic programme expanded to include sciences, health, creative arts, humanities, social sciences, education and business.

It needs to be said, of course, that the Massey University story goes back further than 50 years. We did not just suddenly appear on the scene fully formed. The Palmerston North campus began as the Massey Agricultural College in 1927. The College of Creative Arts can trace its history back to the 19th century. Distance education at Massey is into its 55th year. The Institute of Veterinary and Biological Sciences (IVABS) celebrated 50 years in 2013. Faculties and Colleges have come, some have stayed, others have been transformed into something new.

All of this history means we will be telling stories about our past for many years to come.

Some of those stories are to be found in this issue of the *Manawatū Journal of*

*History*. This issue of the journal brings together stories about a time when Massey could only be found in the Manawatū on the outskirts of Palmerston North. They tell of great characters who helped shape the identity of the University like Sir Alan Stewart and Keith Thomson and of others who occupied or designed the buildings that now form our heritage and are being restored to their former glory. Fifty years of drama are brought to life and we are reminded of the once glorious capping revues that have all but disappeared from modern universities. The library, always the heart of any university, has its story told.

The Massey University community will read this Commemorative Issue with interest and gratitude. Like foundation Vice-Chancellor Sir Alan Stewart, many of the readers have Massey 'in their blood' and want to know more about the university they call their own. As a young university we have not always been as careful to record our history as we will be from now on. We are old enough to know how important it is to understand where we have come from and who has brought us this far. Great universities always have a great history. It is what their reputation is built on. Massey University is one of the world's leading universities and over the next 50 years it intends to maintain that reputation. People within and outside of the University are going to be increasingly curious to know about us. This issue will make a significant contribution to their knowledge.

A special thanks to the Massey University Library and the W H Oliver Humanities Research Academy for their support of this project.

*Steve Maharey  
Vice-Chancellor  
Massey University*

# INTRODUCTION



In 2014 Massey University celebrates fifty years as a full university, having previously been an agricultural college. This year also will also see the tenth issue of the *Manawatū Journal of History*, which came into existence following a series of public meetings in 2004. It seems appropriate to commemorate both with this special issue, in which seven previously published articles on the history of Massey are reprinted, along with one new one.

After 35 years working in the University Library, the last five as University Archivist, the *Journal* seemed a good place in which to record some key aspects of its history likely to be of interest to the local general reader, as well as to alumni. This appealed as a worthwhile retirement project.

The reasons for selecting these topics were partly practical: they were topics I already knew something about, and about which I knew there were adequate resources, as well as being discrete subjects that could hopefully be covered in 4,000-word articles. As well as being important in the history of Massey and its Manawatū campus, they were also, quite simply, topics that interested me. I especially enjoyed exploring the family connections of Arthur and Ethel Russell of Wharerata; perhaps historians are all celebrity columnists at heart. The easiest to do was the one on the University Library, since I was so familiar with it, the most fun that on the student capping revues, and the most difficult that on the Prendergast Estate, about which resources proved hard to find.

Readers may be surprised to note that there is nothing in here directly on agriculture;



together with graduates Lesley Courtney and Michael Bartleet I wrote *Floreat Agricultura*, a short history of agriculture at Massey, in 2002, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Agricultural College. This is out of print, but is available online (Google 'Massey Jubilee books').

I gratefully acknowledge the unfailing helpfulness of the current University Archivist, Louis Changuion, and the support of Cushla Scrivens, the Editor of this Journal, whose idea it was to reprint these articles, and who sometimes generously allowed me to exceed the word limit when my enthusiasm ran away with me.

*Lucy Marsden*

# A SOUND INVESTMENT: SIR JAMES PRENDERGAST AND HIS FITZHERBERT ESTATE



Massey University's Turitea Campus currently occupies land that once formed part of a large (3,743 acres, 1514.7 hectares) estate in the Town of Fitzherbert, on the south side of the Manawatū River, extending from Linton to just beyond Cliff Road. This estate was owned in the late nineteenth century by Sir James Prendergast.



*Sir James Prendergast.*

*Turnbull Library, 031752-F.*

As a young man in 1852 the London-born Prendergast joined the Australian gold rush, where he had some success as a goldminer in Victoria. On his return home he followed in his father's footsteps by qualifying as a lawyer, and was called to the Bar in 1856. London was well supplied with lawyers, however, and he decided to emigrate to New Zealand, arriving in Dunedin with his wife in 1862. Here he was to find considerable status through the pursuit of his legal profession and considerable wealth through astute investment in land.

Thanks to the Otago gold rush Dunedin offered great openings for lawyers in the early 1860s, and Prendergast quickly prospered. In 1865 he was appointed Crown solicitor in Otago and then Attorney-General; at this stage he gave up his Otago practice and moved to Wellington. His task as Attorney-General was to consolidate the criminal law, and to this end he drafted 94 acts, notable for their attention to detail. In 1870 he also became the first president of the newly established New Zealand Law Society. 1875 saw him

reach the height of his profession, when Prime Minister Julius Vogel, whom Prendergast had known in both Australia and London, appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Zealand. He was aged 49, and was to remain in that position until his resignation in 1899.

His approach to the law has been described as 'pragmatic', and some of his legal opinions as 'literary labyrinths', but one of his achievements was to clarify the land transfer system. He is nowadays somewhat notorious, first for describing the Treaty of Waitangi as 'a simple nullity' because the Maori were primitive people, 'incapable of performing the duties, and therefore of assuming the rights, of a civilised community'. Second, when acting as Administrator between two Governors-General he authorized the despatch of troops to Parihaka in 1880. It has been pointed out, however, that in these attitudes he was representing the orthodox opinions of his time. His Pākehā contemporaries regarded him as a person of courtesy, patience and tact.

Based in Wellington, Prendergast would have had intimate knowledge of upcoming land sales, and the frequent travelling demanded by his work provided opportunities to assess the potential of available land. The Ahuaturangi, or Upper Manawatū, Block which lay between the Oroua River and the Tararua/Ruahine Ranges was sold to the Government in 1859. The site for Palmerston North was surveyed by J T Stewart in 1866 and the first sales of Manawatū land took place in Wellington on 7 and 9 November 1866. Town lots varied in price from £20-£52, while rural land had an upset price of £1 per acre except along Rangitikei Line where it was £2 per acre.

Prendergast wasted no time in acquiring Manawatū land, buying sections in the Sandon Block in the Rangitikei-Manawatū Block and a further 41 at Bunnythorpe; as soon as the first sections in Fitzherbert became available in the 1870s he bought there, and his Fitzherbert Estate eventually comprised 37 sections, ranging in size between 45 and 208

acres. Most formed a consolidated block of land, watered by the Turitea and Kahuterawa streams, with six sections further east, beyond Cliff Road. Eight sections between Prendergast's estate and the river were owned by J O Batchelar and J C Monro (see map). All was rich, high quality land, suitable for farming, and the availability of a bridge over the Manawatū River from 1877 facilitated easier contact with the nearby settlement of Palmerston North and increased the land's value and potential. A homestead was built on section 186, adjoining what is now Summerhill Drive, and a woolshed on section 189.

Prendergast was genuinely interested in farming, and was the first President of the Manawatu A&P Association, from November 1886 to July 1887. Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory 1902 Part 1 lists him as a farmer living on his Fitzherbert estate, but Part 2 of the same publication lists him as living at his Wellington home, 14 Bolton St. It would seem reasonable to assume that Prendergast travelled to the Manawatū when his position as Chief Justice permitted, but that a manager was responsible for day-to-day affairs. Petersen reports that the estate was managed by Frank Perry, and both the electoral rolls and Wise's confirm that Perry was a farmer living in Fitzherbert in the 1890s. In an advertisement for sheep dip in the *Feilding Star* of 10 April 1897 he endorses the product and is described there as Prendergast's farm manager. Perry must have liked the area and bought land there, since he is listed as paying rates after 1900.

Dorothea Joblin, in her book *Behold the Plains*, does not mention Frank Perry, but states that the farm was managed by Michael Prendergast, James Prendergast's son. Since James and his wife did not have any children, Michael must have been a different relative, who perhaps managed the estate before Perry. He is listed in the Electoral Roll 1890 as a farmer owning the freehold of sections 219, 225 and 226, sections which were bought by James Prendergast in 1876 and formed part of his estate when it was offered for sale in 1900.



Plan of Sir James Prendergast's Fitzherbert property, produced for the sale on 31 January 1900.

Palmerston North City Archives, PNCC7-6-007361.



*Prendergast's land, partly developed, soon after the sale. Craiglockhart is on the hill and Whare Rata is being built.  
Massey University Archives.*

A photograph showing part of section 203 in 1901, by which time it was owned by R S Abraham and Arthur Russell, suggests that the land had not been highly developed, and had been used for extensive grazing. This is borne out by advertisements in the *Manawatu Standard* in February 1900 for the sale on Prendergast's behalf of 'some 500 head of well-bred shorthorn cattle' ... '10,000 well-bred Lincoln sheep' and '7 horses'.

Even with relatively few improvements, the Fitzherbert land was bound to increase in value. Petersen records that good land in Manawātū sold for 23s to 27s per acre in 1877, but that the value rose sharply in the later 1870s with a growing appreciation of the land's farming potential. Prendergast's purchases reflect this. He bought the parcel of sections 219, 225 and 226, totalling 329 acres, near the river east of Cliff Road, for £450, or just over 27s per acre, and sections 190-197, totalling 405 acres, on River Bank Road (now Tennent Drive) for £47 10s, or just

over 20s per acre. Rate books for Kairanga County Council's Fitzherbert Roads Board are available for 1893/4 and 1896/7, and they indicate the rateable values for some Fitzherbert sections. Unfortunately the sections listed there do not correspond exactly with the few parcels for which Prendergast's purchase prices have been found, so it is not possible to get accurate comparisons, but they do indicate sharp increases in value. For the year 1897-8 sections 225 and 226 were together valued at £2,450 (£9 16s per acre) and sections 219 and 222 together at £1,176 (£8 12s per acre). The single section 207 was valued at £462 (£8 2s per acre).

Prendergast's wife died on 5 March 1899, and he retired from his position as Chief Justice in May that year, aged 72. He put his Fitzherbert and Bunnythorpe lands up for sale. They were auctioned by Williams and Abraham on 31 January 1900. The Palmerston North City Archives hold a poster advertising this sale, describing the Fitzherbert estate as

very good farming land which, despite having been farmed, had not been overstocked. Detailed descriptions are given of each section as to its fencing, water supply, bush and road frontage. While the land had not been cleared of timber this was not seen as a problem, since the high value of firewood in Palmerston North meant it could be done at minimal cost. Purchasers were to pay 10% in cash at fall of hammer, 10% in one month, and the remainder could be covered by a five-year mortgage at 4.5%.

**PLAN OF**  
**SIR JAMES PRENDERGAST'S**  
**FITZHERBERT PROPERTY,**  
*Comprising 3,743 Acres of First-class Land, in close proximity to the Borough of Palmerston N.*  
*To Be Sold by Public Auction,*  
 BY  
**Messrs. ABRAHAM & WILLIAMS,**  
 At Their SALE ROOMS, PALMERSTON NORTH,  
**On Wednesday, 31st January, 1900,**  
 AT 1 P.M.

TERMS OF SALE: 10% cash at the fall of the hammer; 10% in one month when delivery will be given. The balance may remain on Mortgage for a term of five years, secured interest at 4 1/2% per annum, with the proviso that a further payment of 10% must be made at the end of the third year. Purchasers will be allowed to pay off the whole Mortgage at any time during the currency of the Mortgage by giving six months notice.

*Sale notice for Abraham & Williams sale of the Prendergast estate.*

*Palmerston North City Archives, PNCC7-6\_007361.*

There would have been intense local interest in the outcome of this sale of an extensive estate so close to the town; it was advertised widely in lower North Island newspapers. The *Feilding Star* of 25 January 1900 predicted that it would be 'the most successful held for years', and the *Hawera and Normanby Star* of 22 January 1900 wrote that the quality of the land and its close proximity to Palmerston North made it 'one of the most important land sales ever held in the North Island'. Reflecting the wide interest it aroused, the sale was held at the Theatre Royal instead of at Abraham and Williams' rooms as advertised. Unfortunately local newspapers for the week after the sale are missing, making it impossible to work out exactly how much Prendergast received for his land. However, the *Evening Post* of 1 February 1900 reports that the sale was very successful, the Bunnythorpe sections being sold at £15 to £18 per acre, the Fitzherbert sections realising £10 to £18 per acre. The *Manawatu Standard* of 31 March 1900 reports



*Lawrence Bourke, who bought sections 189 and 190 for dairy farming.*

*Pataka Ipurangi, 2007N\_Pi138\_PEO\_1184.*

that all the sections had by then been sold, at an average beyond the owner's expectations, and that the buyers were all local residents. Sections 194 and 197 had by then been sold to F Harris and Jno Harris respectively, for £12 an acre. As early as 17 February, the *Standard* had reported that one purchaser had already sold his land at a profit of £700.

Some of the sections were broken up soon after the 31 January sale. For example, the prime section 203, just over the bridge on River Bank Road with views across the city and plains, was initially bought by Richard Cobb, of Raukawa, then divided into three. Twenty-eight acres of it were acquired by the Russell family (in Mrs Ethel Russell's name) for £785 10s 3d (about £28 per acre) and they soon built their homestead Whare Rata and established a



*Aerial photo of Massey Agricultural College, c1945-55. Prendergast once owned most of the land shown in this photo.*

*Pataka Ipurangi, 2008P\_Ma66\_TER\_1393*

striking garden. A second part of this section was bought by Richard Slingsby Abraham (of Abraham and Williams) who erected the magnificent 24-room Tiritea homestead, with its long elegant drive curving up from the road. Percy McHardy of Hawke's Bay acquired it in 1920 and it was subsequently bought by the Palmerston North Council in 1926 for £10,000, 21 acres being gifted to the new Massey Agricultural College which came into being in January 1927. The third part of section 203, high above the road, was bought by Charlie Loughnan, then sold to the Keiller brothers, who overcame difficulties of access and built the Atawhai homestead there.

Even the rather scanty details outlined above indicate that Prendergast's investment in Fitzherbert land would have yielded him a substantial capital gain. The Sandon and

Bunnythorpe sections would certainly have sold at a good profit, but the Fitzherbert estate could have been the star performer in his investment portfolio. While not every section would have sold in 1900 for as much as the £28 per acre paid by the Russells to Richard Cobb, every indication is that they would have sold for several times what Prendergast had originally paid for them. Proof of his astuteness as an investor in land is that when he died in 1921 his estate was valued at £132,605, the equivalent of over \$11 million today.

No doubt plenty of other land speculators made substantial financial gains from the rise in land values in late nineteenth-century Manawatū. Since the area was opened up relatively late there could have been several with the ready cash just waiting to invest. But

the location, quality and size of Prendergast's estate made it especially notable, and probably especially profitable.

He might have been surprised had he known the use to which his land would later be put. Apart from small areas in private hands and Bledisloe Park (part of section 203) which belongs to the Palmerston North City Council, Massey University now occupies all the sections between the Old West Road and Tennent Drive. Some belong to Massey, while others are owned by the Crown, Massey having the right to occupy. The campus itself has expanded from its original site over the remainder of section 203 and most of section 189; the other sections are now farms used for teaching and research. The magnificent area of bush on section 169, mentioned in the 1900 sale notice, has been preserved as a reserve and is known as Keebles Bush, after the family who farmed the surrounding area for many years.

The area is still officially known as the Town of Fitzherbert. Nor has Prendergast himself been totally forgotten, since the road giving access to the south-western corner of the campus from Tennent Drive is called Prendergast Road.

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Murray Adams, National Capital Manager – Finance and Asset Management, Massey University.

# CONNECTIONS: THE RUSSELLS OF WHARERATA



In the Russell Room of Massey University's Wharerata hangs a life-size portrait of Ethel Russell, who with her husband Arthur built the house in 1901.

Painted in 1914, it shows a beautiful and elegantly dressed woman in her prime (she was then aged fifty or fifty-one) gazing across the room with a distinctly patrician air. Small wonder that both staff and students of Massey have been known to refer to her, erroneously, as Lady Russell. Arthur and Ethel were in fact plain Mr and Mrs Russell. They were, however, closely connected, by birth and marriage, to some of the well-established pastoralist families of the lower North Island, all of whom made considerable contributions to the area's development. Arthur's parliamentarian brother and soldier nephew were both knighted, and Ethel's sister Githa married James Fergusson, brother of Sir Charles Fergusson, Governor-General of New Zealand 1924-1930. James became an admiral in the Royal Navy and was also knighted.

Ethel's family, the Williams family, was a clan so numerous and close that they were once referred to by Arthur's brother as 'Ngati Wiremu'. Her father was Thomas Coldham Williams (1825-1912), fourth son of missionary Archdeacon Henry Williams and his wife Marianne Coldham. Henry Williams, anxious to provide for his many offspring, had bought land in the Bay of Islands area, and Thomas (known as 'TC') farmed this land. He proved an astute businessman as well as a good farmer, making money initially from selling produce



*Ethel Russell, 1885, aged 23.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives*

to the military during the New Zealand Land Wars, and later from his landholdings. He married Anne Palmer Beetham, daughter of William Beetham, a Royal Academician

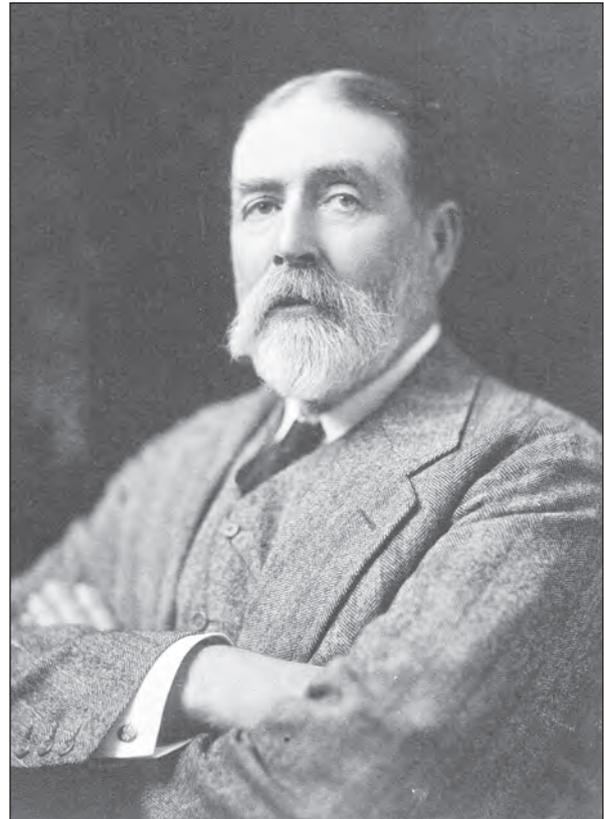
from London who had settled in Wellington in 1855, and in partnership with the Beetham family established and farmed Brancepeth estate near Masterton between the 1860s and 1903. Brancepeth Station was, at 56,000 acres, the largest single property in the Wairarapa. TC also acquired town sections in Pahiatua, Eketahuna and Masterton.

When the Brancepeth estate was split up between 1903 and 1905 Ethel received the Rawhiti Block, making her a substantial landowner in her own right. Her brother Guy leased this block from her, and farmed it together with his own block and one belonging to another sister. At some stage Rawhiti Farms became a limited company, of which Ethel was still a shareholder at the time of her death.

Ethel's uncle George Beetham (1840-1915) entered politics and served as Member of the House of Representatives for several Wairarapa electorates between 1877 and 1890. He was also a noted alpinist, the first to reach the top of Mount Ruapehu, a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, and one of the founders of the Masterton hospital.

Her uncle Samuel Williams (1822-1907) was ordained deacon. During time in Otaki he organised a system of Māori schools, and supervised the building of Rangiātea church, begun by Hadfield. He later went to Hawke's Bay, where he was closely involved with the establishment of Te Aute and Hukarere schools, and acquired land for his own use. In 1888 he was appointed Archdeacon of Hawke's Bay, and in 1889 Canon of Waiapu.

James Nelson Williams (1837-1915), a son of William Williams, Henry's brother, was both Ethel's second cousin and her uncle, since in 1868 he married her mother's sister Mary Beetham. Initially farming with Samuel Williams, he soon acquired land of his own, first at Kereru then at Frimley, where he pioneered techniques of draining and clearing swampy flax-covered land. Like Ethel's father, TC Williams, James was an entrepreneur, involved in the establishment of commercial fruit-growing and an early canning factory



*Arthur Russell.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives*

in the Hawke's Bay. He also served on many local bodies and made a great contribution to the development of the Frimley district.

The Russells were a family with a strong tradition of military and public service. One researcher has described them as bringing 'a "gentlemanlike" tone to Hawke's Bay'. Arthur's grandfather and father, both named Andrew Hamilton Russell, served in the British army; his father (1812-1900) came to Wellington in the 1840s, and was appointed superintendent of military roads in 1846, constructing several important roads in the Wellington region. While he did not come from a wealthy family he had the good luck, or good sense, to marry an heiress, which meant he was able to take the first step towards financial security by leasing the Mangakuri station in Hawke's Bay when he retired in 1859. The wool cheques enabled him to freehold Mangakuri later. He served as Minister of Native Affairs and Defence in 1865-6.

Arthur's elder brothers Andrew Hamilton Russell (b.1873) and William Russell Russell (1838-1913) had military careers like their father. Both left the army to take up farming in Hawke's Bay. William, and Andrew Hamilton's son Andrew Hamilton, known, helpfully, as Guy, (1868-1960) eventually became the titled members of the family, both gaining knighthoods.

William and Andrew Hamilton initially farmed together at Tunanui, but William later settled on land at Flaxmere. Active in local politics, he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1875, and held several ministerial posts before his final defeat in 1905. His long service was recognised in 1902 by being made a Knight Bachelor. An unsigned typescript in the Massey University Archives, of which he is most probably the author, tells of a trip made in 1884 along the proposed route of the Main Trunk Line; the route was approved by the North Island Main Trunk Railway Committee in October 1884, so the trip must have been made very late that year. The author and Sir Walter Buchanan were

in the House when this decision was made, and wished to see the route for themselves. They were accompanied by a Mr Beetham (presumably the George Beetham mentioned above) and two others. Travelling on horseback, they went north from Hunterville, following the proposed railway route as far as the present National Park, where they turned east past Lake Rotoaira to reach the Turangi area. The return trip took them down the present Desert Road to Waiouru, with a side trip to Erewhon station owned by the Birch brothers, William John and Azim, then back down to Marton. This was not an easy trip, suggesting an adventurous spirit as well as physical fitness.

Arthur's nephew Andrew Hamilton (Guy) continued the family's military tradition, serving with the British army in India and Burma before resigning to return to New Zealand to farm with his uncle William at Tunanui and Twyford, taking ownership of both properties in 1909. In 1900 he formed the Hawke's Bay Mounted Rifle Volunteers, and in 1914 accepted command of the New



*Wharerata before the 1930 alterations.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives*

Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade that fought at Gallipoli. He served with distinction there, and later as a general in France, being awarded a KCMG, and a KCB.

So how did Arthur and Ethel, with strong connections in both Hawke's Bay and the Wairarapa, come to build in Palmerston North? Arthur had a quarter share in Mangakuri so when it was sold in 1876 for £50,000 he was financially secure, and with his younger brother Herbert bought land at Te Matai near Palmerston North.<sup>1</sup> He sold this land in 1899 or 1900, and in 1901 built Wharerata on land formerly part of the Prendergast Estate. This twenty-eight acres was bought for £785 6s 3d in Ethel's name.

The twenty-eight-room Wharerata was designed by Charles Tilleard Natusch, an eminent Napier-based architect whose firm designed many large houses for rural landholders, such as Gwavas at Tikokino, and Bushy Park at Kai Iwi. It was in the mock-tudor style popular at the turn of the century, and built of solid native timbers. The 1930 extension was designed by Heathcote Helmore, another architect experienced in designing for the rural gentry. The magnificent grounds were planned largely by Ethel herself with her gardener John Cameron, recreating the semi-formal structures of an English manor house garden.

In common with other settlers of the period the Russell and Williams families tended to cling to British traditions, including sending the sons 'home' for a public school education. Arthur and William Russell were educated in England before coming to New Zealand, but Arthur's nephew was sent back to Britain to be educated. Ethel's father and uncle Samuel were educated in New Zealand, but her cousin James was sent to school in Britain, suggesting a rise in status for the family as well as the availability of more regular transport. Arthur and Ethel brought an English nurse out to look after their children; later their son Guy

<sup>1</sup> At some stage he also bought a property near Mangaweka, called Te Kapua, ownership of this passing to Ethel on his death.

was sent to Wellington College in England for his education, then, following the family military tradition, to Sandhurst. The whole family packed up in 1910-11 and went with him, taking a house in Eaton Square, one of London's better addresses. The two girls were presented at Court, like English debutantes, then travelled to Europe to be 'finished' and learn languages. When war intervened the family stayed on until early 1918, returning to New Zealand after young Guy's untimely death from pneumonia. Following Arthur's death in 1924 Ethel had another trip 'home', this time acquiring a large collection of antiques that made necessary the 1930 extension of the house.



*Ethel Russell, passport photograph, 1916.*  
*Photograph: Massey University Archives*

Their social patterns were also typical of their times. It is clear from Russell family correspondence, and from the Main Trunk Route document described above, that the Williams, Beetham, Russell and Caccia Birch families socialised extensively together. These



*Mrs Russell 'oversees' the signing of the agreement formalising the merger between Massey University and Palmerston North College of Education in the Russell Room, Wharerata, 16 June 1995,*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives*

links were reinforced by business dealings and intermarriage. The Russell property at Mangakuri was sold in 1876 to James Nelson Williams, ownership later passing to Samuel Williams. James Williams, like Ethel's father TC, married a Beetham. Arthur and Ethel met when she visited James and his wife at Frimley. Their 1885 engagement was met with great approval by Arthur's brother William, who described Ethel as '...an exceedingly nice girl ... strong and well grown and nice-looking and graceful'. Andrew Hamilton Russell (Guy) married Gertrude Mary Beetham Williams in 1896. Weddings in these families must have been magnificent family gatherings.

Following their move to Palmerston North Arthur and Ethel led a busy social life, mixing especially with close neighbours the Monros

of Craiglockhart, the Abrahams of Tiritea and the Strangs of Woodhey (later Caccia Birch House). Dorothea Joblin, in her book *Behold the Plains* describes in detail the balls and parties at Wharerata that Ethel clearly enjoyed organising, but gives the impression that she regarded her family as just a cut above the others in the neighbourhood. Joblin refers to her stately appearance, regal presence and class-consciousness, and reports that she was regarded as 'a lady through and through'. Arthur was seen as both a gentle man and a gentleman, like his brother William who was known both in the House and in his electorate for his courtesy and gentlemanly demeanour.

There is no doubt that Ethel and Arthur were one of the wealthier couples in Palmerston North, and they must have handled their wealth well. Despite a reasonably lavish lifestyle Ethel's estate amounted to some £70,000 when she died in 1949. It would be wrong, however, to consider them or their relatives 'idle rich'. Arthur recounted in detail the hard work and difficult living conditions involved in breaking in Mangakuri, and he was in his mid fifties when he finally retired from farming. His brother William's letters to his father are full of details about the work on his farm, suggesting a very hands-on landowner. The activities and achievements of other members of the Russell, Beetham and Williams families outlined above indicate that they all worked hard for their money and status, and had strong service ethics. Ethel, who was a fine needlewoman, did not restrict her sewing to fancy embroidery, but made exquisite dresses for her daughters, and even hats for all the stallholders at a church fete held in the gardens of Wharerata. She supervised her household staff with a firm hand, and appears still, through that magnificent portrait, to oversee all the ceremonies that take place in the Russell Room. The artist who painted it knew what he was doing when he gave her that patrician, even aristocratic, air.

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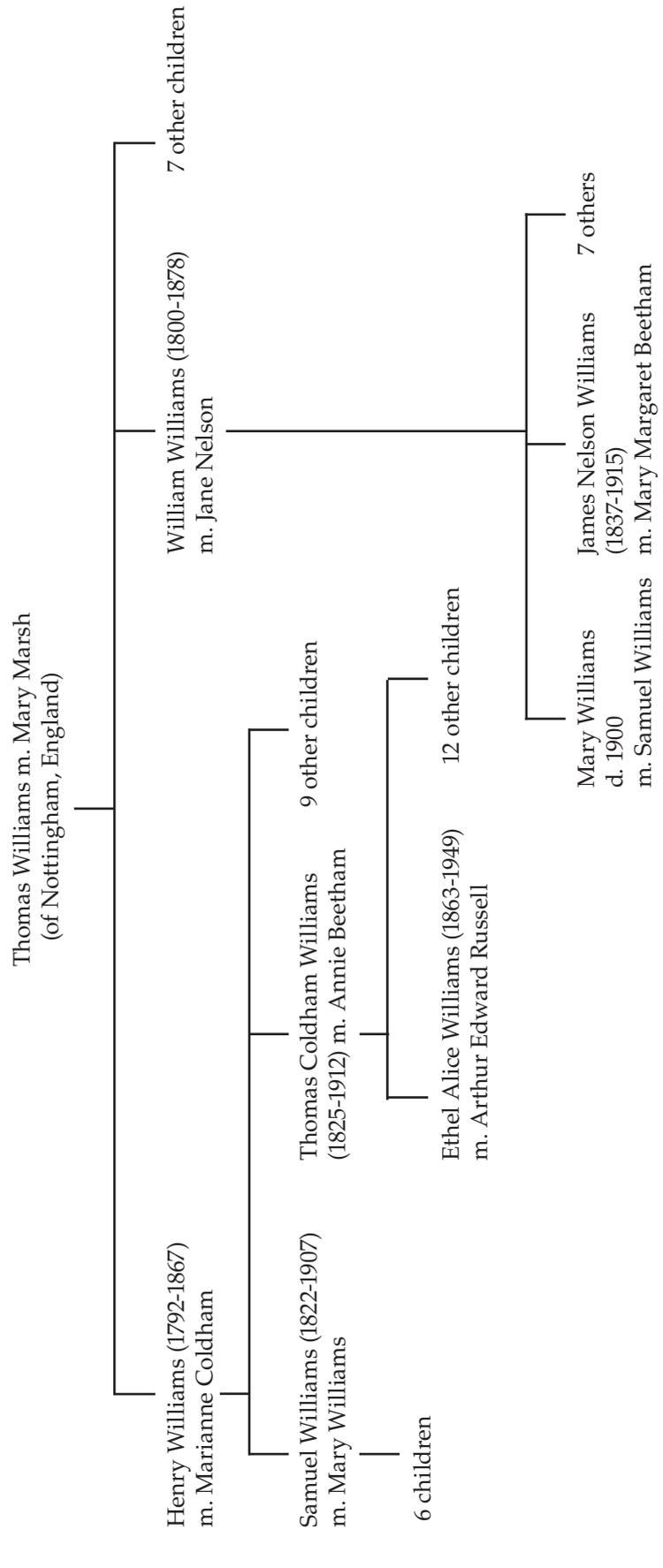
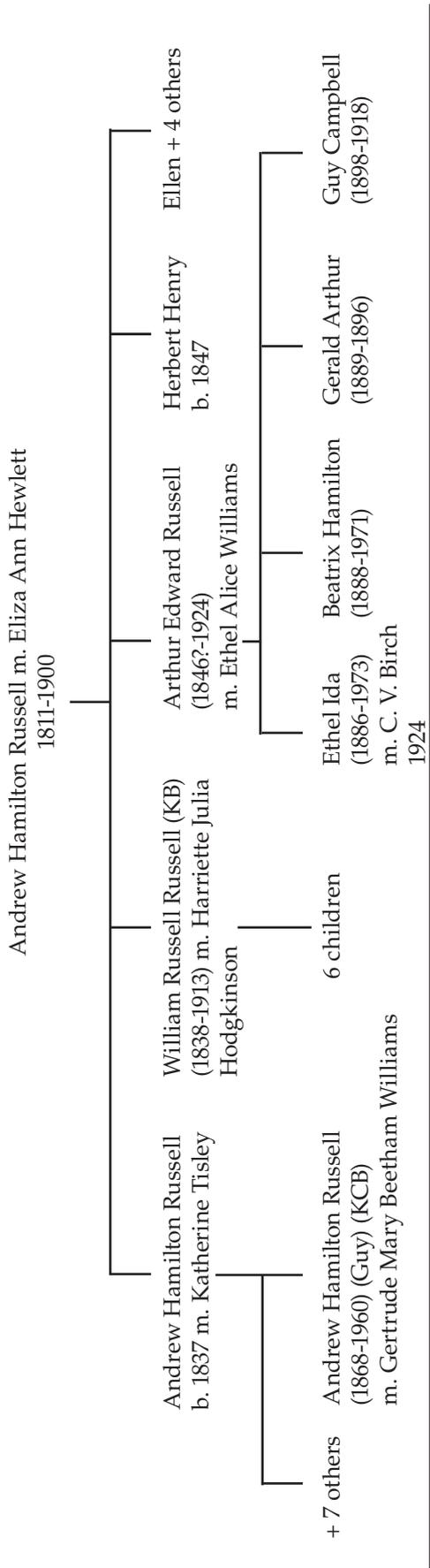
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# FAMILY TREES OF THE RUSSELL & WILLIAMS FAMILIES



# ROY ALSTAN LIPPINCOTT AND HIS MASSEY AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE BUILDINGS

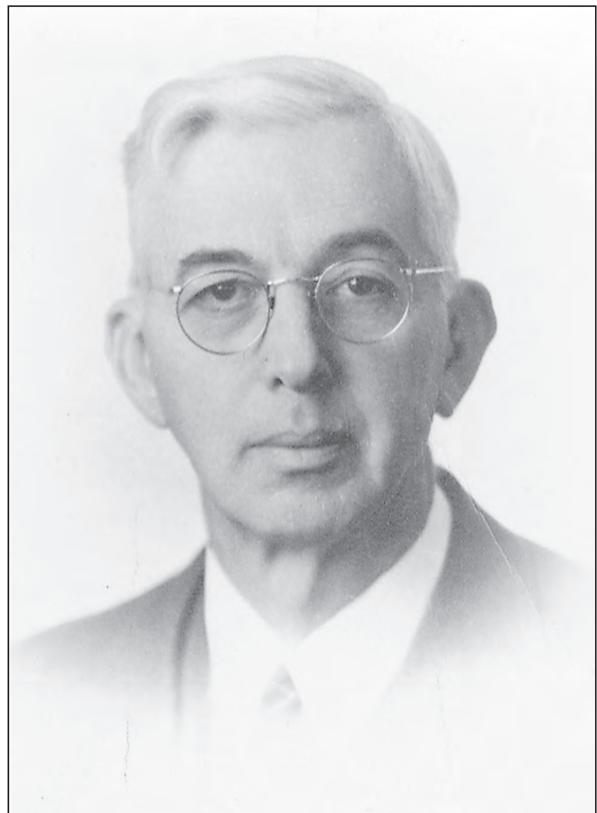


The three original buildings of Massey Agricultural College (now Massey University) are still in daily use. They are highly distinctive, two of them in a style best described as ‘Spanish Mission’, and the other as ‘American Prairie School’.

They are not unique in New Zealand, the earlier Auckland Grammar School and Dilworth house in Auckland, and the work of Louis Hay in Hawke’s Bay, being in similar style. The Massey buildings are in this style because they were designed by an American architect who learned his craft from followers of the great Chicago School architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Roy Alstan Lippincott was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1885, and after graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell University in 1909 joined the Chicago team of Herman Von Holst, Marion Mahoney and Walter Burley Griffin. They were busy on projects that Frank Lloyd Wright had handed over while he travelled in Europe, and Lippincott worked particularly closely with Marion Mahoney on a number of house designs. In 1911 she married Burley Griffin.

While they were still on their honeymoon they heard about the competition to design a new Australian capital city, and decided



*Roy Alstan Lippincott.*

*Photograph: Architecture Library, University of Auckland.*

to enter. Late that year they completed the drawings, which were sent off just in time to meet the deadline, and in May 1912 it was announced that they had won the competition. Lippincott and Griffin's sister Genevieve were part of the draughting team, and in 1913 Lippincott became chief draughtsman for the firm. In 1914 he was made a junior partner and married Genevieve. The Lippincotts and the Griffins then departed for Australia, where from 1916 Lippincott managed the firm's Melbourne office, and was closely involved in the planning of Canberra. His Australian designs, including those for his own house, are very similar to those of Griffin.

In 1920 he and Australian Edward Billson, from Griffin's office, won the competition for the design of Auckland University College's buildings, and he moved to New Zealand in 1921 to oversee their construction. The most distinctive of these, the Arts Building, has been described as 'abstracted Gothic' in style, with a tower influenced by the design of Wren's Tom Tower of Christ Church, Oxford. It was, however, modern in being constructed of reinforced concrete, and firmly anchored in New Zealand by the use of decorative moulded concrete motifs of local flora and fauna such as kea, flax and mamaku (black tree fern). This type of ornamentation came to be typical of nearly all Lippincott's New Zealand buildings, and is present on all his Massey buildings.

Following the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, Lippincott believed in functionality, simplicity, respect for materials, and that a building's decoration should be intrinsic to the whole design. He also believed in the stylistic integration of both architecture and furniture, and designed all the furniture and fittings himself. He considered the Arts Building to be his most important work. Another interesting building for Auckland University College was the Biology Building (1936-39), which included seventy sculptured snails as stair brackets, and simple geometric ornamentation typical of his later 1930s style.

New Zealand architects, who favoured British styles, were not impressed that the

Auckland University College contract had been awarded to an American architect. The *New Zealand Herald* of 21 June 1921 described the Arts Building as 'an architectural monstrosity', and the Government Architect, J T Mair, reportedly considered it 'not in harmony with our national character'. The controversy did not, however, damage Lippincott's career. In 1925 he set up his own practice in Auckland, describing himself on his letterhead as 'Architect - Town Planner'. He remained there until 1939, and designed several notable buildings including Smith and Caughey's Department Store (1927-29), the Berlei factory (1930-31), various private houses such as the Scott House in Orakei (1935), and St Peter's Preparatory School, Cambridge (1936-37). His entry in the Sydney Law Courts competition in 1938 was placed second.

His influence on local architecture was considerable since he was closely involved with the New Zealand Institute of Architects and was instrumental in establishing university training for architects in this country. Following the 1931 Napier earthquake, he was part of the committee that inspected the damaged buildings and gave advice on designing earthquake resistant buildings. His publications in the Institute's journal were influential in helping New Zealand architects move from conservative to modern styles, and he was a strong advocate of town planning. His interests ranged across all the arts, including drama and music, and he played an active role in Auckland's cultural life. In 1931 he was introduced to Steiner's anthroposophy, a philosophy whose unified approach to the arts suited his thinking.

The Palmerston North connection came about because Sir George Fowlds, Chairman of Auckland University College Council from 1920-33, was an admirer of Lippincott's Auckland work. When Massey Agricultural College was established in Palmerston North Fowlds became Chairman of its Council by a 1926 statute, so understandably Lippincott was favoured for the design of its buildings. At some stage in 1926, in the expectation that he would be involved in the design of the new College, Lippincott spent three months

studying the layouts and buildings of similar colleges in the United States and Canada.

The first site for the College was the Batchelar farm, on the flat land between Riverbank Road (now Tennent Drive) and the Manawatū river. The homestead was hastily altered in 1927 to provide teaching space for the first student intake in 1928, and the land developed as the college farm. Negotiations were underway, however, for the acquisition of the McHardy property on the hill south of Riverbank Road. At the first Council meeting in February 1927 Lippincott was asked to do layout plans for this site; he was clearly not one to waste time, since three small, delicately drawn, sample plans were ready for the Council meeting on 22 March. They show teaching buildings and quadrangles in traditional style on the upper site, with a drive sweeping down to a dairy factory on the other side of the road. One of these plans also shows the College expanding onto the Russell property next door, something that was not to happen until the 1950s.

Three buildings were to be built immediately: a Dairy Factory, a Refectory, and a building for teaching and research referred to then as the Science Building,

and now known as the Main Building. In mid-1927 the Department of Agriculture was keen to have all the College's building plans and works under the control of the Public Works Department, and there was at one stage a proposal that a competition be held for the design of these buildings. The Council, however, resolved at their 17 August meeting to insist on complete freedom from the Department of Agriculture, and asked that the College be placed under the Department of Education. Sir George Fowlds recommended in October that Lippincott be appointed as architect for all three buildings, and on 22 October Cabinet agreed to this. The three buildings were to be quite different in function and detail, but being all designed by the same architect have a pleasing harmony of style. All were constructed of reinforced concrete, and tiled with red Marseilles tiles.

Priority was given to building the Dairy Factory, because one of the justifications for establishing the College had been to carry out research to assist the dairy industry, which was having problems with such matters as unreliable starters for cheeses. For this reason it was to be partly funded by the Dairy Board, and jointly operated with the Dairy Research Institute. It was also expected that



*Dairy Factory, c 1930.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*

the operation of the Factory would earn some money for the College.

The site, north of the main road and directly opposite the main drive to the McHardy property, was confirmed in September, and a Dairy Factory Manager, G M Valentine, appointed in October. Lippincott was urged to proceed with plans as fast as possible, and these were accepted at the Council meeting of 13 December. Tenders were called, closing in late January 1928, with an estimated completion time of 22 weeks. A very functional single storey building, it was designed in Frank Lloyd Wright's 'American Prairie School' style, with strong horizontal lines, wide eaves, brick cladding inside and a hipped roof. A ventilator provided a strong vertical element, and as in his Auckland University College buildings, Lippincott used Māori motifs for decoration on either side of the windows.

There was some controversy about foreign timbers being used for the building, and it was agreed that New Zealand timbers should be used, provided seasoned timber of the necessary quality could be obtained immediately. By 20 March 1928 the firm of Trevor Brothers had started construction, and tenders had been called for the equipment and for the electrical wiring of the Factory. The latter contract went to E P Wix for the sum of £310. Construction took longer than the estimated 22 weeks, and the building was not finally completed and occupied until January 1929.

Research work, on openness in cheese, started immediately, under the auspices of the Dairy Research Institute. The *Manawatu Standard* of 12 February 1929 described the Factory as follows:

It is a commodious edifice, designed mainly for experimental work, and provides ample accommodation for the manufacture of butter, cheeses of various kinds, and casein. It is equipped with the most up-to-date machinery, and forms one of the most modern experimental dairy factories in the British Empire.

For part of the year the College used the building and its equipment for teaching students enrolled in the Diploma of Dairy Manufactures, and the Dairy Research Institute used it for the remainder. By 1968 it had outlived its original function, and in the 1970s it was occupied by New Zealand Pharmaceuticals. Then it housed various research projects before being sold to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in 1987, ownership passing to AgResearch in 1992. In 2005 it was refurbished inside for the Bio Commerce Centre and is used as a biotechnology business incubator. Many interior surfaces have been retained, and the exterior is still virtually as Lippincott designed it.

Massey Agricultural College admitted its first students on 2 March 1928, with a total roll of 85. Teaching accommodation at the Batchelar homestead was limited, and there was nowhere for the social and dining functions also considered important for an academic institution, so a refectory building was seen as the next priority. Lippincott drew up plans in 1928 for a building on the McHardy property gifted to the government for the College. It included a hall, servery, kitchen, staff dining room, games room, stores, common room and staff quarters. These plans were submitted to the Education Department at the end of that year. The estimated cost was £9,500.

By the time Cabinet gave approval for the Refectory in March 1929, enrolments were rising, and the College successfully argued that tenders should be called for the Science Building as well. Fletcher Construction's joint tender for the two buildings, totaling £96,500, was accepted in October 1929, though Lippincott had to reduce this price by £4,085 before building could start.

The Refectory was designed to be seen across the Oval, a wide expanse of lawn surrounded by trees. Of reinforced concrete with brick and terracotta panels, it is in 'Spanish Mission' style with tiled roof and semi-circular headed windows. While it is basically simple, Lippincott decorated it with



*Refectory front entrance.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*

his trademark plaster foliage and stylised Māori motifs. It is a two-storey structure, with the imposing central dining hall originally occupying both storeys. Lippincott designed the tables and benches for the building, detailed drawings for some of which survive, as do some actual benches. It is believed that the furniture was made by Pegden Furniture in Palmerston North, and, as can be seen from the photograph, the dining room looked splendid in the 1930s.

While the Science Building was under construction in 1930 the Refectory was used for temporary lecture space, and in the absence of suitable dormitories its common room was converted into study bedrooms. In the early years of the Second World War the New Zealand Army took over part of the College campus for a staff college, and ran the Refectory, providing meals for students and staff. By the time the building was handed back to the College in 1944 cooking facilities had been improved, and a small two-storey annex had been built. Further alterations have included the insertion of a new floor into the dining hall in 1963-64, substantially altering its elegant proportions. When the Student Centre was built in 1968 it took over many of the functions of the Refectory, usage of which changed to administration and teaching. The upper floor of the dining space operated during the 1970s as a drama theatre known as The Grid.

Lippincott's most significant contribution to Massey Agricultural College is his design of the Science Building, a central feature of his overall plan. When the contract was let in August 1929, national newspapers carried reports describing its facilities and emphasising the urgent need for it. The *Dominion* of 10 September 1929 reported that its construction would provide employment for a hundred men, and many newspapers reported the laying of the foundation stone on 4 December 1929.

The choice of site for this building was crucial. It was originally to go behind the McHardy homestead, a substantial 24-room building at the top of a cliff, approached by an imposing curved drive, and with a magnificent view across Palmerston North and the Manawatū plains to the north. In a report to the College Council of March 1928 Lippincott made the radical suggestion that the homestead be moved back, and that the Science Building be erected in its place. This, he said, would give 'a personality and meaning' to the site and the College, and make it clear that the College was not just 'a makeshift affair in somebody's backyard'. Generations



*The Refectory dining room.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*



*Tiritea, the McHardy homestead, divided into two and about to be moved, 1928.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*

of Massey staff and students have been grateful for his vision, and for the fact that the College Council and administrators shared it. The homestead was duly divided into two and moved back on rollers, and Lippincott remodelled one part as the Principal's (later Vice-Chancellor's) residence, keeping its original name of Tiritea. The second part has served over the years as teaching and accommodation space, the Registry, and as administrative offices.

Lippincott's plans for the Science Building are dated 10 June 1929, and the granite foundation stone of the Science Building was laid with due ceremony by the Governor-General Sir Charles Fergusson on 4 December 1929. Underneath was deposited a sealed copper capsule containing various records such as the Massey College *Calendar* and copies of the local daily newspaper.

The building was designed as a hollow square on three levels plus a basement, with staff offices, lecture rooms, twelve laboratories and a library with the capacity for 23,000 volumes opening off the corridors. It was estimated that one fifth of its accommodation would be used for research purposes. Careful attention was paid to the provision of

laboratory fittings, and adequate ventilation. Since it was not possible to place all related rooms on the same floor, the architect argued for a staircase at each corner to provide quick and easy access between floors without the need to walk long distances along corridors. A major feature of the building was a central Assembly Hall, 65 feet by 42 feet, occupying two floors with a balcony on its upper level, and a floor of heart matai.

Like the Refectory, this building was in 'Spanish Mission' style, with rounded window heads; the exterior was clad in a roughcast mixture made from various New Zealand marbles, and the step to the entrance hall was made of solid marble blocks. Even though it was designed before the strict seismic codes introduced after the Napier earthquake, the architect used advanced earthquake-proofing techniques. It had structural steel roof trusses, and the floors and staircases were of reinforced concrete.

An imposing building with a magnificent outlook, appropriate for a modern agricultural college that was generally expected to develop one day into a university, one of its more intimate delights is the imaginative quality of the detailed decoration. Lippincott seems



*Main Building, early 40s.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*

to have taken great pleasure in designing the mouldings, many of them based on natural forms. In the Assembly Hall kiwis, fantails, kowhai and bulrushes adorn the walls and beams, while birds variously described as owls or eagles appear in the entrance lobbies. Stylised Māori designs decorate the exterior and other simplified geometric features common in Lippincott's later buildings echo the art deco style of the 1930s. The heavy wooden inner doors, fitted with bevelled glass, were made in Auckland, and the wrought iron outer doors include the initials 'MC' for Massey College. As with his other buildings, Lippincott designed all the furniture and fittings to harmonise with the building.

Lippincott was again criticised by the Dominion Federated Sawmillers' Association for using imported timber in this building. He defended his plans, pointing out that he had recommended native timbers in almost all cases, the only exceptions being Douglas fir which was less likely to deform where the wood was to be covered with plaster. The Conservator of Forests inspected the building, and was able to confirm that only eleven per cent of the timber used was Douglas fir. The

Sawmillers' Association was also very critical of the fact that the contract had been given to a 'foreign' architect.

On 30 April 1931 the building was opened by the Governor-General Lord Bledisloe, an occasion marked by the students with some lively pranks. The student magazine, *Bleat*, in its 1933 issue, reported that:

... Lord Bledisloe had conferred upon him the Most Distinguished Order of the Bleat. A student of piggish associations produced a Royal Show Champion Yorkshire Boar ribbon to adorn the person of Sir George Fowlds. An extra over-size key was given the Governor-General and after much manipulation he was able to fit it into the lock of appropriate proportions and declare the building open to the students.

At first there were problems with leaking guttering, and the fixing of this was the subject of much correspondence between the College Principal, Professor Peren, and Lippincott up to December 1935. The architect assumed that the specifications were not fully followed by the contractors.

After the Second World War returned servicemen swelled the student roll. To increase accommodation the top floor was enlarged, and in 1962 the assembly hall was converted to a lecture hall with the addition of a sloping floor and rows of seating. The building's connection with science and agriculture ended in 1979-80 when substantial alterations were made to accommodate the Humanities Faculty (now part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences). The lecture hall was transformed into a dual-purpose lecture room and theatre, making use of its excellent acoustics, and many plays and concerts have been performed there. Despite these alterations the most important original design features of the building have been retained, including the doors, light fittings and stair handrails, as well as some decorative tiling in the toilets. Past and present Massey students still regard it as an icon of the institution.

Lippincott's original campus plans included dormitories, and undated plans for a building similar in style to the three buildings described above are still held in the University Archives. Intended to go next to the Refectory, and house forty-eight students, this would have added considerably to both the appearance of the College and the comfort of the students, but was never built, presumably because of the financial constraints of the Depression. Instead, various makeshift buildings were moved onto the campus in the 1930s and 1940s for use as hostels, several of which survived until the 1990s. The architect's involvement with the College extended to working on the college seal, designing cottages for farm workers, and advising on even such mundane matters as the housing of student vehicles. He made many visits to the campus.

Lippincott's buildings have been recognised by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, the Refectory as a Historic Place Category II and the other two as Historic Places Category I. Massey University also paid the architect a compliment in the 1980s by ensuring that the Business Studies



*Mouldings in the Main Building:*

*Top: Kiwis and bulrushes in the Assembly Hall, now the Auditorium.*

*Centre: Fantails in the Assembly Hall*

*Bottom: Owl in the entrance foyer.*

*Photograph: Massey University Archives.*

buildings, sited between the Main Building and the Refectory, were designed in a sympathetic style, with red-tiled roofs. When a campus was established in Albany, on Auckland's North Shore, in the 1990s, its buildings also deliberately echoed Lippincott's designs.

Lippincott suffered in the Depression years when commissions reduced in number, and his wife's catering business became a useful source of income. He became a New Zealand citizen in 1936, and came to think of himself as a New Zealand architect, but was

not to end his life here. In 1939 he travelled to the USA with his family, and when war broke out remained there, closing his Auckland office in 1940, and practising in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara until his death in 1969. He had left his mark, however, on New Zealand architecture of the twentieth century, and in particular on the Massey campus.

*Note. The Main Building (now known as the Sir Geoffrey Penen Building) and Refectory are now closed for earthquake strengthening and restoration, and expected to reopen in 2015/16.*

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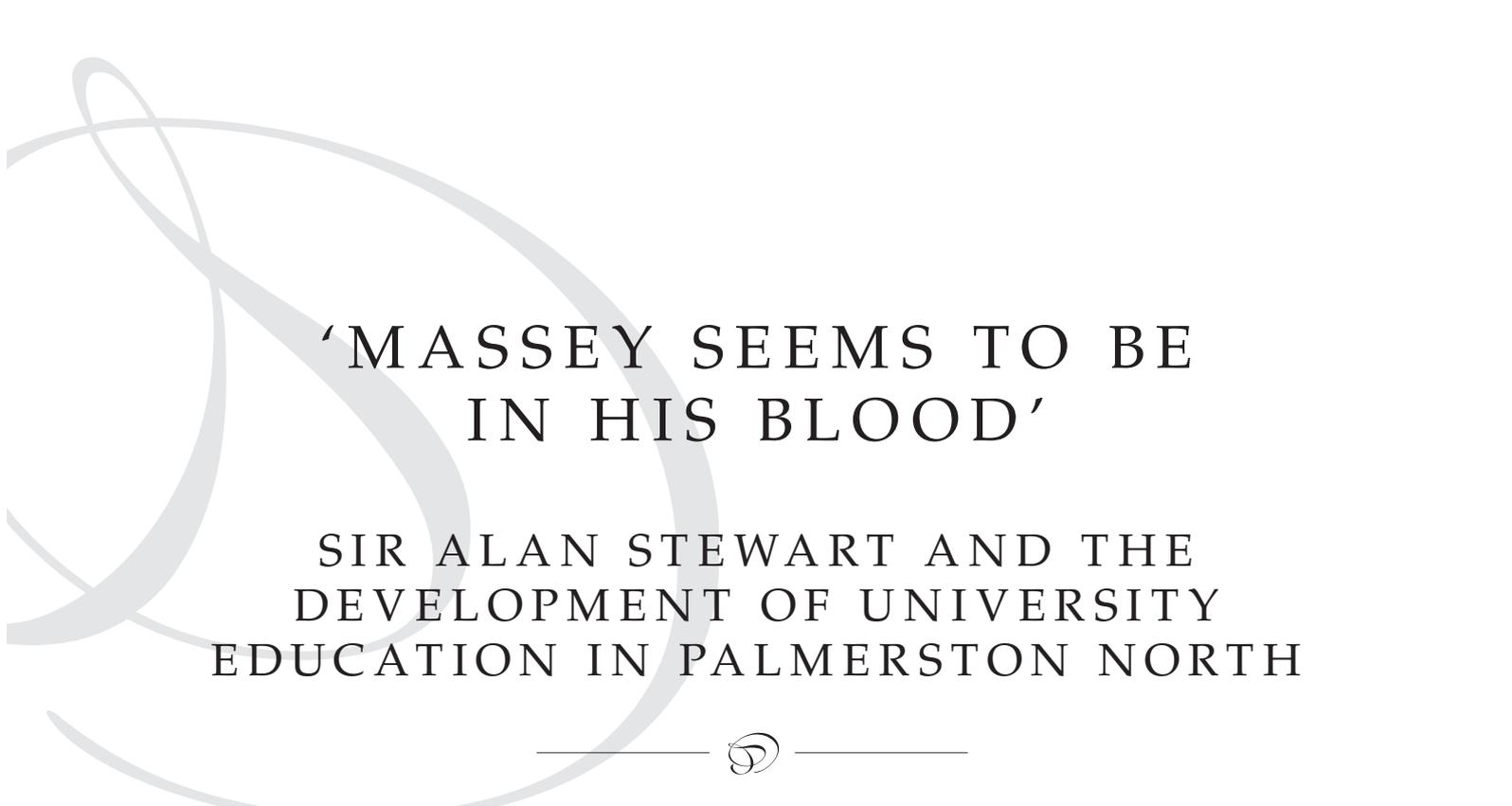
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# ‘MASSEY SEEMS TO BE IN HIS BLOOD’

## SIR ALAN STEWART AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN PALMERSTON NORTH



When Alan Stewart took up the position of Principal of Massey Agricultural College in January 1959 it was a single-faculty institution. He headed 63 academic staff organised in 12 departments, teaching some 500 students enrolled in 15 degrees, diplomas and certificates. At the time of his retirement in January 1983 it was a full university with 32 departments, two sub-departments and ten research centres, making up eight faculties.

Academic staff by then numbered over 500, supported by a similar number of general staff, and some 15,000 students were enrolled in 81 degrees, diplomas and certificates, over half of those students studying extramurally. In 1959 the annual government grant was the equivalent of \$310,000, but by 1982 it had grown to \$23 million.

Alan Stewart was born in Auckland in 1917 into a family with farming connections. He studied agriculture in the sixth form at Mt Albert Grammar School, then gained an agricultural bursary of £60 p.a. to study at Massey Agricultural College, in Palmerston North. This College had opened its doors in 1928, and had 20 degree students when the young Alan Stewart arrived in 1937,

having done his science intermediate year at Auckland University College.

The Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree in which he first enrolled was designed for those seeking a career in advisory, research or teaching roles. The country was then still emerging from the depression, and his main ambition was simply to get a job. At Massey he got a good basic grounding in the sciences underlying agriculture, with some more specialised training in the fourth year. He then continued his studies, completing a Masterate in Agricultural Science with first-class honours in 1940, and being awarded a coveted Rhodes Scholarship (the second for Massey Agricultural College) the same year.



*Alan Stewart, Rhodes Scholar, 1941.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

He was, however, about to gain some even more valuable training, since he was sent to the United Kingdom at Christmas 1940 not as a Rhodes Scholar but as a New Zealand naval volunteer, on loan to the British Navy. A spell on a destroyer doing convoy duty in the North Sea was followed by officer training time on minesweepers in the Scapa Flow area, and then command of a minesweeper in the Bay of Bengal. Apart from the cold in the seas around Britain this was a life he loved, and the administrative skills he learned in the navy stood him in good stead in the challenges to come.

Drafted out of the navy in late 1944, he taught at Massey Agricultural College until 1946, when he took up the delayed Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford, where he gained a doctorate with a thesis on dairy cattle improvement. He then returned to a position as Senior Lecturer in dairy husbandry at Massey, only to be recruited in 1954 as Chief

Consulting Officer for the Milk Marketing Board of England and Wales at Thames Ditton. His task there was to manage an improvement in the productivity of dairy herds by selecting the best bulls for artificial insemination programmes.

Thus far his career had included agricultural research and teaching, naval command, management and administration, and doubtless he would have progressed further up the management ladder in the UK. However, when he heard in 1956 that Professor Geoffrey Peren, the founding Principal of Massey Agricultural College, was due to retire at the end of 1958, he successfully applied for the vacancy and took up the position in January 1959. He admitted that part of the attraction of the position was the chance to get away from English winters. He found the College little changed in his absence, and expected that his role would be to 'keep things ticking over', while facilitating further research and teaching in agricultural science. Events were to prove him wrong.

He was quite possibly aware that as early as 1928, at the College's opening, Palmerston North's Mayor had expressed the hopes of many when he made the rather extravagant prophecy that eventually 'a majestic pile of university buildings' would rise on the site, and that Massey's reputation would make Palmerston North 'the Cambridge of New Zealand'.

The College Council at various times debated the issue of widening its offerings beyond agriculture, but discussions had never come to anything. Professor Valentine Chapman, Auckland University College's nominee on the Council, made the suggestion in 1952 that a science faculty be moved from either Auckland or Victoria University College, to give the Agricultural College strengths in science as well as agriculture, and later perhaps also in veterinary science. Professor William Riddet, Vice-Principal of Massey, also raised the matter in a letter to Professor Peren, which was subsequently presented to the Massey College Council. He referred to the suggestions that a veterinary

college should be established, and that both a teachers' training college and an offshoot of Victoria University College might be set up in Palmerston North. Professor Riddet urged the Massey College Council to grasp at the opportunities that presented themselves, to offer honours degrees in pure science and the arts, to work closely with the proposed teachers' college, and become a really active, multi-faculty university. The residential character of Massey would, he suggested, make it an institution in which collegial interchange of ideas at all levels could become a reality. Council referred the suggestion to its Research and Education Committee, but despite much discussion no conclusions were reached, and no obvious progress was made at that stage.

When change did occur, between 1959 and 1963, it was radical and fast, and picked up on those earlier suggestions. Alan Stewart quickly found himself overseeing the establishment of courses in veterinary, pure and social sciences, technology, humanities, and later also business studies. In addition, Massey assumed national responsibility for teaching in the extramural mode, and his own status changed from that of Principal of an agricultural college to that of Vice-Chancellor of a large university. To use a rugby metaphor (he was always a keen rugby man), far from just keeping things ticking over, he was passed a ball, ran with it and scored a try.

The development into a full university was triggered by three key events.

The first had already happened before Dr Stewart's arrival as Principal. Degree students at Massey had been obliged to undertake their first year of study in the basic sciences ('science intermediate') at another university college, but from 1958 they could study botany, zoology, chemistry and physics at Massey. This gave the College a pool of expertise and experience in the sciences which stood it in good stead in bringing about the second key event, the establishment of veterinary science courses at Massey.

As early as 1944 Massey Agricultural College had published a bulletin about the

importance of New Zealand having a school of veterinary science, suggesting that the College was the most appropriate location for one, due to both its existing facilities and the subjects taught there. These sentiments were echoed in the 1950s in various agricultural journals, and action was urged in 1952 by the then Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Keith Holyoake. By then the matter was becoming urgent, since the arrangement for training New Zealand's veterinarians in Australia was due to run out in 1962.

In 1959 the Senate of the University of New Zealand examined the matter, and Massey Agricultural College's submission (probably written by the Principal, in conjunction with Chairman of the Council Walter Dyer) restated in detail the advantages of establishing the school of veterinary science at Massey. These included the facts that science subjects common to both agriculture and veterinary science, particularly animal science, were already taught there, with good physical amenities, including a veterinary clinic, and plenty of land for expansion. In addition, Palmerston North was surrounded by a dense and varied farm animal population, and several freezing works, providing an ample research resource.

The citizens of Palmerston North and district, who had been instrumental in ensuring that the North Island's agricultural college was located in Palmerston North in 1927, threw their weight behind the College's submission, and it succeeded. In 1960 the Senate agreed that placing the school of veterinary science within an agricultural college made more sense than linking it with Otago's medical school, and that Massey's involvement with animal science made it a better candidate than Lincoln. Cabinet confirmed this in 1961. The decision was greeted with satisfaction by Massey, as well as by an editorial in the *Manawatu Times* on 8 September, and preparations started immediately. Professor Ira Cunningham was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences in 1962 and was soon visiting schools of veterinary science overseas and studying the latest trends in veterinary education.

The first intake of 32 students began their professional training in 1964.

The second development, concurrent with the establishment of the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, involved food technology. From 1928, Massey Agricultural College had offered a Diploma in Dairy Manufacture (later called Diploma in Dairying). This was a three-year course for dairy factory assistants, and covered training in the manufacture of dairy products, dairy management and engineering. In 1930 a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Dairy Technology) was added, and a Master of Agricultural Science (Dairy Technology) was offered from 1950. In 1958 the College proposed widening the scope of the Bachelor's degree to a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Food Technology). After much discussion with other university colleges this was finally approved in 1960 by the University of New Zealand as a Bachelor of Food Technology, and 11 students enrolled for this in 1961. Dr Ted Richards was appointed in 1959 to develop food technology courses, and Professor Kelvin Scott took up the Logan Campbell Chair of Food Technology in 1961, becoming Dean of the newly formed Faculty of Technology in 1962. By then a Master of Food Technology was also offered.

Both veterinary science and food science could be said to have developed naturally – even inevitably – from the agricultural sciences, and their existence certainly influenced the next crucial government decisions regarding Massey's future. The third development, simultaneous with the other two, was considerably more radical, and was the catalyst that quickly broadened the institution's scope to that of a full university. 'Ticking over' became 'full steam ahead'.

Victoria University College's expansion in Wellington was limited by its small urban site. In 1945 its Council resolved that while any immediate development would be in Wellington, they would co-operate with Massey Agricultural College in the event of another multifaculty university being needed in the lower North Island. In October 1957 the Report of the Subcommittee to the Victoria

University College Committee on Extramural Studies recommended the establishment of a branch college in Palmerston North. This would concentrate initially on teaching Stage I (first year) courses in the arts, internally to the students of the recently established Palmerston North Teachers' College, and extramurally to students of Victoria University College living in the area. It was intended that extramural teaching would soon be available to students throughout the country. The site of this Branch was to be close to Massey, for reasons of collegiality, and in the hope that hostel accommodation for extramural students might be available on the campus during their short residential courses.

Massey not only acquiesced over the hostel accommodation; in June 1959 Dr Stewart wrote to the Chancellor of Victoria, offering the proposed Branch a site adjacent to Massey's, on the grounds that this would encourage co-operation and avoid duplication of facilities and resources. He mentioned that he was already interested in the possibility of the two institutions merging. He also wrote to the Minister of Education, the Hon. Phil Skoglund, emphasising the economies of sharing a site, and saying that Massey would not fear being swamped by the close proximity of a faculty of arts. However, the Palmerston North City Council, eager to facilitate the establishment of Victoria's Branch, had already offered a site at Hokowhitu, and this was the site that Victoria's Council chose. Dr James Williams, Vice-Chancellor of what was by then Victoria University of Wellington, was reluctant to commit to any future merger, preferring to leave the matter open.

However, Dr Stewart did not give up on his vision of a merger between the two institutions, and in a letter to Massey Council member William Blair Tennent declared himself keen to co-operate with Victoria in the establishment of the new Branch. The report of the Hughes Parry Committee on New Zealand Universities was released in January 1960; it recommended that Victoria's Branch be on the Massey campus, and be merged with the agricultural college.

Notwithstanding all these contrary opinions, teaching started at Victoria's Branch, called Palmerston North University College (PNUC) early in 1960 on the Hokowhitu site. (The Branch was sometimes contemptuously and colloquially known as the 'Twig'.) Even though its purpose-built buildings were still unfinished, it was officially opened on 19 May by the Hon. Phil Skoglund. Its academic offerings were what had originally been envisaged, that is, first-year courses in education, English, geography, history and mathematics. They were all taught to the prescriptions of Victoria University, and all courses except geography were listed in the calendar as also available extramurally.

Its first Principal, Dr George Culliford, considered that it was more appropriately sited at Hokowhitu than on the Massey campus. An article in the *Manawatu Times* 28 April 1960 makes it clear that he was not in favour of a possible merger with Massey, and thought PNUC should stand on its own feet, developing its courses separately to at least Bachelor level. But Dr Stewart had allies in high places. Dr L J Wild, Pro-Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, and Dr F J Llewellyn, Chairman of the newly created University Grants Committee (UGC), both supported the vision of a future merger when speaking at Massey's capping ceremony on 14 April 1961. Wild was confirming a view earlier expressed in a letter to the *Evening Standard*, where he wrote: 'Let us take pride in the Branch by all means, but keep an eye to the development of the tree'.

Strong support for a merger soon developed in Palmerston North and the region. A public meeting called for 24 June 1961, attended by 100 concerned citizens, supported the idea that the Manawātū should eventually have its own university, and set up an Interim Committee of some 35 to confer with the UGC who were due to visit a few days later. The Interim Committee met several times that year, and appointed a smaller Research Committee which received 23 submissions from individuals and organisations. The submissions were generally in support of a merger, leading to the development of a single

university institution in Palmerston North, though the staff of PNUC favoured further development of PNUC as a semi-autonomous constituent college of Victoria.

By November the Interim Committee had been renamed the Council for the Development of University Education in the Manawatu, and in December it reported on its findings to the UGC. That body had itself been consulting widely on the possibility of a merger between Massey and PNUC for some two years; the impending establishment of veterinary science at Massey, and an application by Victoria for building extensions at Hokowhitu made a decision urgent. At its meeting in December 1961 the UGC resolved to advise the Minister of Education that a single university should be established in Palmerston North, on the Massey campus, and that no further building should take place on the Hokowhitu site. This was promptly communicated to Dr Williams of Victoria, with the suggestion that discussions take place between Victoria and Massey on the details of the amalgamation. Dr Williams accepted the decision with some reluctance, still urging that the new institution should be split between the two sites, and making the rather odd suggestion that the headship should alternate every two years between the Principals of the two colleges.

The Councils of Massey and Victoria met on 30 March 1962 under the chairmanship of Dr Llewellyn. Agreement was reached on many structural and administrative details of the proposed University College, including the fact that there was to be one permanent Principal, who would be called Vice-Chancellor when the College became an autonomous university. Further discussions, in which the local Council for the Development of University Education played a part, took place during the year and in late 1962 the enabling Act was passed, bringing Massey University College of Manawatu into being on 1 January 1963. Alan Stewart was Principal, becoming Vice-Chancellor in January 1964, when the College achieved autonomy as a university.

There was considerable trepidation amongst PNUC staff, some of whom left, fearing that the arts would be swamped by agriculture and science. John Owens described the merger as 'this shotgun marriage of two such different institutions', but it was a marriage that eventually brought satisfaction for all concerned under Alan Stewart's strong leadership.

The mainly youthful staff of the new Massey University College of Manawatu were faced with many challenges, and had to adjust to an almost dizzying pace of change in their academic and physical environment over the next 20 years, including several changes of institutional name. Some slight speed wobbles were probably inevitable, such as when growth in subjects taught and in student numbers outstripped the campus's accommodation capacity, as well as the library's ability to provide reading material.

In 1963 Massey University College had five faculties. General Studies consisted of the former PNUC, and it remained on the Hokowhitu campus until 1968, inevitably maintaining a certain character of its own. Following the recommendations of a 1964 committee, this was split into the two Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculties of Food Technology and Veterinary Science had been established in 1962, and the Faculty of Science came into being in 1963. The Faculty of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences comprised the core of the former Massey Agricultural College departments.

New teaching subjects and departments mushroomed; for example, Japanese in 1965, philosophy in 1967, applied mathematics and biotechnology in 1968, sociology and biomathematics in 1971, social policy and social work, as well as nursing studies and social anthropology, in 1974. Many new teaching subjects were first offered from within an existing department, only becoming departments of their own when there was a critical mass of both student and staff numbers. Sociology started within the Department of Psychology and later social policy and social work within the Department

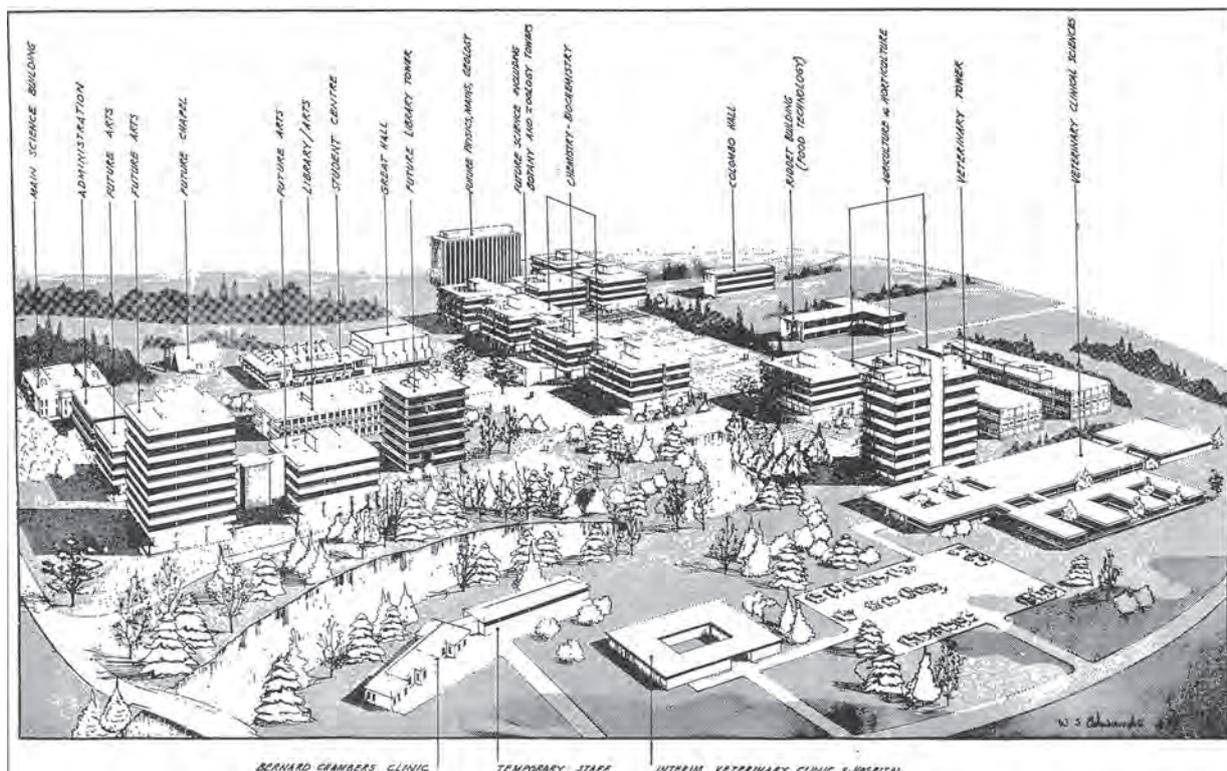


*Aerial view of Massey Campus, 1960-69.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

of Sociology. In 1973 a Bachelor of Business Studies degree was developed from a 1971 degree in agricultural business. The Faculty of Business Studies was established in 1978, and that same year the Department of Education broke away from Social Sciences to form the Faculty of Education, making Massey an eight-faculty university.

Following the merger Massey also took over PNUC's responsibility for teaching extramurally in the arts. Extramural study was available to those living anywhere in New Zealand who were unable or unwilling to attend lectures, and to New Zealanders living overseas. Alan Stewart, a trained agriculturalist, had initially been a little uncertain of the value of both the arts and extramural teaching, regarding them perhaps as 'a cuckoo in the nest'. He soon realised their value, encouraging their growth and development, and promoting them in his speeches. He even considered that the exercise of compiling extramural study guides helped Massey's teaching staff smarten up their act, and made them the best in the country. Certainly students appreciated the quality and convenience of Massey's extramural courses. While student numbers burgeoned overall during Stewart's time, the number of students studying extramurally grew more than tenfold, from 740 in 1963 to just under 10,000 in 1980, exceeding internal enrolment numbers by 2,500. During that period a more diverse range of subjects became available in



Massey master plan, 1963-4.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

extramural mode. From 1980 it was possible for students to complete a full undergraduate degree extramurally from Massey in some subjects; Alan Stewart commented at the time of his retirement that he would have liked that to have happened earlier.

New teaching departments and growing student numbers needed accommodation. Fortunately Massey had in the 1950s acquired sufficient flat farmland adjacent to the existing campus that could be used for new buildings, and during the late 1960s and 1970s this land seemed like one great building site. Alan Stewart was adamant that this building programme should be a coordinated one, with buildings harmonised in style. There had been earlier master plans for the development of the Agricultural College campus, but by 1962 these had to be revised, and further revisions were made by the Ministry of Works in 1963 to accommodate the projected expansion of the new institution while preserving existing campus buildings. A version of the plan was

approved by Massey's Council in December 1963, and with further small changes in April 1964 this formed the basis of the master plan.

A ring road was to enclose the major buildings, with a bridge over the gully near Monro Hill. Underground service tunnels were provided for sewerage, power and heating. A key feature was the central concourse, intended as a social gathering place, bordered by the Students' Centre and Library/Arts buildings. The latter was to house the arts departments until dedicated accommodation was ready. Buildings were in general only three storeys high, with ample space between them to allow sunshine in, the taller Veterinary Science and Social Science Towers being carefully placed on the edge of the campus. Existing student accommodation in the south-west corner of the campus was supplemented by Colombo Hall, opened in 1964, and in 1968 by the Walter Dyer hostel near Moginie House (Craiglockhart) across State Highway 57.



*Aerial view of Massey University campus, 1982.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

Alan Stewart was closely involved in all the building development, attending site meetings himself and maintaining constant and persistent communication with the Ministry of Works about details such as the need for a tunnel under the highway to give students a safe route between the campus and the hostels. Professor Peren had been responsible for landscaping and planting on the original campus, and Alan Stewart was particularly keen to continue this. He secured funding for a coordinated landscaping plan, involving both large-scale parkland planting and smaller, more intimate, planting in courtyards, and made sure that nursery stocks were built up by staff in preparation for this. He was also very concerned to protect existing native bush, such as a rare stand of maire trees near the bridge over the gully.

This care for the environment did have some negative consequences. Visitors to the campus quickly became disoriented, since Alan Stewart considered directional signs spoiled its rural character, and the strings erected to keep people off the lawns were too much of a temptation for one individualistic staff member, who cut them with a display of mock formality. But overall, students and staff alike have been grateful for his horticultural vision, since without it the rather functional buildings typical of the 1960s and 1970s would appear stark and cold.

As a manager, one of his great achievements was maintaining close and cordial relationships with those on the UGC who controlled the supply of funds to the country's seven universities. It was a relatively prosperous period for tertiary education,

but the universities were all competing for funds. Alan Stewart was known to have good intelligence networks, and whenever he heard that there was spare money around he made sure some came to Massey. This gave him a reputation as being the best New Zealand Vice-Chancellor at securing funds, and without these funds Massey would not have been able to grow in size, diversity and quality as it did.

He made sure no money was wasted, and kept staffing levels rather thin, which, as he himself admitted in a 1989 interview, made him appear parsimonious. In particular, no money was wasted on complex administrative and decision-making systems. Professorial Board made recommendations on academic matters to Council, but since Council only met every two months, a faster system to make decisions quickly was needed. Drawing on his administrative experience in the Navy he devised a 'chain of command' cabinet style of management, meeting with the Deans of all faculties every Monday morning to make decisions on non-academic matters. This group was unofficial, and, while it had agendas, kept no formal minutes of its deliberations; it was, however, extremely effective. He had valuable support from 'old hands' such as Professors Al Rae and Ian Campbell, and from 'new chums' such as Professors Dick Batt, John Dunmore, Roly Frean, Bill Oliver and Keith Thomson. It was nonetheless a highly centralised management style; the Vice-Chancellor was a tough, strong leader, who controlled everything.

Three examples illustrate this. First, he was determined when setting up veterinary sciences that they be in a faculty rather than the more usual school, since a school would have been separately funded by the government, limiting the University's direct control over it. Second, every works order for alterations to buildings, even for something as trivial as putting shelving on office walls, had to be personally approved and signed by him.

Third, on his evening walks around campus he enjoyed the native trees and birds, but also noted any little repair that was needed to buildings or infrastructure, and sent a memo about it to the appropriate department the next day. He was aware that his management style meant he could be seen as authoritarian. That said, his senior colleagues regarded him as an able, hardworking man of great personal honesty and integrity, who was utterly committed to Massey, and got things done, achieving some really great things. Above all, he encouraged and facilitated growth, while ensuring that the growth was as orderly and controlled as possible.

In 1972 Dr Stewart was awarded a CBE, and he was knighted in 1981. When he retired an article in the university newsletter for December 1982 commented that since he had been at Massey as a student, a lecturer, as Principal and Vice-Chancellor, 'Massey seems to be in Sir Alan's blood'. It could also be said that Sir Alan Stewart left his own indelible stamp on the institution.

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*Sir Alan Stewart died on 1 September 2004.*

# HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY: THE MASSEY UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



The first book accessioned by the Massey Agricultural College Library (MAC) in 1931 was Curtler's *A Short History of English Agriculture*, published in 1909. It was one of many books that came from Victoria University College when Professor Peren moved from there to found the Agricultural College, and it was initially housed in his office. Since the library of the College's descendant, Massey University, has a national responsibility for material on agriculture, it still holds this book, now appropriately housed in the rare books cupboard.

The character of any library is largely determined by that of the institution it is part of, but there are three main elements that contribute to any library's success: space in a suitable building, sources of information (books, journals and other media), and well trained staff. Throughout the records of the Massey libraries there are recurrent complaints that all three were inadequate. As early as 1969, moves were made to make better use of what was available by judicious use of computers; these of course have radically changed the nature of all libraries in recent years. This article will examine all those elements, and outline contributions made by its University Librarians.

The College, opened 1928 at Turitea, appointed its first part-time Librarian, Erica Baillie, in late 1930. She stayed for about two years, and was followed by Louisa Sheppard.

The Library was barely adequate then, and languished further during the Depression of the 1930s. The budget for books and journals in 1935 was £325, not a large amount for a newly established library. When Arthur Sandall was appointed as full-time Librarian in 1938 he found it lacked even such basic requirements as a proper catalogue, a typewriter and a suitable circulation system, and he worked hard to put things on a more professional footing; when he was required to do military service during the war Joan Swinburne, his assistant, was Acting Librarian. By the time Sandall resigned in 1946 the Library, which until 1965 served the Dairy Research Institute (DRI) as well as the College, contained just over 10,000 volumes and was operating on sound principles, though still to some extent relying on donations of books and journals from farmers and college staff.



*Massey Agricultural College Library, 1940s.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

During Harry Erlam's time as Librarian (1946-51) there was further expansion, to the extent that the available space, on the first floor (now called level three) of the Main Science Building was under pressure; the staff had their own reading room. The annual grant had risen to £700 by 1951, but rapid price increases severely eroded this, with some books increasing in price between ordering and invoicing. As in any scientific library, maintaining runs of journals was a top priority.

Mary Campbell, appointed Librarian 1951, was one of the College's many colourful characters, and she served it energetically for over twenty years. Largely in her own time, she maintained a paper clippings file and established the nucleus of the institution's archives. A redoubtable and well-qualified Scot, Mary had worked for the National Library of Scotland, the BBC, and Wellington



*Mary Campbell, 1965.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

Public Library, as well as for the Society of Friends' Service Unit in China, where she survived wartime adventures. She had a great sense of humour, wrote amusing verses for all occasions, and she reportedly barely needed a telephone since her voice could be heard all over the Main Building. Staff and students had huge respect for her, her two assistants were devoted to her and her annual reports to the Principal are detailed justifications of the need for more space, and more money for stock.

In 1955 the Principal, Professor Peren, applied to the University Grants Committee for a new library of 10,500 sq ft, since all shelves and stackrooms were full. He pointed out that it was the most comprehensive library of its type in Australasia, and served the DRI, and parts of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) as well as the College, and was annoyed when the Committee turned him down. Conditions were to remain cramped for over ten years, and the library occupied space on all four floors of the building. Lending regulations were generous, and students could keep books for the whole academic year, which may have helped ease congestion on some shelves. There were, however, reports of difficulty getting some students to return them at year's end. By 1962 total annual expenditure on library materials was £1,922, of which £1,184 was spent on 270 journal subscriptions.

Meanwhile another, very different, academic library was being established on the other side of the river. The Palmerston North University College (PNUC) was opened at the Hokowhitu site by Victoria University in 1960 to offer university courses to students of the local teachers' college (then in Grey Street), and to enable students throughout the country to study for degrees by correspondence (extramurally). Its initial library situation has been described by Adrian Turner as having 'some of the quality of a Bergman film starring the Marx brothers'.

While £30,000 was allocated for books and journals, quite inadequate provision was made for staff and space. Initially the

College was in Caccia Birch House, later in what is now the Mataamua building on the Hokowhitu site. The current library building on that site is much more recent. The first Principal, George Culliford, did much of the initial ordering work in his own time; he was helped by other teaching staff and even their wives, one of whom was a trained librarian, all working as volunteers. When the first Librarian, Margaret Hall, arrived in January 1960 she found 500 new books, but no equipment or other essential aids, or other paid staff. Against all odds she created order out of chaos, and successfully expanded the library staff, which by late 1962 numbered five full-timers and eight part-timers.

The needs of extramural students are very different from those of internal students who can access a library themselves. Some were able to access libraries where they lived or worked, and many local libraries were happy to help. They could not, however, be expected to supply a full range of specialized academic texts, and Margaret Hall devised a postal request system, based on that used at the Thatcher Memorial Library, in Queensland, to meet the students' needs. Because of the time the books spent in the post, and because all the students in a particular subject would be researching the same assignment at the same time, to ensure equitable access multiple copies of many key titles were bought for the Library. It was also a very intensively used collection, a high proportion of its titles being issued in a year. This gave the Library a unique character, which the present Massey University Library still has, since Massey took over responsibility for extramural teaching.

In January 1963 PNUC and MAC merged to form Massey University, by which time the former library held 34,500 volumes with a staff of twelve full-time and four part-time, and a budget for books and journals of just over £3,000; the latter held some 25,000 volumes with a staff of five, and its budget for books and serials was just over £5,000. This sum was higher than that for PNUC because the all-important science journals have always been notoriously expensive.



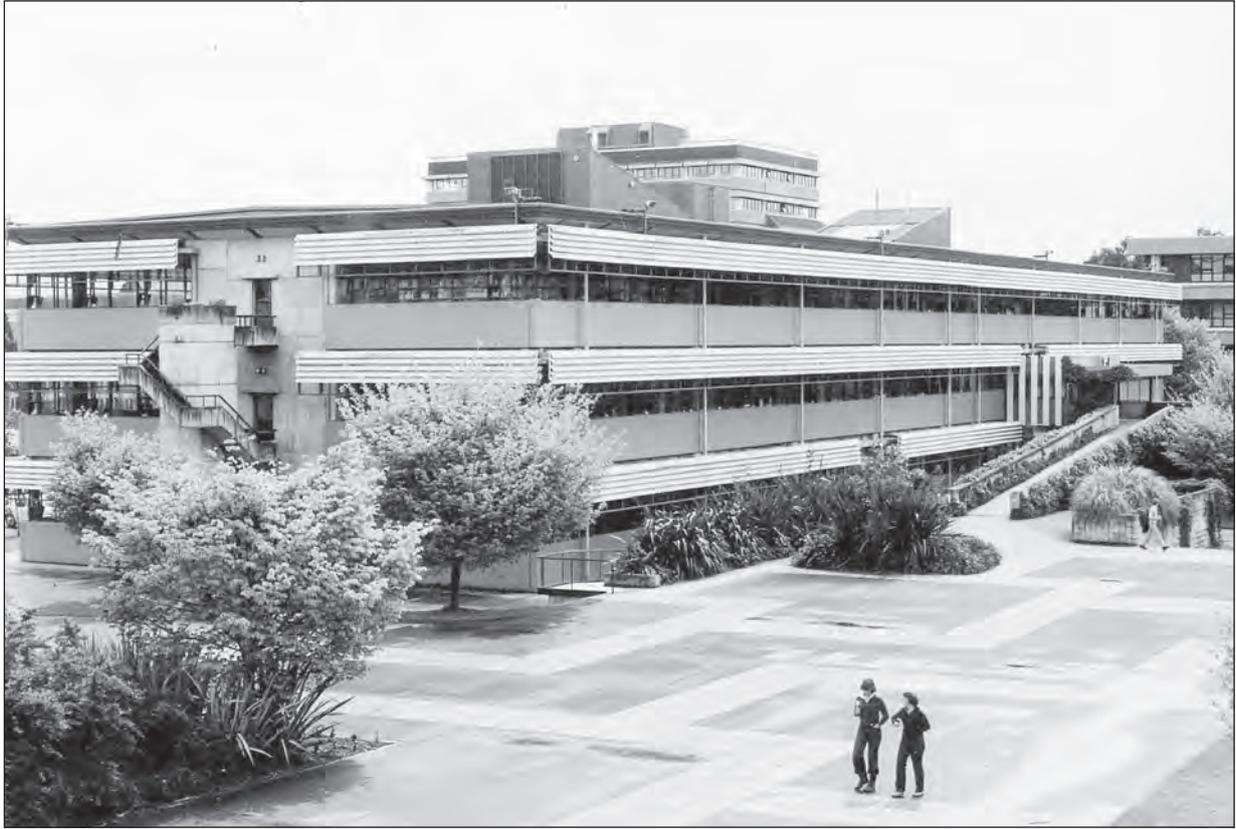
*PNUC Library: Staff looking at newly received books, 1960. Margaret Hall seated at left.*

*Photo: Manawatu Evening Standard/Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

The new Library Committee faced four major tasks in merging the two: choosing a common classification system, centralising such processes as ordering and cataloguing, deciding on budgets for the next five years, and planning a new building. The appointment of an overall Librarian was unfortunately delayed, and he did not take up his appointment until February 1965, so the first two of those tasks were delayed until then. Mary Campbell was meanwhile Acting Librarian. Constant change, uncertainty and a degree of mistrust between the two institutions must have made this a very challenging time.

Plans for the new building, however, went ahead quickly; Kingston, Reynolds, Thom and Allardice were appointed architects, Cabinet approval was gained in 1964, and the Library was opened by the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt, in 1968. Forty-three years later this rectangular three-storey building at the heart of the Turitea site, on one side of the Concourse, still houses the University's information resources and study

space. Originally called a 'Transit Building' it was designed as a dual purpose building, the Library occupying the middle floor and about half the top floor, lecture rooms and studies for academic staff in the arts the remainder. The plan was that the Library would occupy the whole space as other academic accommodation became available, and further expansion was envisaged in the form of a linked tower block at the back. With a stairwell at each end, and the need for academic staff to access their studies outside library opening hours, there was a potential security problem. This was solved by having two entrances, one on the bottom level for the academics, and one on the middle level for the Library up a heavy concrete ramp and external staircase. The ramp was seen by the architects as an interesting architectural feature, on a building that the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Alan Stewart, suggested should be 'a showpiece on campus'. It must be said, however, that the ramp and the middle floor entrance came to be viewed as an irrational eyesore on what many have regarded as a rather unlovely building.



*Library building, 1979, clearly showing the louvres and the ramp.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

An interesting feature of the interior is that it was designed without pillars, making for flexibility in the location of shelving; floor support is provided by longitudinal beams of reinforced concrete, with a troughed ceiling between the beams. Extensive windows were covered with external metal louvres to give some protection from the sun, rather than the originally planned projecting ledges, and their horizontal lines did nothing to enhance the building's appearance.

When the University Librarian, Lloyd Jenkins, arrived from Australia to take up his position in 1965 work started in earnest on the administrative integration of the two libraries, still physically separate. One was in MAC's Main Building on what is now known as the Turitea site, the other in the Mataamua building on the Hokowhitu site. His deputies, until 1968, were Mary Campbell of MAC and Adrian Turner of PNUC. The library at the Hokowhitu site, the more generously staffed as far as professional librarians were

concerned, with fewer journals, became responsible for handling book orders, and cataloguing, while the former MAC Library looked after journals. PNUC had classified its books by the little-used Bliss classification system, whereas MAC used the much more widely accepted Dewey. Jenkins' decision to use Dewey for the amalgamated Library was the rational one, but the task of reclassifying the 45,000 volumes by then held at Hokowhitu was massive.

The new building on the Turitea site was completed in December 1967, and the two collections moved and merged, books in one week and journals in another. So, after three years in the job, Jenkins had the whole library in one place in time for the 1968 academic year.

A geologist by training, Jenkins was affable, with an apparently diffident manner, but determined and effective in the job. His preferred management style was informal,



Lloyd Jenkins, late 1960s.

*Photo courtesy Lucy Marsden.*

and only from the mid-1970s could he be persuaded to hold regular staff meetings. Instead, he favoured what has become known as 'management by walking around', and he was always aware of what was going on. During his time at the University of Canterbury Library, staff had been very late opening the doors to students one morning just before exams, and he had never forgotten their extremely unhappy reaction. He therefore took it upon himself to arrive early and ensure that the doors of the Massey Library were always opened on time; this exemplified his commitment to customer service, something all librarians aim for. Early morning was always a good time to catch him for consultation, which often took place leaning on the wooden catalogue cabinets just inside the entrance.

His early achievements included establishing the Dairy Company Archives and getting the clippings service and University Archives on a more professional

footing. He was a well-read book-lover; finance was limited during his time, varying exchange rates made budgeting difficult, and as late as 1967 import licences were required for journals, but he worked tirelessly to build a solid collection of books and journals in Massey's teaching and research areas, supplementing the recommendations of academic staff by reading reviews himself. Aware of the economies of a centralized system, he resisted demands from academic staff for departmental or faculty libraries, though despite formal opposition by Professorial Board and the Vice-Chancellor some small ones did develop. This meant that all available staffing resources, which were never very generous compared with those at other university libraries, could be focused in one place. While the staffing establishment did double between 1968 and the early 1980s, largely due to his constant lobbying of the Vice-Chancellor, there were often vacancies; professional librarians were hard to attract to Palmerston North, despite the Library being permitted to advertise overseas.

Jenkins had the fortune (or misfortune) to be in charge of the Library during a period of considerable academic expansion, particularly in the social sciences, with the introduction of such new subjects as sociology, social policy and social work, nursing studies, and social anthropology during the 1970s. Papers in business studies were offered from 1971, and the Faculty of Business Studies established in 1977. These new subjects were immediately popular, and it was hard keeping up with the demand, despite Jenkins' best efforts; by the early 1980s there were often embarrassing gaps on the shelves in some areas, even though the collection had increased fivefold from its 1968 figure of some 100,000 volumes. An increase in student numbers, both internal and external, was accompanied by a gradual change from end-of-year exams to a system of continuous assessment. This, as well as a rise in the proportion of post-graduate students, meant more intensive use of the Library, and the building was under constant pressure.



*Students using the card catalogue on level 2 of the Library, 1972.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

As early as 1969 there was insufficient seating for students, especially at peak times, and extra storage space for books and journals had to be provided elsewhere, on and even off campus; precious staff time was wasted going to fetch them when needed. The situation became quite critical before the academic staff moved out and the Library was able to occupy the whole building early in 1974. By 1977 Jenkins was reporting that the space was quite inadequate by recommended standards, and in 1978 the University requested that the University Grants Committee fund an extension to the building, which would make it L-shaped rather than rectangular. It was 1984 before work started on this, and students and library staff endured two years of noise and disruption before it was finished and occupied. Every volume and staff office was moved at least once, some three times. Builders removing the ugly louvres caused two fires, fortunately with only very minor damage. While it significantly increased the number of student seats and staff space, and allowed all the collection to be housed under one roof, it was no more attractive than the original building, and resulted in a stuffy, airless atmosphere where the two parts of the building joined.

Jenkins' principal achievement, however, did not bear substantial fruit until after

his retirement in January 1983. Aware of the potential applications for computers in libraries, he had computerised lists of journals produced regularly from 1969, and encouraged library staff to use on-line information services as soon as they became available in the 1970s. In 1980 a systems analyst, Jay Morfey, was appointed, to plan computer developments. He successfully automated a number of minor operations, and by 1981 was able to recommend a full programme of automation. Timing was appropriate, since a national bibliographic network, in effect an on-line catalogue of all books and journals in the country, was being planned. In 1982 approval was given for the Library to purchase a stand-alone computer to provide both catalogue access and a circulation system, and at the end of that year the card catalogue was closed, all new material being listed on computer-produced microfiche. Software was purchased from the United States, and in November 1984 the Massey Library became the first university library in New Zealand to automate its main operations – with a grand total of 28 computer terminals, of which 22 were for library staff.

The automation process was not always easy, since it was being done at the same time as the building alterations; training sessions were interrupted by deafening drilling noises, and technicians installing cables sometimes found walls where cabling was to go had either been knocked down, or were not yet built. And yes, there were bugs in the system that had to be ironed out with the agents in the States. But students took to it quickly, and at last the Library was able to reduce its issue period for undergraduate students to three weeks rather than a whole term, as had applied since 1968. Every title available for loan needed a barcode label, and all required a machine-readable catalogue record in place of a catalogue card. Although all books bought since late 1980 had a machine-readable catalogue record, conversion of records for earlier acquisitions took till 1990, and was an even greater task than the conversion from Bliss to Dewey had been twenty years earlier. Later computer systems in the Library were



*Learning to use the new computerised catalogue. Centre, seated, Jay Morfey, the Library's Systems Analyst, right Chris Freyberg, Director of the University's Computer Centre. 1984.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

far more extensive and sophisticated; it now has 250 terminals, access via the internet, and a range of on-line books and journals, as well as significantly faster systems for ordering and cataloguing books. Thanks largely to Jenkins' foresight, the first step had been taken in the 1980s.

The students who benefited most from computerization were the extramural students, especially when they could access the catalogue through the internet. Instead of needing to request books by post they could go on-line from their home computer, choose what they needed, check that it was not already on issue to another student, and place their request. Understandably, this process was so easy that many got carried away, and in 2003 the Library received three times as many requests from extramural students as in 1994. Once a good range of full-text journals became available on-line, obtaining information became even easier

for extramural students, and this reduced the demand for photocopies of journal articles. Library staff are hoping that as more full-text books become available on-line, requests for books will similarly reduce from the current high of more than 130,000 a year.

Jenkins' successor as University Librarian in 1983 was Bill Blackwood, previously Head of Acquisitions and, since 1974, Deputy Librarian. He had the demanding task of overseeing the building alterations and computerization. With a keen interest in library management, his style was more formal than his predecessor, and he codified many policies and procedures, as well as instituting a system of staff appraisal. Staff savings from computerization enabled him to initiate a system of subject specialists within the library staff; their function was to liaise with academic staff and graduate students regarding the selection of books and journals, and teach them how to use the Library's

many resources most effectively in the search for information. This teaching had been occurring in a limited way since 1969, but was now significantly upgraded. Evaluation of the collection revealed shortcomings, especially where new teaching subjects had been introduced without consideration of what it would cost to provide books and journals in the Library to support them. It was agreed that any justification for new papers or subjects should be accompanied by a Library Resource Statement, prepared by a member of library staff.

Greater competition among students was leading to increased thefts of books; some students were even tearing out chapters and articles to stop other students accessing them. A tattletape security system was installed in 1986 to reduce thefts, and in the same year the collection of the late Graham Bagnall, a former head of the Alexander Turnbull Library, was purchased. It became a 'reference only' collection of New Zealand material, and included some rare books. Sadly, some were

later stolen by an unprincipled librarian, a rare contravention of a librarian's ethical code of guardianship.

Helen Renwick was appointed to head the Library in 1991. A move for greater efficiency led her to restructure the Library's organization, merging some departments, and she did much to improve the funding for continuous staff training, including training in Treaty of Waitangi issues. New Zealand books and journals were moved from the main sequence in 1998 to form a New Zealand and Pacific collection.

More momentous changes affecting the Library occurred elsewhere, however. When plans were unveiled in 1992 for a Massey campus at Albany, the planners, uncannily echoing the earlier error of Victoria University, failed to include a library. When this was pointed out (initially by a member of the academic staff) hasty plans were drawn up and a small library, appropriately staffed, was ready by opening date in 1993. Ten years later a much more substantial library was opened, which now houses 120,000 volumes. Mergers with Wellington Polytechnic (1999) and Palmerston North College of Education (1996) brought the institution two other established libraries; as a result the main Massey University Library is now not just the heart of the Turitea campus, but also the hub of a substantial nationwide library system, with a total of some 1.3 million volumes (about a million at Turitea) and 105 full-time staff equivalents (75 at Turitea). Its books travel not just to extramural students in New Zealand and round the world, but also to supplement the collections of its 'branch libraries', and theirs do the same for the Library at Turitea. Since 2002 the current University Librarian, John Redmayne, has further developed the computer networks that facilitate this.



*The Library's Information Commons, opened February 2005, contains 92 computer terminals for student use. Seated left to right are Corin Pearce-Haines, Linda Palmer and John Charles, who all worked on the project.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

It only remains to report the fate of the infamous ramp. In November 2004 the decision was made to demolish it as part of a refurbishment of the Concourse area, a task accomplished by a bulldozer in just a few minutes; the main entrance and issue desk were moved from level two to level one.

The staff saw it as an excuse to hold a late afternoon party the Friday before, including toy car races down the ramp, and a poetry competition. The winning poem and limerick are reproduced here.

*Yes, we had a library ramp  
Which we ascended in cold and damp  
But it was declared extraneous  
We had doors simultaneous  
So the library ramp was decamped.*

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**RAMP! RAMP! RAMP!**

TODAY, (sunny windy cloudy as it may be)

U P or D O  
U O W  
O N  
G O N  
N A N  
C A N  
E W O U !

BUT SOON,

TOO SOON,

IN FACT QUITE INCREDIBLY SOON,

TO BE PRECISE: NEXT MONDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER 2004,

you will be no more, ramp;

we ----- will -----walk -----across-----a-desert -----of -----rocks, ----- instead;

*with our heads down, low;*

our eyes searching .....but not seeing;

our feet stum bling, striding, slipping, stopping!  
m st pi

HEIGHTS.

no more soaring to great

But Ramp: maybe one day a thousand laughs from today and a thousand frowns from then and two more tears later, somebody somewhere will see your picture, our picture, and they will take their diggers and their shovels and their bare hands and their finest brushes. And they will find a piece of you, and another piece, and another. And they will start putting the pieces together, and they will construct

*A piece of history ?*

HAHAHAHARDLY. GOOD RIDDANCE, RAMP !!

# KEITH WESTHEAD THOMSON – WEAVING THE STRANDS



Keith Thomson was best known to some as Massey's Professor of Geography and Dean of Social Sciences. But his diverse enthusiasms and skills enabled him to make a very considerable contribution to cultural life nationally and internationally as well as locally. Colleague Bryan Saunders has described him as 'constantly balancing his duties as an academic with his interest in the arts'.

Thomson was born in Palmerston North on 25 July 1924 to George Henry Thomson and Annie Rie Violet, neé Alsop; they had two other sons and a daughter. George Henry (Harry), from Dunedin, was a carpenter, later listed in the electoral roll as a builder. They lived at 48 Broad Street, Palmerston North, but by 1925 had moved to 231 Ferguson Street. Annie (Vi), a Palmerstonian by birth, had wanted to be an architect but this was not considered a suitable occupation for women then so she worked in a lawyer's office. Perhaps she transferred her personal ambitions to her intelligent son; she certainly encouraged him in his academic career.

The young Keith attended College Street School, then from July 1936 Palmerston North Boys' High School. The school emphasised sport and military training as well as academic studies; corporal punishment was the norm. He played Right Back in the first XI Hockey team in 1940 and 1941. The *Palmerstonian* notes in 1940 that as a player he was 'Generally safe, but at times missed through excitement. Will improve considerably'. By 1941 he was regarded as 'Very reliable and safe'.

Teacher A G Baigent led a flourishing drama group, and Keith became involved, starting his lifelong passion for drama. He served on the Dramatic Club committee, and in 1940 played the Bishop of Mid-Wales in *Birds of a Feather* and Leonidas in *Lion of Sparta*. The latter play was placed second in the Manawatu Area Senior Drama Festival, and Keith was commended for his outstanding work. A prefect in 1941, he also did well academically. In his last year he undertook first-year university studies by correspondence from Victoria University, passing two papers in English and two in history, though failing economics. (It was not unusual then, one student completing a whole BA while at school.) In 1942 he attended Christchurch Teachers' College and enrolled at Canterbury University College for a BA.

During the Second World War he volunteered for the Air Force, but by the time his call-up finally came through he had completed two-thirds of his degree. He had also had some teaching experience, helping out with agriculture and English at his old school. His pilot training started in New



*First Hockey XI, Palmerston North Boys High School, 1941.*

*Photograph: The Palmerstonian, PNBHS.*

Zealand, where he crashed a plane on an early solo flight but was also one of the first of his group to do a solo night flight. He later trained at the training base in Edmonton, Canada, where a major problem was boredom, partly relieved by trips involving rodeos and whisky, but he finally returned home, since more than enough pilots had been trained. The war was ending, and he returned to Christchurch, enrolling for an MA in 1948.

Ngaio Marsh was a major influence on him at this time, and he later used her acting techniques and methods. His success in many plays produced by her, including *Banquo* in a production of *Macbeth*, suggested the possibility of an acting career, but on Marsh's advice he decided against it, keeping drama as a hobby. He held a fellowship at the University of Washington in Seattle, completing an MA in Geography. After twelve months teaching

at Gainesville in Florida as an Assistant Professor, he gained his PhD at Washington in 1953. His dramatic talents continued to flourish; his 1950 direction of *Ladies in Retirement* for the Gainesville Community Playhouse was described in the *Gainesville Daily Sun* of 27 March 1950 as 'outstanding'.

From 1953 to 1961 he lectured in Geography at the University of Adelaide, being promoted to Senior Lecturer. His research focused on economic geography, including the Australian wine industry, the Aboriginal people, and Japan's post-war reconstruction. He also edited the *Proceedings* of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society, was one of the founding members of the Institute of Australian Geographers, encouraged the Adelaide Theatre Festival and helped found the university theatre in Adelaide, for which he directed several plays.

During a period of overseas leave in 1960-61 he visited some sixty geography departments in eighteen countries, studying teaching and research methods in economic geography, ending up at Victoria University College Wellington. He was invited to apply for the position of Principal at Palmerston North University College (PNUC). He had clearly kept in touch with developments in New Zealand tertiary education, and doubtless welcomed the chance to move closer to his family.

He took up the position of Principal of PNUC in September 1961. The small college had been run along informal lines, but Thomson brought a more formal approach; he reportedly performed well, in what rapidly turned out to be a challenging position. The college had been established in 1959 by Victoria University College to teach arts and social sciences to local students, and extramurally to students throughout the country; Victoria kept it on a tight rein, much to Thomson's annoyance. However, there were moves to merge it with nearby Massey Agricultural College to create a full university. In July 1961, a Council for the Development of University Education in the Manawatu was set up to foster this merger. In December 1961, Thomson was interviewed by this Council about his views, and his answers indicated that he had wasted no time in becoming well-informed. He had made a thorough study of Australian universities, the problems they faced, their recent and projected growth, and how these related to provincial New Zealand universities. He showed support for extramural teaching, as he did throughout his career, though he was at that stage unsure about teaching a whole degree extramurally. He favoured the eventual formation of a full university in Palmerston North, but felt that 'a premature marriage would be unfortunate', and that both institutions should be mature before a merger, a view apparently shared by the staff of PNUC. Nor did he favour a move from the Hokowhitu campus to the Massey site. In the event, the merger went forward sooner rather than later, and the resulting institution was based at the Massey site.

The Massey University College of Manawatu Act, combining the two institutions, went through Parliament in September 1962, the inaugural meeting of the new College's Council was held 19 December 1962, and the College came into being 1 January 1963. Some PNUC staff left, having been offered jobs by Victoria, and fearing that an arts college grafted onto an agricultural college would have little status.

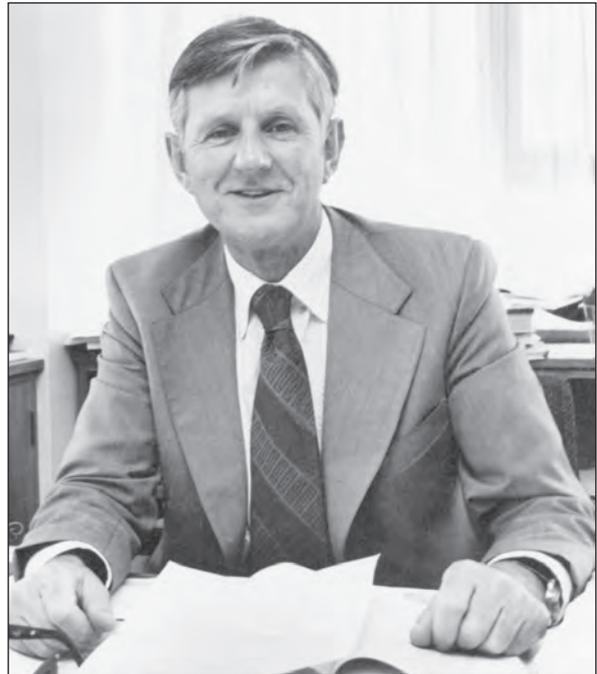
The question of who would become Principal of the new College was a delicate one, especially since the appointee could expect to become Vice-Chancellor when it eventually became an autonomous university, as it did in 1964. The decision was delegated by the Council to the University Grants Committee. Thomson probably considered himself a likely candidate, with his excellent academic credentials and useful overseas experience. The position went, however, to Dr Alan Stewart, head of Massey Agricultural College, and Thomson was appointed Professor of Geography from 1 January 1963, at a salary of £3,000 a year. He was also made Dean of the new Faculty of General Studies for an initial term of two years, any extension of that period to be at the discretion of the College Council. In fact, he was to remain a Dean for most of his career, a position calling for academic and administrative leadership within the University. He was probably disappointed at not getting the top job, and reported finding Dr Stewart a hard man, with whom he had many arguments. Stewart was not initially a supporter of extramural studies, and Thomson stayed largely to protect that and other activities of the former PNUC. Despite this uncomfortable start, he came to respect Dr Stewart, and had a full and productive career over the next thirty years, combining his academic pursuits and administrative position with his interests in acting, art collecting, museums and art galleries.

The Faculty of General Studies, comprising all the departments of the former PNUC, expanded during its short life (1963-4) with modest growth in student numbers, and in subjects offered. Plans were made for

teaching extramurally at third-year level, so that students could gain an entire degree by studying extramurally, and a Bachelor of Commerce was proposed. It was expected that by 1972 extramural student numbers would have grown from some 800 to as many as 3,000. Meanwhile, a committee of the University Council, set up to consider the development of the arts, recommended that General Studies be split into a Faculty of Humanities (comprising Departments of English and Modern Languages and later Philosophy) and a Faculty of Social Sciences (History, which later moved to Humanities, Education, Geography, and later Psychology and Economics). The rationale was that the newly emerging social sciences would flourish better on their own; the two new faculties came into being in 1965, with Thomson as Dean of Social Sciences. In 1968 they moved from the Hokowhitu Campus to the Massey site.

Thomson had the good fortune to be Dean at a time when demand for university education was growing world-wide, and he was a keen advocate of the social sciences in the university. During his tenure the number of internal students enrolled in his Faculty grew from 601 in 1970 to 1306 in 1989 (the year he retired) while the number of extramural students increased more than fourfold, from 1201 to 5250. This growth was second only to that of the Faculty of Business at this time. Underpinning it was Thomson's continuous encouragement of innovation in the introduction of new subjects, many not traditional subjects for university study: Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Nursing Studies, Police Studies, Media Studies and Museum Studies. Most were tried out and nurtured within an existing department before being launched as separate units. At the same time, post-graduate courses were developed in many subjects.

As Dean, Thomson had a reputation for integrity and impartiality which made him respected in the University, though sometimes his staff in Geography felt he was too careful to be seen not to favour them when it came to resource allocation. While



*Professor Keith Thomson, Dean of Social Sciences, early 1980s.*

*Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

it was probably not an easy faculty to run, he tried hard to be democratic, consulted widely, and conducted inclusive meetings, for which he was always well prepared. Despite his air of formality and confidence he was approachable, especially in the early years. He could on occasion be irascible when things went wrong, when insufficient staff attended meetings, and when students turned up for enrolment dressed casually in shorts and jandals, or with bare feet.

He once calculated that he spent equal amounts of time on teaching and research, on work connected with the Faculty, and on looking after the Department of Geography. However, his work as Dean inevitably took up more of his time as the Faculty grew, and he later felt that he should have ceased being Head of Department sooner. Some of his colleagues shared this view, including Bryan Saunders, to whom he often delegated work. The Department's three main teaching areas were physical geography, population geography, and planning, and as it grew it tended to split into these three groups. Thomson was good at picking out promising



Keith Thomson as Sir Anthony Absolute in *the Rivals*, 1961. Adelaide University Theatre Guild.

Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.

graduate students and young lecturers, and fostering their talents, but this led to a perception of favouritism, adding to the schisms and stresses that developed. From his service on major international boards and committees he had many contacts among geographers world-wide, and when one of his staff was due to go overseas on study leave would open his substantial address book with the words 'You should see ...'. He arranged a steady stream of highly qualified visiting lecturers and professors. The Regional International Geographic Union Meeting was held at Massey 1974 and he was also Chairman of the Organising Committee of the 56th Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Congress on the theme of 'Science in a Changing

Society' (1987). These brought many other international luminaries to Massey, and must have been proud moments for Thomson.

Keen to maintain contact with students, he taught a senior-level paper on the history of geographic thought, as well as some introductory papers. Student Bryant Allen found his first-year lectures on human-environment relationships enthralling, and Richard Le Heron has commented on 'a captivating stage presence which harked back to his days in theatre'. He introduced field trips for second- and third-year students, to foster a team spirit as well as give the students practical exercises. At one of these they all stayed at Pahiatua District High School, boys one end, girls the other, with their camp beds and sleeping bags. During his late-night check up he went to investigate a noise; one of the boys crept out and opened the door, and ticked the girls off, pretending to be Professor Thomson, only to hear a voice behind saying, 'No, this is Professor Thomson'.

He had wide geographic interests, and called himself an anthropo-geographer, or an economic geographer. In 1970 he listed his research interests as Dutch migrants in New Zealand and the socio-economic geography of the Cook Islands. He contributed a chapter on Dutch migrants to a 1981 collection *Immigrants in New Zealand*, which he edited with Andrew Trlin, and they collaborated on another collection in 1973, with the ambitious title of *Contemporary New Zealand: Essays on the Human Resource, Urban Growth and Problems of Society*. Trlin has commented that while he learned useful editing skills from Thomson, collaborating with him was difficult, because administrative duties took so much of his time. While Thomson went on to edit other geographical works, he did virtually no further original research in his chosen academic field; by then art and cultural affairs were a more absorbing interest.

Many Palmerstonians will remember him for his interest and expertise in drama. As part of his efforts to make PNUC a more lively place, he established a play-reading group, involving both college staff and actors from

town, which tried to put on a play a month on Sundays in the college library. It specialized in unusual and difficult plays, including one by James K Baxter and one by Patrick White. Thomson played Anthony in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, with Paul Maunder (later a film maker) as his sword bearer. Following the merger this group led to the foundation of the Massey University Drama Society. Thomson appeared as Claudius in 1964, with Bruce McKenzie as Hamlet, and in 1983 as Prospero in an outdoor production of *The Tempest*. A reviewer in the *Evening Standard* commented that 'his diction and presence are outstanding, but his performance last night was a little alienating'. As late as 1989 he was Vice-Chancellor Sir William Gowers in *Trelawney of the Wells* at Massey.



As Vice-Chancellor Sir William Gower in *Trelawney of the Wells*, 1989, Massey University.

*Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

He also enjoyed musical theatre, and organised and appeared in fund-raising revues, was an acclaimed Professor Higgins in the Palmerston North Operatic Society's 1974 *My Fair Lady* (a role he had earlier played in Seattle), and played President Roosevelt in two productions of *Annie* (1982 and 1991).

He was also involved in the Centennial extravaganza *Under the Sun* (1971) and the later *Te Papaioea*. Other performances for Palmerston North dramatic groups included the Bishop of Poitiers in *The Devils* (1967) a highly controversial production that included nude scenes, and as Sir Anthony Absolute in *The Rivals*, which he also produced, repeating a 1961 Adelaide performance. Margaret Greenway remembers that he particularly relished being asked to play the small role of a doctor in an episode of the television series *Close to Home*. As well as appearing on stage he was a (sometimes very demanding) judge for local school drama competitions, and served as Chairman of the Centrepoint Theatre Trust.

Like his interest in drama, his passion for art galleries and museums dated from his student days, when he did a teaching section at the Canterbury Museum and studied anthropology as part of his masters degree. In 1987 he said, 'I think a society which doesn't foster and treasure its artistic expressors is likely to be sterile and... in danger of becoming totalitarian.... [Artists] make us look at our surroundings and our society in a different way'. He urged national and local governments to be more generous in their funding of all cultural facilities. From the 1960s to the 1990s he served on, and frequently led, the governing bodies of three cultural organisations that were able to move from totally inadequate accommodation to purpose-built or substantially customised buildings, which must have given him great satisfaction.

When he arrived in Palmerston North in 1961 he joined the Council of the then Manawatu Society of Arts, which put on travelling exhibitions in a small (and leaky) gallery on the corner of Grey and Carroll Streets. He served variously as President or Vice-President from 1963 through to the mid-1980s, and was a prime mover in its affairs throughout that time. By 1973 the Society, then called the Manawatu Art Gallery Society, was planning seriously for a new building, and a fund-raising campaign was

under way in 1974. Major grants were received from the Department of Internal Affairs and the Palmerston North City Council, and the gallery, designed by local architect David Taylor, was opened in July 1977. It cost less than \$500,000, and is still, as part of Te Manawa, a stylish and generally functional building.

Thomson was involved with the Manawatu Museum Society from 1970 to 1993, for much of this time as President or Vice-President. From 1971, this small museum in Amesbury Street was run by volunteers; it comprised items from a collection dating back to the early twentieth century. After spreading to other sites, the museum moved to the old Pierard's building in Church Street in 1975, and planning started for more suitable accommodation. After much discussion and negotiation with the City Council and other bodies, and a period of great uncertainty, it was finally agreed that the Museum, together with the Science Centre, would occupy their present site; this finally happened in 1994. Museums worldwide were by then much more professional. Mina McKenzie, who shared Thomson's enthusiasms and whole approach to museology, had been appointed Curator of the Manawatu Museum in the mid 1970s, and other professional staff soon joined her.

As well as many local and national committees, including a group that advised the Government on the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, Thomson served on the Council of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand (AGMANZ) from 1963 to 1987, for some of this time as President, which gave him a national profile. He also served UNESCO on the National Commission 1970-80 and chaired its Sub-commissions on Culture, Communication, Social and Human Science.

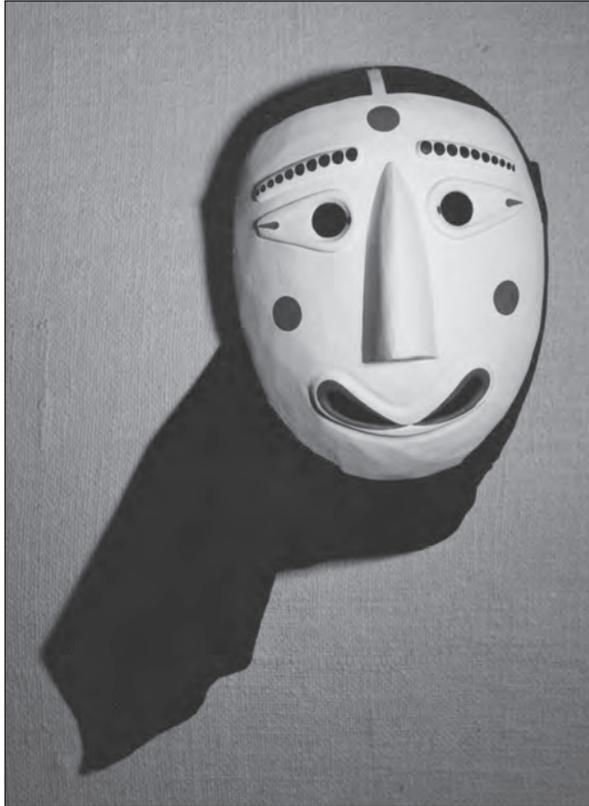
From 1973 he was the Government nominee on the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery, National Museum, and National War Memorial, from 1979 to 1992 as Chairman. He soon became aware that the National Museum was another problem building; it was too small

and leaked. There were many frustrations in the 1980s, as government plans for a new art gallery and national museum kept changing. By 1988, however, plans for integrating the two were quite advanced, and a year later the Government announced its intention to establish a Museum of New Zealand and erect a suitable, landmark, building. This meant Thomson had early input to the huge task of reorganisation, and by the end of 1992 a transitional management structure was in place to guide the development of the institution established by legislation in May 1992. This also dissolved the Board of Trustees, which meant Thomson was no longer directly involved, but he watched the evolution of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa with great interest.

A few days before his death from cancer, in September 1997, Cliff Whiting and others invited him to Wellington to see the new Te Papa building, then nearing completion. Graeme Fraser with other friends and family arranged a helicopter to fly Thomson and supporters there, which was a great thrill for him. Despite health problems which confined him to a wheelchair, he dressed formally in a jacket and tie, and announced the donation to Te Papa of a Fred Graham carving, of kauri, cedar, and kahikatea, from his own collection.

Luit Bieringa, former Director of the Manawatu Art Gallery and appointed Director of the National Art Gallery in 1979, suspected that Thomson felt a little less comfortable in the larger Wellington gallery and museum environment than in Palmerston North. On the other hand, he was knowledgeable, wholeheartedly committed to the profession, and did a great job representing New Zealand on bodies such as the International Council of Museums and the Commonwealth Association of Museums. Bieringa described him as 'a cultured gentleman, never in the game for his own interests or pecuniary gain and with a strong belief in the value of knowledge'.

His personal interest in art extended to collecting paintings, sculpture, pottery, paperweights, and masks; his favourite artists



*Korean folk drama mask for the part of a woman, presented to Professor Thomson in 1991.*

*Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust, Palmerston North, 97/197/5.*



*Japanese mask given to Professor Thomson by one of his Japanese ex-students, Y Nakamura in 1980.*

*Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust, Palmerston North, 97/197/21.*

were Toss Woollaston, Sandy Adsett, Pat Hanly, Gretchen Albrecht, Milan Mrkusich, and Fred Graham. Forty-five of the sixty masks, collected on his overseas trips, and the paperweights, are now in Te Manawa. He related his love of masks to his interest in acting, since once you put on a mask you can take on another personality.

In the mid 1980s he persuaded Massey's Vice-Chancellor, Sir Neil Waters, to allocate money for the purchase of art works, and by January 1986 a small committee had acquired twelve contemporary New Zealand works, which were displayed in the Social Sciences Lecture Block. In 1995 Thomson donated \$25,000 to improve this exhibition facility, and part of the collection was shown at Te Manawa. The University's Art Collection has since grown and been co-ordinated with other Massey collections, and greatly enhances the environment on all three campuses.

Thomson edited *Art Galleries and Museums of New Zealand*, 1981, republished in 1991 as *A Guide to Art Galleries and Museums in New Zealand*. Arguably his most important and enduring legacy to the art galleries and museums of this country was the establishment at Massey of a much-needed professional training course; prior to this staff had mainly learned on the job and taken a training course offered by AGMANZ, using volunteers as tutors. Thomson studied overseas training courses, and devised an extramural post-graduate diploma with other museum professionals; this was offered by Massey from 1989. Its first eleven students graduated in 1993, at the same ceremony at which Thomson was awarded a Massey Medal; by then some students were enrolled in a Master of Arts in Museum Studies. With the establishment of these professional courses, the academic and cultural strands of Thomson's life wove themselves tightly



*Helicopter flight to Te Papa, September 1997.*

*Massey University Archives Photograph Collection.*

together, since his personal interests bore fruit in the context of his university career.

He was honoured with an MBE in 1975, and made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in 1987 for his service to the arts.

Thomson was a cheerful, friendly, and sociable person, who maintained networks of friends in Palmerston North, New Zealand, and overseas, and gave formal dinner parties for his local friends. It is perhaps a little surprising, given his preference for formality and a structured life, that he chose to spend much of his time associating with actors, artists, and workers in art galleries and museums, people known for informality and unconventionality. Luit Bieringa remembers deliberately trying to be extra outrageous

when Thomson was around. He was supportive of his family, but despite clearly enjoying the company of women never married. Perhaps his peripatetic lifestyle made him reluctant to establish a close relationship and a family of his own.

Professor Graeme Fraser was a long-term colleague and friend who spent much time with him at the end of his life. He saw him as 'a good man, who strove to do what he thought best for the university', and who through his involvement with the city's art gallery, museum, and theatre did much to promote town and gown relationships, and to give the university a greater cultural dimension. His native city, and indeed his country, benefited from his choosing to return home to pursue his career, and to involve himself energetically in his many interests.

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# SMUT, SATIRE AND HAIRY FAIRIES: MASSEY UNIVERSITY STUDENT CAPPING REVUES



On 26 April 1979, Glenys Hopkinson wrote in the *Evening Standard*, 'There is nothing quite like a Massey revue. It is always different, something no-one ever counted on'.

'Something different' they may be, but in fact student revues follow traditions of role reversal and 'comic obscenity' that go back to medieval carnival plays, and to the Roman festival of Saturnalia (17-23 December) when a Lord of Misrule was appointed to preside over affairs and the ordinary norms of life were turned upside down. Masters waited on their slaves and slaves held important offices. Similar customs persisted in Britain until the sixteenth century, and Christmas revelry involved much drunkenness and partying.

Massey students were probably blissfully unaware of their capping ritual's lengthy pedigree, but revue titles such as *Boys Will be Girls*, and *Vice Versus* reflect this inversion of behavioural norms perfectly. Within the framework of capping week, the students had licence to poke fun at the institution, their lecturers, local identities, politicians, the royal family and anything else that took their fancy. Their week of letting off steam was in stark contrast to the formality of graduation ceremonies. Sadly, this safety valve of structured tomfoolery has in recent years fallen out of practice.

British universities have had a tradition of 'Rag' weeks, with processions and collections for charity, since the late nineteenth century. New Zealand universities adopted these traditions, but their 'carnivals', including concerts or revues, were held at graduation, or capping, time. Otago University's Capping Show started in 1894, and is still running, making it the world's second longest running student revue. (The Cambridge Footlights revue dates from 1892.) University of Auckland revues developed gradually from a graduation 'social' in 1898, but did not survive into the 1990s. The earliest extant revue programme for Victoria University of Wellington is from 1904, and it was called the *Students' Carnival*, taking the name *Extravaganza*, or *Extrav* in the 1920s. A procession, originally to advertise the revue, was instituted there from 1910, copying the universities of Auckland and Canterbury, but neither now occurs.

At most New Zealand universities before the Second World War, there was a tradition of interjections and interruptions during capping, and Massey Agricultural College's early ceremonies were no exception. Alarm

clocks set to ring at three-minute intervals and animals released during proceedings are some examples. The first graduation ceremony was held 1931; the very first revue took the form of a Variety Concert after the Capping Ball in 1932, consisting mainly of songs performed by both staff and students. In 1933 the first Capping Revue as such was held in the College Hall before the Ball; it consisted of a series of three skits under the title *S.O.S.*, subtitled *In Search of Sapiens*. In 1934 the revue was lengthened, starting a tradition of themed revues; in 1937 it was incorporated into the actual graduation ceremony, and in 1938 it was for the first time performed at the Palmerston North Opera House, and open to the public. Also that year it carried the generic name *Masskerade*, which continued to be used until 1951, after which the name was reserved for the capping magazine. The years 1941 to 1945 were difficult years for the College, with reduced student rolls, and no revues were held, but from 1946 to the 1990s they were a regular event. The last capping revue was that of 2004.

Revue were initially presented under the aegis of the Students' Association, and for many years were administered by a Revue Controller, whose first and sometimes most difficult job was to find a writer or writers; they usually worked on the scripts over the summer. The talented Ross Grimmer wrote three revues in the 1960s, and contributed to a fourth. He recalls that while it was time-consuming, the words just poured out when he sat down to write. The later, intimate, revues usually had a team of writers, sometimes including staff members, who each contributed one or more skits, though some were apparently improvised, or put together very much at the last minute. Next a producer or director, ballet coach and musical director were needed. Usually there was plenty of talent among the student body, including sufficient musicians for a small orchestra, but sometimes Massey staff or townspeople were recruited for these jobs. They absorbed most of a person's free time for the first term, but by the 1960s the controller could offer them the incentive of an honorarium for their efforts.



*Cast of the Dairy Kidder or Pulmona of the Purple Passions, 1934. All of the actors are men.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*



*The cast of Red Cow Inn, 1936, with, in front, the six members of the male ballet.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

The musical director for 1964 received £25 for example, and the producer for 1971 \$300. The names of many Massey staff appear in programmes as helpers and advisors, amongst them John Dawick, who was closely involved with the Massey Drama Society in the 1970s and 80s.

Revue was supposed to make a profit, which would go into the general capping funds for distribution to charity. In 1940 it made £78 for the Patriotic Funds, in 1957 the profit was £80 and in 1965 it was £600. However, the 1971 production *Under the Bed* made a substantial loss, blamed partly on the cost of hiring the Opera House, and from 1972 revues were performed on campus, in the Grid Theatre, then in the Main Building Auditorium. The position of Revue Controller seems to disappear from then, and revues apparently came under the aegis of the by then flourishing Massey Drama Society. They were still expected to make a profit, but this went to the Society rather than to capping funds.

During the 1960s performances were sometimes given in Wanganui and New Plymouth as well as in Palmerston North, but this was not always easy to organise and was soon dropped. John Broughton reports that one year the cast and crew were so drunk during the Wanganui dress rehearsal that the

mayor closed the theatre for the afternoon. They must have sobered up quickly, for the show opened on time that night and was a great success. A free performance was also given for rest home residents before the main Palmerston North season of three to five nights. One wonders what they made of some of the more risqué student jokes, and of the occasion, remembered by Ross Grimmett, when the crew member in charge of the hired stage cannon misjudged the amount of explosive needed, resulting in a deafening bang, followed by great clouds of dust from the flies that made musicians, actors and elderly audience cough.

The format changed somewhat over the years. The mainly musical content of the earliest shows gave way to a programme of three or more brief farcical or satirical plays, sometimes interspersed with musical interludes (called 'interleuds' in one early programme). With an overall title, usually punningly derived from a play, film, musical show, or contemporary concern, these would sometimes, but not always, follow an explicit theme. Titles such as *The Pirates of Pennzanink* or *The Slave of Bureaucracy*, *Ben Hurcules*, *Spycho*, *Grog's Own Country*, *Who's Afraid of a Virgin Wolf* and *Bra-Barella* are typical examples from the 1950s and 60s. That period was the heyday for such revues; some were large-scale spectacular productions with a

cast of 50 or more. After the move back to Massey a more intimate revue format was adopted, with smaller casts and a larger number of shorter sketches. Still a mixture of spoken and musical numbers, by the 1980s they were often influenced by Monty Python, and TV programmes such as *Saturday Night Live*. Members of the public were less likely to attend then, and it gradually became a more in-house event, though one participant estimates that townsfolk still made up about a quarter of the audience.

Despite the changes in format, common themes recur. National and international politics are always targets for student satire, and the 1934 revue, *The Dairy Kidder*, or *Pulmona of the Purple Passion* established a precedent for this at Massey. The Great Depression, involving falling international prices for dairy products, had seriously affected this country's dairy industry. *Pulmona* was a wealthy widow from overseas, who political schemers Forboff and Coatesoff<sup>1</sup> were trying to marry to Prince Damislo so that her millions would save the industry. Choruses of farmers sang songs about mortgages and low dairy prices that would have been highly relevant to an audience of agriculture students during the depression.

Prime Ministers are always targets for student writers; Walter Nash appeared as Sneezzy Gnash (1939), Walter Cash (1940) and Falter Gnash (1947), while Holyoake, whose name must have been a great boon for satirists, featured as Holystroke (1959), Holysmoke (1962) and Rolypoke (1965). The politically aware students of the 1980s satirised both Robert Muldoon and David Lange under their own names, in *Welcome to your Nightmare*, 1983.

Hitler, described in the programme as 'The bloke who wrote a book on camping', is lampooned, along with Goebbels, Mussolini

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<sup>1</sup> Forboff is a take-off of Prime Minister George Forbes, and Coatesoff a reference to Reform leader Gordon Coates, who had earlier campaigned under the slogan "Coats off with Coates".

and the Brown Shirts in *The Merchant of Munich*, 1940. Portrayed as a second-hand dealer he 'manages to sell the impecunious Chas Chaplin an umbrella against which Nev. Chamberlain provides security in the form of a N.Z. lamb'. After a series of improbable events, 'in walks Portia in the guise of peace', and 'sweet virtue, as always, is triumphant'. That must have been wishful thinking in the darkest year of the Second World War.

There is a longstanding tradition of students making fun of their own institution, and of local politics. The first revue, in 1933, included characters who are take-offs of lecturers at the College: Spry (Dr Dry), Yaits (Dr Yeates), Rigid (Riddet), Tighthead (Whitehead) and Kissing (Kissling), and the later intimate revues often included sketches that drew on university activities, including a 1983 sketch 'Vice-Chancellor's Guide to the University'. *Get Smut* (1967) included an item called 'Gownsmoke' or 'Massey Come Home', with such characters as Black Al (Vice-Chancellor), Lofty Weir (His sidekick), Fats Balding (A good man with a nife [sic] - and fork) and Trevor the Clown (Forgive him his trespasses).<sup>2</sup>

An outstanding satire of Massey, and the most consistently witty of the few extant scripts, was Grimmett's 'The Big MUC Up' from *Boys Will Be Girls* (1963). The local reviewer regarded the whole show as one of the best, and this item was singled out for particular mention. Written soon after Grimmett attended a meeting on the merger between the Massey Agricultural College and Palmerston North University College, this involved the ageing spinster Massey MAC being wooed by Palmerston PNUC. Two of their problems were where they should live if they married, at Hokowhitu or in the College grounds, and what their offspring should be called - real problems faced by the merging institutions. In the sketch, as in fact, the decision was made by the government that

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<sup>2</sup> These are respectively Alan Stewart, Vice-Chancellor, Alan Weir, Registrar, Joe Walding and Trevor de Cleene, both City Councillors.



Ross Grimmett, scriptwriter for several reviews and Tony Rimmer, who acted in them and produced them, in the 1960s.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

they should reside at the college campus, and that the offspring should be called Massey University College, or MUC. Characters included Mr Clockwood, Mr Hoptower, Sir Matthew Harem (Oram), Miss Walleye (Julia Wallace). The following song, sung to the tune of 'Mud, mud, glorious mud', is a humorous but surprisingly accurate version of events:

*A proud University was standing one day  
On the banks of a river so wide.  
It taught extramurally Arts subjects they say  
By the Manawatu's mighty side.  
Away on a hilltop sat tending her cows  
That young university's mate.  
So P.N.U. College, quite brimful of knowledge,  
Sang Massey this sweet serenade.*

*MAC, MAC, beautiful MAC  
How about coming to live in my shack?  
We birds of a feather  
Should nestle together  
And who minds the weather  
If he's got a MAC.  
But Massey's experience of life's bitter pills  
Advised her to keep up near MOG.  
There's less interference when living on hills  
Than when you are stuck in a bog.  
And so she refused to move over the bridge  
And sadly replied to her mate  
'I'm not extramural, just agricultural,  
And so must stay inside my gate'.*

*PNUC, PNUC, handsome PNUC,  
Sadly I say you are right out of luck,  
For I need a campus with nothing to cramp us*

*Nor river to damp us  
My handsome PNUC.*

*Those two universities soon softened their hearts  
And before long their wedding day came  
But by some perversity they lived quite apart  
And refused to take the other's name.  
They argued and fought, and the people around  
All argued and fought - what a shame  
Until a commission reviewed the position  
Deciding the site and the name.  
MUC, MUC, glorious MUC  
That is our name and with it we are stuck,  
So follow us follow, up from the hollow  
And now let us wallow  
In glorious MUC.*

Versions of Shakespeare were common in the early years, including *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Esplanade Escapade*, with Oberon and Titanic (sic). Romans invading Britain were satirised in *Veni Vidi Vici* of 1954, written by Francis Cockrem, and in 'Roman in the Gloamin' from *Boys will be Girls*. In this Droolius Caesar, accompanied by Mafia-like henchmen, was stopped by customs on his arrival in Britain, defending the presence of swords and javelins in his baggage as foreign aid for underdeveloped countries. Boadicea got rid of most of the invaders by persuading them to swim the Channel, giving them wrong directions so that they would head into the Atlantic rather than reach Gaul, then kept Caesar for herself.

Not surprisingly, spies were a common target during the Cold War. *Spycho* (1962) involved Russian Spies in New Zealand, and 'Dr Maybe or Get Solo-007', from the 1967 *Get Smut* featured a range of fictional spies, with Batman and Robin, on Foxton Beach. Jim Bond (006), John Steed, Emma Peel, Napoleon Solo, Ilya Kuryakin, and Max Smart are all instantly recognisable characters from TV series. The 1998 capping revue was titled *Capping Never Dies: James Bond is 007¾*. Closer to home, the Sutch affair, involving a pie in a briefcase, inspired the 1982 item 'Briefcase of a Spy'. Astronauts appeared in *Bra-Barella* (1969) and *Retch for the Stars* (1981); the latter had a sketch of the Star Trek team, with Darth

Vader desperate for company and popularity. Another sketch that year concerned a cheese-tasting team sent by the Dairy Research Institute (now Fonterra) to discover what cheese the moon was made of. On finding it was made of cottage cheese, plans were hatched to bring it to Palmerston North to boost the dairy industry.

Wharfies and communists were satirized in *The Red Bird* (1947), The United Nations ('The You-Know Circus') in *Peter Panties* (1948), the Vietnam War in *Under the Bed* (1971), women's lib in *Gravel Rash* (1973), and the Wild West in *MUDS Goes West* (1980). Television was specifically parodied in *Crossing Over Live* (1987) and *Revue TV* (1994). Air New Zealand's 'Orchestrated litany of lies' following the Erebus disaster inspired a successful musical item in 1982. Even the Geophysical Year featured in *Shot Ice* (1958). In fact, almost the whole of human nature was made fun of somewhere in the revues.

Three other features of the revues deserve mention. First, the obvious role reversal of changing sexual and racial identity. The ballet, performed by large males dressed as female ballet dancers, an important element of capping revues at New Zealand universities, was unfailingly popular with audiences and often singled out for praise by the reviewers of the local press. At Massey it first appeared in a revue programme in 1936, with six males in harem costume. In 1938 there was the 'Blushing Ballet', in 1939 'Ten pretty babes on the nursery floor', and 'South Sea saga', then in 1940 'Our glamour boys perform the Fairy Ballet'. In 1950 it was the 'Ballet of the Dying Ducks', in 1951 they did a 'Butterfly Ballet' and 'Can Can Ballet', and in 1953 they were for the first time called the Hairy Fairies. The 1965 programme describes them as 'The Massey Colshoi Ballet, known as the "Hairy Fairies", who execute sundry complex pass de jerks.'

The second half of the 1982 revue opened with a 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy', performed by the not overly confident entire cast; the *Evening Standard* reviewer commented approvingly on the performance of David Guy in tutu and rugby jersey. A



*Swan Lake Ballet from Peter Panties, 1948. L to R: Brian Finlay, Helen McLean, Ivo Dean.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

cryptically named 'Dance' was performed by males and females in 1984, but that appears to be the last. Victoria University dropped their male ballet in 1967, since it was seen as 'both sexist and embarrassingly unsophisticated', but at Otago the renowned Selwyn Ballet continues, normally bringing the first half of the revue to a close.

How hard was it to persuade male students to take part in the ballet? John Broughton, who appeared in a very fetching harem costume in *Get Smut* (1967), has commented that it was mainly friends from the same hostel, who got involved so that they could go to the very popular revue parties, where beer was cheap. When he was Revue Controller in 1969, there was some difficulty getting volunteers, so they targeted one or two keen rugby players, and the rest of the team followed.

Ballet coaches, sometimes from town, worked hard to get them up to standard. The 1956 programme acknowledged the contribution of 'Pauline Renwick who has coached our Sadler's Wells Troop to a high degree of efficiency'. Glenda Ferrall, who was in 1961 both Ballet Mistress and Assistant Revue Controller, wrote in her report that the ballet took up all her available time, even though they were a good group to work with. She commented that men had particular problems with the hand movements of ballet, and stressed that it was important not to let them burlesque it, since 'the more serious they are the more humorous the audience will find it'.

The other example of role reversal in the revues was Pakeha males darkening their skins, donning grass skirts, and performing as a haka party. While common during the 1950s, this disappeared in the late 1960s, though for a few more years it formed part of the Capping Procession. As people became more aware of racial sensitivities, this, like the male ballet, was soon less acceptable.



*Dianne O'Brien, ballet mistress, with one of her troupe from Get Smut, 1967.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

Second, the language. Smutty or suggestive humour is pervasive in all student revues. The title of the 1995 production, *Hucking Filarious* should have made its content obvious, but the programme carried the following warning: 'You are advised that some of the language in the show is somewhat on the fruity side. If you perhaps might be sort of offended by the words S\*@t, A%\$#hole, J!m B\*&%ger and



*Six harem girls from Get Smut, 1967.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

‘From we wholeheartedly apologise for any inconvenience they may cause’. Not all revues were excessively smutty however, and those responsible for the 1953 production deliberately tried to keep it clean. The Revue Controller that year commented in his report: ‘A little bit of “spice” is alright but anything over the edge will reflect on the takings ... the public laugh much more at humorous scenes and actors than they do at disgusting jokes’. The headline for the review of the 1982 revue in the *Evening Standard* read ‘Only slightly pornographic’, and the reviewer for *Santa is Crying Tonight* (1970) put things into perspective: ‘The range of humour ran the usual gamut ... bawdy, slapstick and “sick”, with witticisms and puns to add a slightly more sophisticated flavour ... the script contained nothing offensive to any reasonably broad-minded person’.

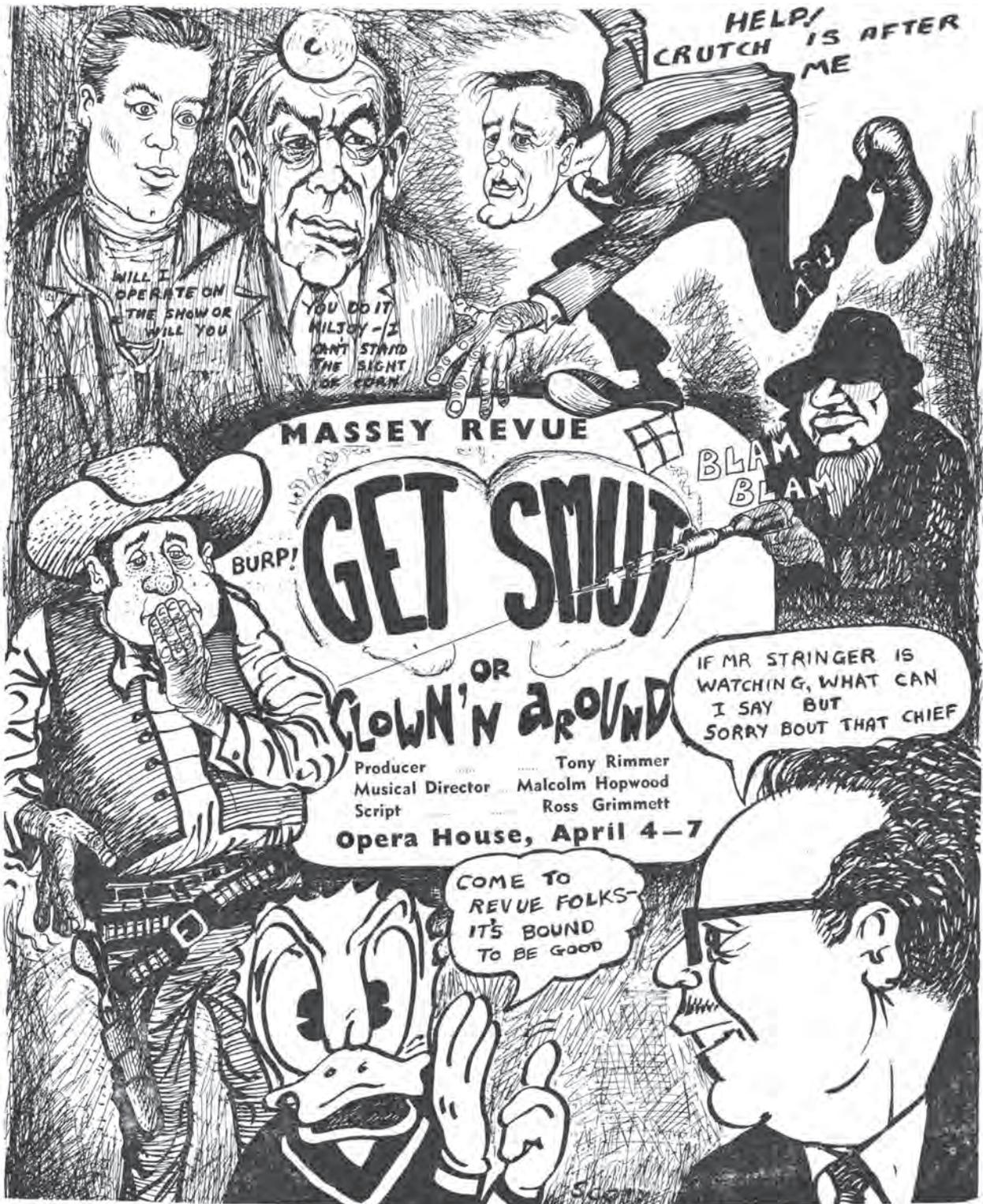
Third, the programmes. Like capping magazines, they were an art form in themselves, which echoed the format of the revues. Early ones were simple in form but included full and humorous summaries of the revue’s complicated plot, as well as the words of songs for audience participation, and carried advertisements for local businesses. By the 1950s, homegrown cartoons featured regularly, along with glossy covers and photographs of cast members. *Thunderbox* (1966) was illustrated by Tom Scott, who already had a distinctive cartoon style, using the signature ‘Scoti’. By the late 1970s, programmes tended to be briefer, folded A4 sheets, with the occasional advertisement from a sponsor.

Presenting a capping revue involved considerable effort; was it worth it? A student wrote in the student magazine *Bleat*, 1939, that the revue was held ‘First, for the enjoyment of the student body. Secondly, for the spirit of cooperation that it calls for and receives. Thirdly, for base profit’. He went on to point out that it helped persuade the people of Palmerston North that the students were not just ‘muddied oafs’. The editorial in student newspaper *Chaff*, May 1954, responded in similar vein to arguments that students could not afford to take time out of their studies for

revue, adding that it gave them a valuable chance to get to know each other early in the year, and was good for town/gown relations.

As well as being enormous fun, they had a more serious effect. Participation in revues could also be justified, like sport and other student activities, as giving young people valuable creative and organizational experience that was as much part of their preparation for life and work as their degrees. Several went on to make careers in related spheres. Peter Hayden, for example, who performed in and produced revues while studying for a BSc, became a TV producer responsible for the nature programmes *Wild South*. Tony Signal, who enjoyed the camaraderie of performing, reports also that the technical skills he learned, such as voice production, were invaluable in his career as a lecturer. Others acquired skills as sound and lighting technicians that they used later in other contexts. Tony Rimmer was an agriculture student, but his experience producing and performing in several successful 1960s revues, working closely with Ross Grimmett, may well have influenced his later career change; he became a professor of communication. Lockwood Smith was another agriculture student with musical and performing skills; he became a television quizmaster, and no doubt the job of musical director for the large cast of *Under the Bed* (1971) was useful training for controlling MPs in his later role as Speaker of the House. Tom Scott, who wrote the 1970 production *Santa is Crying Tonight* and provided cartoons for many issues of *Masskerade*, has made his name as a cartoonist, journalist and film maker since leaving Massey.

A regular performer on TV3’s Friday night show *7 Days* is comedian Jeremy Corbett, who with his brother Nigel did much to invigorate capping revues in the early 1980s, creating scripts and stimulating others to get involved. He credits his experience in Massey’s revues for teaching him how to think on his feet, and giving him the confidence to continue performing. He reports, tongue in cheek, that he also learnt the other useful art of dying on stage. Actor and writer Jon Bridges acted in



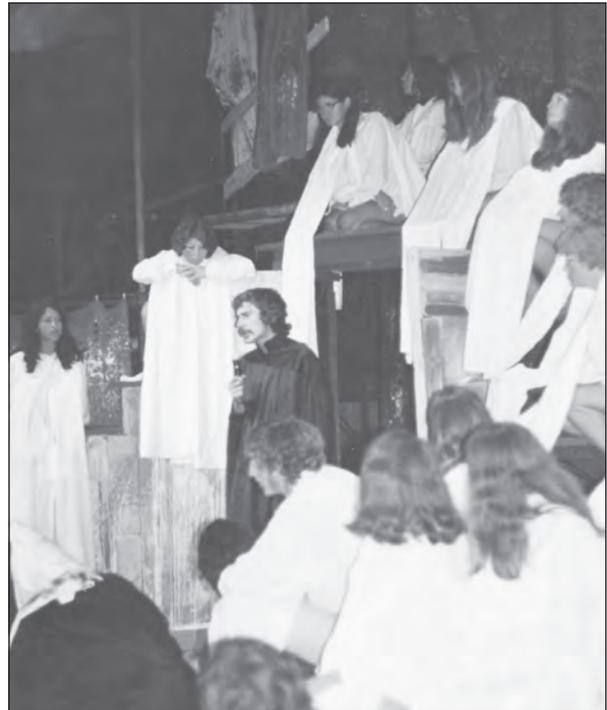
Tom Scott's advertisement for Get Smut, 1967.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

several drama productions as well as being involved in capping revues. In the 1990s he was a key member of the cult TV show *Ice TV*, and of the group *Facial DBX*. Currently he produces *7 Days*, which, in much the same way as the capping revues did, makes fun of current news items and those involved. Comedy writer, performer and producer Paul Horan wrote and directed revues in the late 1980s, as did actor Paul Yates. The latter was judged comedy competitor of the year at the 1989 New Zealand Universities Comedy Competition, Massey's Capping Revue taking out the overall prize for the third year running. All these Massey graduates use the skills learned in the revues quite directly, fostering the development of comedy in New Zealand and proving that it can be a viable career option.

The reasons for the demise of capping revues, at Massey as elsewhere, are various. Students are now under greater economic pressure than fifteen years ago, needing to undertake more hours of paid employment or take out loans to fund their studies. Completing their degrees in the minimum time has become imperative, thus time out for extra-curricular activities is limited. The gradual introduction from the 1980s of a system of continuous assessment rather than end-of-year exams, combined with a trend towards single-semester papers, has also increased academic pressures. Society in general, and university populations in particular, have become more pluralistic, and it has become harder to make many traditional forms of student humour acceptable. Finally, the protest movement of the 1970s and 80s brought a new seriousness of purpose; now, not content with simply poking fun at things they do not like, students are more inclined to take constructive action to change them.

Notably, capping revues still take place at the University of Otago; this may have something to do with Dunedin's strong identity as a university city, with resultant public support for student activities. Meanwhile, at Massey, it could be argued that some of the fun has gone out of university life.



*A scene from Under the Bed, the last of the spectacular productions at the Opera House. Lockwood Smith was the musical director.*

*Photo: Massey University Archives.*

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Tony Signal, Bruce Rapley, John Ross, John Broughton, Ross Grimmett, Paul Lyons, William Muirhead.

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Jon Bridges, Paul Yates, Jeremy Corbett, Rag and Otago Capping.

## LIST OF CAPPING REVUES

1933	Capping Revue: SOS (In Search of Sapiens)
1934	Capping Revue: The Dairy Kidder or Pulmona of the Purple Passion
1935	Capping Revue: The Rain and the Mud
1936	Capping Revue: Red Cow Inn
1937	Capping Revue: The Scroungers of Messyburg
1938	Masskerade : Fun and Games, Romeo and Juliet, Farcical Extrema
1939	Masskerade: Fun and Games, Macbeth and the three Witches, So What and the Seven Gawks
1940	Revue: The Merchant of Munich, A Midsummer Night's Dream or Esplanade Escapade
1941-1945	No revue
1946	Masskerade: Hamlet, The Old Soak, Brave New Blurb
1947	Revue: Sinderella, The Red Bird
1948	Masskerade: Peter Panties or A Few Last Gasps
1949	Vot-the-Hulla/Hades Ladies
1950	Nationalist Theatre
1951	The Pirates of Pennzanink or The Slave of Bureaucracy
1952	Some Day I'll Find You
1953	The Timber's not for Burning, or As You Find it
1954	Veni, Vidi, Vici
1955	The Sneekers
1956	How Would You Be? Hatched, Matched and Despatched
1957	Just an Ordinary Man
1958	Shot Ice: A Geofizzical Phantasy
1959	Grog's Own Country
1960	She's Alright Jock, or She's too Fat for Me
1961	Journey to the Muddle of the Earth, based on the Best Selling Lady Loverly's Chatter
1962	Spycho
1963	Boys Will be Girls, or The Great MUC Up
1964	Ben Hurcules
1965	Who's Afraid of a Virgin Wolf? or Dr Fidlay's Coarse Book
1966	Thunderbox
1967	Get Smut or Clown 'n Around
1968	Pavlova Go Go
1969	BraBarella
1970	Santa is Crying Tonight
1971	Under the Bed
1972	The 100% Biodegradable Intimate Revue
1973	Gravel Rash
1974	Streak A Light

1975	Drop Dead
1976	Exposure
1977	Jubilee Revue: Deja Revue
1978	Vice Versus
1979	The Way You Want it
1980	MUDS Goes West
1981	Retch for the Stars
1982	Capping Revue 1982
1983	Welcome to Your Nightmare
1984	Let's Communicate
1985	Two for the Price of One
1986	Odd-essy 4000: Business as Unusual
1987	Crossing Over Live
1988	Capping Revue
1989	Ripper
1990	Hijack 90
1991	Mother of All Revues
1992	Icing on the Cake
1993	Adventures in Toyland
1994	Revue TV
1995	Hucking Filarious
1996	Mad Capping Revue
1997	?
1998	Capping Never Dies (James Bond is OO7¾)
1999	Lord of the Wings
2000	The Massey Witch Project
2001	2000 and what?
2002	Massey – This is your life
2003	The Last Laugh
2004	The Massey Mid-year Comedy Revue: Bigger than Jesus

*Any corrections or additions to this list would be gratefully received. Please contact the author at [lucym@inspire.net.nz](mailto:lucym@inspire.net.nz)*

# 'ENTHUSIASTIC, TALENTED PEOPLE': FIFTY YEARS OF DRAMA AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY



LUCY MARSDEN

Irish writer George Moore, in his collection of essays *Impressions and Opinions* (1891), contended that 'acting is the lowest of the arts, if it be an art at all', and one that 'makes slender demands on the intelligence'.

His grounds were that the actor is not creating, simply repeating a story created by another. Be that as it may, drama has been very popular at Massey; since the 1960s hundreds of Massey staff and students have collaborated with others, all of undoubted intelligence, to stage a wide variety of plays, and found acting a creative and satisfying experience. They and their audiences look back on their productions with great pleasure and for some it has become a career.

When Massey Agricultural College opened in 1928 most of the clubs formed were sports clubs. However, concerts and capping revues were held regularly through the 1930s and the student magazine *Bleat* carried plenty of poems and short stories, evidence of creativity among these agricultural students. In 1943 a 'cultural club' was formed, for debating, talks and showing films; by 1945 it was hoping to present a playreading, and later a full production, but no record has been found of any. The early 1950s saw more attempts to get drama going, with little success, though capping revues were still going strong.

*Chaff* reports that a Drama Club was established in 1960 with the inaugural meeting held in the Refectory Common Room on 27 June. Roger Page was elected President, Josephine Bray Secretary, and committee members were Glenda Ferrall, Bill Schroeder, John Reid and Martin Walker. The Club's main function was to produce a play for the Arts Festival at the annual August Tournament; after years of successful revues, they felt there was sufficient talent for Massey to hold its own. The entry *Sordid Story*, by T A S Coppard, produced by Roger Page, won the contest. John Reid's 1961 production of Noel Coward's *Family Album* fared less well however, the adjudicator detecting a lack of experience in production planning.

By 1962 the Drama Clubs of Massey and Palmerston North University College had amalgamated. The 1963 Annual Report of the Massey University College of Manawatu Students' Association commented on the improvement in the 'quantity and quality of its productions due to the new blood from across the river'.

It was certainly a good year for drama. During the May vacation a week-long drama course was held at Caccia Birch House, *Measure for Measure* was performed mid-year, and Massey's production of *Electra*, starring Dorothy Cooper as Clytaemnestra and Juene Pritchard as *Electra*, was highly commended by Patric Carey at the Universities Arts Festival in August. In October 1964 MUDS advertised itself in *Chaff* as 'Massey's major cultural society'.

Some of the Massey staff and other non-students who were most heavily involved were made Honorary Members of MUDS. This involvement gave the Society leadership, stimulus and continuity, all crucial in a student organisation whose membership was inevitably always changing.

The first to be involved was Professor Keith Thomson, Principal of PNUC from September 1961, a keen and experienced actor and director. His policy of making the College a livelier place included starting drama classes every Saturday morning which he was still conducting in the 1970s and 80s. He also set up a theatre workshop group which concentrated on rehearsed readings of classic plays. It was mainly for staff, but some students and interested people from the city were involved. Wearing academic robes as costumes, they put on rehearsed readings monthly on Sundays in the college library, attracting good audiences. Plays presented included *Electra*, *Mandragola*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *A Winter's Tale*, and later *Under Milkwood*, *The Prince of Homburg* and *Don Juan in Hell*. Thomson, later Dean of Social Sciences, thus prepared the ground for further developments, and he continued to act in many MUDS productions, serving as Patron of the Society.

The next important staff member was Dr John Dawick, who joined the English Department in 1964. Keen on drama from an early age, it was his main focus as a lecturer, and his influential involvement lasted until his retirement in 1994. His first production was *Hamlet*, using the first or 'bad' quarto, with Bruce McKenzie as Hamlet. Next came a Theatre Workshop performance of

Hazlewood's *Lady Audley's Secret*, designed by Bob McMurray, with Dorothy Cooper in the lead role. An unknown reviewer described her as 'magnificent throughout'.

Dawick's first large-scale production with MUDS, one he still regards with great affection, was Dekker's high-spirited Elizabethan comedy *Shoemaker's Holiday*, also designed by McMurray (1965). Lacking a proper theatre, they set up a stage from scratch in the Refectory Common Room and in the Concert Chamber in town, as well as taking the play to Wellington for the Universities Arts Festival.



Sally Walker as Sybil the maid in *Shoemaker's Holiday*, 1965.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

Reviewer 'F L G', writing in the *Manawatu Evening Standard* praised its 'authentic ring' and accurately prophesied that 'drama here could well undergo quite a revival.' The first student production after this was Pinter's *Birthday Party* produced by Jonette Elder

(1966), performed as part of the New Zealand Universities Arts Festival held in Palmerston North. A reviewer in the *Standard* commented that the players could be 'justly proud of their effort'. In 1967 McMurray, an innovative and experimental director, did the first known production, with actors in masks, of Cyril Connolly's version of Jarry's *Ubu Cocu* at the Little Theatre, Terrace End. This was taken to the Universities Arts Festival in Christchurch and favourably reviewed by Christchurch newspapers. Another first in 1967 was Dawick's staging of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* in Wharerata gardens. Light rain caused a ten minute break on the first night, but the reviewer described it as a polished production, with good diction and excellent, colourful costumes.

These first plays established a pattern that endured for nearly thirty years: a mix of classic plays and contemporary or experimental works, with a sprinkling of homegrown revues. The major play in any year, often but not invariably by Shakespeare, was usually rehearsed over the summer vacation and performed in the first term, and the student cast was often joined by several staff and townspeople, who brought a mature approach, but were not necessarily in the lead roles. Collaboration went both ways, since some MUDS members were involved with drama groups in town, such as the Little Theatre.

Most of the plays were directed by staff members or others with experience and plenty of contacts in the community – unsurprising since directing a major play with a cast of 20 or more is a huge and expensive responsibility. It was, however, always the Society's committee who made the important decisions such as what plays to put on. Relations between the groups were generally very harmonious, and Dawick, who got on well with the students, has commented that it was a pleasure to work with so many enthusiastic and talented people. For their part, the actors found him organised, systematic and good to deal with.

He regarded himself as something of a traditionalist who believed in presenting

plays in a manner that accorded with their original period and the author's intentions. Since the great classic plays are performed less often in New Zealand than in Europe, he felt it was better to do them straight. This was especially useful for the many groups of school students who came to see the plays they were studying as part of the curriculum.

His outdoor Shakespeare productions, making use of the natural beauty of the campus, were memorable. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1974) featured Dawick's wife Anona as Titania/Hippolyta and students Paki Cherrington as Oberon/Theseus and Roger Wigglesworth as Puck. The *Standard* reviewer described it as a 'carefully worked out production', performed in front of an appreciative crowd, singling out Puck for special praise. *Twelfth Night* followed in 1976, with Deborah Laurs as Viola, David Guy as Sebastian, Sue Olsson as Olivia and professional actor Roy Nairn as a polished Malvolio. Marie Law's colourful costumes made *As You Like It* a feast for the eye in 1980, and the University Staff Club catered for the inner person by offering a venison dinner before the performance. The Vice-Chancellor, Dr Alan Stewart, wrote a very appreciative letter afterwards.

Staging plays outside has its hazards. Diction has to be good, or amplified with sometimes unreliable microphones. By late March nights can be cold for both audience and actors so costumes need to be warm, as well as bright enough to show up well. And rain is always a possibility, so an alternative venue has to be available. In 1967 it was the Farm Machinery Hall, and for one play every night but the first was wet, with no scenery in the alternative venue. For one performance of *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* a full audience, including school parties, was awaiting the start when rain came down. It took 25 minutes to relocate, and the alternative venue was then so crowded the actors had to crawl under the seats to reach the stage. The beautiful grounds were however a magical setting; at the end of one performance of *Dream*, as Puck spoke his lines about a screech owl, a morepork called, then flew in front of the actors.



*Top photo: The cast of As You Like It, 1980. Rear from left: Peter Henderson, John Ross, Anona Dawick, John Dawick (Director), Jacqueline Rowarth, Nick Broomfield. Front: Penny Guy, David Guy.*

*Bottom photo: The cast of Trelawney of the Wells, 1989, take a curtain call. Trish Bell centre.*

*Photos: Massey University Archives.*

Even staging Shakespeare indoors could have its dangers. One of Dawick's few acting roles (he reportedly preferred directing) was as a delightfully evil Richard III in a 1973 staging directed by student Paki Cherrington. At the dress rehearsal Richard chased Richmond up a three-foot platform on Bosworth Field, and Richmond fell off, disappearing backstage but fortunately unhurt.

Dawick also directed several more modern plays. T S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1984) featured English Department lecturer Robert Neale in his first acting experience, giving a notable performance as Becket. Reviewers commented on the powerful death scene, frozen in red light.



Robert Neale as Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*, with Margaret Greenway (centre left) and a member of the women's chorus, 1984.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

GB Shaw's late play *Too True to be Good* (1972) toured to Victoria University, to Tongariro High School, Turangi, and to the Universities Arts Festival in Auckland. Beckett's *Waiting*

for *Godot* was presented with an all-female cast (1982); Doug Standring, writing in student newspaper *Chaff*, described it as 'a performance that transcended any thoughts of the amateur, and stood as a potent event'. Pinero's comedy *Trelawney of the Wells* (1989) was beautifully designed and costumed by Marie Law, with music arranged by Barry Williams and a strong cast including Patricia Bell, Keith Thomson, Paul Yates, Jon Bridges and Basil Poff. John Arden's radio play *The Bagman* (1975) was a more experimental production.

A particular challenge in the early years was finding a venue. Some plays were presented at the Little Theatre in Terrace End, others on improvised stages in the City's Concert Chamber, or in the Refectory on campus. In 1969 Dawick designed a simple but more enduring home for MUDS in the Refectory. Called The Grid, after its metal lighting grid, it seated about a hundred, and though a little rough and ready, it served as a venue for some 20 plays and revues until 1981. With no paid technical staff, directors and others were inevitably involved in backstage activities such as set building and lighting. Equipment was often less than perfect; on one occasion Dawick was setting up the lighting rig in the Grid late at night when he fell off a ladder with a pipe in his mouth, which led to lingering dental problems.

By 1979 the Refectory was needed for teaching space. Vice-Chancellor Stewart, always supportive of drama at Massey, provided moral and financial support for plans to convert the Main Building's principal lecture theatre into a dual-purpose lecture theatre and performance space. Close co-operation between Dawick, other members of academic staff, the University's building officer and the architect meant the conversion was rapid and successful. Five rows of seating were removed, the roof was extended and a 36 ft-wide stage built, complete with proscenium arch. When needed as a lecture room part of the front stage could be quickly raised by hydraulic equipment, revealing a lecturer's bench and whiteboard, and a projection screen could be lowered into place. Lighting

and other equipment was more professional than in the Grid; acoustics were excellent for both speech and music, and it seated 158. There were backstage dressing rooms and storage area, though the wings were so narrow sets had to be relatively small. Known as the Auditorium, this facility was used for plays, revues and lunchtime concerts from 1981 until 2012, when the Main Building was vacated for restoration. In addition, the English Department acquired its own drama studio on the top floor of the Main Building to accommodate the practical workshops involved in papers being taught on European drama. This was also used as rehearsal space for MUDS productions.



David Guy in *The Recruiting Officer*, 1977, with Deborah Laurs, left, and Basil Poff, centre.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

Another member of the English Department who was involved with MUDS and worked closely with John Dawick was Dr John Ross; he arrived in 1973 having taught at London's Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. An experienced actor, he appeared in several of the Shakespeare productions. Jacqueline Rowarth remembers that in *The Taming of the Shrew*, set in the 1920s,

he accidentally dropped his monocle into his cocktail glass and had trouble extricating it, to the amusement of other cast members. As a director Ross, like Dawick, tended to prefer classic plays; his particular interest was in Restoration Comedy, and he directed notable productions of Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (1977) and Congreve's *Love For Love* (1979) with splendid costumes by Margaret Malcolm and Marie Law respectively. Wigs were made for the men from polystyrene, and, in keeping with the period, they had to learn to walk in high-heeled shoes. Both plays had strong casts. Student David Guy played the eponymous recruiting officer, earning great praise from reviewers. The *Standard* reviewer congratulated the Society on the successful staging of such a difficult play as *Love for Love*, capturing its spirit admirably.

Ross also directed several Shakespeare plays, though unlike Dawick he preferred to present them indoors. Modern plays he directed included *Setting the Table* by New Zealand playwright Renee (1995) and a radical work about the South African pass laws, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1990), which gave him particular satisfaction.

Ross reports thoroughly enjoying his work for MUDS, but finding it hard work. He invariably found himself not just the artistic director but effectively also the producer, dealing with such practical matters as getting together the team of backstage workers, publicising performances to local schools, negotiating with university authorities, and working late at night on such things as lighting. It was, he says, hard on his family.

Since MUDS aimed to present one major play and at least one, usually two, others a year from the 1970s to the 1990s there was plenty of opportunity for others to take the lead producing or directing. Staff member Paul Lyons directed several plays. As an actor he was a notable Caliban in *The Tempest* (1983) and twenty years later Prospero in the same play in 2003. Rolf Panny, Mike Smith, Marjorie Webster and Basil Poff also served as directors; Poff's many acting roles included that of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (1990).



The Merchant of Venice, 1990. Basil Poff as Shylock (left), Paul Lyons as Antonio (centre), Paul Yates as Bassanio (right) and James Norgate (rear) as Gratiano. (coloured)

Photo: Massey University Archives.

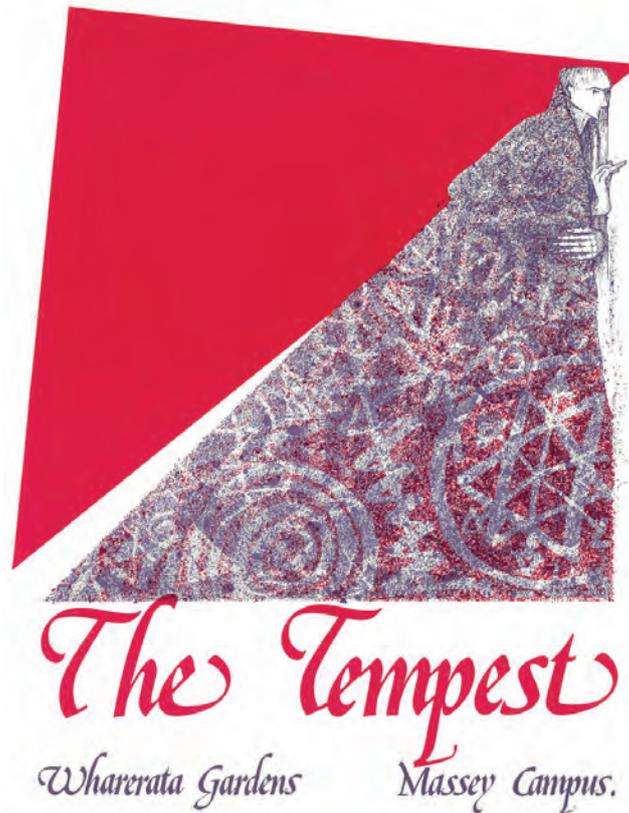
Paul Yates still remembers how Poff, normally a quiet man, dominated the stage demanding his pound of flesh.

Liz Clewley's presentation of Miller's *Crucible* (1981), with Jacqueline Rowarth as the contriving Abigail Williams, elicited complimentary letters from both schools and an audience member who had travelled from Whanganui to see it.

Two twentieth-century plays directed by students during this period were notable, for different reasons. Christopher Hampton's *When Did You Last See Your Mother* (1968), produced by Erin White, dealt with homosexuality and student life. The Mayor of Palmerston North, Mr G M Rennie, and the Chancellor, Blair Tennent, and their wives were in the audience; they walked out in disgust. The *Standard* commented that it was a poor choice of play, though it had some praise for the way it was done. Bob McMurray commented that this particular version turned out more shocking than the

playwright intended, and that audiences wanted 'the sort of thing that will not offend nice old ladies in fur coats'. The production was presented in Auckland two weeks later; no one walked out. David Johnstone's production of Sartre's philosophical drama *In Camera* (1977) was welcomed by Glenys Hopkinson of the *Standard* as a change from the 'hardy annuals', and one of the finest performances she had seen for a long time.

Actors and directors are not the only people whose skills and hard work are required for presenting a play. Marie Law's sets and costumes greatly enhanced several productions in the 1970s and 1980s. John Ross has described Law, a former president of MUDS, as a genius, and costuming was much more difficult when she was no longer available. He recalls having to go to Stratford (Taranaki) to borrow costumes for *As You Like It*. Professional artist Julia Morison co-ordinated design for the 1983 *Tempest*, including especially elegant posters and programme cover.



Programme cover for *The Tempest*, 1983, by Julia Morison. Printed with permission of the artist.

Collection Massey University Archives.

University technician Bruce Rapley built many of the sets for Dawick's shows; students and others helped with both the construction and painting, and often several of the cast would join in. Stage managers, makeup workers, musical arrangers, prompts and front of house workers were all roles MUDS members filled. Margaret Tennant remembers operating a tape recorder, not always successfully, during *Richard III*. Dawick and Ross tended to look after the lighting themselves, with help from university electrician Alastair Laing and students, but admit that the equipment was rather rough and ready. MUDS spent \$4,595 on lighting equipment for the Auditorium in 1985, but by the mid-1990s media studies lecturer Graham Slater regarded it as outdated and dangerous, and persuaded the University to update it.

Change and development were occurring in many areas of the University in the 1990s; the English Department was no exception,

and this impacted on drama. John Dawick, recognising that drama at Massey needed a shot in the arm, encouraged the Department to replace him with someone with theatrical experience. Dr Angie Farrow, who arrived in 1995, had been teaching drama in education at Sheffield University; she was impressed by the rich culture she found in performance drama at Massey, but, like the lighting, some updating was needed. Gradually a change in emphasis became evident, and three basic strands emerged: Summer Shakespeare, Festivals of New Arts, and regular MUDS productions.

The annual Summer Shakespeare productions have evolved from the outdoor shows by Dawick and others on the university campus. Differences are that they are now presented at various venues in town, are sponsored by Massey and a number of community trusts and businesses, and are more of a collaborative town/gown event

with invited professional directors; actors are drawn from MUDS as well as other sources. The aim is to bring innovative interpretations of Shakespeare into the community in a way that makes his work accessible and entertaining. In 2003 Farrow invited Simon Ferry from Centrepont Theatre to direct *The Tempest*, and it was performed above (and sometimes in) the pond in the Esplanade's Rose Gardens. Encouraged by its success, the University collaborated with UCOL in 2004 to present a masked, knockabout version of *Comedy of Errors* directed by Ralph Johnson from Wellington, who returned in 2008 to present *Romeo and Juliet*, both again in the Esplanade. The forts in the children's playground provided the balcony for Juliet.

From 2005 several of Massey's Visiting Artists directed Summer Shakespeare productions. Ryan Hartigan's version of *Twelfth Night* had the versatile Paul Lyons playing Sir Toby Belch as a 'serially drunken Aussie Uncle Toby' in an 'accessible, worthwhile and ultimately enjoyable production'. Peter Hambleton's modern dress

*All's Well that Ends Well* (2009) was performed on wheels near the station of the miniature railway, using bikes, scooters, a wheelchair, a supermarket trolley and the train. Jaime Dorner gave *Midsummer Night's Dream* (2011) a dark modern twist, bringing out the cruelty and sex he saw in it, dressing the fairies in silver and black leather, and making his actors dance. It won best overall production and best director categories at the annual regional Globe Theatre Awards. In *Much Ado about Nothing* (2012), directed by Amanda McRaven, the actors swam and waded in the Rose Gardens pond, discovering how difficult it is to simultaneously swim and deliver lines. Richard Mays described it as a wonderfully fluent performance with 'serious character detail, and choreographed slapstick'. In 2013 Vanessa Stacey took *The Tempest* even further into the city, using three sites in the Square, which meant the actors wearing microphones and the audience moving to follow the action. It also gave the play a pageant-like feel. Other innovations included making Prospero female and giving it a 'steampunk' setting



*The cast of Julius Caesar, (Rome, Inc.), 2013.*

*Photo: Collection Joy Green.*

with mock-Victorian costumes and ray-guns rather than swords or pistols.

The second strand, the Festivals of New Arts, grew naturally from the changes in the English Department. In 1995 a Department of Media Studies was established, offering papers in television and film studies that had already been available through another department for several years. In 1999 the English Department merged with Media Studies; offerings in the fields of theatre and creative writing multiplied, and since 2005 it has been possible for students to pursue a BA majoring in the Expressive Arts. A new paper entitled Creative Processes was taught by Dr Farrow for the first time in 2000. It involved small groups creating scripts for dramatic, musical and artistic presentations. The first resulting presentation was called 'Boxed In', after the 'me-box' used in the course as a creative device, and it became the first Festival of New Arts in September 2000; others have followed, giving creative opportunities for both MUDS members and those enrolled in Farrow's papers. Initially held on campus, these are now, like the Summer Shakespeare, town/gown events, and sponsored by local funding agencies.

The third strand has been the continuing presentation of plays by MUDS, though MUDS has evolved somewhat. No longer a formal society closely affiliated to the Massey University Students' Association, it is a smaller informal group of around 35 theatrically-minded students and associates. Joy Green, a senior tutor in the School of English and Media Studies, has been closely involved with MUDS and has directed several plays, including a very well-received 2013 presentation at Te Manawa of *Julius Caesar* as *Rome:Inc*, in which the conspirators were women in second tier management hitting their heads on the glass ceiling.

*Lysistrata* (2006) is one of the few classic plays presented in recent years. Others have reflected contemporary tastes, such as Pratchett's fantasy piece *Lords and Ladies* (2012), *Wyrd Sisters* (2005), his parody of

*Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and Planche's *Vampire Bride of the Isles* (2009) (Illus). A number of plays have been 'home grown', stimulated by the creative work done for coursework. Joy Green and Adam Dodd's *Worse Things Happen at Sea* (2010) used Shakespearean archetypal characters and plot devices to create a fake Shakespeare play that also drew heavily on *Blackadder*, the Goons, Terry Pratchett and Tom Stoppard. It won several local awards, including best new play. David (Div) Collins, whose involvement with MUDS spanned 15 years, wrote and directed *Invaders from Mars* (2011), an updated version of the *Three Musketeers* story, and *Lost Girl* (2013), based on the film *Over the Rainbow*. One advantage of homegrown plays is that they are cheaper to present, since there is no need to pay royalties.

Many recent performances have deliberately been off-campus, at such venues as the Globe, Square Edge, the Library, the Hokowhitu Auditorium and UCOL. At present this is essential since the Sir Geoffrey Peren Building (formerly the Main Building) housing the auditorium is being restored. When finished there will be a larger and more flexible space for presenting drama; meanwhile an area of the old Woolroom, (renamed Black Sheep Theatre) and the Dark Room in Pitt Street near Te Manawa serve as temporary homes.

A number of students have either gone on to drama-related careers, or have found their drama experience of benefit in their careers. Some, but not all, had done some acting at school; some were students of English and Media Studies, but many were science students widening their university experience.

Glenda Ferrall, foundation committee member of MUDS, became a professional actor and director, later a lecturer in drama in Australia. Sally Walker was also a professional actor there. Murray Lynch was Director of Centrepoint Theatre in Palmerston North, and has since worked in nearly every professional theatre in New Zealand. Jacqueline Rowarth gave polished performances in at least nine

plays while studying agriculture at Massey between 1977 and the mid 80s and was President of MUDS. Currently Professor of Agribusiness at Waikato University, she is an accomplished public speaker and has won awards for communication. She reports finding *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* a totally absorbing play, in which her character Guildenstern was on stage the whole time. Paki Cherrington, a mature student in the 1970s, became a professional actor, appearing in a number of films and television plays. David and Penny Guy met during the run of *The Recruiting Officer*; Penny remembers how dashing he looked in his red uniform. Both gave several well-reviewed performances in the late 1970s and early 80s, David serving as President of MUDS. Both are still performing, with an amateur group and a professional troupe that presents themed murder mystery dinners and comedy shows. Penny also works as a children's librarian and is able to read stories in a very dramatic way.

Actor and writer Jon Bridges learned his comic skills performing in both revues and plays, almost stealing the show as Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice* (1990). It was he who dragged a rather shy Paul Yates along to a revue rehearsal in 1988; infected with the drama bug Yates particularly enjoyed the serious drama productions, but later joined Bridges and Paul Horan in forming the comedy group Facial DBX that appeared on television.

Yates, now a comedy writer and actor, has memories of completely forgetting his lines in *Timon of Athens* (1990), dancing around the stage and drinking stage wine, pretending that was all part of the production, until finally the next line came into his head. He also reports on the wonderful post-production parties that were a feature of MUDS, and on his experience of tripping over scenery and extemporising action to turn it into comedy. Paul Horan, who directed *Timon of Athens*, is now an executive for comedy for the Australian ABC. Vaughan Slinn, Scott Wills and Nathan Meister are other Massey



Jon Bridges as Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*, 1990.

Photo: Massey University Archives.

graduates whose student involvement in drama productions has led them into careers in the theatre and related media, likewise Kelly Harris and Marie Gibson who now teach drama in Feilding.

Although one of the original reasons for founding MUDS in 1960 was to enter competitions, it is clear from talking to those involved that the hundreds of students involved gained just as much from taking part as from winning. They all learned something from the experience, including the actor who had to be reminded by the Chancellor, Les Gandar, that a wristwatch was an anachronism in a Shakespeare play. Their hard work and creativity have enriched the cultural life of both Massey and Palmerston North.

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