

AGRICULTURAL GAZETTE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

first year at H.A.C. doing agriculture APRIL, 1972





Susan Penn (right) and Margaret Alderdice ride in for the day's work at H.A.C. The College went co-ed three years ago and now has 17 girl students

Susan (left) and Anita Bath (third from right) have lunch in the College dining room, at one time an all-male preserve



Lectures and hard practical work lead to the Hawkesbury Diploma in Agriculture. Both girls study under Commonwealth Scholarships

GIRLS AT H.A.C.

Last year, for the first time, Hawkesbury Agricultural College accepted girl students in Agriculture. Two of the girls are Anita Bath from Coff's Harbour and Susan Penn from Mount Colah. Anita and Susan were motivated to do the Diploma in Agriculture by a love of land and animals. Anita's parents were originally on the land at Walcha, but Susan discovered her own close ties with country life when her father, a naval officer, was billeted on a dairy

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Seven girls, including Anita and Susan are doing the Ag. course at the College. Both girls have completed about 38 units of the full 160 unit course, lasting three years



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Susan backs up the tractor to a three point linkage implement. The course includes tractor maintenance, farm mechanics, welding and driving: Susan was born in England and came here in 1958

Hawkesbury's hot summer is tempered by a full size Olympic pool largely designed and built by students



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Everyone learns to shear the Tally-Hi way. Anita makes a good start on this wether, not much smaller than herself



The girls stay at nearby historic Hobartville, a friendly, relaxing place to call home after a day of lectures and practical work at H.A.C.



farm near the naval base at Nowra (H.M.A.S. *Albatross*).

Career possibilities for students finishing Diploma courses at H.A.C. are interesting and varied. This year, the New South Wales Department of Education awarded ten teacher trainee scholarships in both Hawkesbury and Wagga Colleges of Agriculture. The traineeships are restricted to the Diploma in Agriculture course and will be available every year. Students who complete the course and qualify for a traineeship can then complete the one year Diploma of Education course and be eligible to teach in schools. Significantly, thirty per cent of all high schools in New South Wales teach agriculture. Entrance qualifications are the Higher School Certificate with passes in English, Science and, preferably, maths. A School Certificate pass in maths will generally be accepted. Entrance to the College is then based on marks achieved in the Higher School Certificate examinations, students being selected strictly on merit. The minimum age for entry to the College is seventeen years.

Last year, both Hawkesbury and Wagga colleges were gazetted as colleges of advanced education under the Higher Education Act of New South Wales, and are now regarded as fully tertiary teaching institutions.

The Diploma in Agriculture course consists of 160 units and generally lasts for three years, depending on the student's ability. Anita Bath and Susan Penn had completed 38 units by the end of second term in their first year. Most students graduate after three academic years.

Hawkesbury Agricultural College was founded in 1891 and was for seventy-eight years an all-male college. In 1969 a number of female students were admitted to the College, but only for the course in Food Technology. The move was very successful,

The Author: Mr D. G. Campbell, Editorial Assistant, Department of Agriculture, Sydney.

so for the College year, 1971, the New South Wales Minister for Agriculture opened all diploma courses to females at both Hawkesbury and Wagga Agricultural colleges.

Now, seventeen girls study at H.A.C. Eight are enrolled in Agriculture, four in Food Technology I, three in Food Technology II, one is in Poultry Technology I and one has enrolled for Dairy Technology. They make up only a minor percentage of the College enrolment of 256 students. The number of girl students is expected to increase, but not dramatically, because there is no accommodation for girl boarders at the College. New buildings for girl boarders will not be finished for a few years. Meanwhile the Minister has approved a trial period in which 15 per cent of the student population can live "off campus", and although this ruling applies to both male and female students, it is expected that girls will eventually constitute most of the 15 per cent.

The accommodation problem is one for the girls themselves. They solve it in various ways, with help from the College administration. Susan and Anita are very fortunate in this regard. They live in the modernized outbuildings of an historic Australian mansion, not much more than one and a half miles from the College. It's a pleasant ride on horseback or a few minutes by car.

The mansion is Hobartville, built on 400 acres of magnificent Hawkesbury river-flat land which was the subject of an original grant. The great house was built in 1828 by William Cox the second, and was described by the press of those times as, "a building which might well be styled a little palace". The estate is now owned by Mrs Lindsay and consists of the house, the outbuildings and 228 acres of the original area.

Anita lives in a building close to the homestead, and Susan lives in what used to be the stable boy's cottage. It has been thoroughly modernized. Mrs Lindsay has retained the character and last-century charm of the buildings and gardens. She hopes to accommodate more girl students in the future. ●