EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:
Bronwyn Walker
Doris Camp
Anne Deane

TYPESetting:
Lois Laivins

PRINTING:
Alvaro Trovalusci
Gregg Nowell

COVER DESIGN:
Alan Walker

YEAR OF 1961

CONVOCATION
James Cook University of North Queensland
Townsville
FOREWORD

By the Premier
Hon. Joh Bjelke-Petersen, MLA

I am pleased to be associated with this publication for the James Cook University.

The Queensland Government has played a vital role in ensuring that higher education is available to people in North Queensland.

This has continued since the establishment of the University College in Townsville, when the then Minister for Education, Mr Jack Pizzey, strongly encouraged and supported the project.

The Queensland Government at that time realised a seat of higher learning was essential in the north, not only to satisfy existing academic needs, but also as a practical example of its deliberate policy of decentralisation.

This forward-thinking policy is of paramount importance to my government today, and is largely responsible for Queensland's unparalleled development in comparison to the other States.

The development of Queensland's north is a success story in itself. Industry and commerce now thrive here, and graduates from the University in Townsville are playing an ever increasing role in promoting further progress within the community.

My Government today contributes significantly to the University by funding specific projects, such as research into tropical cyclones.

North Queenslanders deserve congratulations for the support they have given this University. From its conception as a regional college of the University of Queensland to its independent status today, James Cook University of North Queensland has become an academic institution that compares favourably with the best in the world.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Whenever any publication goes to press, there are always people to whom appreciation should be expressed for their work "behind the scenes".

To those 1961 staff members and students who pioneered university education in the north, we extend our thanks, both for your contribution to the University in 1961 and to this booklet 20 years later. Special mention must be made of Bruce Gibson-Wilde, Ross Smith, John Marshall and Ray Volker who attended a large number of our meetings and assisted with the slow process of collection and identification of photographs as well as some of the proof-reading. We were also very grateful to Robin Blyth, Kevin Stark, Jon Stephenson, Doris Coleman, Herbert ("Mac") McCullagh and Bruce Knight for their enthusiasm and support when they were called on.

The assistance of members of the Townsville and District University Society and North Queensland University Association has been greatly appreciated. Those members — Mr Jack Bordujenko, Mr Rupert Coglan, Dr Bob Douglas, Mrs Joan Hopkins, Mr Fred McKay, Mr George Roberts, Mr John Saint-Smith and Dr Barbara Stelling — have responded admirably to the call for help and advice.

Mr Arch Fraley has provided generous assistance with some of the photographic work included and we are grateful to him for his permission to use his work.

Mr Reg Tickle and the staff of the Department of Education Regional Office in Townsville have been most helpful in our endeavours to trace some of the 1961 students.

The University’s media staff have extended themselves beyond reasonable expectation and we are immensely grateful to Alan Cutting, Peter Finch and Brian Pump for the time they have spent and the detailed, difficult work on aged photographs and film.

Mr Alex Byrne from the University Library has provided help with discovering information relating to the activities of the Townsville and District University Society and North Queensland University Association.

We would like to think of this book as merely the opening of a door on the year of 1961. We hope that it will encourage people to look into their own photographic collections and contribute anything of interest to the newly established "James Cook University Collection" and we would like to thank those people who are already doing this and sending in photographs even as this goes to press.

Our final and most important tribute must go to Frank Daveson, Secretary of Convocation, who has worked tirelessly to assist the Publication Committee, giving many hours of his own time. Such dedication may go unrewarded but not unnoticed.

Bronwyn WALKER  
Doris CAMP  
Anne DEANE

CONTENTS

Foreword (i)  
Acknowledgments (ii)  
Message from the Chancellor 1  
Message from Vice-Chancellor 2  
Introduction by the Chairman of Convocation 3  
Those Who Paved the Way 5  
Dr Reeve Palmerston-Rundle 6  
Dr F.J. Olsen — Warden 7  
Mr H.T. Priestley, Chairman of the Advisory Committee 8  
The North Queensland University Association 9  
The Beginnings — Joan Hopkins 10  
North Queensland’s Involvement — Jack Bordujenko 13  
The Establishment 15  
Establishment of the University College 16  
Origins of the Model of Pimlico Campus 21  
The Decision Makers 22  
The Advisory Committee 23  
The Formative Year — G.V. Roberts 25  
Reflections by Members of the 1961 Staff 29  
1961 Staff 30  
1961 Original Staff on Campus in 1981 31  
Ross Smith 33  
Bruce Gibson-Wilde 34  
Reflections from the Principal of Duncragan 36  
1961 in Focus — Interviews Conducted by Clive Moore 38  
Ross Smith 39  
Ian Moles 42  
Robin Blyth 45  
Bruce Knight 48  
Mrs H.D. McKay 51  
In Retrospect — Recollections of Foundation Students 52
MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

The Hon. Sir George Kneipp

First, let me applaud Convocation’s initiative in producing this booklet. No organisation is without its history and it behoves us all to have regard for our origins. We need to be aware of the forces which shaped our past, of how things came about and of the debt we owe to those who came before us.

Such an awareness is rewarding in itself — a source of pleasure. But, it is more than that, for it provides us with a basis for understanding the present and assessing options for the future.

In looking back to the Year of ’61, I am reminded of the hopes and fears which many of us had for the newly established university college. Amongst other things, we were concerned that the college should be a full and active member of the northern community. We did not want to see the creation of an ivory tower in our midst.

As the years unfold, I think one can say that considerable success has been achieved in this regard. Through the perseverance of many people — not the least our first Chancellor, Sir George Fisher, and his Deputy, the late Mr Tom Priestley — James Cook University of North Queensland has achieved a strong measure of recognition for the contribution which it is making in our part of Australia.
MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Professor K.J.C. Back

When casting one's mind back to the year of '61, one is inevitably struck by the changes which have taken place since those not very far off days. We certainly lived in a different sort of world then; a world of increasing affluence and opportunity.

I think it fair to say that most of us thought this happy state of affairs would continue, barring some major breach of world peace. But we were wrong; predicting the future turned out to be more difficult than most of us imagined.

If then, it is so difficult to see ahead, how does one prepare for the future?

I believe part of the answer lies in recognising that there are basic rules which remain valid despite change. I can think of two which have stood us in good stead. Sir George has already mentioned one; namely, that the University should be a full and active member of the northern community. Another is that we should concentrate our research effort in areas in which we are best able to make a notable contribution.

Twenty years on, the wisdom in following these rules is now apparent. I believe we can be justifiably proud of the place which our University occupies in the North. We can also feel proud of the contributions which have been made by our research scientists and of the recognition which they have received for their work.

INTRODUCTION

By the Chairman of Convocation
Mrs Bronwyn Walker

The idea of producing this booklet arose at the time of the 1981 Annual Convocation Dinner which had as its theme the "Year of 1961". It was not intended to be an academic work, but rather, a collection of anecdotes and reminiscences interspersed with whatever photographs were available.

Records and photographs of people and events in the early life of the University College are sparse, and in some cases, non-existent, but the Publication Sub-committee has endeavoured to capture something of the spirit of the first, pioneering year.

Unfortunately, the task is not as simple as it might seem because most of the students who were enrolled at the University when it was a College of the University of Queensland did not become members of Convocation when James Cook University gained its autonomy. Hence, the task of contacting these past students is doubly difficult.

Although Convocation began officially in 1970 when the University became autonomous, it met for the first time in 1979 and has held a dinner in conjunction with each annual meeting since then.

Convocation first expressed an interest when, at the 1981 Annual Meeting, it was agreed that assisting in the collection of University memorabilia might be one of the roles Convocation could take. Subsequently, the University set up the
James Cook University Collection and many of the photographs which are now being collected will become part of this collection.

It is to be hoped that the interest which has now been sparked will continue so that before too many more years have passed, the University will have an extensive collection of material depicting its early years.

Too little has been said and recorded of the effort put into getting a university in the north by members of the Townsville community and the North Queensland region in general. The name of Dr Palmerston-Rundle is virtually unknown throughout the University today, even though he might be regarded as the founding father of the University, or at least the catalyst which began it all.

So, in one sense, also, this booklet serves as a timely reminder to us all of our indebtedness to people such as Dr Palmerston-Rundle, Tom Priestley, George Roberts and Joan and Harry Hopkins, as well as other members of the Townsville and District University Society and North Queensland University Association. Fortunately for North Queensland, these people had vision.

THOSE WHO

PAVED THE WAY . . .
Dr Reeve Rundle was the main mover in the foundation of the Townsville and District University Society and was its first Chairman. Dr Rundle had always been a prominent figure in the higher echelons of the local branch of the Liberal Party and it is thought that the movement for the formation of a University College in Townsville came from him or so it was believed in Townsville. However it is known that the Minister for Education, Mr Jack Pizzey, was also in support of the idea. Dr Rundle called the first meeting to launch the Townsville and District University Society at his house, No.12 Upper Clifton Street, North Ward, in the year 1958. The meeting took the form of a garden party and it is remembered that he served black olives, a little unusual in those days, and Marsala wine. The Society when formed, was remarkably effective in getting the University College established in such a short time.

At the time, Dr Rundle was an Ear, Nose and Throat Surgical specialist practising in Townsville. He had had a rather checkered and migratory career in the past and was aged about 64 years when he organised the Society. He graduated in Melbourne in 1917 and served for a time in the A.I.F. towards the end of World War 1. After the War he practised as a General Practitioner in Menzies, Western Australia, near Swan Hill, Victoria, Sydney in the 1920’s, where he married his wife Eleanor (Vickie) in 1924. There are some references to his moving in literary circles while in Sydney. His son states that at that time he lived in “Edwardian splendour”. Certainly Reeve Rundle was a man of parts. He was a great raconteur and an omnivorous reader. His skills as a cook were quite remarkable. His temperament was that of the scholarly bon vivant.

During the Depression of the 1930’s, he gave up Medicine for two years and became Personnel Manager of Mt Isa Mines at Mount Isa. On returning to Medical Practice at Kingaroy, he was inclined to E.N.T. Surgery and did a course in this subject in Sydney. Following this he became registered as an E.N.T. Surgical Specialist and practised in Rockhampton. A reason for this may have been that his wife came from the Maryborough area and Rockhampton was not far away. Certainly towards the end of his professional life, he practised in Maryborough. At one stage in the late 1960’s, he practised as an E.N.T. Surgeon in Collins Street, Melbourne. He died in Melbourne in 1979 having ceased practice in Maryborough a few years before. His son, Henry, practices as an E.N.T. Surgeon in Melbourne.

Dr Bob DOUGLAS

* * * * *

Dr F.J. Olsen, MEd BSc PhD — Warden

The late Frank Jackson Olsen, MEd Melb BSc PhD Qld left his position as Director of External Studies at the University of Queensland in order to spend two years as the Warden of the newly established University College of Townsville, attached to the University of Queensland as from 1st January, 1961.

Dr Olsen went about this arduous task with great enthusiasm. He carried a very heavy administrative load during his two years as Warden due to the innumerable teething problems which inevitably arose with such a project.

The Warden treated staff fairly and gave advice freely. He encouraged the early students to be independent for most had not attended a University before and there were very few mature students in 1961. He showed a deep interest in the welfare of students and staff and their families.

Dr Olsen was always keen to provide press and radio with articles pertaining to the University College and the activities of its staff and students in order to publicize the new institution as far and as wide as possible.

At the end of 1962 Dr Olsen returned to his previous position at the University of Queensland, following two years of successful establishment of the University College of Townsville.

John MARSHALL

* * * * *
Tom Priestley was a man of considerable enthusiasm and energy. If he believed in something, he became totally committed to it.

Fortunately for North Queensland, he had an unshakable belief that North Queensland not only needed but was ready for a University, and in the late 1950's and early 1960's, through his contagious enthusiasm, succeeded in convincing many people throughout the State to share his belief.

He was one of the main driving forces behind the establishment of two organisations which helped marshal support for the establishment of a University in North Queensland, the Townsville and District University Society, whose membership was limited to University graduates, and the North Queensland University Association. The latter organisation was formed with the main purpose of raising funds to assist in providing residential accommodation for out of town students. It was established in response to indications from the Minister for Education and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland at the time, that any commitment to further development of university facilities in North Queensland would be dependent on the level of community support. In the event, the level of that support surprised many people, but not Tom Priestley.

The first part of his dream came to reality with the foundation of the Townsville University College and the second part only a short time later (in the life of a University) with the granting of autonomy and the establishment of the James Cook University of North Queensland. Most of the last twenty years of his life were, in one way or another devoted to the realisation and furtherance of his dream.

Fred McKay
The Beginnings

One summer day in 1958 Dr Reeve Palmerston-Rundle invited seven of his graduate friends to come and sip cool drinks, with him sitting on his terrace overlooking the sea while he told them a cherished idea. Those friends were Moya and Ralph Cormack (later Judge), Vic Honour (Principal of Townsville High School), Tom Priestley (Manager of TREB — now NORQEB), Alderman Dr John Briene, Alderman Harry Hopkins and Joan Hopkins, and his big idea was that a society of university graduates should be formed for the enjoyment and stimulation of each other’s company and to work for the establishment of a university in Townsville.

On the 28th of April, 1958, a meeting was called at the C.W.A. Hall, 63 people attended, and the Townsville and District University Society was unanimously voted into existence. A constitution was subsequently drawn up with the above aims.

An Inaugural Meeting was held on September 12 and Professor W.A. Osborne MA DSc Emeritus Professor of Physiology at University of Melbourne, accepted the invitation to deliver the Oration. It was a magnificent oration, entitled “The Service of the University”. In it he asked, “When is a community fit for the establishment of a University? The answer is when it wants one. Those who think that the foundation of a university should wait until the economic position is favourable should take a hint from churches which are not afraid of initial monetary difficulty. If asking is properly organised, then giving is assured”.

In December of this same year of 1958, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Mr J.D. Story, reported to the Senate that one of the directions, in which they must progress was fostering the spread of tertiary education throughout the state of Queensland, by the establishment of Regional University Centres that would ultimately develop into autonomous institutions. And so the scene was set.

Vic Honour canvassed the schools for the number of potential undergrads, Vic and Tom Priestley went to and fro talking to Government and University authorities, Dr Peter Rowland organised scholarships for bright, but needy, students so that they could stay at school for their senior years. Alderman Roberts with tremendous foresight, organised the City Council’s buying of 1000 acres of land on the south bank of the Ross, which was offered to the Senate as a permanent site for the future university.

At the first Annual Meeting of the University Society, in 1959, Dr Rundle reported that the Government had announced in May that a University Centre would be built in Pimlico in 1961. In November he moved that a committee of citizens should be formed to promote and support the establishment of a University College. As a result, in February 1960, a public meeting was called by the Mayor, Alderman Angus Smith, at which 83 people attended and the North Queensland University Association was formed. This Association then took over the mammoth tasks of raising money and organising Residential Colleges.

The Association urged that a University College be set up rather than a University Centre and that a Warden be appointed. This was to be Dr Olsen. In May 1960 the foundation stone of the University Building at Pimlico was laid by the Hon. T.C.A. Pizzey, Professors Schonell, Teakle, Jones and Prentice of the University of Queensland came up for the ceremony. After that ceremony Mr Wolfe, Principal of Pimlico High School, offered the use of an area under his school as a laboratory. This offer was finally accepted and how Miss Margaret Mackay and Mr Ron Kenny managed to run their first year courses of Botany and Zoology so successfully without any water even being laid on in the area remains one of the wonders of that exciting first year 1961.

In August 1960 the state Government negotiated with the Federal Government for the Stuart Migrant Centre to be used as a hostel for men students. At that time it was not thought advisable for men and women students to be close together at Stuart — (20 years have produce a great change in thinking) — and so Duncragan on Melton Hill was taken over for women students. Duncragan, a big old house with big square rooms, was originally the home of the Duncan family. It was converted to a hostel by removing the central section of the roof and constructing a sunken garden in the centre of the building under the opening and the big rooms were divided into small rooms on either side of a corridor. A big tremendously heavy cast-iron plunge bath left in the building, probably the first in Townsville, is to go to the historic house being furnished by the National Trust.

In August 1960 the Accommodation Sub-committee of the University Association was set up to supervise the alterations of the hostels and organise furnishings for an anticipated 35 men and 20 women. The hostels were just ready in time for occupation when the University College opened in 1961. The first principals were Miss Mackay at Duncragan and Mr Ian Moles at Stuart.

About 1914-1915 Professor Osborne visited Townsville several times during the hot summer and carried out tests on himself, walking up and down Castle Hill. He thereby proved satisfactorily to himself that man is a tropical animal. In 1958 with great foresight, he concluded his oration with these words:—

“I may be permitted to remark that the foundation of a University in North Queensland must one day be achieved. Tropical Queensland is climatically and economically a country set apart and possessing the promise and potency of expansion and power. My life work in human
physiology allows me to state with assurance that nowhere else in the world can there be found the amenities without those dread endemic diseases, those hideous maladies which infest the tropical regions of Africa, America and Asia. One day, it may not be far off, tropical Australia will become the winter resort and sanitarium of white races. When this great influx of population takes place it would be pleasant to think that the opportunity of higher education was available. With deep earnestness I appeal to you to recognise the wonderful opportunity offered to you. History is knocking at your gate. Are you going to respond?"

North Queensland has surely responded.

Joan Hopkins
(Foundation Member:
Townsville District University Society
and North Queensland University Association)

Flinders Street, Townsville, 1961.

North Queensland’s Involvement

At a general meeting of University graduates held in the CWA hall, (cnr Walker and Denham Streets, Townsville) in 1958, it was decided to form the Townsville and District University Society.

The first President was Dr R. Palmerston-Rundle, who had done much of the groundwork leading to the calling of the general meeting of interested graduates. A sub-committee was formed to draw up a constitution and rules, and these were adopted, after much debate, by a further general meeting later in the year.

Basically, the objects of the society initially were two-fold:

(i) To press for the establishment of a university in Townsville
(ii) To foster social activities between graduates of the various universities.

Members of the Society in well-placed positions were able to lend their weight to submissions being made for the establishment of a university in Townsville, and to make a case in their own right in as many quarters as possible.

Within a very short space of time — 1-2 years — the Government had announced its intention to establish a University College at Townsville. Thus, one of the basic objects of the Society had been achieved.

The thrust of the Society then evolved as:

- an annual cocktail party early in the year to welcome new University staff to Townsville and as a social occasion for old and new members
- other social activities during the year, including family outings
- cultural activities, especially the setting-up of a Film Group
- awarding of annual scholarships to deserving matriculants.

A separate body, the North Queensland University Association, was formed to raise funds for the residential colleges established at the Stuart Migrant’s Hostel (male under-graduates) and at Duncragan (female under-graduates), to manage the finances of these colleges, and to foster an awareness by the community of North Queensland of the value and needs of the University College.

This was a separate body, with entirely different objectives, although there was much dual membership, even as office-bearers.
The Townsville and District University Society ceased awarding scholarships when the Commonwealth greatly increased its provision of scholarships. Funds for these scholarships had been raised by donations from members.

The Film Group was hived off into a separate body, and the Society then became a body organising social functions for its members, including members on the University staff.

The Society ceased to operate in 1973, and its funds were made available in trust to the University for the award of prizes.

Jack BORDUJENKO
(Foundation Member of the Townsville and District University Society)

* * * * *

THE ESTABLISHMENT...
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

In a memorandum to the Professorial Board of the University of Queensland in January, 1957, the Vice-Chancellor, Mr J.D. Story, called the attention of the Board to the need for establishing some form of regional university centres outside Brisbane. The number of students then in attendance at the University (1957) was approximately 5,000 (day and evening), but enrolments were expected to rise to 18,000 by 1966. A Committee of the Professorial Board under the chairmanship of the Professor of Education, Fred J. Schonell, was subsequently constituted and charged with making a comprehensive survey of the problems associated with the expansion of tertiary education in Queensland and the advantages which might be derived from regional university development. This Committee uncovered a number of significant facts and its findings may well constitute one of the most prominent milestones in the history of Queensland education. In the first place, it was found that the demand for full scale university education in the country areas of the State was soon to exceed that which could be effectively offered by the University’s Department of External Studies. Although this Department catered for some 2,000 students with tutorial centres in Toowoomba, Townsville, Rockhampton, Cairns, Maryborough and Mackay the range of subjects available for external study was a limited one. There was, for example, an increasing demand from students in more distant areas of the State for Science and Engineering courses requiring laboratories and a considerable amount of practical work to be undertaken by students. In the second place, the increasing cost of residential college accommodation, travelling expenses and rising university fees, seemed to point to the provision of some form of university education in areas which would be conveniently accessible to students. It became increasingly apparent to the Committee that some form of decentralization in university education should take place.

In Townsville, an enthusiastic organization of local citizens began to show exceptional interest in the establishment of a university centre in the north. To this interest was added the promise of sustained personal and financial support. This group, the Townsville and District University Society, was formally constituted in January, 1958, and dedicated itself to the attainment of three primary objectives: (1) fostering the cultural and social interests of graduates in North Queensland; (2) encouraging the growth of an interest in higher education; and (3) supporting the foundation of a University College in North Queensland. The Society produced a survey of potential university students in the north and argued that Townsville was the most logical and suitable place for the establishment of Queensland’s second University. The city of Townsville had a growing population of more than 51,000 was linked directly by rail with the rich pastoral and mining areas of the west, and was centrally situated in respect to such towns as Cairns (25,000), Innisfail (7,000), Ingham (5,000), Ayr (8,000), Mt Isa (13,000) and...
The Foundations (looking towards Pimlico High School).

Meanwhile, in Brisbane, a second Committee of the Professorial Board drew up concrete recommendations for the establishment of a regional university centre catering for first year courses in Engineering, Science, Arts, Medicine, Education, Agriculture and Veterinary Science. These suggestions were submitted by the University Senate to the Minister for Education (Mr J.C.A. Pizey). On 11th October, 1958, Mr Pizey also received a deputation from the Townsville and District University Society in the Queen’s Hotel, Townsville, and on the following day, from a Cabinet meeting in Cairns, it was announced that the Government would proceed with the establishment of a University College at Townsville.

Once the Government had made the decision to establish The University College of Townsville events moved swiftly. The Department of Public Works drew up plans approved by the University for the erection of buildings; orders were placed for teaching material, class room equipment, and books for the Library. With the retirement of the Vice-Chancellor, Mr J.D. Story, his successor, Professor F.J. Schonell, made the plans and preparations for the new University College his personal responsibility. Professor Schonell pushed ahead with the innumerable details and decisions required for the opening in 1961. In the north, the Townsville and District University Society gave birth to a new North Queensland University Association which was to consist of all people in the north anxious to assist in the foundation of the University College. This association immediately undertook to provide residential accommodation for men and women students, and also accepted the responsibility for providing additional money for a Library as well as scholarship endowments.

Throughout 1959-60, the enormous task of establishing and equipping a new University College was completed. The foundation stone of what was officially gazetted on 19th May, 1960, as The University College of Townsville was laid by the Minister for Education, the Hon. J.C.A. Pizey, BA DipEd, on Saturday, 21st May, 1960, in the presence of a large gathering representative of the Government, the University and the industrial and commercial interests of North Queensland. The University College was officially opened on the morning of 27th February, 1961, by the Premier of Queensland, the Hon. G.F.R. Nicklin, MM LL.D, and lectures commenced on the following day.

(Extract from the 1962 Handbook of the University College of Townsville.)

In 1961 I was approached to construct a model of the proposed Pimlico Campus. The idea behind the project was for the Model to be displayed at various country shows and functions to make the people of North Queensland aware of the need for the University and for their financial support to build Colleges to accommodate the out-of-town students. The Model was displayed at the Atherton Tablelands shows, coastal towns and western areas.

The Model was housed in a two part box which was locked together for transport and when displayed showed the Pimlico Campus and a proposed contour map of the Future Douglas Campus. The box and Model was constructed by myself, (Bill) G.C. Kaye, then attached to the Staff of Townsville State High School and Technical College.

The painting of the Model was carried out by the Senior Art Students under the guidance of Mr Jim Aitkenhead and the Contour Map was constructed by Mr Jim Hansen and his Senior Students. Assistance was also provided by the late Jim Mahoney, Vic Honour and Stan Brock.

On completion of the Model, it was consigned to Tully by rail where it was first displayed. Later in 1961 it was displayed at an industrial type Fair held in Townsville, at the Showgrounds in Eagers Pavilion.

It was estimated about 100 hours work went into the complete Model.
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(As at the End of 1961)

Chairman
Henry Thomas Priestley, BE MIEE MIEAust FAIM

Members
George Vivian Roberts Jnr (Vice-Chairman)
John Cecil Saint-Smith, BE (Mech & Elec) MIEAust
            AMAusIMM FAIM (Lt-Col)
Frank Jackson Olsen, MEd BSc PhD
Victor Gerald Honour, BA DipEd
Andrew Dale
Maurice William Blank BSc
Lewis Richard Davies-Graham, DiplIndCh FRACI FAIM
Henry Hollis Hopkins, BA BCom FAIM AASA
Joseph Thomas Baker, MSc ARACI FCS MACS
Margaret-Muriel Mackay, MSc
Ian Newton Moles, MA
Ian Shevill, The Rt Rev. MA ThD
Vincent Francis Vandeleur, The Rt Rev. Msgr
Maxwell Albert Percy Mattingley, Bro. MA DiplInstEd AEd
Barbara Joan Stelling MB ChB
Reeve Palmerston Rundle, MB BS
Bernard Joseph Jeffreys, The Hon. Mr Justice
Cedric Bruce Venton, MScApp (Ind Chem)

Secretary
John William Marshall
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1961
THE FORMATIVE YEAR

On the 13th December, 1960, Professor F.J. Schonell announced the appointment of the Advisory Committee of the University-College of Townsville. It consisted of the Warden, Dr F.J. Olsen, four members of the Academic Staff and fifteen members appointed on the recommendation of the North Queensland University Association.

The first three wings of the first building on the Pimlico Campus were nearing completion when the Advisory Committee first met to initiate the development of policies to guide the new College. There was ample enthusiasm to justify the firm belief that with diplomacy and hard work the College would in due course become a University in its own right.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at the Town Hall, Flinders Street, Townsville, on the 23rd January, 1961.

In his welcoming speech, the first Warden, Dr F.J. Olsen, assured members of the Committee that the Senate of the University would vest in the Committee all the powers, duties and responsibilities that it hoped in turn to give to the Advisory Council which was to be constituted the following year. He further assured members that the time given to assist in the good management of the University College would be time well spent because the Senate would be guided in its policy decisions towards the management and expansion of the College by the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

The Inaugural Meeting elected Mr H.T. Priestley as its Chairman, Mr G.V. Roberts as its Deputy Chairman and Mr John Marshall as its Secretary.

Much of the discussion at this Inaugural Meeting related to the Committee structure. Dr F.J. Olsen stated that the proposed Planning Sub-Committee had two major reports to make. Firstly, an urgent and important one, covered what courses or subjects of second year level should be provided in 1962. Secondly, an orderly five-year plan so that the Committee could advise the Senate on a long-term planning basis, showing when a move to the proposed new University site could be made.

The following Sub-Committees — Development, Research, Public Relations, Library, Students Welfare and Co-Ordinating — were formed.

Although the formation of a Hostel Management Committee was raised, separate Halls of Residence Committees for "Stuart" and "Duncragan" did not
eventuate until June, 1962.

Prior to the formation of the Advisory Committee, representations had been made to the Queensland University for the inclusion of two women in the membership of the Committee. These representations culminated in a petition signed by a number of Townsville residents asking that the membership of the Committee be increased by at least two to enable two women to be elected to the Committee. This petition was considered by the Advisory Committee at its first meeting. A decision thereon was deferred. At its meeting in May, 1961 the Committee decided that its membership be increased by the appointment of one woman. At the same meeting, Dr Barbara Stelling was elected and took her place at the next meeting.

At its first meeting, the Advisory Committee set up a special Sub-Committee to make arrangements for the official opening of the College by the Honourable F.R. Nicklin, Premier of Queensland, on Monday, 27th February, 1961.

The diligence and initiative of the Committee and its Sub-Committees is perhaps best illustrated by an extract of a report from the Planning Sub-Committee which reads:

"The following points highlighted the needs considered by the Planning Sub-Committee —

(a) The need to establish a University at Townsville in order to encourage an educational consciousness in an area where this is greatly needed.

(b) The need to establish a bridgehead on the new site from which adequate growth can take place as a complete University.

(c) The need to establish full degree courses as a stimulus to the attraction of students.

(d) The extreme need for the provision of very extensive residential college accommodation in 1963 and 1964.

(e) The need to exploit on a systematic basis the accommodation of students in private homes (compare Brisbane where systematic approval of accommodation and registration of vacancies is controlled by the University).

(f) The probability that technical buildings on the new site will not be likely before the 1964-66 triennium.

(g) The resulting extreme importance of establishing the residential colleges as soon as possible and above all the importance of locating them on the new site as a "bridgehead"."
(h) The need to influence the Senate to select land at the new site in a manner which will best suit the development of the University and residential colleges and at the same time conform to the development plan of the Townsville City Council and the C.S.I.R.O. and other bodies.

(i) The enormous potential for developing a University of the Tropics at Townsville where characteristic courses and research would become a feature inviting world-wide recognition."

Prior to its last meeting in December, 1961, the Advisory Committee, acting upon recommendations from the co-ordinating Sub-Committee, did at its September meeting resolve that the new Advisory Council should consist of twenty-five members comprising the Warden (ex officio) four members of the staff of the College, three persons nominated by the Government, three persons representing the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Non-Conformist Churches and fourteen members to be nominated by the Senate of the Queensland University.

In addition, the Committee resolved to submit for the guidance of Senate, a list of the names tabled by the Co-ordinating Sub-Committee together with the qualifications of each proposed member.

All of the names submitted by the Committee became members of the first Advisory Council which met on the 27th March, 1962.

An interesting page of the history of the College had closed.

G.V. ROBERTS

REFLECTIONS . . .

By members of the 1961 staff

Left to right: I. Moles, L. Davies-Graham, Bishop I. Shevill, H.H, Hopkins
1961 STAFF

Warden: F.J. Olsen, MEd Melb BSc PhD Qld

Lecturers

Botany: Margaret M. Mackay, BSc StAnd MSc Syd
Chemistry: J.T. Baker, MSc Qld
Engineering: K.P. Stark, BE 1st Class Hons BEcon UnivMedal Qld AMIEAust
English: R.S. Smith, BA 1st Class Hons Qld
French: R.K. Moss, BA DipED Melb
Geology: P.J. Stephenson, PhD DIC Lond BSc 1st Class Hons UnivMedal Qld
History: I.N. Moles, BA 1st Class Hons MA Qld
Mathematics: B.B. Newman, BSc 1st Class Hons DipEd
Physics: E.H. Carman, MSc PhD Melb
Zoology: R.P. Kenny, BSc WAust

Senior Demonstrators

Physics: B.C. Gibson-Wilde, BSc Qld

Demonstrators

Botany: M.M. Stewart, BSc Qld
Zoology: J.A. Bryan, BSc Qld

Librarian: E.M. Carroll, BA Qld

Senior Administrative Officer: J.W. Marshall

1961 ORIGINAL STAFF ON CAMPUS IN 1981

K.P. Stark — Professor of Systems Engineering, Head of Department of Civil & Systems Engineering
R.S. Smith — Senior Lecturer, English Department
P.J. Stephenson — Associate Professor, Geology Department
I.N. Moles — Associate Professor, History Department
B.B. Newman — Senior Lecturer, Mathematics Department
R.P. Kenny — Associate Professor, Zoology Department
B.C. Gibson-Wilde — Senior Lecturer, Physics Department
J.W. Marshall — Administrative Officer, Buildings & Grounds Division
I remember giving three lectures and one tutorial each week to day students, but only the three lectures to evening students. And whereas the four day-class hours were scattered through the week, the three evening-class hours had to be taken as a single block. This arrangement was tailored to suit the convenience of evening students, so that they had to come out to lectures only one night a week for any given subject. Under these circumstances, sustained concentration was difficult on hot summer nights, when standing under the overhead fluorescent lights invited the invasion of the lecturer's hair and shirt-neck by myriads of flying and crawling insects.

I remember the natural ventilation. The buildings consisted of a set of rooms along the inland side, giving onto an open verandah along the seaward side. Glass louvres and windows facilitated a flow of air across the rooms. They also enabled tired and bored students to escape from the tedium of lectures by gazing at the world outside with its passing parade.

I remember the crowded conditions for lecturing staff. Five of us occupied a single room next to the Warden's office, and next again was a tiny roomlet (I exaggerate not) which was used for staff coffee-breaks and lunch.

I remember how unsophisticated the students were (they still are, but in a different way), how the staff therefore made special efforts to be friendly and helpful, especially as numbers (of both students and staff) were small. But I also remember how these efforts were counterbalanced by the aloofness of the students, who had been firmly instructed by officials of the Student Union at St Lucia that they were not to hobnob with the staff. Among other things, this policy of stand-off independence led to what I always remember as a gallant but unconvincing production (for two nights in the Theatre Royal) of *Tiger at the Gates*, a translation of Jean Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*.

Yet this production is a striking instance of what I remember best about 1961. Everything was a new challenge, and to meet it everyone was fresh and keen. There was a great spirit of exuberant enthusiasm, and everyone enjoyed the present in the confidence of laying solid foundations for a prosperous and limitless future. We were pioneers beginning to build a tradition, and that year (1961) was North Queensland's academic honeymoon.

Ross SMITH

* * * * *
How do you start a university teaching laboratory from scratch? After appointment as Senior Demonstrator in Physics at the new University College of Townsville in January, 1961, I learnt the answer to that question — very quickly!

It was something of an adventure — to one who had been no further north than Bundaberg — to be arriving in the tropical north to help found a new university college. Driving north from Brisbane on a highway with many hundreds of kilometres still rough gravel reinforced the sense of distance and isolation. The sense of adventure turned to near-panic on arrival when, with classes due to start in six weeks, the “college” turned out to be a shambles of partly-furnished buildings, with workmen, carpenters, electricians and plumbers everywhere — all in steaming heat and shrouded in dust.

Where was the Physics Laboratory anyway? Climbing over building material, dodging tradesmen, avoiding falling into trenches or being garroted by power cables, eventually I located a large first-floor room — bare concrete, no windows, no furniture, no services! The “office" for the demonstrator looked like a room after the Blitz — hand basin askew in the corner, wires protruding from bare concrete, utterly bare. The twenty crates of teaching laboratory equipment which had preceded me from St Lucia were piled forlornly under cover in another wing; there was no point in opening them yet.

By early February, at least essential fittings were installed in the laboratory, vinyl tiles were laid, windows were now glazed (a blessing with the onset of a heavy wet season), electrical and plumbing services were under way and, after a little concern, the laboratory benches, cupboards and other furniture arrived. Crates were unpacked and — mercifully — the equipment was found to be largely undamaged.

By the time of the official opening of the new College in the last week of February, the laboratory was almost in workable state, with only limited electrical power and still no mains water. Miraculously, as it has often seemed looking back to those days, classes started only a week or two behind schedule.

Bruce GIBSON-WILDE
PHYSICS

* * * * *
Reflections from the Principal of Duncragan

Fortunately, when we recall events in our lives, we have the ability to forget the frustrations, anxieties and pain and remember the best, the happier features. So it is with me. It is only since I have been asked to write this and since I have consciously recalled the early days of the University College of Townsville, that I have remembered the problems we encountered – the anxieties of a first lecture to be given and no time in which to write it; a practical class to be run and no material collected, the first lecture delivered from a packing case in a schoolroom in Pimlico High School with paint pots scattered around the room and the painters waiting outside; the accident involving two of "my girls" from Duncragan.

Instead, I remember with pleasure the friendliness amongst the nine "original" members of staff; the manner in which we laughed – sometimes incongruously at our problems but still managed to overcome them. I remember the co-operation we gave each other. The "girls" from Duncragan will remember my Pip – dog. He, poor animal, was not allowed to have a bath till he had provided enough fleas for each member of the Zoology I class!!

I remember the manner in which the people of Townsville received us and their efforts to make the College and the Halls of Residence viable. I refer particularly to the members of the University Society and the University Association. Collectively and severally they were always ready to help.

Probably best of all and most affectionately I remember Duncragan, the girls and the pleasure it was getting to know them. With a degree of amusement I recall my own inexperience, yet (I believe) we had a happy mutually tolerant relationship. The girls of 1961 will always be special as far as I am concerned. I wonder if they remember our "At Home"?

Being a "foundation member of staff" is an experience never to be forgotten. It is an experience I am grateful to have had and appreciate the memories it provided.

Margaret MACKAY

* * * * *

Miss M. Mackay, Principal of Duncragan and Lecturer in Botany.

Duncragan – female residence.
Interview with Ross Smith, English Department, 28 April 1981.

Ross, we were talking about the University twenty years ago in 1961, when you first arrived and it was a College of the University of Queensland. Could you tell us a little bit about where it was situated – the teaching part of it and the boarding part of it?

It seems strange to say so, but in the beginning the University College of Townsville was located in the A.M.P. Building in Flinders Street. I can still remember having to journey up to the second floor there to collect mail from John Marshall.

While the actual University building was being completed at Fulham Road we just managed the best way we could; we wrote lectures, we read books, we held meetings wherever we could.

The opening ceremony of the actual first buildings on the site at Pimlico was performed on a day of torrid tropical heat and humidity where, if I remember correctly, we sat out in the open faced by members of the public. The physical setting was one of sand, there were no established lawns or trees, and in this area of sand stood not only the academic buildings but the workmen's and foreman's huts, so that the original impression of the physical building on its site was not altogether attractive.

Now we're used to the students living in the colleges on the campus at Douglas, but before that they were using old boarding establishments scattered around the town. Could you tell us a little bit about where the colleges were?

The only residential place for students that I remember was some converted huts on what had been an army base out at Stuart during the war, and the physical difficulty of getting to and fro between Fulham Road and Stuart was met by students and some of the original staff in transport of one kind or another. These students' residential huts included dormitories, an eating hall and a recreation hall. I mention the recreation hall particularly, because among our first students we had some drama enthusiasts who insisted on rehearsing and presenting a play called "Tiger at the Gates". The leading light of this drama group was Ken Smith, who having obtained a degree here then went to London.
There was a place I can remember in West End. And also Duncragan, was that later again?

I think the residential in West End had been the original Mater Hospital at the top of Echlin Street and Stagpole Street. Margaret Mackay, the lecturer in Botany, was the Principal of Duncragan as a hostel for women students.

Today we’re used to having a Vice-Chancellor. When it first started it was a Warden. Could you tell us a little about the first Warden?

The first Warden was Dr Frank Olsen. He was the right man in the right place at the right time. He was an excellent public relations man, not only with the Committees that had promoted the establishment of the University and with the general public of Townsville, and indeed North Queensland, but particularly with the students. He was very helpful in getting them to settle down to their studies in this entirely new tertiary institution. I can always remember, however, that before the end of that first year he made it very clear that “the honeymoon was over”, and that all the delights of beginning this new institution were now to be reinforced with solid results and worthwhile achievement.

If the staff had to have a pioneering spirit, really, in setting up the University, it must have been difficult for North Queensland students to accept and get used to a concept of having a University. Am I right in presuming that the students came from North Queensland?

I think the majority of students came from North Queensland, but a number of students had to be imported from down south. Whether they had originally come from the north I no longer remember, but to make up a student enrolment of 100 in 1961 at the beginning of the College, some students were offered scholarships from the Teachers College in Brisbane. I can remember particularly that one of these imported students was named Chris Bergin. One of the original local students was Janet Graham, who later obtained her degree and married one of the university staff.

Was there such a thing as the University library then?

The library was tiny. It occupied a small room on the top floor over the Warden’s office. The Department of English began its library career in Townsville with a mere £150 worth of books.

Finally, could you tell us what courses were taught in the English Department by you in those early days?

The only course was English I. The lecturer knew he was committed to seven hours of class time per week. This was made up of three hours of lecturing to the day students, plus a tutorial for the day students (there was no tutor), and then for the evening students a solid block once a week of three hours of lectures. The physical conditions were not always pleasant. On many occasions we lectured to students under fluorescent lights, with swarms of insects, not only through our hair and over our books and papers but also down our backs. There was no way of avoiding them, and of course, we had no air-conditioning. This discomfort applied also to staff studies; we did not have individual staff studies. There were five lecturers in one study on the ground floor, with a tiny staff canteen next door. When it came to examinations, we did not mark our own papers. These were sent to Brisbane and we got 120 Brisbane papers.

Are there any stories which you remember that are particularly funny from the incidents that might have happened in that first year?

I think the funniest thing that happened to me was the experience of house-hunting in Townsville, and being taken around to places whose yards were flooded. One place was literally at ground level: the water came in through the doorway, which was simply protected by a piece of striped canvas which you rolled up or let down. The wardrobe was two tall metal filing-cabinets. But we were pioneers.

Ross Smith, English lecturer.
Interview with Ian Moles, Department of History, 28 April, 1981.

Ian, in 1961 you were in charge of the residence at Stuart and also the foundation lecturer in History. Could you tell us any memories you have of it? Were there males and females at Stuart?

No, there were only males at the time. There was another Hall of Residence for the girls at Duncragan, which is still up on Melton Hill, but I got involved with Stuart House for the simple reason that I have previously had a long association with colleges from the time that I was an undergraduate myself at Cromwell College in the University of Queensland. I subsequently went on to become the Principal and for a time an Acting-Principal of Cromwell College, and when I arrived here among the original staff, I was, I think, the only one among the academic staff who had had any sort of collegiate or Hall of Residence experience. The question was just put to me, would I like to be the Principal, and so I said, “Why not?”, not knowing exactly what the situation was. It consisted, of course, as Ross has probably told you, of just a collection of old war-time huts which were initially used by the R.A.A.F., and then it became for a time after the war a migrant holding centre. Then some very public-minded citizens throughout North Queensland, who went by the name of the North Queensland University Association — not the University Society, which is a different organisation — raised the funds to convert those premises to residential accommodation for, I think, it was about 32 men students. Duncragan had accommodation for, I think, no more than about 20 girls, which meant, however, they were both full in the first year and that meant that somewhat in excess of 50% of the undergraduate population was accommodated.

I can remember someone pointing out to me another place in West End that was, at some stage, a University residence. Was that not as early as that?

Yes, well that came, from memory, in about 1963, and that started off originally as what was called the Stuart House Annex. It was the original Mater Hospital, in Stagpole Street in Townsville, and by the time the student population had risen from, I think it was 99 in 1961, to about 200 by 1963, it became evident that there was a need for more accommodation. The Mater Hospital was then in the process of moving to its new premises in Fulham Road and so became available, the University took it over, and again I administered that for a time as Principal, with Al Richardson, who is still here at the University Hall, as the Vice-Principal in charge of the Stuart House Annex, and then shortly after that it was made into an autonomous hall of residence with the name of Olsen House, after the first Warden of the University College.

When I was an undergraduate student I lived in University Hall and there used to be all sorts of student pranks, and particularly fights between colleges and strange goings-ons. Did the same sort of things go on out at Stuart?

Oh, of course. I suppose one could reel off dozens and dozens of these, but I suppose the most notable thing that was ever achieved by a student of Stuart House was during Commem. week, as they were then — I don’t think they’re even held now are they?

I think they’ve cut it down to a Commem. Day.

Well, again, this was part of the legacy of the University of Queensland, and many of the institutions that were adopted here were just carbon copies of those in Brisbane. Commem. Week was one, but it was a continuous week of rather uproarious activity and practically no students went to lectures for a whole week, culminating on an official university holiday, which was usually on a Thursday, I think, when there was a formal ball at night. Of course, these no longer occur, but there was a university procession of floats through the streets of Townsville and usually the academic staff had a pub crawl up and down Flinders Street at the time when there were many pubs still there.

Well, it was in one of those Commem. weeks that, of course, the original question mark was painted on Castle Hill. Are you familiar with the question mark? That preceded the Saint.

No, I know the Saint, but I don’t know the question mark.

Oh, yes. Well originally there was a large question mark in whitewash that appeared on the side of Castle Hill and this provided grounds for great speculation and great moral uncertainty among the citizens of Townsville — you know, the impropriety of putting it there in the first place. But that was achieved by one person and then, when it wore off gradually, it was replaced a few years later by the rather unoriginal Saint.

The symbol of the Saint — could you date that? It was adopted by the Student’s Union — would that have been in the late sixties?

Well I think it was originally adopted by the University Football Club, wasn’t it, as their symbol? I think so, but it’s totally unoriginal and I think that when the question mark had finally worn off the face of Castle Hill some students decided that they’d better put something else there, and no doubt at some bull session one night someone thought up a Saint and so that went up. I think the University Football Club still call themselves the Saints, don’t they?
Ian, you came up here to teach History. What did History entail in 1961?

Well that's a long story. The first history courses taught here were again in fact replicas of those taught in the University of Queensland at the time, and the first-year course that I taught here was a Survey of European History, which was called *Europe to 1815*. That led to the second-year course the following year, called *Europe since 1815*, both courses being taught simultaneously in Brisbane and all examination papers pooled. I had to fly down to Brisbane every year and mark my quota of examination papers for Townsville and University of Queensland students. In addition to that, there was a first-year Honours course on the French Revolution and then there was a second-year Honours course on British History in the 19th century, so that in those first two years, and indeed for the first four years, I was teaching for two pass courses and two honorus courses.

What library facilities would have been available then?

Well, they weren't very good as you can imagine. The first library was just a rather small room in what is now the TAFE, the old Pimplico campus of James Cook. I don't remember how many volumes there would have been, but they were very, very basic holdings, but that didn't matter too much in terms of the fact that there were so few students, and, of course, the University College had its own arrangements with the External Studies Department, too, of the University of Queensland.

Interview with Robin Blyth, Deputy Bursar, 4 May 1981.

Robin, you are now Deputy Bursar at the University. In 1961 you were one of the earliest staff members. Could you tell us how many staff members there were in 1961, and how you came to get the job at the University?

I joined the University of Queensland staff in February, 1955. After two years in the Records Section and five years in the Accounts Section, a position became available in Townsville. I applied for the job and transferred here in early November, 1961, to work as a clerk under John Marshall, who was Administrative Officer at that time.

So you came later in the year rather than at the start of it?

Yes, I arrived in Townsville on 5 November, 1961, Guy Fawkes night. I remember it well. As the aircraft, an ageing Viscount prop-jet, approached the airport over virgin scrub land, which is now Lavarack Barracks, Cranbrook and Heatley, I could see bonfires everywhere and exploding fireworks made an impressive display. In fact at one stage I feared that some of the rockets might hit the aircraft.

Today we're used to people in administration keeping very much in one section in the Accounting Section, or in the General Office downstairs, rather than being a jack-of-all-trades. What was it like in 1961, performing jobs in administration.

One of my first jobs was to assist in the administration of the first annual degree examinations. My duties in those days touched on all aspects of University administration from the most menial of tasks through to assisting in the decision-making processes. I can recall sitting for hours one weekend on a rider mower assisting with a general clean-up of the grounds just prior to an important function.

There were very few committees in those days. Decision-making was more in the form of enlightened dictatorship – a direct contrast with the very complex committee system we have today.

Were there Departmental Secretaries in those days? Were they separate from this?

In the beginning there were no departmental secretaries. The girls in Administration did all of the typing for departments. So far as I can recall the first departmental secretary was appointed to Engineering some time in 1963.

Stuart House – male residence.
Was there a photography section in 1961?

No, not in 1961; photography came later.

Of the 1961 staff, just looking at a photo there, there is yourself, also Doris Coleman. Who does remain among the clerical staff?

There are four of us still soldiering on. John Marshall in Buildings and Grounds, Doris Coleman in the typing pool, Helen Alexander also in Buildings and Grounds, and myself.

The building you’re standing in front of – that’s the main Pimlico building as you come in from the road?

Yes. By the end of 1961, three wings had been completed. Wing 4, the Refectory building, and various other smaller structures came later.

It must have been a more friendly place, a lot more personal place for students, academic staff, administration staff.

As I recall we had a very happy environment. All of the staff got to know one another pretty well. Most of the students were known on a first name basis.

Was there a Staff Association for the staff social events that happened then?

In 1961 there was only one common room used by everybody, academic staff, administrative staff, cleaners, groundsmen, the lot. We started up a social club in 1961 and I can remember being very active in organising social events. Academic staff could join the University of Queensland Staff Association but I don’t recall any of the staff being very active in the Association’s affairs.

Was there anything else in particular that you remember from 1961?

I can remember being crammed into a very small space in the office with no airconditioning or ceiling fans. It was very uncomfortable in the middle of summer. I can also remember walking a lot. It was a long way around the buildings particularly when you did it several times a day.

One of Ross Smith’s memories is of lecturing at night with insects and bugs crawling all over him and all over the students.

Ah! the flying ants and stink bugs. How well I remember them. They made working back at night in the summer months a nightmare.

Stuart House was operating then – was the administration for Stuart House handled through the general University administration?

Yes. I assisted in administering Stuart House and Duncragan.

It’s a long way from Stuart House to Pimlico; what sort of transport system did they use, particularly when we had no bridge?

Each year we would arrange public transport to bring the students in from Stuart House daily for lectures. This service would last for two weeks at the most. The students would hitch-hike or arrange lifts with friends. We had a mini-bus at the time to transport students on field trips and it was also used from time to time particularly after hours to take students back to Stuart House. The mini-bus was also used to transport the girls to and from Duncragan each day.

“Amaroo” – bed-sitters for resident tutors, Stuart House, with Bruce Gibson-Wilde’s car.
Interview with Bruce Knight, Chemistry Department, 4 May 1981.

Bruce, what job do you have here in the University now? What’s your designation?
I’m a Senior Technical Officer now.

You’re one of the original staff members from 1961. What were you employed as in 1961?
As a laboratory assistant.

Where did you come from to get the job here?
I came from the sugar industry, I was a sugar chemist in sugar mills in north Queensland.

You were telling me before that when you first arrived, you were really too early.
Well, what really happened was that for some reason they knew the building wouldn’t be finished. Other staff members had been notified, but for some reason they forgot to notify me, so when I arrived here I asked where to find the Warden’s office. A fellow who was building the place said to me “It will be over there when we get the walls and the roof on.” I was a bit horrified, so I rushed out and bought a little box brownie and took a lot of photos and sent them off to the Queensland University, to help them realise just how bad it really was. Then I went into town because I’d read that Tom Priestley and Fred McKay were on the University Council and I got them to sign my letter of appointment indicating that I arrived at T.R.E.B. at 9 o’clock to commence work at the University.
I still have that letter of appointment.

What date was that?
It was 9th January 1961.

You’ve always been involved in the Science side and the laboratory side of the university. Where did they get the equipment from to build up that department?
Well all the equipment was actually ordered through the Queensland University, because we were colleagues of the University. But a lot of it, I believe, was cast-off things from the Queensland University, and we were given many things which consequently didn’t last very long. I don’t think there’s anything left of the original things.

You’re talking about equipment?
Yes, and the problems that we had to begin with were caused because the building wasn’t ready. People like Bruce Gibson-Wilde from Physics and Joe Baker from Chemistry — we’d have to get together. The T.R.E.B. lent us a store room and as the things came from Brisbane by rail, we transferred them into that store room. We were actually weeks late in the Chemistry buildings, and I don’t know about other buildings, in starting that year’s courses.

In Pimlico now there are some very old laboratories there. Are they still the same virtually from twenty years ago?
Exactly the same, yes; very old wooden benches etc. Wood has always been good — solid wood. The problem these days is that you can’t do much with the laminated stuff. But wood is still the best type of material for laboratories. It was set up fairly well. I believe that the first-year laboratory there was very good and very efficient.

In subjects such as Chemistry and Physics, was there just the one year that you could do to start with, then students worked through to second-year and third-year?
Yes, what happened when we first started here was that we did just about everything in the sciences. First-year it was the same for anyone to do medicine, pharmacy, whatever, and we had a big influx of first-year students and they went from here to Queensland to finish their course. So we started off virtually as a first-year course in the sciences only.

It must have been a lot more friendly a place in that it was so small. The students and staff would have known one another very well.
We all felt as if we were aliens, we were all from somewhere else, although I suppose I was the closest, being a Queenslander working in the north. We used to get together for swims on Sunday mornings. There was a lot of social activity. We used to go out to Stuart House, the single fellows — there used to be Ian Moles and myself, John Stephenson, people like that, and we used to get together fairly often. That’s one thing I miss. Some of those people we never see anymore. I think a lot of it is that you make friends within the
town and you've got your own outside interests, sport, different committees etc., whereas we had nothing and we stuck together very closely and helped each other a lot. I think that's most likely gone.

The University was a very alien institution to North Queensland as it was the first attempted tertiary education in North Queensland. Was that in any way a strain? Was there much conflict between the town and the University?

I think the town was sort of awe-struck by it. If you said that you worked at the University when you came here first, you saw this look of amazement. Where you noticed it particularly, or I noticed it particularly being a sort of sports person and casual, was in shops. If you went into a shop and you wanted to cash a cheque and you were dressed in shorts, they expected you to be in a suit if you came from the University. They had the wrong idea of what a University should do.

I also get the impression from talking to people that in those days, the lecturing staff and professors that were appointed were much more important in the town — they were more awesome creatures because they were just so strange and alien to the town.

That's right. Well, of course, we didn't have professors, we had senior lecturers or heads of departments, but I can't recall exactly when Chairs became available in each faculty, but there was none then. In 1961 there were no professors. Some of them went on to become professors, but they were called upon for a lot of public appearances and this was needed for the University for publicity.

You told me about trying to get people together for a twenty-year club, or a double-decade club — people who have been here for twenty years.

Yes, what had occurred to me was that, I think, there's thirteen left now from the original early 1961 people, and it didn't seem feasible to have a 1961 Club because it wouldn't be long before we'd all be extinct, so I thought we might start a twenty-year club. Each year we have more and more members and twenty years is not all that long. The interesting thing is that out of the original staff, thirteen people are left. They're fairly dedicated people — they started here young and they seem to be very much part of the University and feel that they are not just of their own particular Faculty.

It's very true. Of the list of the basic staff, a lot of the academic staff and also quite a reasonable proportion of the administrative and technical staff have stayed. Whoever, from the University of Queensland, chose the group of people, must have chosen quite wisely in their first group of people because they have been quite dedicated.

I think in the initial interviews, they hoped that the staff would stay here for a while. They wanted them to start and stay, and quite a lot of them have, as you can see.

After 21 years of service with the University, it is pleasing to see how much the Chemistry Department has progressed since the inauguration of the Faculty at the Pimlico campus.

In the early days, the staff of the department consisted of Dr J. Baker, Mr Bruce Knight and myself. Over the years many friendships have been formed with students and technical and academic staff. It is a pleasure to renew acquainances with past students and staff of the department, and I feel honoured to still receive letters and visits from both past staff and students.

It is with a feeling of pride that I view my past association with the University and I only hope that I will be fortunate enough to continue working in the University environment for many years to come.

H. D. McKay
AGRICULTURE
Anderson, E.R.
Ferguson, J.E.
Gillison, A.N.
Green, A.R.
McMullen, J.

APPLIED SCIENCE
Blockey, F.G.
Dunn, L.N.
O'Kane, J.M.

ARTS
Beams, J.M.
Bryan, J.A.
Burgin, C.R.
Clark, R.E.
Connnole, P.F.
Couhmen, D.B.
Cowladay, V.M.
Damiens, S.
Douglas, E.A.
Drew, S.A.
Duncan, M.H.
Dyson, S.H.
Gehrke, D.H.
Gehrke, M.A.
Goodchild, W.C.
Graham, J.
Hansen, J.F.
Hapood, G.
Harmen, J.C.
Hayes, J.J.
Hooper, L.M.
Johnson, S.H.
Jones, M.S.
Keir, G.C.
Keough, D.A.
Loughran, J.P.
Lucas, L.H.
Luciano, A.
McNell, D.W.
Needham, D.C.
O'Brien, B.J.
Plant, A.F.
Privitera, S.A.
Reardon, P.J.
Robinson, N.M.

ARTS (Contd)
Rowland, N.
Rush, T.J.
Sawdy, S.E.
Scott, A.T.
Shields, D.A.
Sinnott, Y.F.
Smith, K.
Taylor, P.F.
Turner, D.
Wilkie, J.M.
Wilson, P.
Wolfgang, J.M.
Wordsworth, W.E.

COMMERCE
Atkinson, K.L.
Greet, W.
Hawkswood, K.M.
Hooper, K.G.
Hunt, J.K.
Kelly, W.J.
Perkins, J.J.
Walters, W.F.

EDUCATION
Bell, G.W.
Bloxom, K.R.
Bryant, R.J.
Buchanan, R.M.
Campbell, M.J.
Coleman, T.G.
Cormack, J.M.
Cowen, W.W.
Crowther, H.L.G.
Davies, J.M.
Elms, S.N.
Emmerson, I.J.
Gilbert, R.A.
Glover, J.K.
Hay, J.M.
Heywood, S.C.
Jack, C.M.
Jenkinson, P.P.
Love, R.J.
Macalpine, C.
Marland, P.W.

EDUCATION (Contd)
Martin, W.T.
Neel, N.J.
O'Rielly, M.
Peel, L.A.
Raimie, A.J.
Robertson, N.J.
Smith, M.P.
Symons, A.J.
Thomas, V.C.
Webb, L.S.

ENGINEERING
Ahern, C.J.
Brown, L.J.
Brown, T.F.
Caltabiano, S.
Collyer, C.W.
Dickson, J.B.
Franich, J.
Hattfield, A.P.
Johnson, G.R.
Kermode, I.A.
Miflin, C.E.
Ness, R.B.
Omer, D.A.
Reale, F.N.
Robertson, S.G.
Rudge, K.J.
Sandford, D.G.
Sargent, M.A.
Seaton, I.T.
Stanley, L.O.
Tait, D.M.
Trounce, P.M.
Turner, C.W.
Volker, R.E.
White, B.B.

FORESTRY
Banks, J.C.G.

LAW
Kootsookos, M.A.
Reebuck, R.L.
Suthers, D.A.
Students (Contd)

MEDICINE
Bennett, G.M.
Cullum, S.M
Hopkins, P.J.
Luk, E.S-T.
McDermid, L.D.
Moore, G.G.D.
Shield, R.J.
Tucker, W.B.
Wolfe, A.M.

PHARMACY
Brown, D.D.
Cox, V.A.
Popham, C.E.
Sullivan, D.P.
Wadley, R.J.K.

SCIENCE
Abercrombie, D.F.
Adcock, G.R.
Argyros, J.D.
Bordujenko, L.R.
Bourke, N.P.
Broughton, A.D.
Brown, C.D.
Bryan, J.A.
Butcher, V.J.
Evans, K.G.
Fitzgerald, E.P.
Geraghty, J.W.
Goodchild, M.R.
Gould, D.N.
Gregson, R.
Grumley, W.D.
Hansen, G.T.
Hodgens, E.M.
Irwin, G.R.
James, D.H.
James, J.F.
James, M.B.
Keating, D.C.
King, C.M.
McNiece, D.
Marty, R.A.
Millard, M.E.
Murphy, P.T.
Pieters, L.A.
Schrieke, R.R.
Smith, N.E.
Vegar, V.N.
Williams, J.
Wright, G.J.
Wright, L.J.

*This list consists of those students who sat for examinations in 1961. Unfortunately there are no lists available of students who enrolled at the beginning of the 1961 year.

THEN

Dr Olsen with foundation students.

AND NOW

20 years later.
I have tried my hardest to recall and reproduce some witty anecdote(s) from that year in 1961. However, like many of the names and faces, they have faded away. Nevertheless I do still retain warm feelings for that formative period.

"What's an Agriculture student doing in Townsville? Won't you have to go to Brisbane next year?" — the question was often asked. "Economics mate — I have just finished the tobacco season (picking and grading) on the Burdekin and I can find cheap rent in Pimlico," was the reply. I seem to remember there were five Ags there, one of which included an illustrious female — Jill Strong (nee McMullen).

The images that return most clearly of that time include Geology excursions with Dr Stephenson who had freshly returned from conquering Antarctica (gave a good public lecture to prove it) madly scaling hills; Physics lectures that were rarely attended, and Joe Baker's early morning Chemistry vivas to make sure we passed the exams — that were always attended.

A big high for the year was being in Joe Baker's football team and making the semi-finals. A big low for the year was turning up for the first semi-final (held during the August Vac.) and having to forfeit due to lack of players.

I was an impressionable young man and can still remember listening with respect (I'm sure it wasn't awe) to R.G. Menzies when he visited us. I wasn't alone, as the rest of the student body were deadly quiet — eat your heart out Malcolm Fraser.

Eric ANDERSON

Unfortunately for me, I could not complete an Ag. Science degree in Townsville in 1961. With the help of a vocational guidance officer, a science course was selected. The problems with the new university were many at that time — a big one for me being that lecture times for two of my subjects clashed. All that is "water under the bridge" now.

However, I have many fond memories of the year. After all, I met and fell in love with "Beetle" O'Kane, my husband of nearly twenty years. I enjoyed meeting new students from other towns, working hard selling football doubles with Vicky Cox for the Rugby League team, charity work and the hectic social life.

Thank you to all concerned, my lecturers, fellow students and John for a memorable year.

Lynn BORDUJENKO
(Now O'KANE)
They were, in some respects, the best of times. We had, on our side, youth, optimism, idealism. There were so few of us that instantly a protective camaraderie developed. Many new friendships were formed that still endure. Indeed, those whose courses could not be offered beyond first year considered themselves unfortunate. The student body passionately wanted the place to succeed – however the success of a university may be measured.

We had, in our favour, experience at public examinations, results of which we were confident, relatively easy access to publicly-funded scholarships, and few worries about employability. Although we were concerned for our success in our chosen degrees, we were keen to make the name of the college known far and wide. So we played hard and we worked hard.

We accepted with good humour the distances between the college and the halls of residence. We knew, because John F. Kennedy had told the world, that we stood at the threshold of an exciting era of technological development, and we were in the vanguard. It was a good place to be and a good time to be there.

Some, I suppose the majority, of our lecturers were gifted with first-class teaching ability and professional dedication to their tasks. The best of them are still there today and remain the backbone of the institution.

In other respects they were the worst of times. Bureaucratic infighting between the Department of Education and the University of Queensland resulted in inexcusable delays. Furniture and equipment were slow in coming. The library was abysmal. The warden, Frank Olsen, wanted to run the University College like a secondary school. Although he addressed us – in his opinion for the first time – as adults, Frank never thought of us as anything other than school-children.

We lacked the leadership that would have been provided by older students, and we were deliberately misled by occasional cynics of the staff. Career guidance was unheard of, and many a start had to be stopped and restarted later.

But, it was a good place to be and a good time to be there.

John BUTCHER

As a freshman first year student in Engineering in a new campus in 1961 my principal recollections are of people both lecturing and fellow students.

At Stuart House, converted army camp to student accommodation between the present suburb of Wulguru and Stuart, male out of town students were accommodated. That served as my second home for three years. History Academic Ian Moles was in charge there. A more affable, gregarious and learned fellow you would never meet. He has a magnificent collection of classical records and I recall the stirring music of Beethoven his Fifth Symphony and his Violin Concerto in D major in particular which were my favourites.

No fancy stereo cassette recorders then to provide gentle background music in the early hours while trying to resolve some problem in hydrodynamics or advanced mechanics. Jon Stephenson (Geology) and Bruce Gibson-Wilde (Physics) also stayed at Stuart House in the early years.

Because the University College of Townsville as it was then known was located at Pimlico the hassles of commuting from Stuart House daily were coped with by that age-old energy saver the push-bike or by hitch-hiking. Fortunately I was able to convince my father in 1962 to give me the old family car, a black coloured post war Ford V-8 Pilot. This ran remarkably well except in wet weather when it refused to start – petrol was also cheap in those days.

There was also a certain freshness about the approach and attitude of the new University staff working to develop the various faculties virtually from scratch. At one of the technical drawing sessions I can recall being told that if I failed engineering I would make a good draftsman!

First engineering lecturers Kevin Stark, Baden Best and later Ian Hunter, had a very professional approach to lecturing with a sense of humour that could lift the dry atmosphere of the first Monday morning lectures.

Beside, what seemed endless hours of adapting to study to deal with ten subjects in the first year of engineering (do they still take that many in 1982?), the college had a sort of informal but on-with-the-job atmosphere from the College Warden Prof. Olsen down to the students.

First year for a country lad, in a new university, with no tradition, or other established students, would seem to present burdensome obstacles to success, however as a year of 1961 student and upon reflection of 20 years on, the new campus did present a unique opportunity and environment to study in those developing years.

Salvatore CALTABIANO
At the beginning of 1961 I was fortunate to be transferred as a teacher from the Atherton Tableland to Townsville to continue as a part-time evening student in the Faculty of Education of the University of Queensland. For some years prior to 1961 I had studied English, Education and Pure Mathematics externally under quite difficult conditions in the country areas. I was overjoyed to return to a form of "internal" study through the move to Townsville. Townsville has been my home since 1961 and the University College (and the later James Cook University) have been vital influences in my life from the "beginning" year 1961.

As a student at the new University I recall vividly some of the early problems raised by library and laboratory inadequacies, but these were worth enduring. The personalised attention to students which all staff in this small university have been willing to give is something I will always value. Outside lectures, laboratory sessions, and field trips. I recall most warmly my involvement with the Comparative Education Society, a group dedicated to the study of the world’s education systems, political systems, economies and cultures.

Henry CROWTHER

Library Facilities Revisited — Guru and Giru; ah, what the lack of one stroke of the pen can do. Transposed from being a grave, dignified, spiritual leader, held in an esteemed position: to that of a place of little stature, hiding in the long grass, well off the beaten track.

Well, the contrast above was similar to the difference between the University of Queensland and the fledgling Townsville College of the University of Queensland in 1961. As an Evening student I had had access to the comprehensive library and had sampled the refectories and coffee shops at St Lucia and Herston Medical School for three years. Foolishly I imagined that the new College would provide student interaction, easy access to library monographs and the occasional tit-bit for ravenous evening students. What a blow! Student interaction there was, but the remainder of the dream was as conspicuous as Giru from the Bruce Highway.

Leaving the trivia aside, and focussing only on the library, I can assure the reader that the students at Townsville coped well. Now, the library at Townsville was not quite as large as that at St Lucia, but, if a page count at Townsville was taken to be equivalent to a monograph count at St Lucia, then the two libraries were about equal. From memory, everything of any note in the library was available in one tutorial room. As a result very little energy had to be expended in the search for material and everything was really so cosy. Naturally, after the initial use of a monograph one could steer straight to the spot on the shelves time again without any reference to a card catalogue. What a timesaver! St Lucia by contrast was such a bore. You could get lost in the stacks on that campus and the way it was arranged always reminded me of the children's game of "Streets and Lanes". Unfortunately, even if you were successful in that game and you arrived at the correct Dewey lane, then the rules of the game magically changed so that it became "Hide and Seek" among the decimals. What a waste of time! Certainly one couldn't think that life was meant to be easy.

Then there was the further complication that, even if you did not find what you were seeking at St Lucia, you were always likely to be way-laid by some interesting material. This didn't happen at Townsville. At Townsville it was "all or nothing". None of this being sidetracked. We were dinkum students where only the best would do.

In hindsight, the lecturing staff were also very thoughtful and assignment topics seemed to conveniently match the exclusive limited collection. Mind you, the choice of topics for assignment purposes was not great and the number to choose from almost matched the variety of crops grown around Giru.

However, in 1961, life at the embryo Guru of the north was almost as sweet as the crop of long grass that continues to hide Giru.

Noel ELMS

MATRICULATION CEREMONY
It was rather fun for us all to enter university life, not as lowly freshers at the bottom of the pecking order of students, but to start right at the top. We were involved immediately in the administrative things such as being on the Council of the college without first serving an apprenticeship at such things. I remember we struggled to get together a constitution, and at one particular meeting we proceeded to officially adopt this constitution clause by clause; we were in fact merely teenagers slightly out of depth. I was quietly very amused, when one such clause we had solemnly passed contained a typing error; the whole clause was meaningless and no one had admitted to understanding what it was all about.

When the then Governor of Queensland, Sir Henry Abel-Smith, visited the university college, there was to be a motorcade from the campus to his residence at the bottom of Castle Hill. The student cars were lined up to escort the Governor’s car. The Governor strode out, and to everyone’s surprise, instead of getting into his own limousine he turned and squeezed into Geoff Bennet’s old truck, virtually sitting on me, and half falling out the open side of the cabin. We careered off through the town, the student-filled limousine ahead. The police escort was baffled and the police on point duty were more so, as the Governor saluted them while hanging out of this awful truck, and chatting to us about fishing.

I regret the figure we painted on the rock face of Castle Hill, the first of a series of disfigurements that were to follow. However, it was tremendously exciting the night we did it, holding on to the ropes as we let down an intrepid mountain climber. It felt at the time that we should announce to Townsville it now had university students of its own. We were after all not much more than school children, and perhaps this would never have been done if we had been kept in our place by more senior students.

I enjoyed being one of only nine in the entire class of Medicine I, which was quite contrasted to the 217 in the year of Medicine II which I was to join the following year in Brisbane.

The year was over very quickly. It could never be the same again and many precious friendships were made in 1961.

Prue HOPKINS
(Now MANNERS)
My recollections of the year 1961 should start, I think, with the years 1952-1955 when as a student at St John Fishers College I had to pass through the area to get to school.

Each day as I walked or bicycled to school, I passed the area which was an abandoned saw mill. Parts of the saw mill’s fibrolite walls still stood while others had been broken and fibrolite pieces were everywhere.

In amongst the china-apple trees my school-mates and I built rough walls like forts out of timber, fibrolite and galvanized iron. The walls were about 3 feet high and once built we then proceeded to have fibrolite fights. Sometimes it was the Catholics against the States, other times we just picked sides. By curling the fibrolite it was possible to throw it like a boomerang so that it could make an arc and go round our home-made forts.

The road now called Hugh Street began at Gill Park those days. A rough bush track linked Hugh Street to Gulliver Street and during the wet season this became for us what would probably be called a BMX bike track today.

The area changed somewhat in 1957 with the building of Pimlico High School and the connection of Hugh Street. However, the old saw mill remains were still there in 1959 and when I attended the University College in 1961, I used to think back to us — probably an earlier version of today’s vandals. Now 21 years later the area hasn’t changed all that much.

Verne JACK

* * * * *

Being both a member of staff and the student body in 1961, I had a unique opportunity to experience the atmosphere in both sections of the College. The staff were all young and energetic and enthusiastic. The intimacy and co-operation between the academic and administrative staff that developed because of the small numbers, created a happy working atmosphere. The students too were a happy group trying to establish traditions as well as receive an education. Everyone wanted to make it work and pulled together to make it happen. It was great to feel part of that atmosphere.”

D’Esley JEFFERIES
(Now SMITH)
RECREATION

Football action.

Taking it easy

STUDENTS UNION MEETING

66

67
As 1960 drew to a close and the last bundles of external study notes for that year were scanned and processed in preparation for end-of-year examinations, I, like many other external students of the University of Queensland, looked forward with eager anticipation to 1961 and a new phase in tertiary education.

This new phase, for students resident in Townsville and environs, began with the establishment of the University College of Townsville in functional, unpretentious buildings in Pimlico. Our status changed from part-time (external) to part-time (evening) students but, more importantly, we forsook education by the distance teaching mode for the customary approach involving lectures and tutorials.

Apart from a feeling of pleasurable anticipation early in 1961, there were two other events which stood out in my memory with great clarity. The first was the initial lecture in English 1 by Ross Smith, now Senior Lecturer in the English Department at James Cook University. Part of this lecture dealt with ‘kennings’, periphrastic expressions found in old English and old Norse poetry. I can also recall one of the examples of a kenning provided by Ross — ‘wave-floater’ for ‘ship’. As Ross waxed eloquent about such devices I copied down notes furiously and reflected on this newest evidence of my abundant ignorance.

The second event I remember was a consequence of the intellectual challenges we confronted in the course. To cope with these challenges, we conspired — Ross was not told — to establish a mutual-aid group which met on Sunday afternoons in the staff room of Mundingburra State School. Regular members included Peter Jensen, Warren Cowan, Bill Martin and myself. There, on many occasions, serious intellectual debate was joined. Almost inevitably this gave way late in the afternoon, as our enthusiasm waned, to an obsessive search for the bawdy bits in Chaucer and non-literary reviews of the amorous exploits of heroes and heroines in the picaresque novels we were studying.

Perc MARLAND

+ + + + +

I completed English 1 in 1960 through the External Studies Department of the University of Queensland. In 1961 I began History 1, attending evening classes on the Pimlico Campus, but was transferred mid-year to a country school, so completed History through External Studies.

The tutorials for both English (at the Townsville High School) and History (at the University) were most helpful. The studies in English developed a deep appreciation of the language and interest in the cultures which helped to produce it. A keen interest in history was a natural consequence of this. Also, like many other students, I learned the research skills which have been invaluable in all subsequent studies, and in the understanding and evaluation of the changes taking place in our modern society.

These studies have contributed to the quality of my life. Basically, through my experiences in both English and History, I learned to think.

Cecily MacALPINE

One of the most colourful characters I can recall from 1961/62 was Dr Jon Stephenson, Geology Lecturer, who stayed at Stuart House along with the students.

It became the practice for the students to kick the football around, in our gowns, for the half hour or so prior to the evening meal, in the area in front of the Common Room. We were surprised one evening to be joined by Dr Jon, who, in due course, had his turn for a kick. And kick it he did, right across the highway into the caravan park. In the silence that followed, he marched back to his hut to continue lecture preparation, having proved his point. Having noted his point, the football was kicked around in a quieter manner thereafter.
Unlike the established universities, the number of students was small. No student hierarchy existed, and in many respects, 1961 at the University College was more like a final year at secondary school than first year at University.

The majority of lecturers and demonstrators were capable, enthusiastic and young. (For the first few weeks I mistook a couple of them for students.) Because of faculty numbers, lecturers had to cover a wide range of subjects, and in a number of cases, a single lecturer constituted the teaching staff of the department.

The Warden, Dr Olsen, was well liked and respected by the students, and the Townsville community responded enthusiastically to the establishment of the university, and welcomed student participation in the city's sporting and cultural activities.

Because of the small numbers, and close contact between students, it was very easy to become involved in student activities. I'm sure many 1961 students would recall excursions to various towns to play sport against college teams, or commemoration week pranks, such as painting a question mark on the face of Castle Hill.

Bob NESS

* * * * *

At school I'd always considered myself a bit of a history star and, as entering the business world on leaving school precluded such frivolities, I found the opening of the University College at Pimlico an outlet for this interest.

Our Lecturer in History 1 (Evening Class) was Ian Moles who always made his lectures enjoyable and interesting, although I didn't always agree with him. His ability at that stage was quite apparent and it was no surprise when Mr Moles became Associate Professor Ian Moles, and he is undoubtedly one of the University's leading lights.

Having been five years away from School and pretty involved socially, I found the study fairly difficult to settle into the assignments hard to complete on time. However, the knowledge and interpretation I gained in that year considerably deepened my understanding of history and has helped explain subsequent events.

Our class was a mixture, mainly comprised of teachers seeking further units
to a degree, but containing a number of interested individuals like myself. The most outstanding student was undoubtedly Doug Suthers, a leading Solicitor in his fifties who left the younger students standing. His High Distinction contrasted with my very undistinguished Pass at the end of the year, a year that was very satisfying, if rather hectic.

As evening students I doubt if we considered the lecturers and ourselves were in any way pioneers laying the foundation for greater things, but probably most of us were filled with wonder that such a thing as university education had come to Townsville.

Tom RUSH

Having a University in the North meant I could afford to continue studies much more readily and with less financial strain as a part time evening student.

The College numbers made class sizes small and so contact with lecturers and students was more accessible. It balanced the inconvenience of continuing building expansion.

Furthermore the College experience spread over ten years part time, brought me into contact with many varied people including my wife.

Mervyn SMITH

I remember the year 1961 as being one of strange endeavour. I enrolled in French I as part-time evening Education student, together with four other students. One by one they dropped out until by third term I was the sole survivor. Mr Moss, the lecturer, decided not to lecture to one lone student: instead, he set me written assignments and each week let me have his lecture notes for the day students, which I used to spend my Saturday afternoons (I was teaching full-time in Townsville) copying out. The oral examination was an ordeal but the Brisbane Examiner seemed kind. When the exam results were published in the daily newspaper, however, my name did not appear and I sent a telegram to my parents announcing failure. My mother immediately telegraphed back: you have not failed. The next day further results were published and there was my name. I’d not realized that Arts and Education were published separately. Joyful me! It was an incentive to continue studies, and I always recall with appreciation and gratitude the help and encouragement I received from the University College of Townsville staff.

Yvonne THOMAS
A medical student in Townsville in 1961 was, I suspect, an entity to “make up the numbers”. Perhaps the traditional narrowness of medical education was broadened by exposure to North Queensland.

I am both glad and sad that the first year of my six year course was spent outside of Brisbane.

Glad because the citizens of Townsville gave themselves completely to the students during the inaugural year, the tutors were dedicated and approachable even for the minor first year problems, and I was close to home.

Sad because the transition from the free and easy, “first name” basis of the Pimlico campus to the fierce competition of 150 souls in torment of Medicine II was something that affected one for years.

The environment presented by Townsville as a habitat and a place of learning on my return in 1980 has improved so much that it makes one proud to be associated with the beginnings of tertiary education in North Queensland.

Bill TUCKER

Visit by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. R.G. Menzies, in June, 1961.

The year of 1961 was a memorable one for the foundation students and staff of the University College of Townsville. My clearest recollections from that year is the “pioneering spirit” which enveloped students and staff alike. This in turn produced close friendships and a sense of common purpose. The numbers of people involved were small enough to promote a “one large family” atmosphere amongst the full time students and staff, with the Warden of the College, Dr F.J. Olsen, the “head of the family”.

The sense of pioneering was probably inevitable when the matriculation ceremony is held partly under canvas on a campus in which lawns and gardens are yet to be established, when lectures are held in partly completed buildings with construction work proceeding all around, and when one’s accommodation is in a recently refurbished migrant hostel many miles from the campus. These factors, however, were not considered hindrances or disadvantages, but merely part of the challenge.

This fledgling University community was, generally speaking, welcomed into the wider Townsville community. Teams were entered in the Townsville competitions in several sports, including Rugby League and Hockey. Matches were arranged against high schools in the city as well as at Charters Towers and Abergowrie and I believe this helped to promote the University College. Activities such as “Commem Week” with its city parade and the pranks also heightened the awareness of the local community to the presence of University students in its midst.

Enrolling at the University College of Townsville in 1961 meant that students missed the advantages a larger University has to offer at least for that particular year. There were no long standing hallowed halls of learning, no buildings steeped in tradition, no established clubs and societies, and no senior students to guide the “freshers” in their first year at University. Nevertheless, there were compensating advantages, such as the relatively small class sizes, the enthusiastic and dedicated group of staff, and the opportunity to play a part in establishing the new institution and help to shape its own tradition.

The year of 1961 had its own special significance, its own records, and its own cherished memories for those of us privileged to participate in that foundation year of the University College of Townsville.

Ray VOLKER

* * * * *
I am one of the failures of the “Year of 1961” at James Cook University since I flunked two out of the four subjects, those being Botany I and Latin I.

I never learned to distinguish collenchyma from sclerenchyma and my only good mark of eight out of ten for an essay on a botany ramble was gained after glancing through the notes of a gifted friend who could spot a spatulate leaf a mile off. Here my English ability came to the fore. She was most chagrined at getting seven out of ten for the same paper. Such are the injustices of the educational process. Love you Delma!

How fortunate today’s students are to have a full range of courses available. I’d have much preferred Political Science I or Psychology I to Botany I; and German I to Latin I.

But really I failed because of my ennui. I had attended St Anne’s School, Townsville, for fourteen years straight and was excitedly looking forward to a change; to the metropolis of Brisbane at least. Instead I found myself about a mile away with students the same age and from the same small town backgrounds. Many found it delightful. I, impatient beast, found it frustrating.

This is not to denigrate the efforts of all those early administrators and lecturers who gave so much enthusiasm to the tremendous task of putting life into a new institution — Ian Moles, Miss Mackay, Joe Baker. They were ably backed by students Vicky Cox, Geoff Bennett, Jill McMullen, Prudence Hopkins, Sandra Cullum, Althea Wolfe, Bob May, “Beetle” O’Kane, Lynne Bordujenko; and Spike and Ian; and Lois, the future doctor with a bosom the envy of all flat chested students; and Andy Gillison who provided the “sophistication” since he was the only older student who had worked in the “real world” (New Guinea) and who performed feats of “derring do” which impressed more timid souls.

I finally concluded my degree ten years later at the University of Hong Kong; not a process I would recommend to my children who after a childhood in hectic Hong Kong, will probably be the antithesis of myself and long for the quiet life of the provinces and adore the new, beautiful James Cook University.

I currently run my own real estate/budget decoration firm in Hong Kong. No one asks me about the Napoleonic Wars but I long to tell them. It’s been an interesting life. Maybe the gentle introduction to it given by that first year of University in familiar Townsville helped more than I realised!

Wendy WORDSWORTH
(Now McTAVISH)
Judy Bryan demonstrating to a Zoology class.

English class

Castle Hill, Townsville, 1961.