AUSTRALIA’S largest solar photovoltaic research facility is well under construction on the UQ Gatton Campus where researchers will provide new insights on integrating large-scale renewable power plants with conventional electricity grids.

Being constructed on and next to the old College Air Strip, the facility will cover 10ha on the southern side of the Campus, and will provide 30 percent of UQ Gatton’s energy requirements.

Providing 3.275 megawatts of power, enough to supply electricity for up to 450 average homes, the solar farm is due to be commissioned early next year.

Comprising 40,000 advanced photovoltaic panels in ground mounted arrays of fixed-tilt, single-axis and dual-axis tracker technologies, the facility will allow the study of electrical and economic performance of multiple PV mounting technologies.

The UQ has partnered with American company First Solar who will provide the engineering, procurement and construction of this facility.

In the era of finding alternatives to coal-fired power stations, the technology being installed here is estimated to displace the equivalent of 5600 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide or removing 1590 cars from the road per year.

This project is being viewed as a pilot plant for new and existing large-scale Australian solar plants, including the Nyngan (102MW) and Broken Hill (53MW) power generators.
The Last Word

Australia to become the ‘food bowl of Asia’.

Initially it gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling to think that our country could be such an influential contributor to the welfare of so many millions of people.

In reality it is probably a ‘pipe dream’, and I refer to the ABC Fact Check where they identified the Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce saying the notion is ridiculous.

Five year old figures indicate that Australia is capable of feeding about 60 million people or 1% of the world population, and as Mr Joyce says, if we double that to 120 million or more, we can’t feed half of Indonesia, let alone other parts of Asia.

In this great country of ours each farmer produces enough to feed 600 people – 150 at home and 450 overseas, therefore to attempt to meet the ever growing demand for food with the increasing world population, some dramatic changes need to occur in agricultural production.

It has been touted that the vast areas of northern Australia with it’s large tracts of land, ample water and lots of sunshine will be the new highly productive ‘food production bowl’.

However, this idea introduces major challenges in land use, whether it be for grazing or farming; water, fertilizer and chemical usage; market and access and export opportunities.

Mr Joyce believes Australia should concentrate on being the exporter of premium produce, targeting and growing the global middle class.

If and when this idea ever takes off, it will offer great opportunities to the people who study and graduate from agricultural institutions such as UQ Gatton.

We, I believe, as past students, need to be seen to be encouraging young people to take up careers in the agricultural sector so that in time we are better placed to take on challenges like being ‘the food bowl of Asia’.

President’s Report

Graham McLymont
President,
UQ Gatton Past Students’ Association Inc.
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It is that time of the year when the Management Committee and volunteers start to focus on the Back to College Weekend which will once again be held on the first weekend in December. Already quite a few year groups are well organised and we hope to crack the magic 300 registrations this year. We almost made it last year with 296 registrations.

At our August Management Committee meeting, we hosted a dinner for our four scholarship holders who are studying full time at UQ Gatton. This was a most enjoyable dinner which was held in the Trophy Room and attended by Management Committee members, volunteers, senior UQ Gatton staff, four students and the Mother of the 2014 scholarship winner.

Our Association has now financially assisted eight UQ Gatton students since 2007 with a total of $105,000 during this time. I regard this as a magnificent achievement and I am sure you share our pride in helping needy students achieve their goal of a Gatton education. At the dinner, the Mother of the 2014 scholarship winner summed it up when she said to me, this scholarship means a tremendous amount to us. Thank you for your help. Scholarship recipients receive $5,000 per year for the duration of their course. The 2014 winner is Sara Rodes.

Already we have over 400 people who LIKE our Facebook page and new topics including lots of photos are added every few days. The Facebook address is shown on the front and back of this newsletter. We also have a Linkedin page with 100 members.

There were eight excellent nominations for the UQ Gatton Gold Medal this year, and one person has been selected to receive the medal. Once again the standard was very high and the person selected to receive their award at Graduation Day in December is a worthy recipient of the medal. Full details will be in the first edition of this newsletter in 2015. Details of all previous recipients of the UQ Gatton Gold Medal are on our website.

Carol and I have attended Branch Reunions at the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane during the year while Mark Pace represented the Management Committee when he attended the Mackay Branch Reunion. The Management Committee of our Association encourages Branch Reunions and will help anyone who is interested in forming a branch in their region.

If we don’t see you at the Back to College Weekend, then on behalf of the Management Committee, I wish you and your family the best for the Festive Season.

New members

John Trevor Arthur (1954)
William Charles Carroll (1964)
Sidney Brian Harbison (1949)
Edmond Jones (1949)
Ivan Henry Middleton (1954)
Gavin Ward Porter (1983)
Kathryn Maree Webb (1986)
James William Wright (1957)
2014 UQGPSA Scholarship Winner

The UQ Gatton Past Students’ Association has donated over $100,000 in scholarships assisting eight students to study at The University of Queensland Gatton.

Veterinary Science student Sara Rodes is the most recent recipient of the UQ Gatton Past Students’ Association Scholarship and she is very grateful for the opportunities it has opened up for her.

“This scholarship has made it so much easier to enjoy my degree, and get as much out of it as I can,” Ms Rodes said.

“It has taken the pressure off to work and study during the week, and allows me to spend more of my free time getting more experience with animals that I haven’t had much contact with.”

“I would like to thank the UQ Gatton Past Students’ Association again for giving me the honor of receiving this scholarship, and will do my best to give back to the association in every way I can,” she said.

As long as Ms Rodes can remember she has always wanted to be a vet.

“When I was little I used to go to my mum’s chiropractic office after school and I used to see how much she helped people,” Ms Rodes said.

“I knew I couldn’t just work with people, and I have always loved animals and had lots of pets, so I decided to become a vet because that way I could help people and work with what I love every day.”

“I love studying at Gatton, the atmosphere is amazing, and it is such a beautiful campus to live and study on,” she said.

Once she finishes her study Ms Rodes would like to work with production animals, in particular cattle and pigs.

For more information on the scholarship visit www.uq.edu.au/gatton/paststudents.

UQ Gatton Open Day a Success

The UQ Gatton Campus Open Day was held on 17 August 2014.

High-tech farming practices were on show, highlighting how innovative agricultural technologies such as drones, including hexacopters and quadcopters, are being used to improve farming efficiency.

Project officer Armando Navas said the drones carried complex computer operating systems and cameras so farmers could monitor plants and animals from the air.

“This technology can be used to improve farming systems and help farmers to save on resources,” Mr Navas said.

“Students have the opportunity to do this course as an undergraduate and a post-graduate student.”

UQ Gatton Campus is internationally recognised as Australia’s leading education and research provider in the fields of animals, agriculture, veterinary science, food and the environment.

Gatton Campus Director Janelle Zahmel said the Open Day provided career and study information for the public, especially prospective students and their families.

“It is a great opportunity to plan future careers in the agriculture, animal, plant and veterinary science fields,” Ms Zahmel said.

“There are several valuable information sessions on the different disciplines to study and useful information about scholarships and accommodation.

“We also have new programs on offer, including the Queensland Diploma in Agricultural Technologies and new majors in the Bachelor of Science, Animal and Veterinary Bioscience and Plant and Soil Bioscience.”
Back to College Weekend

The annual Back to College Weekend will be held again on the first weekend in December this year, Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 December. The early arrivals will arrive for a casual BBQ and socializing in the Staff and Graduates’ Club beneath the Foundation Building on Friday night.

The main activities commence from 9am Saturday with registration at Morrison Hall and the activities continue non-stop until after lunch on Sunday.

The feature years are those groups who finished their study at Gatton in 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1994 and 2004. The 1949, 1959, 1969 and 1979 year groups are also planning on attending.

It is important to note that the weekend reunion is for all who studied at Gatton, and is not restricted to graduates. Many groups invite their mates who may have started with them in first year, but did not graduate for various reasons. Partners are most welcome.

A reunion of staff both past and present is organised over lunch on Saturday 6 December. This staff reunion is always well attended. The annual dinner is also well attended on the Saturday night.

The AGM of our Association will be held at 3pm Saturday 6 December beneath Morrison Hall. All are welcome to attend our AGM and reunion.

What’s in a name...

The College at Gatton has been known by a variety of names. Originally it was the Queensland Agricultural College (1897), became Queensland Agricultural High School and College (1923), reverted back to Queensland Agricultural College when the High School section was discontinued (1962), and finally became known as Gatton College within the University of Queensland (1990).

The College is now known as The University of Queensland Gatton Campus.
Historical Collection

The Collection was on display for the UQ Gatton Open Day on the 17 August and we had a very satisfactory visitation of quite a number of Past Students, relatives of Past Students together with interested members of the public.

A trickle of donations has been received since the last issue of the Re-Connect.

Items received include:-

**Assorted literature**

1934, 35 and 36 College Magazines and Student’s Handbook from Barbara Northcott. A “History of Gatton and District” from Julie Reid. Three books from KC Williams, Book – Faces of the Fallen – 100th Anniversary of Start of WWI from UQArchives, Leather bound copy of Centenary Book “100 Years of Science with Practice” from the Rev BAC Harding, books from the UQ Gatton School of Agriculture and Food Sciences.

**Photos**

QAHS&C Photos 1949/1953 from RI Dearden, QAC Pipe Band (3) 1964 from Iain Bruce, 1908 QAC Football Team from Barbara Hender, 1927 Gatton College Staff and Students and the 4th Tractor School from D Qualischefski and three slides, Shearing Demonstration at QAC during visit of King and Queen of Thailand from Jack Groenendyk.

Merchandise Proposal

Over time the Past Students’ Association has produced quite a range of PSA branded merchandise including a tie, stubby holder, badges and a number of books.

The current proposal (see attached photo) is for a polo style shirt, which has been slowly evolving over the past 18 months and is on the verge of production to be available for sale at the 2014 Back to College weekend.

The very popular PSA tie, with it’s colour and badges has been used as the template for the shirt design, using a light-weight polyester material rather than cotton due the major difference in price.

Your committee has been told that the 180gsm fabric will not be hot in summer and is capable of “breathing”, being widely adopted elsewhere.

With a limited run of just 50 shirts initially, we are keen to hear your feedback and happy to take pre-release orders, retailing at $50.00.

The demand or lack of will determine any future production of these shirts.

Various items

1959 Junior and 1964 QDAH Certificates from KC Williams, Risdon Cup 50th Anniversary shirt from Julie Martin, College Scout Troop identity card of NJ Kelly (1934–36) from B. Northcott and a Scythe from the UQ Gatton School of Agriculture and Food Sciences.

Again, I thank Val Kilah and Julie Reid for their ongoing dedication and to Kevin Lewis, Don Oxenham and Julie Martin for their continued support.
Gold Coast Reunion

Our 24th Reunion on 2 August was most enjoyable with 42 attending. Twenty-eight apologies were received.

The new private room upstairs was a welcome change with plenty of space.

Special guests included Association President Graham McClymont and wife Carol, Association Past President Bob James, Gold Coast Branch Patron Bill Laver and our Honoured Old Boy Clive Gilchrist 1934–38.

Also attending were 1999 UQ Gatton Gold Medallist Jim Miller, 2011 Distinguished Past Student Ray O’Grady together with Association Honorary Life Member Val Kilah (Whip).

We were pleased to welcome first timer Rob Freeman 1964–66.

A big thank you to Diana Douglas and Pamela Groenendyk for their assistance at the door and Bob James and Don Oxenham for conducting the Raffle.

Brisbane Branch Reunion

The Brisbane Branch Reunion was held on Saturday 23 August. The biggest crowd in many years showed up with 45 attendees enjoying a sumptuous Greek banquet at the South Brisbane Greek Club.

This was the second year that the reunion was held at this venue, and it seems to have been an even better feast than last year. It was a great opportunity to renew old friendships and make a few new ones, and to reminisce.

Whilst it would be good to see more younger past students we were delighted to have representatives from a broad span of the decades. All the usual enjoyment of good conversation, great food, and lucky raffle winners, including again a couple of much coveted gift packs of a range of delicious honey varieties from Paul Sattler’s busy bees, and the inevitable wine prizes.

We look forward to cracking the 50 attendees next year, because all feedback indicates that everyone had a ball.

Mackay Reunion

The Marian Hotel was once again the venue for the annual Mackay Branch reunion on Sunday, June 1. Attendance was well supported with over 30 past students and partners with junior vice-president, Mark Pace representing the UQGPSA.

Mr Clive Rogers was re-elected president and delivered the annual report, while Mr Mark Hetherington was re-elected treasurer submitting his financial report.

The event then focused on the business of exchanging good old stories, enjoying the good food and followed by some amber liquid nourishment.

Mark said, “I had the privilege of meeting more of the crew up in Mackay and getting to know the characters that once knocked around the hallowed ground of Gatton College”.

A special thanks to Clive Rogers and Mark Hetherington, and to the other regular patrons including Ross Walker, John Whitaker, Graham Davies, Colin Glover, and the special “old boy” of the day, Gib Turner, who was one of the founding members of the Mackay Branch in the late 1940’s.

There was also a visiting member from Townsville and a new member from Moranbah attending the day.

Branch Reunions
Introducing...

Gary Mason QCAH (Hons),
UQGSPA Committee 2010–2014

A long association with Gatton College (now UQ Gatton) started way-back when I was bred, born and raised at what I have always referred to as “home”.

Home was sandwiched between the pig, sheep and poultry sections, not far from Farm Square, which was the centre for the horse and cattle sections – a very agricultural upbringing.

The College holds many memories as it was our playground, we were all over it, on a weekend or school holidays, leaving after breakfast to explore and undoubtedly get into mischief somewhere, getting home for dinner at night.

There were very few buildings and other places which we failed to access – it was a great place to grow up, and needless to say we were the champion swimmers in the whole of the Lockyer Valley which had an Olympic pool.

After schooling in Gatton and completing my study at College, working life started as a JO, being one of the first to work in the then “new piggery”, as well as the horse and cattle section.

I actually paraded the grand champion Brahman female at the 1971 Royal Brisbane Show, named Lawes Saras, which then carried the College registered symbol brand of the Persian slipper.

Various amounts of time were spent broadening my experience in the beef industry, including working on properties in the Goondiwindi district (where one of the first importations of Charolais cross females from NZ occurred).

I then worked for the Borthwicks Company at Murarrie as a trainee livestock buyer, spending time in every sector of the abattoir from the knocking box to wholesale meat sales.

This was followed with a stint in the old Mactaggarta Company based in Creek St, Brisbane doing my apprenticeship at Cannon Hill, then to their subsidiary Tatnell & Graham at Gympie before joining their live export arm.

A visit to the Department of Primary Industries Beef Cattle Husbandry Branch in Brisbane resulted in being appointed to a technical role at Brigalow Research Station, Theodore.

From there I was transferred to the Swans Lagoon Research Station, Millaroo (up the Burdekin from Ayr), again in a technical role supporting the research into beef industry challenges in northern Australia.

There are many stories which could be told of experiences and exploits relating to the years spent in both these locations.

Subsequently, I moved into advisory/extension roles based at Roma and Biloela which were both in the middle of a screaming drought. This led to the widespread introduction of M8U, a molasses/urea mix which resulted in much improved survival rates of cattle.

Altogether, about 12 years as a public servant involved with the Queensland beef industry, a period which taught me a lot about the resilience and attitude of those on the land whose motto may well have been “have a go”.

This was followed with a short period as CEO of the Charolais Society of Australia in Sydney, and I can vouch for the old adage “you can take the boy out of the bush, but you can’t take the bush out of the boy”.

Could not stand living in Sydney and moved back to the Darling Downs to manage a stud cattle/bull breeding property.

From here I was successful in being appointed as a livestock journalist with Queensland Country Life based in Toowoomba and later to become the livestock advertising manager.

This position allowed me to meet and associate with a broad section of the beef, sheep, horse, goat, alpaca, and ostrich industries in this State, spending much time with the late great rural journalist, Malcolm McCosker and senior photographer, Rod Green – we made a great team over a period of about 17 years.

I currently work for a rural fencing and hardware company with a territory which takes in a large tract of western and central Queensland, where the greatest challenge is to contain wild dogs and kangaroos, allowing graziers to improve their ability to make a living.

If you are reading this you probably already know I have been a UQGSPA committee member for about five years and junior vice-president, as well as the editor of this esteemed publication.

See you on the first weekend in December.