

## Transcription of interview with Malcolm Rex Krause by David Spencer

### Transcribed by Ronald Lewis Tuckwell

**DAVID:** This is an interview with Malcolm Rex Krause on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Rex's home in Campbelltown, Adelaide. This interview is part of the Roseworthy College Oral History Project. Rex graduated from Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1948 with a Diploma of Agriculture, Diploma Number 583. Rex, thank you for making yourself available today to contribute to the oral history bank of the University of Adelaide Archives. Now, let's start with you as a boy in Palmer.

**REX:** Well, I was born in 1924 on the family farm on the Murray Plains between Palmer and Mannum. It was a mixed farm mainly cropping with cereals but we also ran sheep, we had a few cows, a few chooks, a few pigs; that sort of thing. So I was introduced to what happened on a farm very early on. I went to the Palmer Primary School, which was a one-teacher school of about 30 children, at that time, and I was at school during the Depression years of the 1930s. I used to ride my bike to school almost four kilometres each way on unsealed metal roads; and I did that for six of the seven years; I don't think I did that in the first year. And over those six years I had the same teacher, the same teacher, right through those six years of my primary schooling. And he was a great teacher, and I have a great admiration for his work – a great respect for his work and his sense; and this will come out in a moment; he modelled my career in a sense. Because at the end of my seven years at primary school we had to do an QC as it was called in those days (Qualifying Certificate), a day long examination and ..er.. based on those results, in which I did fairly well, my teacher, who, by the way was Nelson Scott, suggested that I should go on to secondary school. My father (and remember these farming days were pretty outgoing particularly, as I said, it was during the Depression years) and he was keen to have me back home on the farm to help him. All the farming activities were done with horses and we had cows to milk and pigs to feed and so on. But, Nelson Scott implored my father to let me go on to high school. I'd done quite well during my primary school days and I enjoyed going to school; I really did; and so with a bit of encouragement from the headmaster of the Birdwood High School I then went on to Birdwood High School for three years for 1938, 1939, and 1940. And again, I suppose, I performed reasonably well at school academically, and at the end of another three years the same story. My father wanted me home but the high school teachers said, "No, he ought to go on." So after lengthy discussion my father again, I guess, conceded. By this time, my younger brother who was two years younger was, I think, contemplating coming back on the farm and this might have helped my cause somewhat. I'd already been appointed as a Junior Teacher at Elliston on Eyre Peninsula. In those days you did a year teaching as a Junior Teacher under a senior teacher and then went on the Teachers College, and so on. So, it looked as though I might be heading towards a teaching career. But, at the same time, and now we are talking about January 1941, I was fortunate in getting what was called a District Scholarship in those days, to Roseworthy Agricultural College. I didn't know much about Roseworthy Agricultural College but, certainly, because it was education in agriculture it appealed to me immediately, and so, erm, my path, my career path changed there and then, I went to Roseworthy and started there as a First Year student in 1941. Now, bear in mind that these are the war years and student numbers at Roseworthy, in those days, were relatively low and in my first year it was probably the lowest number for...ever since the 1930s we were only forty there altogether and only seventeen of us started as first years in 1941. And it was a pretty stiff learning curve for me to go to Roseworthy. I didn't know much about it; but, of course, Roseworthy in those days was fully residential and nearly all the staff was resident on the place as well. We were almost a semi-closed community. So, I started at Roseworthy and we had begun a bit earlier. In those days the academic year at Roseworthy ran parallel to the agricultural year in a sense. It didn't start till April and it concluded in February. The annual Speech Day was on the first Friday in March. And then, of course we had a long vacation until early April and then the new year started. We first years had to come in

a bit early to look after the place while the senior students went on leave, under supervision of a number of employed people who were regulars on the College staff. But there were cows to milk twice a day, pigs to feed and poultry had to be looked after. So, I started in, it would probably have been March 1941. As I said, a pretty steep learning curve for me as I had never lived away from home. It was my first experience of living away from home, but my parents were very supportive and they bought me a motorbike to, at least, go home for weekends. We were allowed a weekend off once a month, and so I could ride home to Palmer. There wasn't a service to the community between Palmer and Roseworthy. You had to get the bus to Adelaide and take the train to Roseworthy which was pretty inconvenient to say the least. So, they got me this motorbike and I used that extensively in my first year. And, just as a matter of interest, that motorbike (it was a Triumph (*indistinct*) Triumph, a second-hand bike they bought locally, in very good condition, and at the end of my first year the Army said, "We want your motorbike." So ..er.. they commandeered my bike. It was ... they paid me for it I think a reasonable selling rate at the time; I don't recall the amount but, that's by the by. So that was the end of my transport for the next two years. But it was, even in those days, it was war years, there was petrol rationing, there was clothes rationing, that sort of thing. We were living pretty frugally. To finish my story about the motorbike, at the end of the war they rang me and said "Do you want your motorbike back?" And I said I would be interested in having it back it was a good motorbike. So they sold it back to me, at a reasonable price again as I recall, but it had been painted khaki, hadn't it and to show how far afield that bike had been in the intervening years from the end of '41 to the end of '46 I don't know but I had my motorbike back and I rode it for a number of years after that.

Anyway, coming back to Roseworthy, in that first year ...er... I guess it was pretty hard going because the numbers were down and the ...er... senior students ...er... weren't all that friendly and welcoming new students to the College. Again a learning curve for me, and we had our various functions during the course of the year which lasted far too long, I thought in those days, but that was commonplace and expected I guess at that time. I recall the annual steeplechase that the seniors organised and the juniors ran cross-country. They were sold to syndicates of senior students and trained accordingly, and they even ran a book which was, of course, completely illegal; but, it happened. I can just recall one incident ...er... in my second year, when the steeplechase was run and the new lot of first years that were following the year behind me; there was a preliminary where they used to handicap them and ...er... whether some of them ran dead in these preliminary runs I'm not sure, but ...er... in that particular year there was a little known student from Tasmania. He looked an unlikely athletic type, and therefore, the books run by two third years bet long odds about this fellow and he was the limit man. The handicaps were on the basis of time not distance. The limit man would go and twenty seconds later the next one would go and forty-five seconds later the next one would go and so on, and the back marker probably started two of three minutes after the front one, the limit man. Now Max Clark was the limit man...the books bet all sorts of odds, even up to 100/1 odds, if I remember rightly. And, what happened? Max Clark left, and nobody ever saw him again. The rest of the field didn't ever catch him; and he won by a long way. And, of course, the books were embarrassed; the books went broke. Well, that's a story I'll never forget as part of the initiations. I believe that annual steeplechase or cross-country went on for some years after that. There's one other thing that I will just mention. We used to have what was called a "blacking night". This was all part of the show too. First years were called to the gymnasium in their jocks, armed with a tin of Kiwi black boot-polish and ..er... there was a free-for-all, in which you had to get as much of this black shoe-polish rubbed over your next-door neighbour as you possibly could, and if anybody finished up looking possibly white, they probably got a second go. And then, of course when we went to the showers to try and clean up they had turned off the hot water. So, that was the "blacking night" and how much longer that lasted after my time I'm not sure, but they're just a couple of things from the initiation that I can remember at Roseworthy.

**DAVID:** Rex, you were saying the other day about that and if you want more detail and look on page 27 of the 1941 “Student” there’s bit more as Rex and his colleagues wrote a poem about it; there’s a bit more detail.

**REX:** You don’t want me to quote it do you?

**DAVID:** Oh, no.

**REX:** Because I remember something from the last verse where it says something about when we are old and decrepit; and this now applies to me at this very time. And I recall that particular night.

**DAVID:** Now there is some other stuff. You said that you lived in the Main Building. Did you get a hard time from students up there?

**REX:** Yeah, in those days, as I said, we were about fifty in my first year, which dropped down to forty in my second year. All accommodation was either upstairs in the Main Building or what we called the Long Corridor, which had about thirty rooms, as I recall, with a passage down the middle and rooms on either side. And the first years always lived upstairs in the Main Building. Second years, a few of them upstairs, a few of them downstairs and the third years in the Corridor, with a few of the rooms left over for some of the second years. But, I was in Room 4; there were four of us in most of those upstairs rooms – they had four students didn’t they? Ah, yes, we had regular visits from the senior students. They’d tip us out of bed. They even went to the extreme of throwing our mattresses down the stairway and so on and before we could get ourselves back to bed again. The other thing was about work and lectures in those days, and I don’t know how long this went on for, but you spent about 50% of your time in lectures and 50% of your time on field activities. You were rostered on to the Farm or the Poultry section.

**DAVID:** Now Rex, you started to talk about your work on the College. Do you want to talk a bit more about that?

**REX:** Yes, well, you were rostered to various sections of the College. If you were A-week well you worked Monday, Wednesday and Friday or if B-week you worked Tuesday, Thursday. I think the weekend was Saturday and Sunday. Those rostered to the Dairy Section or the Stables Section had to start work fairly early. Up at 5 o’clock and report to the Dairy or Stables by 5.30 am. Both of these had a supervisor who looked after you when you got there. But, if you were rostered for Dairy you had 40 cows to milk. And, in my day, when we started, 20 of those were milked by hand, and 20 were milked by machine. I think that changed fairly soon after that and they were all machine milked, but, at that stage you still milked some by hand. Of course, I had come from a farming background and I was milking cows when I was still going to Primary School. So that was not a great job for me – not a big change there. But, most students had a few things to learn because they had not had the experience. Noe, I’ll just report one thing and this has got nothing to do with the milking, I suppose, but, when we came in as First Years at the end of March and, as I said, we had to, with help from paid hands, we had to carry on the essential services while the Senior Students were on their long vacation in March and early April. And we came in on the 31<sup>st</sup> March and we were rostered to various sections each day. Peter Brownell was in my room in Room 4. He’d come direct from St Peter’s College and I don’t think had any rural or farming experience at all. And they said, “Peter, you’re rostered for Dairy duty tomorrow morning and you will get up at 5 o’clock and you’ll report to the Dairy at 5.30 am. And He said, “You can’t kid me. I know tomorrow is April Fool’s Day”....Ha, Ha, Ha....but unfortunately, they were serious and he had to report. It wasn’t April Fool’s Day at all. They were

busy days, we got to work and milked the cows and didn't get to breakfast until we finished that; probably around 7.30 am. We had our breakfast and reported back to the dairy around about 9 o'clock. Well, that was the work routine. For those that were allotted to other sections, you started around about 8.00 am, and, wherever you were you had to get on with the work that was current for the day whether it was the Poultry section, the Sheep section or Vineyard and Orchard, or whatever.

**DAVID:** What was it that you enjoyed doing the most?

**REX:** Oh! Well I enjoyed all of it really. Those farming activities would probably have been my favourite because I had a background in that area. But farming activities, that is, broad acre farming I'm talking about, in those days we ploughed the fields and cultivated them and did the seeding, and that sort of thing was all with horse-drawn power. I repeat that it was war years; I think that we had one tractor on the College grounds and that wasn't used a lot because of fuel rationing and that sort of thing. I think that we had five eight-horse teams that, in the busy times of harvesting and seeding and so on were all being used in various fields and so on for various farming activities. And students had to learn how to handle teams of horses. And there were occasional bolts and incidences. I can't recall any one in particular, but you know, there were times that somebody tried to drive an eight-horse team through a gate that was ten feet wide, and there was a bit of consternation and problems when that sort of thing happened. But that was all experience that students got those days. Now, here I will say that I had an advantage as I was driving teams on my home farm before I came to Roseworthy while I was still at secondary school. Whereas a lot of the other boys were not that fortunate. They hadn't had that sort of background. Yes, you learned how to drive teams of horses, you learned how to milk cows, you learned how to shear a sheep and crutch a sheep and that sort of thing. They were common farming activities for those days that all the students had to learn. Bear in mind that Roseworthy College started as a training ground for young farmers; and a lot of these students, when they completed their Diploma did, in fact go back onto a home farm or they worked for some farmers who would employ them, with the idea that they would eventually own their own property. And I think a lot of that happened. A few students went on into the Department of Agriculture and that sort of thing. But that's where students with a Diploma went and had careers in various ways agriculturally related; sometimes not agriculturally related. But they had a good basic training there from the three years.

**DAVID:** Now, let's hear about some sporting activities. You were a sports person in your day. You were captain of cricket, captain of football, a champion athlete; you must have been a pretty good all-rounder.

**REX:** Yes, well I was a very keen sportsman that was true. I was a keen sportsman, and I got very much involved in sporting activities at the College. Football and cricket in particular, I wasn't much of a tennis player and I wasn't a swimmer. But I was a bit of an athlete, strangely enough, I had had some success at Birdwood High School; I think that I won the junior cup in my first year and the senior cup in my second year, so I was a bit of an athlete as well. But, at that stage as a student I was (I'll come back to that when I talk about my staff days; I was very much involved in sport in those days as well). One other thing you've got down here is meals. (Laughs) Our cook, in my student days, I'll call him a cook, I don't think I'd call him a chef (Laughs) was Jack Osborne and he was an ex-league footballer he played with Sturt and he was quite an identity on the College he was very popular with the students and he was the coach of the football team. And I can still see Jack down there coaching us he probably still had his white overalls on and he would come straight from the kitchen to give us an hour's coaching and then he'd be back to his duties back in the kitchen. Jack Osborne was a name that all students from that era would remember very, very well. Now the meals, yeah well, a bit

monotonous. The same sort of menu from week in week out, and some of us, I suppose, complained a bit, but...er...we would have enjoyed a bit more variation. To this very day I keep telling my wife that I not that keen on rhubarb in puddings as the standard dessert was either rhubarb and custard or prunes and rice. And (laughs) we had this six days out of seven every week. However, we all survived and we all did pretty well. The other thing.....you've got down here something about lectures. Very different to what it is today, of course. We had the lecturer up the front lecturing to us. Some lecturers dictated notes, others handed out summaries and sort of lectured to those summaries. It was up to the students to fill in the gaps and put in their own notes and that sort of thing. Yes, I think it all went pretty well and, as I mentioned, there were even lectures on Saturday morning. There used to be a fifty minute lecture and then a ten minute break. And they usually went in packets of two. You'd have one subject that would go for two hours -- two fifty minute lectures. There were four fifty minute lectures before lunch and three fifty minute lectures after lunch. (Indecipherable)

**DAVID:** It was sort of a record for you as you won the bronze medal in first year, the silver medal in second year and the gold medal in third year. So, as a student you were pretty good.

**REX:** Well, I'll make two comments about that, er David, maybe I was fortunate. Yes, I did get good results, academically, but bear in mind the numbers were down and the competition was probably not as keen as it would have been a few years later. And, I think the standards for entry were even lowered a bit in those four years so that some sort of numbers could come to Roseworthy. I was a bit lucky...yes! I was Dux of the year in second and third year but, I think that there were only seven of graduating in Third Year. So, there were only six others weren't there.

**DAVID:** But, you did graduate with First Class Honours and there hadn't been anybody graduate with First Class Honours for a few years, so, you still set a high standard for the bar there.

**REX:** Thank you for that. Yes, I did finish with First Class Honours at the end. And that, I suppose takes me to the next stage. I won a Ridley Memorial Scholarship, I think they were called at that time, which took me to the Adelaide University for three years. So, it was in those days, and I've often been asked this, that I ever thought of going into the services. This is now the beginning of 1944 when we finished. The war was still on. When I was a first year, the third years at the end of 1941, when they finished their exams the entire year enlisted. In second year in 1942, at the end of that year I don't know whether the entire year enlisted, but the majority did. When it came to our year and we were down to seven by this time; there were only one or two enlisted. In my case my peers actually encouraged me to go on with my studies. So, that's what I did and I had a scholarship to go on to university for two years doing Ag Science at the Adelaide University. And before I had finished in 1946 Dr Callaghan, who was still the principal of Roseworthy at that time, had already invited me to apply for a position that was coming up at Roseworthy on the staff. So, I went straight from graduating at the end of 1946 and I was on the staff by February 1947. By the time that I got onto the staff in 1947 (this was only three years after I had graduated) there had been many changes at Roseworthy. For a start, the war had ended, the student numbers had gone from forty-odd in my third year to over a hundred by 1947, and over 40% of them were ex-servicemen. They were either students that had enlisted before they had completed their three years or many of them had come to Roseworthy in the hope that they could get a war service land settlement block upon graduation from Roseworthy, and many of them did. At that stage there was much agricultural land being opened up in the Upper South-East, the Lower South-East, Kangaroo Island and various places; and there blocks being allotted to ex-servicemen. And so a lot of these students who were enrolled in 1947 and 1948, and even as late as 1949 had visions of getting a war service land settlement, and a lot of them did. A few of them had interrupted their course at Roseworthy.....Peter Brownell was a case in point. He had left at the end

of his second year and then he came back in 1947/1948 and completed his third year. And that happened amongst quite a few of them.

**DAVID:** You were talking about the early days with initiations, and now you had these ex-servicemen coming back and many of them were quite mature and war hardened. How did things go for them? What were the arrangements?

**REX:** That's a good question, Dave! I don't know. I think initiation had started to tone down by this time. We had change in staff. Well, Dr Callaghan was still the Principal but he was also the Chief Executive of the War Service Land Settlement and, so, that took him away from the College quite a lot. So, they appointed, for the first time, a Deputy-Principal. And that was Bob McCulloch, who came in 1947, that same year that I started on the staff. Yes, I think that it was gradually being toned down and I don't know whether there was any in your day; that would be the early sixties.

**DAVID:** I think it was a bit more moderated than in your day.

**REX:** Yeah! But it's a good question, because a lot of these servicemen were mature students. The normal students had to be sixteen before they came to Roseworthy, and had to have certain....he had to have at least his Intermediate,,, with the Science subjects, and so on. But, a lot of these ex-servicemen would have been in their twenties when they came to Roseworthy, and I don't think that they were involved in the same way that the sixteen-year-olds were. Anyhow.....so we are back on the staff, and staff numbers.....lecturing staff had doubled in numbers as well. In my third year I think we only had about a dozen lecturers, and a few of those were visiting. Some staff were part-time and involved in service activities. And by 1947....well I think mine was a new appointment, and I think many others were as well. We would have had about twenty lecturing staff at the College then, that is, by the late forties. Yes, there had been a distinct changeover. I was still living in the single men's quarters, where I spent seven years of my life until I was married. Those single quarters are still there, I think, just opposite the chapel. But it is not used for that purpose. In those days there must have been about six or eight of us, I think, who lived in those quarters and had our meals over at the College.

**DAVID:** Did you socialise with other single staff members of the College?

**REX:** Oh yes, yes! The single quarters was a place for all sorts of activities. Playing cards at night and that sort of thing. That's where I learned to play Bridge, and a few other card games as well. We were quite a happy little family.

**DAVID:** Were there any restrictions? Were you allowed to come and go from the place?

**REX:** We staff members could. But, not for the students – no. The students were kept under fairly regular supervision. You had to get leave --- I'm sure that some of them got away with it --- you had to get leave if you wanted to leave the grounds overnight, or go out for something, some function or something like that. And they were entitled to weekend leave once a month, or something like that. But, staff had duties. Now, staff members in those days; not only were you appointed as a lecturer, but you had certain staff responsibilities. You had a roster every evening, Monday to Friday, when you were rostered from 6.00 pm to 10.00 pm. You'd supervise the evening meal, and you hovered around from then. There was always some sort of a study period, which they called a quiet period between about 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm when those students who wanted to study and weren't interrupted by some raucous behaviour down the track or radios going full blast. Something like that. And that was the responsibility of the staff member rostered for that night. You went around and ticked the roll.

You did a round of the whole of the accommodation areas and made sure that everybody was that should be in. Yes, so it was under a certain amount of discipline still. But not for the single staff. If we wanted to go off for an evening, there was no restriction on that at all. We did have four responsibilities in addition to our official responsibilities – lecturing staff or whatever. And me, personally; I got very involved with the sports side of it. As a single fellow I still played football and cricket for some years after I was on the staff. And I had the honour - there were two of us, one student and myself – to play in the premiership team in the Gawler Association three years running. 1949, 1950 and 1951 we were Premiers. And we lost the Grand Final by 5 points to Gawler South in 1952. It's interesting to remember, many years afterwards. But, when I retired from actually playing I became the Football Manager for about ten years, from about 1954 to 1964. See, all the sporting activities -- I was also Chairman of .....what did they call it?.....the Sports Union, for a number of years. This had the oversight of all the sporting activities on the College. And we used to allot Blues and Colours to students and so on. And so I was involved in sport right up to my latter years at Roseworthy. One other thing I've got to say about my staff years at Roseworthy. Again, all of this is a bit fortuitous, and I realise that I was pretty fortunate in many ways. I came onto the staff in 1947, as Assistant Biologist to Rex Kuchel; he was the Biologist and also the Oenologist and was in charge of the Wine Cellars at that stage. And, at that stage the Senior Lecturer in Agriculture and Plant Breeder was John Millington (?), who had come in 1947 -- same year as I started again on the staff. He had replaced Jim Breakwell, who had quite an illustrious...I would think...career at Roseworthy, from the early Thirties. He was appointed by Dr Callaghan as the wheat breeder, and wheat breeding took quite a fillip from that stage. Of course, it had waned a bit because of the war years and so on. But, in 1947 and 1948 the Senior Lecturer in Plant Breeding was John Millington. He had come from the West, but he only stayed two years and decided to go back home to the West. So there was..... In the meantime Norm McKeon had come as Senior Lecturer in Agriculture, but he wasn't a Plant Breeder and they didn't have anybody.....they didn't get an immediate replacement of the Wheat Breeder at Roseworthy. Now, I had always taken a great interest in Jim Breakwell's work. Jim Breakwell I thought had always been a great mentor to me in many ways. He was also an excellent lecturer. I think that he was very disappointed that he wasn't appointed Deputy-Principal, and may have been one of the reasons why he resigned and went back to Sydney University at the end of 1946. So, Millington replaced him. But then, when Millington left at the end of 1948 there was no Wheat Breeder, and because I had a bit of an interest in that area I was asked to become the caretaker of the wheat breeding programme. And that lasted for two years – 1949 & 1950. I had inherited a lot of material that, particularly, Jim Breakwell had initiated and Millington kept a little bit as well. And come 1951 and they still.....I guess people would find this hard to believe today....they still couldn't find a suitable appointee to take over the wheat breeding programmes. And so, I was appointed Wheat Breeder in 1951. And, promptly stayed there another twenty-one years. And that was my sort of background to wheat breeding. But, I enjoyed that period immensely.....I'm a man of the fields and I love my cereals and the wheat particularly. Of course, if I want to add a little bit to that, I again had the good fortune in 1964 (and incidentally, in 1964 Bob McCulloch had retired or resigned....he'd become the Principal.....Callaghan had gone from Roseworthy to become Director of Agriculture in South Australia, and from there, he took a post in America, and so on. Callaghan had gone. Bob McCulloch had then left.....I'm not sure of the dates....late fifties, early sixties, and was replaced by Bob Herriot). And after a few years of Bob Herriot, he decided he ought to have a deputy as well. And I was appointed Deputy-Principal in 1964. This was a great honour to me. I'd been there a long time but perhaps, I didn't have the qualifications that some other people might have had, but I knew the place pretty well. But, it wasn't long after that I applied for and was successful in getting a Farrer Memorial Scholarship; which was a scholarship.....I don't know what's happened to that.....Anyway it was a fund from which they gave scholarships.....12-monthly scholarships to wheat breeders for study overseas or elsewhere to where they are working, in the particular field of

their interest that they wanted to enlarge on. And so, I applied for this and asked to study under a couple of notable wheat breeders in America.....Dr Orville Vogel was a particular one who was working on semi-dwarf wheats, which were new in the field of wheat breeding in those days. And I was fortunate to be given that scholarship, although I hadn't long been appointed Deputy-Principal and I was asking for twelve months leave to go off to America to accept this Farrer Memorial Scholarship and study under Orville Vogel at Washington State University in Washington State in America; which the Government kindly agreed to. I was given leave with pay.....fortunate...I had to accept and so, I moved with my family.....they came at my expense.....but I had my fares paid and anything else over there. The Government of South Australia were very generous in allowing me leave with pay.

**DAVID:** Was that academic? Did you get some sort of qualification out of that year?

**REX:** Yes, it was. Initially, it was just to study these semi-dwarf wheats which had become quite a feature of wheat improvement in the Pacific North-West, and down to Mexico, where (?????) were working under Dr Norman Borlov. And while these wheats had certain features. They were much shorter straw.....I don't know what they call it now.....but the ratio of grain to total dry matter was much higher because they were short-strawed; they were all awned varieties, which they claimed was an advantage in photosynthetic activity to swell the grain...give you more plump grain and increase of yield. And they were very responsive to high fertility....to higher levels of fertiliser. So, I went over to study these semi-dwarf wheats. They had already.....some of this material had already crept into Australia at this stage, but it did really.....it changed the face of Australian wheat varieties. If I go back to my breeding days....the varieties being bred were not awned.....they were awnless. They were medium-tall. But, bear in mind in those early days a lot of that wheat was sheaved and chaffed for horses and for cattle and that sort of thing. So, semi-dwarf wheats changed the face of Australian wheat; there's no doubt about that. You go out into the fields today and they've all got these semi-dwarf wheat characteristics. They are short-strawed; they are awned. And they respond quite well to additional fertiliser, and that sort of thing. They have really changed the scene. But, to come back to my situation; I was given leave for twelve months to do this extra study with Vogel at Washington State University, and at the same time I decided to take a few university subjects which I felt I needed upgrading in or I hadn't done much of in my lecture commitments back at Roseworthy, and then again, I suppose I did reasonably well in those subjects that I took and the people at Washington State encouraged me to convert this to a Master's Degree, which meant that I had to have my twelve month scholarship extended. Again, whoever was handling the Farrer Memorial Trust were very kind to me and they did extend it; so, I finished up being in Washington State for about nineteen months and completed a Masters in that time as well. We were becoming more familiar with the semi-dwarf wheats and, in fact, I started making a lot of crosses between what was then the most commonly grown varieties in South Australia and some of these semi-dwarfs. It was mainly the Mexican ones, because they were.....most of the wheat grown around the Pullman area in Washington State around the State University were winter wheats.....and winter wheat has a completely different habit of growth. Whereas the Mexican ones were not winter wheats.....what do they call the short growing period...they were called Spring wheats. But, here in Australia we grow Winter wheats with a Spring habit. There they are dormant through the winter months, where a lot of the wheatfields in Washington State were covered in snow. Anyhow, that's another story.....I'm getting off the track a bit here

**DAVID:** Well, Rex, you spent a long time at Roseworthy, first as a single man and then as a married person. What was it like with a family on the College?

**REX:** Ah, well...I wish my wife could answer that, partly. Ah.....we had a wonderful time. Those times there was housing available on the College grounds. There must have been anything up to twenty



houses. The majority of the staff lived on Campus. There would have been a few that didn't, but the majority did. Then you had your bunch of unmarried people as well. But, I think the wives would agree that the life at Roseworthy in those days was very, very enjoyable. I suppose a lot of us were newly married and had children that were much the same age. Well, the kids ran just about anywhere over the College grounds and we, as parents, felt that they were perfectly safe, and they got to know one another and made great friends; in some cases, still to this very day. Our children and the next generation are still friends, going right back to those days. They went to the Roseworthy Primary School. There used to be a bus running every morning to get the mail from the railway station anyway. So, they went in on this bus and brought back in the afternoon. A few of them went down to the one-teacher school down at Kangaroo Flat, but, the majority went into Roseworthy. And there was..... Life on the College in those days.....it was great. We had.....it was pretty cheap living. We went into our houses.....we were in a Housing Trust house at a fairly nominal sort of rent. We could buy our eggs from the Poultry Unit at a nominal price. We could get our milk from the Dairy every day. You'd put the billy out and you wanted two litres and you'd finish up with four; and you paid for it at a very nominal rate. There were two gardeners who used to look after the Vegetable Garden. I don't know.....were the Fairlies still there in your day?

**DAVID:** I think that they had just finished when we started.

**REX:** They worked there for a long time. Bill Fairlie....well, he grew all sorts of vegetables for the College kitchen. But, when there was a flush of something they'd.....any surplus then we would put out our vege bags once a week, so, once a week we got a ration of vegetables. Anything that was surplus from the Garden. So, we staff did all right.

**DAVID:** There was a lot of.....I was there in the late Fifties and there was staff like yourself, Ray Norton, Cliff Hooper and Ken Leske. The staff was very stable and a lot of them were there for a long time so that there was a build-up of friendships.

**REX:** That's very true that you can say that, David.....well, I was on the staff for twenty-five years, from 1947 to 1972. I can quote a few others. Ken Leske started the year after me; he starts in 1948 and spent all of his working life there. I don't know when he retired.....in the 1990s I think. He would have been there near to forty years I would think. Gil Hollamby was another one. Talking about the wheat breeders.....Gil Hollamby joined me as my assistant in 1961. And that was the time when the.....what was it called.....the Wheat Research Act went through and there was a levy placed on grain farmers when delivering grain; and this set up a wheat fund which was matched by the Commonwealth Government and made funds available for wheat research in various places throughout Australia, for that matter. But we were fortunate in getting some of this money, which allowed me to appoint an Assistant Wheat Breeder. Also, a seeds officer.....we were growing a lot of pure seed at Roseworthy in those days.....and I also think we had money available for a Laboratory Assistant. We were doing certain tests on wheat in the laboratory. But, Gil Hollamby joined me as Assistant in 1961; and he became the Senior Wheat Breeder in 1972 when I left, and he stayed there then until 2002. He was on the staff for forty years. And that's a sort of an example of what you'd see on staff in those days; a lot of them stayed for a long time. You mentioned two or three...you mentioned Ray Norton. They all had long terms there as staff members at the College.

**DAVID:** So, talking about the College life being a long time. What amazes me is when you talk about 5 routines on the College in the forties.....they were there in the late sixties. Most of them were still intact. So, they must have been doing something right. All those things, discipline, initiations, nothing seemed to change very much over the time that you and I were there, so it's amazing how that sort of thing worked and produced.....

**REX:** Well, I think, probably, the big changes came in the 1970s. Well, I left in 1972....Herriot was still Principal then....you finished in about 1971 about the same time.....Herriot was still Principal and we introduced the RDAT, the fourth year, which you did. I...ah.....was the Dairy Course still running then?

**DAVID:** No. I think about then it became a College of Advanced Education.

**REX:** That's what I was about to say. It was in the 1970s some time that the College became part of the Colleges of Advanced Education. That was a transitional period and for the first time females were allowed in as students. Were there any girls in your day?

**DAVID:** No. They started in 1974, I think.

**REX:** 1974, OK, right. Well, the 1970s brought in quite a change. When Roseworthy became a College of Advanced Education and from there, of course, it became a Campus of the Adelaide University; and completely different. I go back to Herriot, of course, whom you would remember as you were under his regime, was very, very strict, a disciplinarian, no alcohol on the place. I wouldn't say that it didn't happen, but he was strict on that, but.....do know when Herriot goes? Was that in the mid-1970s?

**DAVID:** Ah yes, about 1974. He retired then.

**REX:** Yes, he retired, that's correct and Ron Williams came in as his replacement, and the year after they had a wet canteen on the College,....Ha,Ha, the discipline changed completely at that time. But, I'd gone by this time, so, I can't really comment on anything after 1972. I'll tell you a fellow who would be interesting for you to interview is Gill Hollamby, because he's a bit younger than I am.....a fair bit younger than I am.....and still very much with it mentally and he was there from 1961 to 2002. Forty-one years, I think.

**DAVID:** Yes.....well Rex, we might wind it up there. We've had a really good talk about your time as a student and a staff member and all that sort of thing. This is all part of the Archives; getting these stories together and has become a great source of information for other people to ponder on and think about what took place in the past. So, I'll thank you again for putting the time aside to talk to us today, because it will go into the Archives and will be there forever and your great-grand-children will be able to listen to your voice and hear stories you have told about your motor-bike. Thanks very much again and we'll meet you another time.

**REX:** Well, thank you David. I enjoyed this; reminiscing, if you like, about what happened in my student days and then through to the staff years. They were the key years of my career, there's no question about that. And I enjoyed my.....particularly my years on the staff there, and thank you for having me.

**DAVID:** So, in conclusion, this is the interview with Rex Krause by David Spencer in relation to the Roseworthy Agricultural College Project.

**END**