



MONASH REPORTER

A MAGAZINE FOR THE UNIVERSITY

THE FIRST XV YEARS

On January 31, 1976, Monash's founding Vice-Chancellor, Dr Louis Matheson, will stand down — ending a 16 year association with the University.

A significant enough event in itself. Dr Matheson has been one of Australia's best known academics — certainly the longest-serving of contemporary university vice-chancellors.

But there are wider implications.

Monash has now completed 15 years' teaching. It has reached its maximum size, having achieved a rate of growth unmatched anywhere in the Commonwealth. It has earned an international reputation for the quality of its scholarship and research.

Now we stand at the threshold of a new era. Besides Dr Matheson, a number of other founding members of the University are at, or approaching, retiring age. Changes there undoubtedly will be.

This, then, seemed an appropriate time to look back over the first fifteen years.

So, Reporter this month appears in two sections:

The outer eight pages represent an exercise in nostalgia: a more-or-less objective view of the birth and growth of the University, combined with a collection of anecdotes from some of Monash's long-serving identities.

Inside, is the 'normal' monthly issue of the magazine.

We hope it all adds up to some sort of picture of what Monash University is, and has been, all about.



Dr and Mrs Matheson at home

Photo: Herve Alleaume

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I am pleased to be able to write an introduction to this issue of the Monash Reporter. My relative newness as an officer of the University disqualifies me as a historian. I have, however, been a part-time teacher in the University for more than a year, and I have had enough experience of the quality of the work done in my own and other Faculties to feel proud of my association with the University, and to feel confident that it will progress in the future as it has progressed over the past 15 years under the aegis of Dr Matheson.

Unfortunately we are not able to say at this stage who Dr Matheson's successor will be. We do know, however, that during the twelve months following his

retirement the administration of the University will be in the capable hands of Professor Scott as Acting Vice-Chancellor. I am sure everyone concerned will give him full support in this testing transitional period.

To Dr Matheson I tender the warm thanks of the University for his splendid achievement and its thanks also to all those who have co-operated to make Monash the outstanding institution that it has become.

R. M. G. G. G.
CHANCELLOR

Monash is a million stories. In its brief history it has clasped to its forgiving bosom what sometimes seems to have been more than its fair share of characters, eccentrics, colorful personalities — even geniuses — among both staff and students.

In pages 4—5 Professor John Legge sketches what might be called the semi-official history of the University. (An official version, covering the first 10 years, already exists: Sir Robert Blackwood's "Monash University — The First Ten Years.")

To balance it Reporter set out to gather together some of the unofficial history.

We invited a number of the longer-serving members of staff to take a trip down memory lane, to recall some of the incidents, innovations and pranks that gave the place a very special flavor in its early years.

Because of limitations on space, time and physical resources, we cannot pretend that what follows represents more than a fraction of the anecdotal material that abounds in people's memories and filing cabinets.

We apologise in advance, therefore, to all those whom we failed to interview — and to those who may even know the greater truth of the stories we tell.

● Monash is a million stories . . .

DOUG ELLIS, Deputy Warden of the Union, started at Monash in July, 1960, eight months before the University opened. His first job was as laboratory manager in chemistry. In 1965 he became general secretary of the Monash Sports and Recreation Association.

In that role he has been closely and sympathetically involved in a wide range of student activities. He admits to an admiration (not always wholeheartedly shared by others in positions of authority) for some of the more imaginative pranks of the early days — before the student body 'got serious.'

Doug's favorite student prank was the report published in a daily paper in 1967 of a \$2.7 million, 15-storey car park to be built at Monash for students.

The students had produced a very professional-looking pamphlet describing the project, prepared their own press release — and hoodwinked the press.

That year Doug regards as the vintage year of student humor and ingenuity.

During Farm Week, 1967, the students competed to bring the most unusual trophy back to the University. The prize was won by a group who took the plaque from the gates of the Royal Mint in William Street.

"They had had students walking past the gates every day for a week, dropping oil on the bolts, so that when they came to take the plaque off, the bolts worked free very easily," he says.

Other trophies that year included bulldozers, the Waverley City Council sweeper, TV performer Jimmy Hannan tied to the bonnet of a car, and the point posts from the MCG.

It was Doug's task to arrange the return of all the 'borrowed' goods. When the plaque arrived, Doug acted as go-between arranging the return of the enormous metal shield.

He had the police in one room, the University legal officer in another and the students in a third.

"The police would ask me a question, I'd ask them to wait a moment while I talked with the students and the legal officer. Then I'd go back with the answer and collect another question.

"We were trying to get the thing returned with the minimum of difficulty."

Doug recalls having to return the MCG point posts with something approaching glee.

"I remember sitting at my desk and ringing the MCG. When I got through to someone, I said who I was and said we had their point posts here at Monash.

"The chap at the other end just laughed and said it was impossible. I insisted that they have a look, and when the fellow came back to the phone he was very subdued and chagrined.

"I think they were a bit put out about their security."

Doug believes 1967 was a climactic year for student feeling, because the University had reached a critical size in terms of people. There were enough students to tap a fund of ingenuity, without individual loss of identity with the student body as a whole.

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Doug Ellis maintains that one of the Vice-Chancellor's important contributions to Monash was his philosophy about people and their walking habits.

"He used to say 'let the goat tracks build up', and argued that the architects shouldn't plan paths or walkways, but should wait to see where people walked — then lay the paths after them.

"The result is an aerial view of Monash with paths taking off in directions that an architect simply would not tolerate. But it does mean that people are walking where they basically want to and not where they have to."

Doug says that when the first chemistry lecture theatre was built, there was a preparation room with dangerous chemicals and the like which was out of bounds to everyone.

"I came in one day to find Ben Baxter (chemistry photographer) being told by a young man that he wasn't going to leave the room because he was the Vice-Chancellor's son.

"I was busily telling the boy I didn't care whose son he was when a voice behind me said, 'Well said — out you go, Roger', and Dr Matheson watched his son go out without another word."

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Doug Ellis sometimes misses the easy camaraderie of the early days.

"Everybody here at the beginning was imbued with a pioneering spirit," he says. "There was no sense of parochiality and none of the red tape that exists now.

"From 1961, the chemistry building housed the entire University — except for the Vice-Chancellor's house, which was still the office, and a couple of builders' huts which housed some departments."

The earliest 'sports building' in use at Monash was an old brick cottage remaining from the Talbot Epileptic Colony which originally shared the University site with a trotting track and market gardens.

The cottage, on the site now occupied by Education, was the home of the University's first sports medicine centre — which was also the first of its kind in Australia. The blockhouse behind the cottage, which had been the padded cell treatment area for the colony, was used for book storage at first; later it became the bushwalking students' equipment area.

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Doug Ellis believes that the demonstrations which dominated the Monash scene in the late '60s were a lot more 'responsible' than many others.

"They were concerned with major issues and the morality of the Vietnam situation," he says. "Those of us who were very involved respected the seriousness of it all. There were no threats to life or limb, staff were not threatened as has happened more recently at other universities. Staff were able to communicate with and to discuss issues with students and some of us even stayed with them during demonstrations on occasions."

Doug believes the demonstrations grew out of the critical size of the University, with departments and people polarising instead of being part of the earlier close-knit 'family' atmosphere.

"Communications broke down. Instead of everyone knowing everyone else, it got to the stage where people knew only people in their own area.

"Now Monash is more concerned with environmental issues in a quiet way. The larger student body has diluted

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the impact of activists, and there is no radical leader with charisma."

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Doug recalls a near-disaster at Monash when an explosion in the services tunnel under chemistry rocked the University and brought people running from every direction.

"The story has it that gas people were checking for leaks with a lighted candle when it exploded with a great boom, and flames whooshed up the stairs," he says.

"Someone said there was a man still trapped underneath, and several of us tried to get down to him.

"When the flames cleared there was no one there.

"The story goes on that, when the explosion happened, one chap ran up the stairs so fast that he wasn't counted, and they reckon he kept on running so far that a piece of equipment he was carrying was found hundreds of feet away."

Doug says that the Monash staff were so brand new to that sort of thing they sprayed each other in their efforts to put out the fire.



...too much learning...

No history of Monash could be written without frequent references to the late Jock Marshall, the University's colorful and irreverent founding professor of zoology.

He was, it used to seem, in just about everything that was going on in the early years. His contribution, particularly in relation to the campus planting scheme, is of course acknowledged in the naming of the Jock Marshall Zoology Reserve (and the bar-rail of the Monash University Club) — but a host of stories about him have passed into Monash folklore.

When Professorial Board was solemnly discussing the conferring of an honorary degree on a prominent Victorian politician, it was Jock Marshall who, equally solemnly, proposed that the champion racehorse 'Tulloch' should instead be so honored.

It was Marshall who coined the name "The Vicarage" for the Notting Hill Hotel.

Two bulging files in the basement of the University Offices tell of his role in the search for a University Coat of Arms — a prolonged, often hilarious, sometimes acrimonious tussle that involved the Vice-Chancellor, the Comptroller, the Academic Registrar, the Garter Principal King of Arms in London and many others for more than four years.

It was Marshall who suggested the motto (Ancora Imparo — "I am still learning") and put forward many of the early suggestions for the design of the Coat of Arms.

And it was his wife, Jane, who drew and re-drew the various designs until, in a moment of exasperation, she told him the motto should be "Much learning doth make thee mad" (a biblical allusion that might not have readily commended itself to Jock, who once exploded when he saw himself described as Professor of Zoology and Comparative Theology — instead of Physiology).



LEFT: Former Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, leaving after the opening of the Humanities building named in his honor, August, 1962.

RIGHT, After the opening of the University, March 11, 1961 Mr (later Sir Robert) Blackwood, first Chancellor, showed Sir Charles Lowe and other guests a model of what the infant University was going to look like.

BELOW LEFT: And the first day for the students — Monday, March 13, 1961.



Seedlings for growth

PADDY ARMSTRONG, sports ground curator, was Monash's first head groundsman. He was appointed in March, 1960, after interview with Sir Robert Blackwood (chairman of the Interim Council and later Chancellor), Dr. Matheson, and Mr. Frank Johnson.

"I was told to make it my life's work," he recalls.

When Paddy arrived, much of the site was still occupied by the epileptic colony, trotting tracks and market gardens. There were bullock paddocks and grazing paddocks and a lot of the land was covered with blackberries and noxious weeds.

Site meetings were held every Friday to discuss progress and implement the master plan laid down by the University architects, Bates, Smart and McCutcheon, and the landscape architects.

"Dr. Matheson chaired all these meetings, so he kept his finger very close to the pulse of the place," Paddy says. "He knew what every man was doing.

"We began plantation No. 1 at the corner of Blackburn and Wellington Roads. We planted medium-sized trees — wattles, melaleucas, bottlebrushes — all designed to attract native birds, and I don't think there is another campus in Australia with the wonderful variety of birds that we get here."

After completing the Blackburn Road planting scheme, the grounds team began work on the Beddoe Avenue boundary.

Paddy says: "The idea there was to screen out suburbia, so we developed a soft type of planting, with trees that weep and bend. If you look at the western boundary ring road now you can see a lovely soft image as a result."

The grounds team began work in the stables of the O'Shea house (now the Vice-Chancellor's house), and in the strappers' room upstairs — the horses and the groom were still there.

"The groom didn't really like the University coming," says Paddy. "He kept wheeling in barrow loads of hot manure just at morning tea time. He referred to the V-C as 'the Viscount'."

One of the first tasks, in the hot summer months, was to keep four departments housed in a tin builder's shed as cool as possible.

"We rigged up a coolgardie safe arrangement with hessian on the roof and reaching down the sides to the ground. A hose on the roof kept a constant flow of water down the hessian. We did more than just keep the professors cool: we used the cool spots between the hessian and the shed walls to keep nursery plants shady and moist."

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The official opening of the University on March 11, 1961, fully tested the capabilities of Paddy Armstrong and his grounds team. Two thousand visitors had been invited, and at very short notice, the team was asked to establish a lawn for the barbecue.

"We had to panic a bit, so I went bush and came back with 40 bags of fowl manure which we worked into the forecourt between the chemistry and physics buildings. We had no water in the area, so we asked Doug Ellis for help and he gave us water out of the laboratories.

"We had a lawn up in five days and we cut and rolled it on the seventh — just in time for the opening. It looked magnificent."

When the time came for the opening of the Menzies Building, Paddy's team had to arrange the decoration of the area for a reception to be held in the basement. They borrowed 80 trees in pots from the Oakleigh Council and set these up with vines trailing over the columns.

"We checked everything and thought it looked good. Then Dr. Matheson came down. He walked around and then suddenly pointed at one of the pots.

"The pot was black, and Dr. Matheson had noticed what it was — one of the pans commonly used for sewerage. All he said when he came to me was: 'Remove the evidence.'"

Later, Paddy was engaged to landscape the area given over to the CSIRO.

"I designed it as a well-kept golf club and the names soon developed as 'The Farm' for Monash and 'The Country Club' for CSIRO."

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Of the Vice-Chancellor, Paddy says:

"It was a great privilege and experience to work with Dr. Matheson. He was a great leader and brought me into everything that was being done, and he showed me a lot of consideration and encouragement.

"Into the life of this University he built something that will endure. He created an atmosphere of a family between students and staff. He encouraged us to help each other.

"The University planners, the Council, the professors and doctors all had outstanding foresight. They were concerned with the enjoyment of being here. I was a small part of a very great team and was privileged to work with these people."



HEAD groundsman Paddy Armstrong (third from left) with the original Monash grounds team, 1960.

MORE OF THE MILLION STORIES, PICS. — p. 6, 7

FLOOD WATERS

NORM WATT, now the University's customs officer, was the 32nd member of staff appointed to the infant institution. Like the other pioneers, one of his most persistent memories is of the weather — and the pervasive Monash Mud.

He says: "That year (1960), it rained and rained. Mr Johnson (then Registrar, later Comptroller) had an old station wagon and every morning he would pick up the typists.

"But when he got to the corner near Clayton Road it was always flooded and his car kept breaking down in the water. I would have to go and tow it out.

"During the winter it was really cold and at lunchtimes, Mrs. Matheson would cook the V-C's lunch in the kitchen (just about everyone then was sharing the V-C's house). Upstairs would come the smell of steak and onions and by lunchtime we were almost ready to take a bite out of our desks."

Norm, on appointment, constituted virtually the University's entire finance department, but as accounting staff were recruited he became in turn purchasing officer and Customs officer. One of the more hilarious problems he encountered in his later role involved (of course) Jock Marshall.

"Jock came back once from overseas with lots of material for his department. He also had a live snake in his bag and when the Customs official rummaged through the bag and found the reptile, he berated Jock for not declaring it.

"Then he had to back off, because Marshall had declared it — he'd used the scientific name."

Norm remembers the problems associated with feeding the early Monash population.

"The food was cooked by the caterer, Otto Eisen, at Kangaroo Road, Oakleigh, and then the University's one-ton truck would go down and get it.

"It was the same truck that was used for rubbish and zoology specimens!"

MONASH

The first XV years

For the early members of Monash the opening of the University was accompanied by a great sense of euphoria.

The University of New South Wales was, perhaps, the first of the second generation of Australian universities; but the decision, embodied in an Act of the Victorian Parliament of April 1958, to establish a second university in Victoria was nevertheless part of a new wave of educational development — the post-Murray-Committee wave in which tertiary education was backed by massive federal support and seemed heading for a new era.

In that perspective Monash felt itself to be at the crest of the wave, the first of the new universities, a pioneer in a brave new educational world.

This heady atmosphere undoubtedly helped the University to keep moving in its first hectic couple of years and possibly to establish a general flavor that was to survive longer. By comparison with other new foundations — La Trobe, Macquarie, Flinders, Griffith and Murdoch — Monash was founded very much on the run.

When the Act was passed it was expected, on the basis of the Murray Committee's Report to the Victorian Government, that the new University would take its first students in 1964 or 1965.

Subsequent figures revealed a more rapid build-up of the student population in Victoria than the Murray Committee had expected and the Interim Council, in fact unaware of Murray's proposed time schedules, decided to plan for a 1961 opening — and, at AUC insistence, to open with five faculties rather than the three (Science, Engineering and Medicine) originally planned.

When that decision was confirmed in 1959 the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor had still to arrive and the first members of the academic staff had still to be appointed. The first senior appointments were made in 1960 and most of them had thus only a few months in which to staff their departments, stock a basic library collection, equip laboratories and plan courses.

Memories of that year are of rapid preparations in temporary offices in the Vice-Chancellor's house and garage, of the library beginning in the Volkswagen factory down the way, of lunches in Cotter's Oakleigh Hotel (the days of the Notting Hill came later) and, of course, of the mud.

1960 was a wet year and the Science area resembled Flanders in 1918. Though only one member of staff actually went in over the tops of his gumboots, others learned not to venture on to the site unaccompanied. It may all be gilded now by nostalgia, but at the time one wondered whether the buildings would really be finished and whether the doors would open on time.

Speed of that kind tended to be habit-forming and contributed to the emergence of a Monash style, compounded of energy, plenty of self-confidence and a fair admixture of brashness.

Self-confidence sometimes bordered on megalomania as when the University seriously considered proposing to the Government that Monash should heed for a target of 30,000 or 40,000 students, thus becoming the third as well as the second University in Victoria!

But if judgment was sometimes impaired by haste, at least the pressure was tempered by a pervading sense of goodwill and purpose and by high student as well as staff morale.

The flavor of Life on the Farm in 1961 was perhaps best captured by the ad hoc catering arrangements in a partitioned-off section of the Science building, where all members of the University from Vice-Chancellor to the freshest freshette elbowed for their places in the luncheon queue.

That easy informality and sense of community could not be expected to survive the pace of the University's

growth. The first year intake of approximately 350 students was more than doubled in 1962 (798 students), doubled again in 1963 (1590), and reached almost 6,000 by 1966.

The University's original commitment was to achieve a student population of 12,000 in ten years, and though it did not quite make that figure, it fell only a little behind schedule, reaching a total student number of 10,400 in 1970 and passing the 12,000 mark in 1973.

To the original five faculties — Arts, Economics and Politics, Engineering, Medicine and Science — were added Law (1964) and Education (1965). Staff and buildings expanded to keep pace.

In accordance with an early decision to avoid temporary buildings for the reason that they invariably end up by becoming permanent, the first years saw departments playing a complicated game of musical chairs as they moved from one temporary home to another in permanent buildings.

With the completion of the Great Hall (Robert Blackwood Hall) in 1971, the second stage of the Library in 1969, the second stage of Education and third stage of Humanities in 1975, the main building programme was completed.

In weathering its early rapid expansion and in developing its distinctive character the University owed more than could easily be measured to the relaxed style, the genial touch and the accessibility of Louis Matheson.

As Vice-Chancellor, his resilience in taking crises as they came, his ingenuity and his pragmatic open-mindedness to all manner of day-to-day proposals went along with a capacity to stand back from the detail and consider what it was all adding up to.



Profit and loss

Whatever the judgments of later student detractors, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that he was the central figure in the building of the University.

There were, of course, others — Bob Blackwood who brought an orderly and patient mind to the chairmanship of the Interim Council and to the first Chancellorship, Jock Marshall whose blend of conventional and unconventional wisdom enlivened the proceedings of the Board — but a potted survey can't attempt to give an adequate Honour Roll of those who contributed to the early Monash image.

It was inevitable that with growth there should go some hardening of the arteries. Institutionalised procedures and the notion of proper channels replaced, of necessity, the corner-cutting administrative methods and the improvisation of the first few years. Within departments the small groups of people who planned courses together in 1961 had become large, unwieldy groups by 1970. Statutory provisions for formal departmental meetings were intended to ensure some measure of departmental democracy, but consultation and co-operation could no longer be conducted with the ease of the early '60s.

Inevitably, too, as staff numbers increased and as new people brought their own conceptions of what university education was about and their own ideas of how their subjects should be taught, the sense of a common purpose shared by a handful of people gave way to variety and controversy. The loss in that respect was no doubt balanced by the gain.

These were the natural consequences of growth. Not so inevitable was the outbreak of student unrest in the

When we decided to publish a brief history of Monash in this special issue of Reporter, we sought the best possible advice as to whom we should commission. It was agreed that it should be a man close enough to the events of the past 15 years to know what he's talking about. And far enough away, physically, to see the thing in perspective (and dodge the immediate reactions).

It all pointed, inescapably, to Professor John Legge, the University's first professor of history (appointed November 25, 1960), now on study leave at Oxford.

Professor Legge not only supplied the following wide-ranging and perceptive account of Monash's birth and development — he even provided an appropriate preface, which runs something like this:

"... This is not a definitive account of the University's first fifteen years, but merely crusty old Legge laying about him in all directions — that he was invited to reflect on the history of the University and this, the editor regrets to say, is what he's come up with ..."

late '60s. Mass meetings and stirring rhetoric were followed by the invasions first of the sacred parking preserves of professors and later of the administration building and the careers and appointments office. Such occupations — or the threat of them — became a regular part of Monash life.

The with-it university of 1961 had become the pace-setter of student turbulence seven years later.

By the end of the first decade a good deal of the first momentum had been replaced by the rather different modes and preoccupations of a fully functioning institution. After a further five years it is perhaps worth asking how much of the initial euphoria bears remembering.

Some of the University's specific goals are easily identified and its success or failure readily measured. Others were more intangible.

● As far as the Government of Victoria was concerned, Monash was intended to contribute to the solution of a general population explosion crisis, reflected in increasing numbers in the schools and an increasing proportion of those numbers coming through to matriculation level. It was Monash's job as soon as possible, and for a few years thereafter, to absorb the annual increase in the student population.

● Secondly, and closely associated with the first, its formation was part of an Australian educational philosophy which held that tertiary education should be open not merely to an elite but to all who could reach a minimum qualifying standard.

● Finally, for many members of the University itself there was a desire for experiment and innovation. Monash was required, by a somewhat quaint provision of its Act, to maintain academic standards at least as high as those of the University of Melbourne, but it hoped to do so by striking out along new paths. Not for us the hidebound ways of the older universities.

From the figures already quoted Monash may claim to have made a major contribution to the first two of those aims. The rapidity of its expansion provided places, during the '60s, for students who would otherwise have been excluded from the quotas of the University of Melbourne.

Nor were its students merely those who had been unable to gain admission to Melbourne. Within a year or two (was it because of its location, or its atmosphere or its academic reputation?) Monash had begun to attract students — many of them students of the highest quality — in its own right.

As was to be expected, given the policy of providing university training for an increasing proportion of the population, many of them were first generation students — men and women whose parents and grandparents had either not wanted a university education, or had not been able to carry through the full course of secondary education, or had been unable to find university places at the end of it.

They differed from their counterparts in the older universities in ways not always easy to determine.

Their teachers may have noticed differences in motivation on the part of students who hadn't been led to take a tertiary education for granted.

They may have seen differences in school preparation or in attitudes to learning as such.

They may have wondered how far the common student demand for relevance in university courses sprang from new attitudes of students who rejected the notion of university education as providing the professional qualifications demanded by society and who looked to it to provide a liberating experience which it might not always be able to deliver.

But at least they found the Monash student to be a lively, irreverent and stimulating being to teach.

ONE MAN'S VIEW: John Legge



Monash's record in respect of the third goal is more difficult to assess.

In the closing months of 1960, the academic staff on the Arts side of the University gave some attention to the ideas emanating from the University of Sussex and in particular from Asa Briggs, its first Dean of Social Sciences and subsequently its Vice-Chancellor, who expounded the idea of integrated courses grouped in schools of study rather than in traditional disciplines, as making possible the drawing of new "maps of learning".

This vision seemed to require not merely a new concept of course structure, including a strong emphasis on inter-disciplinary study, but also a departure from the traditional faculty and departmental organisation of other Australian universities.

Some felt that these ideas, though in many ways attractive, had serious disadvantages. A map of learning appropriate for 1961 might not be so apt in 1980, but might by then have acquired its own inflexibility. Others argued that inter-disciplinary co-operation could only be effective if based on a traditional organisation of disciplines.

It was said, too, that much of the attractiveness of the Sussex prescriptions lay in the way they were presented, and that in fact their substance was not so very different from that of traditional course arrangements.

But others felt that in this kind of model there was an opportunity for Monash to break new ground, to plan exciting programs of study relevant to the preoccupations of students and able to capture their imagination.

In the event, there was simply no time for radical departures of that kind. Monash staff members were later to look enviously at the time given to the staff members of neighboring La Trobe to think carefully about course organisation and content.

For Monash it was a matter of getting courses off the ground in a matter of weeks. The result was an essentially conservative arrangement of subjects and content.

At the level of university government, too, there was no time to strive after new forms. Monash perforce (and perhaps by choice) adopted in main outline the Scottish-Australian pattern with which most of its staff members were familiar.

There were some variations. In order to provide effective administrative services in the large university that Monash was destined to become, the Vice-Chancellor moved early to establish full time deanships in all faculties instead of the rotating deanships common elsewhere.



Success and failure

But in general the Monash pattern was the standard pattern of faculties and professorial board and with departments as the main building blocks, to use a phrase of the Vice-Chancellor.

He, indeed, was torn two ways on some of these questions. He, too, hoped that Monash would be a leader in educational experiment; but his main commitment was to excellence in scholarship and so far as university organisation was concerned he looked to achieve that goal through a strong departmental organisation, with the Professorial Board as ultimately responsible for academic policy. As its chairman (another change from tradition was the amendment of the University Act to provide for the Vice-Chancellor to be Chairman of the Board) he was sensitive to its views and skilful in presenting them to Council. Though he found in the

meetings of the Committee of Deans his regular source of senior advice, he did not regard it as usurping the Board's authority.

The adoption of conservative forms of government did not mean that there could be no educational experiment, of course — merely that, insofar as it developed, it was to be found within the traditional structure rather than as an integral part of a new structure.

There were successes and failures.

One plan of 1961 — to bridge the Two Cultures by requiring Arts and Ecops students to take a half course in a science field and scientists, medics and engineers to take a half course in the humanities-social science area — was given a serious trial but was eventually abandoned.

Courses were specially prepared and were designed to introduce students to the assumptions and methods of disciplines other than their own; but students resented the compulsion and staff felt it impossible to fail otherwise good students for not making the grade in the compulsory half course.

In Medicine, the vision of a university hospital on the site and integrated with the university, linking clinical and pre-clinical years, did not fit in with the Government's general hospital planning for the south-eastern suburbs, and was eventually given up in 1974.

Other developments were more successful: course work Masters' degrees for a new clientele in the Faculty of Economics and Politics; a number of inter-disciplinary ventures such as the Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies; participation in inter-university inter-disciplinary activity in the shape of the Western Port Environmental Study; the emphasis on special education within the Faculty of Education; and no doubt many others.

It would be hard to draw a balance sheet out of this. It could be argued by the conservative or the timid that the speed of Monash's foundation in fact saved the university from rash, gimmicky and unsuccessful experiment. Schools of Study plans elsewhere have had some difficulties in practice and even the Sussex model has had its critics.

Monash at least was able to seek excellence according to its own lights within a traditional framework and without the risks attendant on the breaking of new ground. In so doing it has achieved high academic standards and has earned respect in the world of scholarship — but as a traditional rather than as an innovating institution.

Having seen itself in 1960 as the first of the new universities it has succeeded, maybe, in establishing itself as the last of the old.

It may be that this determination to preserve traditional academic values has been one of the elements in student restiveness over the years; and no account of the early Monash would be complete without a glance at that side of the story.

Though Monash may have surrendered to La Trobe or Flinders or elsewhere, at various times, its leadership in the field of student unrest it certainly seemed to have more than its fair share of demonstrations, sit-ins and loud hailers.

Its distinctive style of student action was aided by the change in the machinery of student government adopted by the student body in 1968, when the old SRC was finally replaced by the Monash Association of Students.

To its critics the whole idea of MAS, with its provision for the direct participation of all students in student policy making, was misguided. They argued that mass meetings would make it impossible for practical business to be transacted.

Fears were expressed that the new system would enable minorities to manipulate majorities, and would

upgrade rhetorical and demagogic skills at the expense of genuine debate and argument.

On the first point the Cassandras were wrong. Under a succession of skilful MAS chairmen clear conventions of debate were established and procedures developed for handling motions quickly. There is no doubt that a meeting of 600 or 1000 people or more can get through the business effectively if it has a mind to.

But it has certainly been true that the MAS system for a time suited those who wished to politicise the campus. This had its educational spin off in making students aware of the nature of political action. They learned to observe ideologies in action, to appreciate the techniques of manipulation and the subtle justifications of those techniques.

But the direct action tactics pursued through the framework of MAS fulfilled the worst fears of the old-fashioned liberals who felt that coercion was out of place in a university (despite the radical argument that of course it is there anyway).

With this form of student organisation as a backdrop it is possible to distinguish two waves of student action.

● The first, beginning in about 1967 and fading out at the end of 1971, was an Australian counterpart of the student movement in Europe and America. It was deliberately political in character, concerned to channel student indignation at the defects of the society about them. It drew a good deal of its driving force from the Vietnam issue.

It was also the vehicle for many quite legitimate demands for enlarging the formal voice of students in university affairs, though it is hard to escape the conclusion that these demands were essentially tactical moves used by a skilful leadership to rally support for itself.

And here lay the built-in limitation of the movement. The dilemma of its radical leaders was that, while their aim was to disturb the foundations of the university as part of a wider establishment, the student support on which they depended was forthcoming only so long as the specific objects of a particular campaign could be seen as reasonable and so long as sit-ins and other demonstrations stopped short of violence.

The movement faded after the University Council in 1971 managed to reach agreement, not with the radicals but with MAS representatives, on acceptable guide lines for radical action.

● The second phase of student action, to be seen in 1973 and 1974, was more limited in aim. The concern was no longer with the evils of American imperialism in Asia, or with the multi-nationals or even with the subservience of universities to capitalist society, but was directed rather to genuine university matters, in particular to questions of assessment and to methods of determining course content.

No doubt for some the actual experience of protest was an exciting and liberating experience; and for a few the old motives of politicising the student body and challenging the surrounding society were still there.

But the tenor of protest was, for the most part, very different from that of the late '60s, and it reflected a genuine dissatisfaction with traditional university purposes and methods.

For good or ill it was not able to command the same degree of continuing student interest as the earlier movement. Indeed, because of the difficulty of securing a quorum at meetings, the MAS organisation which, in more passionate days, had played into radical hands, now seems to muffle rather than to amplify the radical voice.

Nevertheless the issues raised in 1974 were important, and they may point to ways in which Monash's success or failure is to be judged.

If Australia had chosen to develop a wide diversity of tertiary institutions it would be possible for some of them to be highly experimental, departing from formal degree structures as we know them and perhaps setting quite different standards from those of the traditional university. In different ways in different institutions students could play a major part in determining course structure and content, pursuing with more freedom the lines of inquiry that attracted them and with less concern for the formal certificate of achievement at the end.

Instead, universities in Australia have displayed considerable uniformity, and the colleges of advanced education are trying, alas, to be as like universities as possible. The room for that kind of diversity is therefore sadly limited.

Rattling skeletons...

When **BEN BAXTER**, chemistry photographer, arrived at Monash in February, 1961, crash-helmeted patients were still in residence in the epileptic colony, cows grazed all the way from the Wellington Road entrance to the Science end of the proposed Union site, and there was mud everywhere.

The only completed building was the first year chemistry lab, and part of physics; the Vice-Chancellor's garage was the University's head office, and staff were paid in nearby huts.

Ben has vivid memories of the official opening on Saturday, March 11, 1961.

"The celebrities were sitting against the wall of the Science building under a canopy facing towards the then Arts building, or first year chemistry as it is now.

"Just as the opening was to take place, a figure appeared on top of the building — a skeleton, clad in mortar board and a cloak. The crowds on the lawn all started laughing, but the dignitaries under the canopy couldn't see what was going on.

"Later it was alleged that it was a student practical joke. It wasn't, of course, because we didn't have any students. It was Jock Marshall.

"He'd got a kid who was working as a technician and worded him up to it. They got a skeleton from the first year zoology lab, and rigged it up there.

"The police went up to try to catch him, but Jock Marshall had planned an escape route with a ladder down the back, and when the police got there, there was no sign of him at all. In the papers, it was said that the police had got the fellow."

★ ★ ★

At the time Ben started, there was a stunt going on called the "White Protestant Movement."

"Nobody had ever heard of the 'White Protestant Movement' — and no one's heard of it since. But they had properly-printed signs that said 'Protestants Only' and 'White Protestants have been here.'

"We were very short of toilets then — the toilets in first year chemistry were about the only ones around ... and someone stuck 'White Protestants Only' notices on the doors!

"I used to work very late preparing slides and equip-



ment and often the Metropolitan Security Service fellows covering the area would drop in in the early hours for a cup of coffee.

"One morning a chap came in horribly upset and asked me to come outside and have a look in the quadrangle by the pines.

"There he showed me at least a ton of concrete laid in a big slab. Sitting on it was a lavatory bowl, with lovely flowers glazed on the bottom. It had a stand-pipe and chain and was very neatly set in the concrete.

"And there was a brass plate on the front that said: 'Presented to the students of Monash by Dr Mannix — White Protestants Keep Off!'"

Because the security man feared for his job, he and Ben got to the edifice with a crowbar, broke up the concrete and dumped the lot.

"It was a great practical joke, but unfortunately only two people saw it," says Ben.

★ ★ ★

Another prank that Baxter really liked involved the garden beds at the back of the Union.

At the time, the shrubs in the beds were about 18 inches high and each had an identifying stick alongside.

One day there was to be a professorial meeting and the students knew who and where everyone was. And as people arrived that morning they found each stick had another attached to form a cross and each bore a name.

"They had a beautiful notice printed, saying 'Monash Lawn Cemetery ... Be Buried Next to an Academic ... Select a plot with a Commanding View of the Dandenongs.' They didn't miss anyone — they had 68 professors and others, and each cross bore an appropriate inscription.

"The then parking officer, Snowy Boyd, had one. It read: 'Snowy Boyd — This is a Black Sticker Zone — Snowy, you can't be buried here, you're in the wrong zone.'

"When the professors came out at lunch, they walked through the 'cemetery' ... everyone enjoyed it, and no damage was done to anyone."

★ ★ ★

On another occasion, Ben says, a woman lecturer preparing to give a maths lecture found a drawing of a dancer (very well done in colored chalks) on the blackboard.

"The lecturer used another board, but when she had filled that, she apologised to the students for having to rub the drawing off.

"She picked up the duster and started to rub. But as she rubbed, the dress and everything else came off but underneath, in paint, was a very rude nude, and the more she rubbed, the ruder it got.

"It took us about a week to get the paint off the board."

Sporting physicists! Left: Dr Gordon Troup (centre rear) with one of the early fencing teams he coached. Below: Professor Bob Street felled by a bouncer in a staff-student cricket match. (Ben Baxter photos).



Set in the Science lawn are two large aluminium domes that Baxter says proved irresistible to one prankster.

"For years at Orientation Week, this chap would sneak out early in the morning and plant red buckets upside down on top of the domes. Then he'd paint pink patches around them.

"He used to always reckon that they belonged to a female from outer space who was pushing up through the ground."



A "bit of a stir ...": a typical student rally in the Forum, circa 1967.

STUDENTS

In the late '60s and early '70s, the name Monash became synonymous in the public mind with student activism. Certainly, those years (for reasons discussed by Professor Legge in his article) produced innovations in the form and style of student organisation and government that have since found imitators in a number of other tertiary institutions.

To get the student perspective, Reporter invited Mary Potter, chairman of the Administrative Executive, Monash Association of Students, for the past two years, to reflect on the development of student government, to evaluate the present state of affairs, and consider the areas that the student movement might profitably explore in the future.

She writes ...

Student government started off at Monash with an SRC whose members were elected to represent various interest groups among the student body.

This system worked reasonably well until the major political issues of Australian and American involvement in Vietnam and conscription hit the campus. The SRC structure was not able to respond effectively to students' wishes to be involved in policy making on the issue. It was felt that a system which allowed all interested students to participate in policy decisions at general

"It is one of the most mischievous effects of flattery that it renders honourable natures more slow and reluctant in expressing their real feelings in praise of the deserving, than for the interests of truth and virtue might be desired."

—S. T. Coleridge

In compiling this special issue of *The Reporter* to mark the Vice-Chancellor's retirement, we sought to avoid embarrassing any of the V-C's colleagues (or Dr Matheson himself) by commissioning anything in the nature of a "eulogy".

But it would be an inexcusable omission if we were not to publish at least something that Coleridge's "slow and reluctant honorable natures" would surely like to see in print.

We have chosen, then, to publish some extracts from the address given by Sir James Darling, President of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, when he launched the Robert Blackwood Hall Organ Appeal on September 24.

Sir James said:

Dr Matheson was your first Vice-Chancellor and on him largely fell the planning and execution of this great project. For that alone, the University and Victoria and Australia owe him recognition. His record of achievement and service is an outstanding one, and too long to recite here.

Under the influence of the late Sir Raymond Priestley, Dr Matheson came to Australia first as Professor of Civil Engineering in 1947, returning to England as Bayer Professor of Engineering in Manchester, until he took the post of Vice-Chancellor of this University in 1960. Somehow, in spite of all that this entailed, he has managed to be President of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, to be a member of the Royal Commission into the failure of the King Street Bridge; he has done much work in Papua and New Guinea, becoming in 1966 Chairman of the Institute of Higher Technical Education and in 1973 Chancellor of the Papua New Guinea University of Technology.

These are by no means all of the ways in which he has served Australia, and when he leaves, he will continue so to serve as chairman of the newly constituted and very important Australian Science and Technology Council.

In all these activities, he has shown many great qualities; first those of the great engineer, which I take to be the combination of creative imagination of a practical kind and the sense of responsibility in very detailed and exact planning — the aspect of genius, that is, which consists of taking infinite pains.

But Louis Matheson has other qualities not necessarily connected with engineering, but which are essential in a Vice-Chancellor and especially for one who had to weather the particular storms of the late sixties and early seventies; it is for these qualities of greatness that we are

most anxious to honor him; for his tolerance, for his rectitude and his dignity under very trying attacks.

In the Old Testament, we find frequently put together the words "wisdom and understanding". I am not sure that I have ever properly discriminated between them.

Perhaps we may take understanding as the power to assess a problem and wisdom as the capacity to make in consequence the appropriate decisions. Understanding implies patience and unprejudiced judgment, wisdom creative thinking and logical thought. The first gives evidence of intellectual capacity, the second in addition of imagination and may often require also moral courage.

Both depend upon the possession of both intellectual and moral integrity, so that it is not inapposite to add to them the quality often associated with them in the Old Testament, the 'fear of the Lord'.

By this, I take it, when we have freed it from theological jargon, we mean, if we are religious, the walking with God and the application of what we learn from that process to the more mundane problems with which we are called upon to deal; and, if we are not religious, we can still mean the following of the workings of our own consciences in our beliefs about right and wrong and the compulsion to follow these convictions, whatever may be the consequences.

Louis Matheson has given evidence of all these qualities, and more, understanding — wisdom — the fear of the Lord — patience — sympathy — courage as well as the engineer's capacity to convert them into action. This is not, praise be, an obituary, and it is good that in the important work which he has taken on himself to do, they will bear further fruit. It is, nevertheless, appropriate that as he retired from the Vice-Chancellorship of this University, a recognition of what he has done for it should be made.

The first lady of Monash

A modern university is such a diverse organisation that it would not be difficult for an outstanding contribution towards its development to receive little recognition.

It is good to know that this will not be so in relation to the work that Mrs Audrey Matheson, as the first lady of Monash, has so cheerfully undertaken in many practical ways since she accompanied her husband to Melbourne in 1959 to take up his appointment as Vice-Chancellor.

From the first, Mrs Matheson took an active interest in the well-being of new members of staff, particularly those who had uprooted themselves from their homes elsewhere to settle in Melbourne.

She read, for example, the general information about life in Melbourne that was sent by the Staff Branch to applicants for appointment in the University, suggesting in particular, the inclusion of information about such things as the price of children's clothing and other items likely to be of interest to families, particularly wives, coming to an unfamiliar environment.

In 1960, following the appointment of the first Librarian and the first half-dozen professors in key disciplines, when the search was on to staff the new university and to erect its buildings, the university "offices" were located in Mrs Matheson's home. The general office and switchboard were in the garage. Mrs Matheson, then with three sons at school, took this invasion of her home in her stride.

Over the years, Mrs Matheson's name has been closely associated with the entertaining she has undertaken on the University's behalf both in her home and officially in the University. She has received countless guests at private dinner parties, at luncheons such as those preceding graduation ceremonies, and on many other occasions when the University has received distinguished visitors.

Her name is closely linked with the Monash Women's Society of which she was the first President: with the Monash flats for new staff members on their arrival; with the morning coffee mornings given in her home, frequently with a speaker on a topic related to the University and its work; with the annual lunch held at the beginning of each year to welcome new staff members and to introduce them to others; with the children's and staff Christmas party and with the host family scheme for befriending students from overseas.

In all these activities and more, Mrs Matheson has helped staff and students adjust to new surroundings, make new friends, discuss common interests, surmount difficult times and feel that they belonged to the University community.

Monash has benefited immeasurably from the warmth of Mrs Matheson's personality, her thoughtfulness, her friendliness and above all her good judgment.

Other organisations also appreciate Mrs Matheson's qualities. She is currently President of the National Council of Women, which says a great deal for her ability and her standing in her adopted country.

We at Monash thank her warmly for all she has done for Monash and Monash people, and we wish her well.

— JOAN DAWSON.

ON THE MOVE



meetings would make student government more representative of student views.

The Monash Association of Students was set up with a group of committees to administer policy determined by student general meetings.

MAS is still functioning as the official student body, but the role of general meetings in policy-making has declined as students have lost interest in major political issues. The policy-making role has now fallen almost entirely on MAS Committees, except for a few very contentious issues such as the Middle-East and AUS policies where students have been interested enough to decide the issues at general meetings.

The situation is unsatisfactory in that it is very difficult for interested but non-involved students to keep in touch with not just one, but a variety of committees making decisions on their behalf with relatively little enforceable co-ordination. Policy decisions are also difficult to administer effectively as only a general meeting is binding on all committees of the association.

However, there appears to be very little interest in adjusting the Constitution to the changed pattern of student involvement.

Although student involvement in major political issues has declined there are still many issues that MAS must be involved in.

Over the last year or so, more attention has focused on problems closer to home which confront the whole student body.

Universities, in general, and Monash in particular, seem to be entering a new era where important changes in features we have taken almost for granted will occur.

Finance for tertiary education is being severely squeezed. This will affect students in two ways — on the one hand, facilities and staffing may be much more limited and on the other, living allowances for students are declining rapidly in value and are already grossly inadequate for students' basic needs.

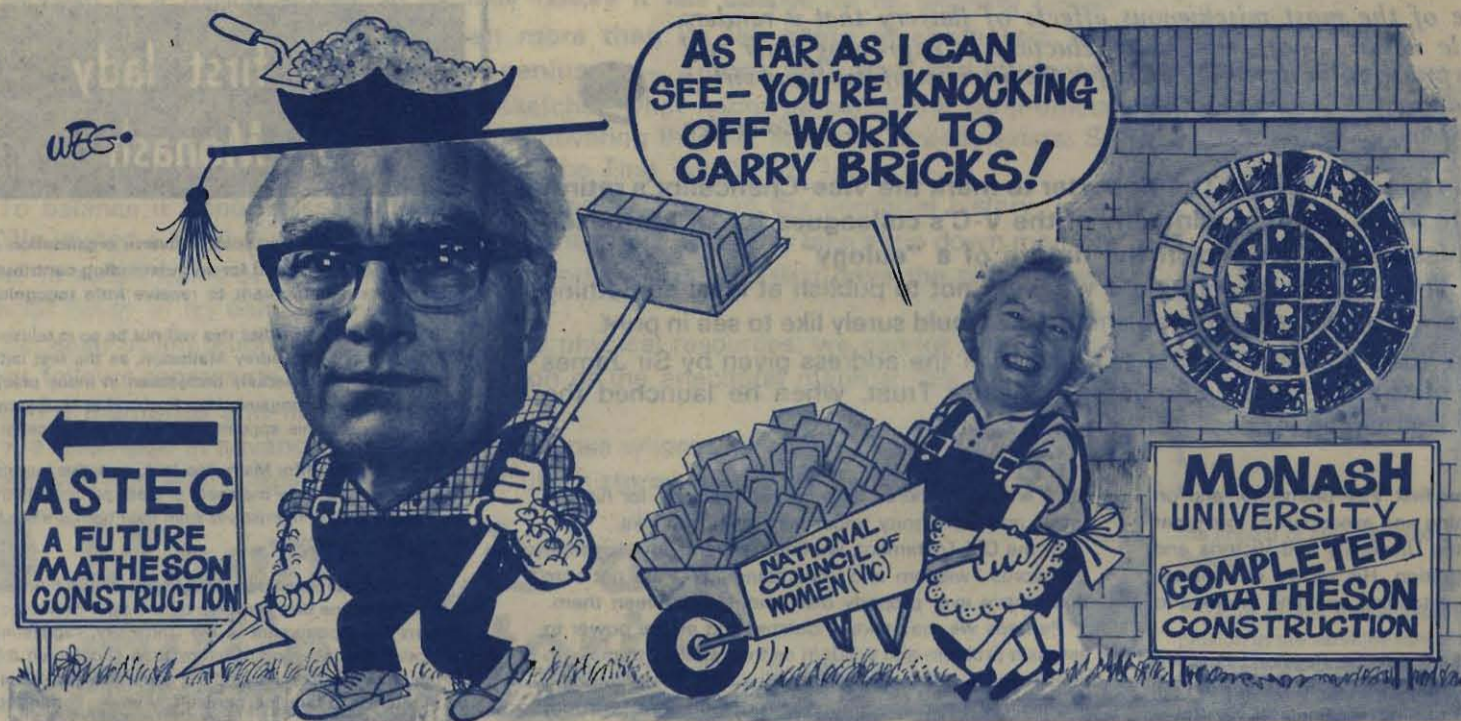
The HSC system of uni. entrance seems certain to be replaced soon and it is important that some more equitable system replace it. This may also mean that a somewhat different group of students with different needs may come to the campus.

Both these issues affect students and MAS should be strongly involved in them.

Of course on the lighter side of student affairs, the Activities Committee can be guaranteed to continue its longstanding tradition of drawing large crowds to such cultural events as the Iron Man Contest and a wide variety of concerts and balls.



AN EARLY (1961) photo of the University's new Acting Vice-Chancellor-designate, Professor W. A. G. Scott — with a carton of Prof. Board papers.



Finally, a word from the Vice-Chancellor, who sums up 16 years of ...

When one approaches the end of a long period as the founding vice-chancellor of a new university it is natural to try to draw up a balance-sheet: this is a first rough draft of such a document.

Years ago, when giving the Stawell Oration at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, I said: "When I leave Monash I shall leave a fine array of buildings that I have helped to plan; a system of academic and business procedure to which I have contributed much thought; a distinguished staff whom I have helped to choose. But above all, I shall leave a great company who are the University and whose work in it, and for it, and devotion to it determine whether belonging to it is a worthwhile experience or not."

No one now doubts that Monash is a great university. It is big; it is competent — distinguished even; it occupies elegant buildings set in gracious surroundings; but above all it has a certain intellectual flair which is characteristic.

Only the other day, in darkest Queensland, someone said to me that two of my young colleagues from Engineering had paid them a visit and, "in typical Monash fashion" had opened their eyes to some interesting educational experiments in which they had been involved. No more succinct or telling tribute to the success of the Monash venture could be found.

Now that we have reached our full size it is easy to overlook our incredible rate of growth. To increase by 1000 students a year for a prolonged period without abandoning academic standards is quite something, and those of us who took part in this achievement can properly take some pride in it.

Of course there are debits on the other side of the balance sheet and I now mention three of these that keep returning to my mind.

"Monash College" was the name tentatively given to a semi-independent college which all students admitted to the University would enter as a first step. It would have received students with widely different backgrounds and preparation but, it was to be hoped, with sufficient talent and motivation eventually to succeed in a university environment. Students who emerged successfully from this stage would have proceeded to a college of arts and sciences and/or to a series of professional schools.

The idea was to develop in the Australian scene a corresponding sequence to the Junior College-Undergraduate College-Graduate School sequence which is so familiar in the United States.

The reasoning behind the idea was that the school system and the subsequent selection processes in Victoria were so deficient that some further selection, within the university itself, seemed to be essential. Within the proposed Monash College, which would have been staffed by people specially chosen for and skilled in this kind

of work, students would have been prepared for life in a real university.

The idea was debated at length and, although it attracted some support, it was eventually dropped. As time has gone on it has become increasingly apparent that the situation which Monash College was devised to deal with is intensifying rather than going away. The high schools are becoming less and less ready to deliver to the universities students who are fully prepared for university life.

It is becoming widely recognised that a new transition mechanism is required to take able students over the high school/university boundary; Monash College might have been the model for such a mechanism but Monash academics were not ready for it even as recently as 1967.

MUSIC (The Monash University Scientific and Industrial Community) was an idea that foundered mainly because of the political circumstances prevailing at the time of its introduction although it is possible that, with a different title and a lower profile, it might have succeeded as well as similar schemes elsewhere.

Unisearch is a company operated by the University of N.S.W. to undertake contract research for clients in industry, commerce and government. It enters into these contracts on behalf of the University and arranges for the work to be carried out by University staff and with University facilities. Although it is quite profitable, the main advantage to the University is that it greatly assists the close relationship between town and gown that most people think should be encouraged. Its catchy title is, by now, very well known, and must have had a great influence in identifying the University's "front door" to potential users of its services.

Monash University, too, possesses research facilities and is anxious to have its expertise and apparatus used by industry — especially, perhaps, by our neighbours in the Clayton area. Although a fair amount of consulting work and contract research is undertaken the full potential is far from being realised. The Monash University Scientific and Industrial Community was to have been our Unisearch, avoiding, it was hoped, some of the disadvantages and reinforcing the advantages of the N.S.W. scheme.

But MUSIC was seen by its critics as a means of selling out Monash to big business and no amount of argument could persuade them that this was neither intended nor possible. The misrepresentations intensified and it soon became evident that, far from generating friendly relations between Monash and its community MUSIC was in real danger of generating so much ill will that it

would be counter-productive; it was therefore abandoned.

This was a real disappointment as MUSIC could have served a need without exposing the University to any of the dangers which its critics, deliberately ignoring facts and misrepresenting intentions, declared to be inevitable.

The loss of the Monash Hospital was more than a disappointment: it was a tragedy.

When the Interim Council, in 1959, was considering plans for the new university one of its members, Dr R. R. Andrew, strongly advocated that the proposed new medical school and its associated teaching hospital should be side by side on the campus.

It was easy to see that many important advantages — educational, therapeutic and investigative — could spring from such an arrangement which attracted informed support from the outset.

The Government responded by appointing the Lindell Committee which, in 1960, endorsed the plan and recommended interim arrangements for clinical teaching at Alfred and Prince Henry's hospitals pending the construction of the campus hospital.

The site plan for the new university made provision for the hospital and sufficient area was allocated in the S.W. corner of the site adjacent to the medical school. The University has consistently acted to further this development and, in the late sixties, released its Professor of Surgery, Hugh Dudley, to work out a functional brief to guide the ultimate design.

This brief, I understand, has since been of some help to Flinders University which is now building just the integrated hospital/medical school complex which was intended for Monash.

But all these plans came to nought in 1974 when the Government decided, for reasons that have never been explained — at least to me — to abandon the plan and to relocate one of our affiliated teaching hospitals, Queen Victoria, on a site in Clayton Road.

This plan will certainly have considerable advantages which we are now working to make the best of, but it falls far short of the imaginative scheme which the Interim Council adopted.

These are three examples of bright ideas which came unstuck. The first was defeated by professorial conservatism; the second by doctrinaire radicalism; the third by political opportunism.

And what is the moral? Only that you can't win them all, as Jimmy Connors said after the Wimbledon finals.

Maybe a vice-chancellor needs a course in Arthur Ashe's meditation techniques to develop the serenity that he so often needs.

TRIUMPHS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS