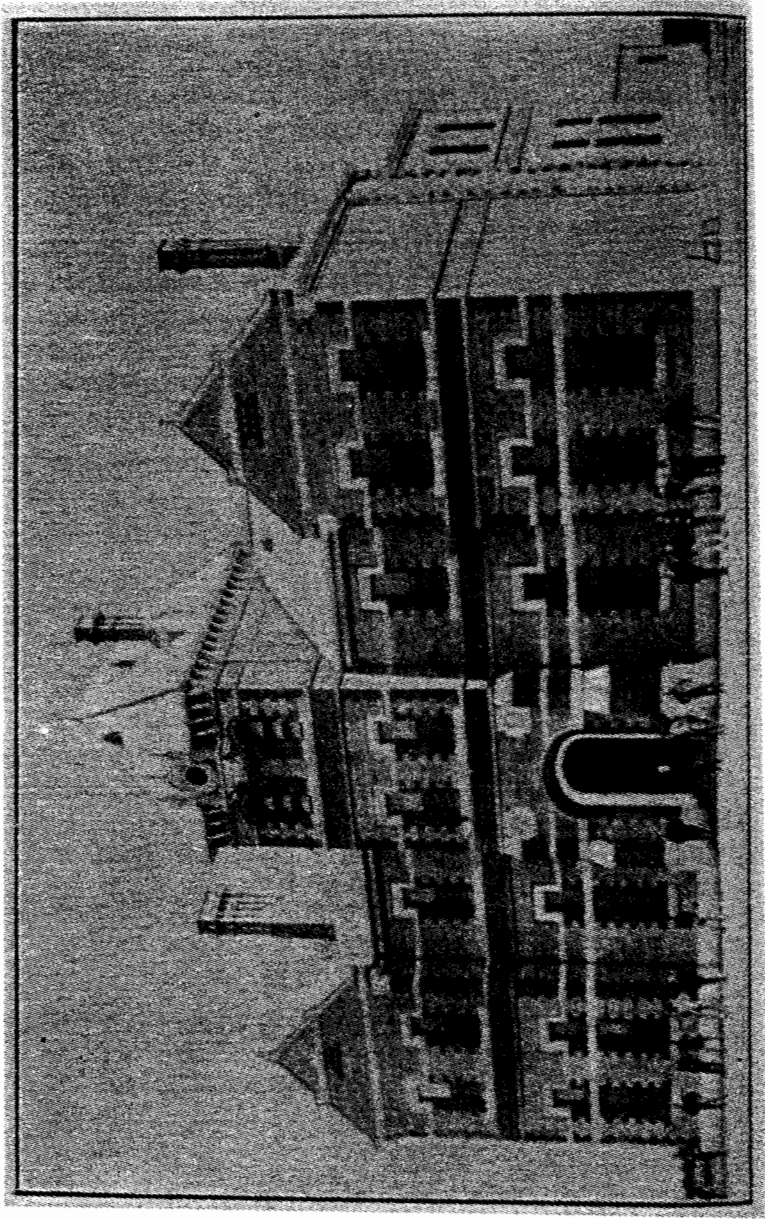


# **Roseworthy Agricultural College and its Library 1883 – 1990**

By Margaret Emery  
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Agricultural College Library  
from 1975 – 1995

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*Roseworthy Agricultural College Main Building, 1883*

# Roseworthy Agricultural College and its Library 1883 - 1990

by Margaret Emery

**O**n the first day of January, 1991 Roseworthy Agricultural College will become a part of the University of Adelaide. It seems a fitting time to put on record some aspects of the history of its library service, together with some history of the College as background.

## Early days

Roseworthy Agricultural College was established in 1883, and the first students were admitted in 1885. These students worked towards graduating with a Diploma in Agriculture. Construction of the main building of the college was begun in 1883 and completed late in 1884.

The 1887 *Annual Report* contains a brief description of the building:

The College is a fine two-storey erection, built of blue Tarlee stone with brick coigns, relieved with white freestone. On the ground floor in the main building are five large rooms and a spacious entrance hall. To the left of the front entrance are the principal's office, the chemical laboratory, and the lecture theatre; to the right, the library and dining hall. ... The upper floor is divided into dormitories for the students, dwelling-rooms for the staff, bathrooms, lavatory, and a study for the senior students. All the apartments are thoroughly ventilated, lofty and well-lighted. ... At present there is sleeping accommodation for thirty students, but the erection of additional dormitories would enable the College to receive more than double that number.

The same *Annual Report* contains a list of Regulations to be Observed by Students, one of which reads:

Visitors are to be received in the library, and are not, without permission, to be admitted to other parts of the building, nor received during lecture or class hours.

References to the library over the next eighty years or so continue to indicate that it played a more important role in the social life of the College than in the academic activities. The *Annual Report* of 1901-02 refers to a 'reading room' immediately adjoining the main entrance which is used as a 'common or recreation room' during the evenings for lack of any other such facility, in consequence of which 'in spite of our best endeavors, it is impossible to keep that portion of the building that first meets the visitor's eye in that state of order and tidiness that does so much towards creating a good impression.'

The *Report* of the 1904-05 year complains that 'at present the library has to be used as a teaching room, leading to much inconvenience to those who have leisure to study in ordinary teaching hours'. In 1912 the College's students' publication, *The Student*, contains a report of 'The Big Dance', at that time apparently the social event of the year:

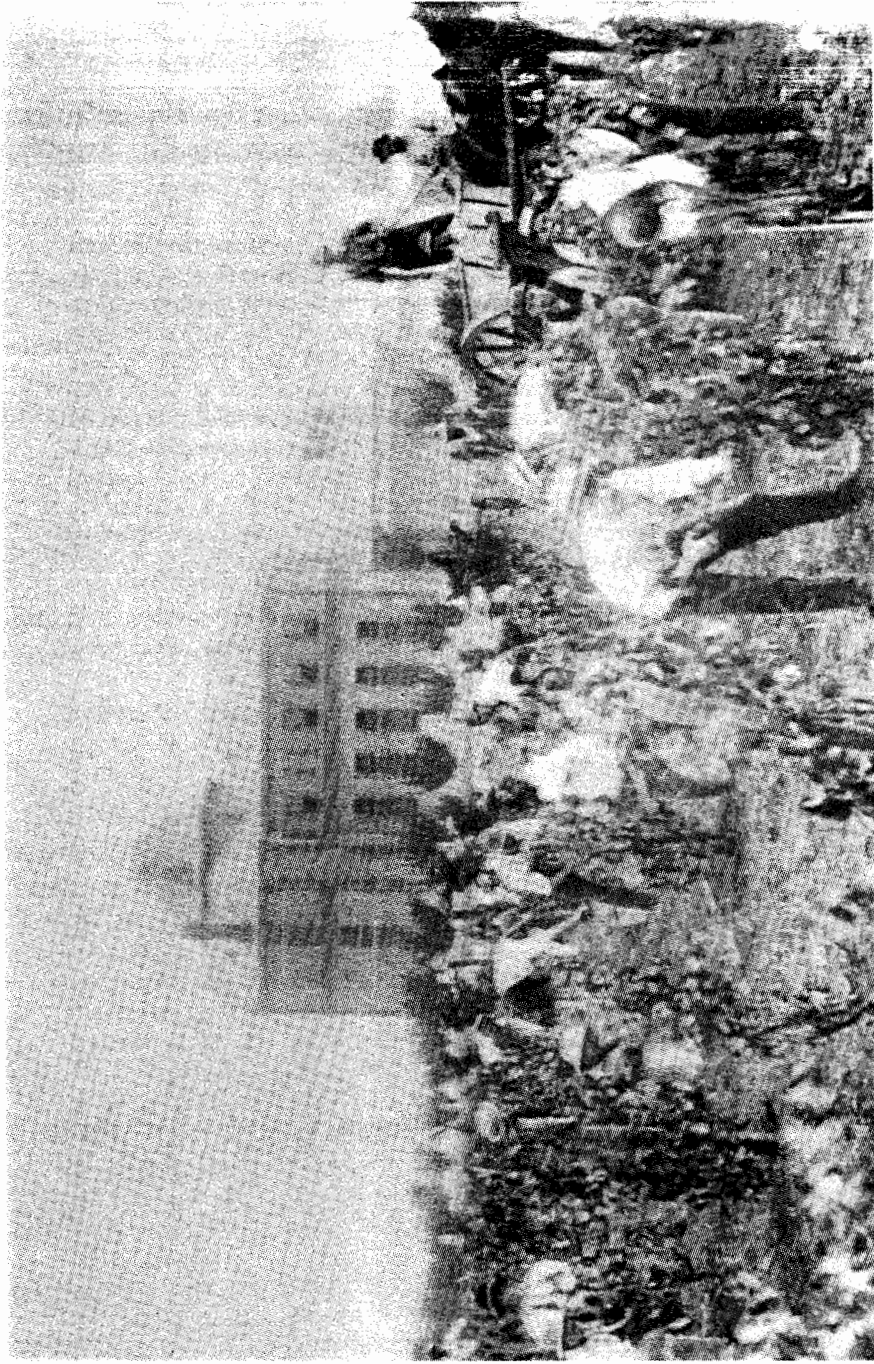
The Library, which is availed of as a supper-room, is always much overcrowded, but this was avoided by utilising a portion of the lecture-room for this purpose.

And in 1913, in the report of the same event of that year:

Our lady friends again kindly arranged the decorations, and although not so profuse as usual, were effective. The library, which was carried out in asparagus and roses, showed up with splendid effect.

## **Viticulture and winemaking**

While in the early years the emphasis at Roseworthy was on broad acre farming, that is cereals, pastures and livestock grazing, there was from the inception of the College a strong interest in viticulture and winemaking. From the beginning, viticulture was included in the teaching, and Arthur Perkins took up the position of Lecturer in Viticulture, Fruit Culture and Wine-making in 1892, becoming Professor of Viticulture in 1895. Perkins introduced the teaching of oenology as an elective in the final year of the Diploma course in agriculture, and established the College winery, while the Diploma in



*An early grape harvest (with the Main Building in the background)*

Oenology was as not introduced as a separate course until 1936.

In early reports of activities there are some interesting descriptions relating to the viticultural and wine interests of the College. In the report of speech day in the first volume of *The Roseworthy Agricultural College Student*, 1898, part of the address of the Chairman of the Council of the College, Mr. J.L. Bonython was reported as follows:

He must not talk about manufacturing wines, because the present Ministry had been accused of being a teetotal Ministry, and they had been told that they must never mention wine or they would be chid by some of their friends. While being a teetotaller himself he had nothing to trouble his conscience as far as advocating the export of wine was concerned. The wine was bound to be made, and so from a teetotaller's point of view what better thing could be done than export it out of the colony, and let someone else drink it? Professor Perkins was trying to get the growers to make a good wine, so that they would be able to export it and get a high price for it. Truly, in the interests of temperance it was far better to manufacture a good than a bad drink.

The same student magazine reports on the College wine cellars and past vintage:

Two years ago the College Wine Cellars were started, the first stage being the erection of the fermenting room, which is a stone building about 50 ft. x 25 ft., with an iron roof; the ceiling being covered to a depth of 6 inches with seaweed.

The report goes on to describe the original building and the second floor and underground cellar which were added in 1897-98, and then gives a picture of the 1898 vintage activities at the College:

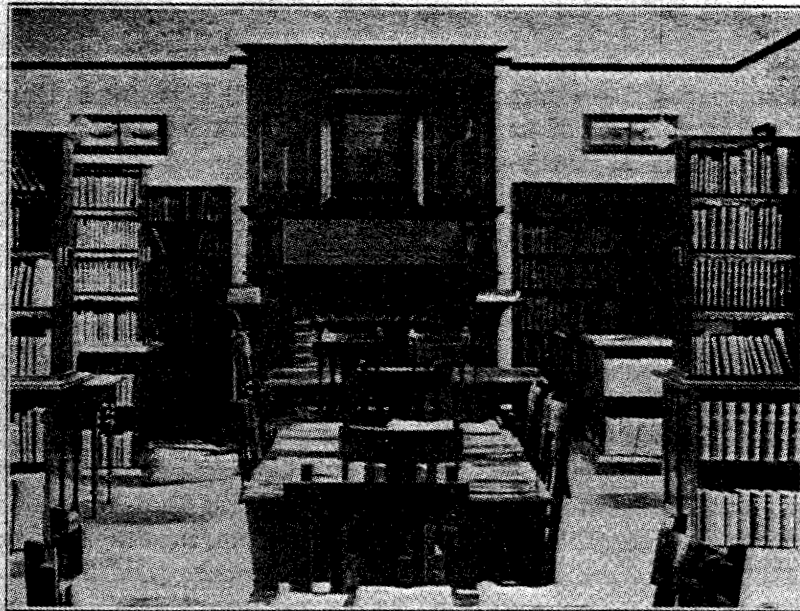
The students returned from their holidays on Wednesday evening, February 9, and next morning, favored by lovely vintage weather, thirty odd students, armed with buckets made from kerosine tins, and two more students each with a horse and dray, under the direction of Professor Perkins, started the picking and carting operations; while three more were allotted cellar work with Mr. McBain, and by 7 o'clock the College vintage had commenced.

## The Tassie Library

A major step forward for the library came in 1920 when Mr. John Tassie donated funds to erect a library building in memory of his son, John, a student at the college from 1903 to 1906, who was killed in action in France on 25 April 1918 at the age of 33 years. The John Tassie Memorial Library was opened by the then Governor, Sir Archibald Weigall, K.C.M.G., who presented £25 to the College to start a new collection of books (*RAC Annual Report, 1920-21*).

According to the *Annual Report* of the following year, the accommodation for books was increased by the placement of substantial blackwood shelves beneath the original ones, and these handsome pieces of furniture, besides providing space for a much larger library, improved the general appearance of the interior of this fine hall.

Reports in *The Student* (1923 and 1924) indicate that as well as providing funds for the building Mr. John Tassie also presented books or funds to purchase books for the library collection.



South end of Library.

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*The Tassie Memorial Library, 1923*

It is interesting to note that Roseworthy College pre-dated the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Adelaide, which was not established until 1925 (at the same time as the Waite Agricultural Research Institute). The first Director of the Waite Institute, A.E.V. Richardson, was a Roseworthy graduate who went on to the University of Adelaide, and there were other Waite Institute staff who were Roseworthy graduates.

At this time, the basic research and graduate teaching functions of Roseworthy were taken over by the University of Adelaide.

Dr. Allan (later, Sir Allan) R. Callaghan was appointed as Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1932, and M.B. Spurling, writing in *Roseworthy Agricultural College: A Century of Service*, says that, during his term of office,

Roseworthy Agricultural College was able to re-establish its role in agricultural education as a training centre for agricultural technologists, the extension and applied research workers of agriculture. The relationship between Roseworthy and the University Faculty became firmly established as complementary and not competitive. Graduates from Roseworthy could go on to complete the BAgSc degree in three years instead of the normal four and students undertaking the University course spent the second year of their course at Roseworthy to get practical experience.

The Diploma in Oenology (previously mentioned) was established in 1936 with the support of the wine industry, and in 1948 a Diploma in Dairying was introduced but was short-lived, as it was clear that there was not the demand in South Australia to justify such a course.

### **Tassie Library extended**

In 1945 Mrs. A Lowrie, widow of a former principal of the College, Professor William Lowrie, donated funds to the College to extend the Tassie Library by the addition of a wing, to be known as the William Lowrie Memorial Annexe. With the approval of the Tassie family, the College was able to accept the donation, and the *Annual Report* for 1945-46 notes that 'tenders had been invited and steps taken for the erection of the building. In addition, Government had provided funds for a bust of the late Professor to be placed in the annexe.' The *Report* for the year ended June, 1947 states that the extension (including the bust of the late Professor Lowrie) has been completed. The extension was built on the eastern side of the Tassie Library, forming a T-shaped area for the Library and extending the available area considerably.



The Annexe can be seen on the left hand side of the photograph.



*The Tassie Memorial Library and William Lowrie Memorial Annexe*

While details of progress in terms of buildings up to this time can be found in annual reports and other documents, there is a dearth of information on staff, and also a lack of statistics on the size and make-up of the collection. In some *Annual Reports* from 1929 onwards, the staff list includes mention of a librarian, but this does not appear consistently and was apparently a part-time responsibility of a member of the teaching staff, a laboratory assistant or clerical officer. We do know that some effort was put into binding journals and categorising books into broad subject areas. However, it is evident that these tasks were conducted on a part-time basis and not continuously.

Little changed during the next period of almost thirty years. The only change in the courses offered was the introduction in 1968 of the one year Diploma in Agricultural Technology as a fourth year available to graduates from the three year Diploma in Agriculture. Entrance to the Diploma course in agriculture did not require matriculation and the first year was classed as sub-tertiary. The Diploma plus the fourth year provided three tertiary years and thereby

equivalence to three year tertiary courses in other non-university institutions such as the Teachers Colleges and Institutes of Technology.

In 1974 Roseworthy Agricultural College became a College of Advanced Education, with the Roseworthy Agricultural College Act, 1973, being proclaimed on 14 March 1974 by the Governor in Council. This proclamation established Roseworthy as an independent College governed by a Council appointed under the Act. Prior to the proclamation of the Act, Roseworthy had been administered as a State government department (the Agricultural College Department), with a principal as Head of the department and responsible to the Minister for Agriculture.

## **A new Library building**

The *Annual Report* of Roseworthy College for the year 1972-73, the last one issued under the aegis of the Agricultural College Department, after noting the progress of the College towards autonomy, goes on to describe plans for a new library building:

The acceptance of tenders in June, 1973 for the construction of the new library and teaching block for the College is seen as a major step in filling what has been regarded as a serious deficit in the teaching facilities at Roseworthy. Additional lecture rooms as well as adequate library space with carrel and reading facilities are provided for in the plans.

This heralded the beginning of the third premises used for library purposes in the history of the College.

The *Annual Report* for 1974, the first for the autonomous College, includes a table of staff numbers which indicates one part-time staff member for library as at 1.1.74 and the same at 31.12.74, while overall staff numbers for the College increased by 14 (16%). The report does not give any indication of the salary classification or qualifications of the part-time library staff member, who was in fact a laboratory assistant. The same report includes a section entitled *Buildings* which begins as follows:

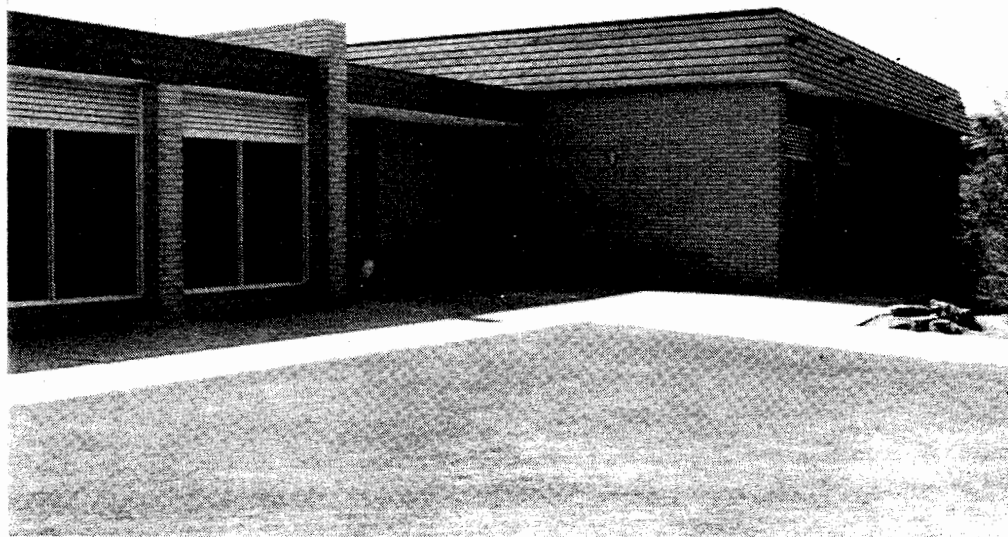
The completion of new library and biochemistry buildings during 1974 will provide much needed improvement in the teaching facilities of the College. The Tassie Memorial Library, erected in 1921, has served the College well over the past fifty years. However, the building has become too small to house the expected increase in library holdings.

The new library will provide places for 94 readers and for increased book stocks. A seventy-seat lecture theatre, a tutorial room and offices for five staff members in addition to the librarian are contained within the building.

For a number of years the library has operated without a full-time librarian. The position is to be filled in 1975. Although capable part-time staff have provided basic services to students and staff, no cataloguing has been carried out. With the advent of new courses and the anticipated rise in student numbers, an adequately staff (sic) library is essential. Projections for the next triennium call for a total library staff of six by 1978.

However, it is apparent that even these additional library facilities will be inadequate to meet the future needs of the College. The projected book stock of 15,000 volumes cannot be accommodated in the new building. Therefore, the College has proposed to the Commission on Advanced Education that an extension providing additional shelf space and reading area be approved.

The new library building was opened by the recently retired principal of the College, R.I. (Bob) Herriot in 1974. In addition to the Library, the building contained offices for teaching staff of the Department of Extension and Education, as well as a lecture room and tutorial rooms.



*'The new library building was opened...in 1974'*

Unfortunately, this building was planned and built without any consultation with librarians, and in consequence suffered from several major faults. All of the shelving provided was rolling compactus, unsuitable for an open access collection for undergraduates; no workroom space was provided other than a generous office for the librarian; and the air-conditioning unit was situated inside the library, creating a major noise problem.



*'The library building...suffered from several major faults'*

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Attempts were made to overcome the defects in various makeshift ways over the years. The compactus shelving was converted to fixed shelving units, although the space between the bays was inadequate and the lighting insufficient in some areas. A 'temporary' annexe was added to form a workroom in 1976, and in 1978 another extension was added to the eastern end of the building to give extra reading space and allow additional shelving to be added to accommodate the growing collection without reducing readers' spaces.

It was after the new building was completed that staffing for the library was also improved. A qualified librarian was appointed in March 1975 and later that year another librarian, a part-time library officer and a clerical officer were added to the staff.

## Women at Roseworthy Agricultural College

Roseworthy College, in common with other agricultural colleges, has been very much an institution for males for most of its 107 years. Female students were formally admitted to its courses for the first time as late as 1974, many years later than they were first admitted to other tertiary institutions in this country. Geoffrey Bishop, writing in *Australian Winemaking: the Roseworthy Influence*, relates:

In 1898, seventy-six years before the first female students were admitted to study at Roseworthy College, a young lady by the name of Nora Isabel Herring applied to enter the Diploma course. Her application was refused. A newspaper report some 15 years later stated, "Her sex had denied her the privilege of studying at Roseworthy College." Undaunted by this setback, Nora Herring took on the management of her brother's vineyard at Sturt, eight miles south of Adelaide, and in 1901 purchased 20 acres of land at Sturt and planted her own vineyard. She was later joined in this enterprise by another liberally-minded lady, Miss Henrietta De Mole. Nora Herring proved to be a very capable vigneron and by 1925 was operating a 65 acre property. She continued to manage her vineyard until she retired in the 1940s.

*Consensus and conflict in agricultural education: a comparative study of four agricultural colleges* was published in 1973, based on work done in 1968 to 1970. It looked at Dookie Agricultural College (Victoria), Hawkesbury Agricultural College (New South Wales), Queensland Agricultural College and Marcus Oldham Farm Agricultural College (Victoria), and reported that at the time of the survey none of these colleges had made provision for the admission of women, although some had since admitted female students. The

study went on to explain:

In the past one of the reasons stated for not admitting women was that suitable accommodation was not available. Another reason given for refusing to enrol women was that they would be unable to undertake the necessary practical work, but with the decreasing emphasis placed upon practical farm work, it is doubtful if this objection can be sustained much longer. Recent research and the experience of Gatton suggest that suitable women applicants would be available. Other tertiary institutions offer residential facilities for both men and women and there seems no good reason why women should be excluded from the agricultural colleges. The chief problem, of course, will be that of the employment opportunities for such women. Although these are likely to be limited for some years, it can reasonably be predicted that opportunities will widen in the future.

In its conclusions, the report suggests that 'one of the most outstanding problems associated with the move towards fully tertiary status is the survival of an ethos within the colleges more reminiscent of boarding school than a tertiary institution', and that the admission of women to the courses at these colleges would help to redress this problem. At Roseworthy, this process began in 1973; the first female graduate of Roseworthy College was in fact a student of oenology who was admitted to the course in 1973, having already graduated from the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. The College *Annual Report* for 1974 tells us that:

One hundred and sixty-five students were enrolled, ten of whom were young women in the first year of the Diploma in Agriculture. These were the first female agricultural students in the history of the College; the only other female student successfully completed the Oenology course and was awarded her Diploma in 1974.

The *Annual Report* for 1976 reveals that of the ten women first enrolled in 1974, four graduated with a credit in 1977, having completed the course in 1976.

Until the 1970s, the staff at the College was predominantly male, with the exception of some clerical and domestic staff. When a female librarian was appointed to the staff in 1975, she was told that the College could not offer her rented accommodation; there were 'single men's quarters', and there were houses available for rent, but only to married couples or families. A single female was a previously unknown problem!

## New courses and library expansion

For some years from 1975, there was a steady expansion in the range of course offerings at Roseworthy. By 1980 the following courses were offered:

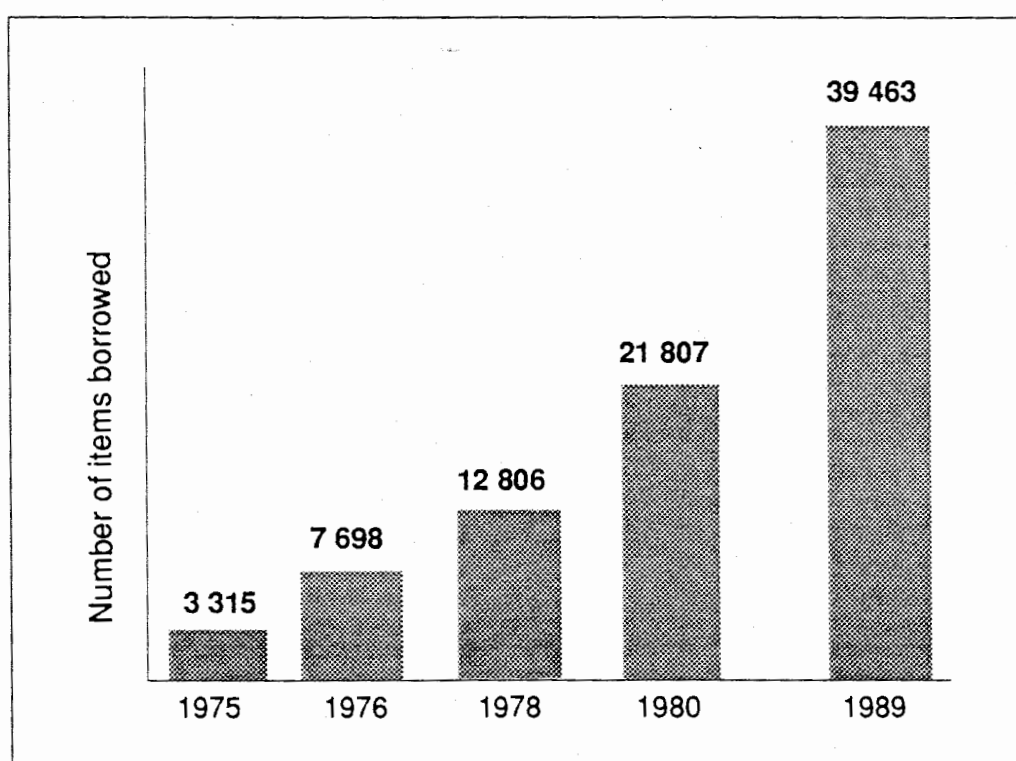
- **The Bachelor of Applied Science in Oenology:** a three-year course providing technological training in oenology, including viticulture and allied subjects, for people intending to become winemakers or to enter technological vocations within or associated with the Australian wine industry.
- **The Diploma of Applied Science in Agriculture:** a three-year course designed to provide technological training in agronomy, horticulture, animal husbandry, farm management and agricultural engineering for people entering rural and related industries in southern Australia.
- **The Diploma of Applied Science in Natural Resources:** a three year course providing a technological training in the basic sciences and their application to the assessment, interpretation and management of the natural resources, particularly non-agricultural land, and native flora and fauna.
- **The Associate Diploma in Wine Marketing:** a two-year course designed to provide a training in the principles and practices of wine marketing and in the practices of winemaking and viticulture to meet the needs of the wine industry for wine marketing personnel with a background knowledge of production methods.
- **The Associate Diploma in Agriculture:** a two-year course with three divisions or options: Farm Management, Horse Husbandry and Management and Agricultural Production.
- **The Graduate Diploma in Agriculture:** a one-year graduate course offering refresher training, specialisation of study at an advanced level or an extension of studies for graduates of other disciplines.
- **The Graduate Diploma in Natural Resources:** providing advanced training in non-agricultural land management, flora and fauna for graduates in a variety of disciplines.
- **The Graduate Diploma in Wine:** providing advanced training in oenology, viticulture and wine marketing for persons working in, or wishing to enter, the wine or allied industries.

The range of courses is essentially the same in 1990, although the three-year undergraduate diplomas in agriculture and natural resources are now degree courses. In addition, the Associate Diploma in Wine Marketing and the Graduate Diplomas in Agriculture and Natural Resources are offered in the external mode as well as internally.

## Expanded Library services

The expansion in course offerings had a number of implications for the Library. The collection had been strongly agricultural and oenological in nature but with the expansion in courses there began to be a demand for material on economics, management, marketing, communications and other social science areas. Both student and staff numbers grew rapidly and the library user community, as well as substantially increasing in numbers, came to the College with a wider range of backgrounds and demands than had been the case previously.

As the collection expanded in size and range, and teaching methods changed, use of the Library increased rapidly. There were no statistics kept prior to 1975, but an examination of the loan figures from 1975 is revealing.



*Roseworthy Agricultural College Library loan statistics*

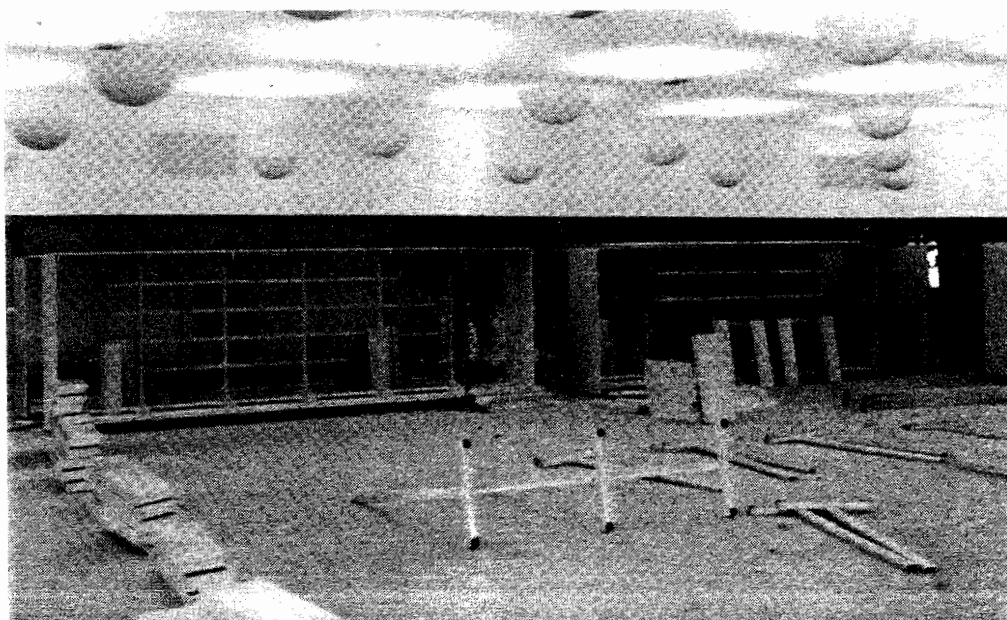
During this time the collection has grown to 25 070 monograph volumes and about 430 current serial titles.



## A new era

In November 1988 capital funds of \$2.675m were allocated by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training for a new library building for Roseworthy College, to be completed in mid-1990. Planning for this began immediately. The firm of Raffin Maron Architects was appointed, and David Taplin of the College academic staff was nominated project supervisor for the College. The College Librarian was formally involved in the planning process.

In addition to the Library, which was to be the major part of the building, there was provision for an audiovisual area and also offices for an academic department. A concept proposal for a new Library/Resource Centre at Roseworthy had been prepared by Raffin Maron Architects as early as 1981 and this was adopted as a starting point for new plans. Costs and College growth projections had changed considerably since the 1981 proposal, and there had been other changes. For example, a printery and space for graphic arts, which were to have been included in the building, had since been housed separately. The College held a general meeting on 19 December 1988 to discuss overall requirements for the building, before detailed planning began.

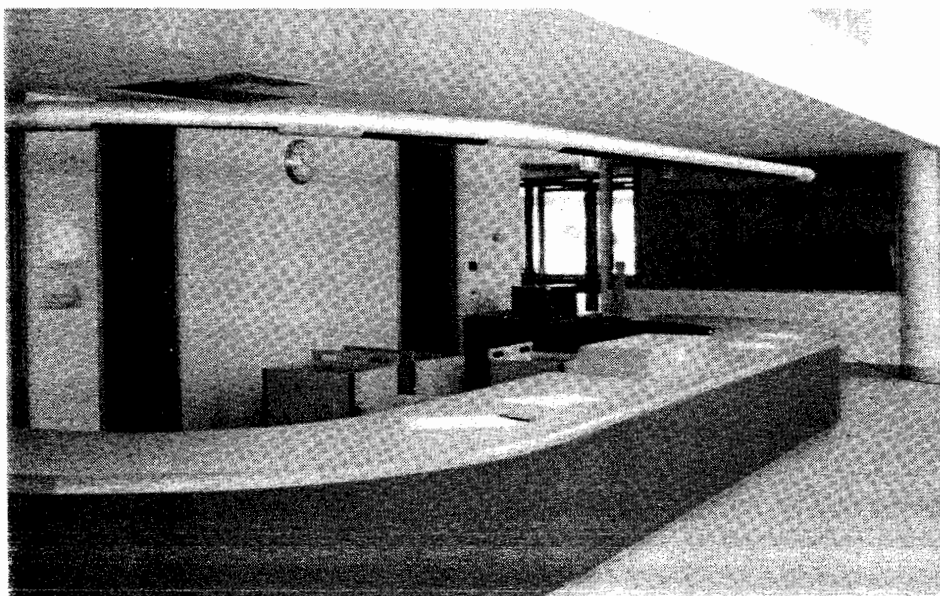


*The shelving is installed...*

At this time the Chief Librarian began meeting with Guy Maron of the architectural firm to brief him regarding the specific requirements for the Library portion of the building. Meetings with the architects, and with the various consultants continued until mid-1989, and building began in October of that year. While the building was going on, work still continued on the planning for fittings and furniture, colour schemes and other internal arrangements of the new Library.

The new building has been planned to cater for the growth of the Library and the College during the next ten years. During this period it is estimated that student numbers may increase from the 1990 figure of 700 to about 900 and so an additional 80 reader places have been provided in the new building. These include some places that are suitable for the use of audiovisual equipment and a special area has been provided in the Library for microcomputer use, which is seen as an expanding area of library services. At the same time, shelving has been installed to house a collection of approximately double the size of the existing one. Overall, the area occupied by the Library is some 1300 square metres, compared with the 500 square metres of the present Library.

The building has been planned with the needs of rapidly changing technology in mind and it is hoped that the cabling and data communications arrangements will be flexible enough to allow for appropriate changes, without inordinate additional expenditure, during the next ten years.



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*The new service and loans desk*

## Amalgamation

Concurrently with the planning and erection of the new library building, other major changes were happening at the College. After a prolonged period of meetings and discussion, the College Council had taken the decision to seek amalgamation with the University of Adelaide. The University had agreed with this proposal which meant that the various sections of the College were involved in meeting and negotiating with groups at the University, to work out in detail how the amalgamation would work in practice. During 1990, the decision was taken to form a new Faculty of Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences which would be based at both the Waite and Roseworthy campuses, and it was established that the Library at Roseworthy would serve this Faculty, in conjunction with the Waite Agricultural Research Institute Library.

At the same time as she was meeting with the architects to plan the new building, the Chief Librarian was meeting with staff at the Barr Smith and Waite Agricultural Research Institute libraries to discuss library-specific aspects of the amalgamation, the details of which are still to be completed as this is written.

The new library building was completed at the end of August, 1990, and furniture and fittings were installed during September. The move into the new building cannot take place until the end of the second semester examinations, since it will be necessary to close the Library for some weeks.

The Roseworthy Agricultural College Library will close its doors at the end of November 1990, and when they open again in January in the new premises, they will do so as the Roseworthy Campus Library of the University of Adelaide – the beginning of a new era.✻

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