

RMB8624,
Lower Kalgan,
WA 6330

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(ph 008 464 208)

Ian Macintosh,
Australian Nuffield Farming
Scholars Association,
c/-Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria,
Royal Showgrounds, Epsom Road,
Ascot Vale, Victoria 3032

Dear Ian Macintosh,

Thank you for your August 23 letter asking for my response to my Nuffield S'ship experiences in 1955, and thereafter. Some task!

Why me in the first place? I can only assume I was given the scholarship because I'd set out a good case and knew what I wanted to see in the UK. Perhaps being an ex-serviceman nearing the age limit set at that time may have given an edge to my application. But I don't know. The two senior interviewers were both former servicemen (Sirs) John Medley and Samuel Wadham. I knew what I wanted—it helps.

My six months in the UK: I recall with pleasure the warmth and hospitality of the farmers and scientists I met there. I found them interested to hear of my experiences and of other Australian farmers' backgrounds. Yes, we had electricity and kangaroos do not run down Collins Street. Having read enough about UK farming I was not shocked by the manpower per acre nor the apparent division existing between farmer and employee at that time. The UK farmers had had a tough time in the 1920-30s and in 1955 were still feeling their way after the shortages of material following the 1939-45 war.

My priorities: To study land drainage techniques and how UK sheepfarmers managed their flocks. To species used in and the management of improved pastures relative to sheep grazing. I was interested in everything pertaining to farming there and to the advisory services.

Summarising, I found the high capital cost of bringing out heavy drainage equipment was beyond my resources and I did not take up drainage contracting on my return. My raised interest in prime lamb production, pasture management and advisory services continued to this day.

Achievements: (stimulated by my scholarship experiences). Shortly after returning I formed the Peninsula Fat Lamb Association; its members lamb producers across the Mornington Peninsula. It survived until I moved to WA at the end of 1966. It achieved much by engaging in research and experiments on lamb production and pasture and fattening crops with the Melbourne University School of Agriculture and the Agriculture Department and with veterinarians from ICI Merindale facility. We held monthly meetings often having speakers who were leaders in their field. I remained its president from 1956-66.

MF

If the candidates had, by party rules, to have resided in the Flinders electorate I would have won the preselection by a proverbial mile. ^{also} Ten of my supporters arrived late and were not admitted to the hall. No complaints please.

The result was a good thing for me and my family. I later told Malcolm Fraser who I interviewed in 1978, that he lost a good Primary Industry minister! And gained a less than good treasurer. Like Queen Victoria, he wasn't amused.

Just to keep a little balance I played tennis, football and cricket in the Peninsula leagues during those years, helped my wife raise four terrific kids and always kept my bank manager reasonably happy.

In 1965 I finally realised I was too deeply involved off the farm and had to face up to the fact that at 45 years of age I had not progressed much financially. I began looking for more land. I eventually found it in WA and moved westwards in 1966-67 buying a piece of land which was the site of the first real farm on the south coast of WA. Its history appealed to me and my family. I retired from active farming in May 1995, but remain living on the farm I built up. For years I had bred and cross bred Angus-Hereford calves sold to feedlots.

Interviewed PM Malcolm Fraser? Almost by accident I became a part time journalist in 1974. I was invited to contribute an article to a WA owned rural paper Western Farmer & Grazier which had recently been launched. The invitations grew. Over the years since then I became a regular contributor to that paper then owned by Wesfarmers Limited and Rural Press' Farm Magazine. I am now Rural Press' regional representative and write articles and reports for its Farm Weekly/Elders Weekly papers. I enjoy doing it and I think I can claim it has helped me make many WA friends throughout the farming community. The Fraser interview resulted from a challenge by the Editor of the national paper National Farmer. I won. Writing has taken me on trips to China, NZ and Japan.

Summary: I've enjoyed my 47 years of farming and mixing with rural communities and wouldn't, given a second chance, wish my life to have been otherwise. I intend to live another 75 years and enjoy that too.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful of the opportunities given me by the generosity of Lord Nuffield and the Nuffield Foundation. The scholarship plus the six years in the AIF gave me enough self-confidence to do things I may not have tackled without them.

I also wish to acknowledge the good advice given me in 1955 (before I travelled to the UK) by the first Victorian recipient George Wilson. George had opened the doors for me and it smoothed my way round the UK. People there remembered he and Bert Kelly with affection. And we spoke good English!

I am grateful the Liberal Party did not choose me for its Flinders electorate. I shall decanter a bottle of Mount Mary cabernets tonight and drink a toast to the scholars association, the late Lord Nuffield and to my parents' genes.

END

At the same time I became involved in the then Australian Primary Producers Union, (APPU) moved into its Meat Section Committee and at the time I left for WA was its vice-president. I often spoke to it of a need for more lamb production research and ultimately served on the state-wide Lamb Promotion Committee. I successfully moved that the APPU join with the Graziers Association in forming a research liaison committee and to use it for approaches to research bodies etc.

Grassland Society: I had been impressed in the UK with G S of Great Britain(?) and in the late 1950s I began pushing the idea with people like Professor Derek Tribe, Clunes lamb producer Mac Troup and Agricultural Department adviser Bob Hedding and others. The result was I moved at a meeting at Melbourne University in September 1959 that the G S of Victoria be formed. Mac Troup was a fellow APPU committee member. I was the society's president in 1962, fellow steering committee member Bob Croll, CSIRO, filling the post in 1960 and '61. Perhaps the society's formation at that time resulted from Lord Nuffield's generosity more than anything else. I remain a financial member.

During those early years I also set about planting a 18 acre apple orchard to supplement my modest income. I farmed among apple growers, but my scholarship period included visits to apple orchardists in Suffolk and others.

In my report to the Nuffield Foundation I had said the broiler industry (then emerging in the UK) would be a threat in the future to our red meat producers. I recall Sir Samuel Wadham, on reading my report pooh-pooing my observation "because we could produce red meat in Australia much cheaper than poultry meat". However, he was generous enough to congratulate me on the work I'd done over there.

Fencing: During the 1950s I became friendly with R. L. (Bob) Piesse of Kew, Melbourne.

I co-operated with him on several occasions in the development of electric fencing systems and conventional fencing using round posts and long post intervals. I knew some farmers to be sceptical of his ideas but we remained close friends until his death and I helped him in some WA journeys and accompanied him through Central Australia, NT and the Kimberleys in 1980. No one was more delighted than was I when he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for his contribution to the nation's agriculture.

Extra-curricular: I became involved in many cultural, sporting and educational activities on the Mornington Peninsula from 1948-66. I founded the Peninsula Music Society in 1961 and remained its president until 1965. It presented many Musica Viva concerts by visiting and Australian chamber music artists and groups. I served on the Mornington High School Council. Captained the local Bush Fire Bde for several years. Was for many years President of the local branch of the Liberal Party. Briefly managed a local cooperative society. I stood for preselection for the Liberals in the Federal seat of Flinders the year (Sir) Phillip Lynch won preselection.