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...

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.
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, eccentricities, 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 hope it will be a nucleus 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 assistant. 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 admission (not always wholeheartedly shared by other governing bodies 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 plaques 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 pranks that year included bulldozers, the Waverley City Council Sweeper, TV performer Jimmy Heselden 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. As each plaque arrived, Doug acted as go-between arranging the return of the enormous monument.

It 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 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 'give me back these points 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 says.

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

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 provision 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 Mr Matheson watched his son go out without another word."

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 rockhouse which had been the Zootogy Reserve (and the bar-rail of the Monash University Club) — but a hostel 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 rorthouse ‘Jock’ should instead be so honored.

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

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 flamed 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 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 planning scheme, is of course acknowledged in the naming of the Jock Marshall Zoology Reserve fund the bar-roll 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 rorthouse ‘Jock’ should instead be so honored.

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Two bulging files in the basement of the University Office tell of his role in the search for a University Coat of Arms — a prolonged often hilarious, sometimes acrimonious truce 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).
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 and onions and by lunchtime we were almost ready to cry.

"The food was cooked by the caterer, Ono Eisen, at the O'Shea house (now the Vice-Chancellor's house), and in the strappers' room upstairs - the horses and the groom didn't really like the University coming."

Paddy says: "The idea there was to screen out suburban noise and to attract native birds, and I don't think there is another campus in Australia with the wonderful variety of birds that we got here.

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

Paddy says: "The idea there was to screen out suburban noise and to attract native birds, and I don't think there is another campus in Australia with the wonderful variety of birds that we got here.

"The ground 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 Vicar'."

"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 coolidge safe arrangement with a hose on the roof and reaching down the sides to the ground. I was in the shed for most of the summer."

"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 zooology specimens!"

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 episcopal colony, gratefully emptying tracks and market gardens. There were bullock paddocks and grazing paddocks, so 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, B.H. 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 got here."

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More of the Million

Supplement to MONASH REPORTER 3
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 1968, to establish a second university in Victoria was nevertheless part of a new wave of educational development — the post-Murray-Cumming 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 for some time. 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 six months earlier than Victoria’s 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 still had to be appointed.

The first senior appointments were made in 1960 and most of them had only a few months in which to staff their departments, stock a basic library collection, equip laboratories and plan courses.

Meanwhile, there was a rapid preparation of temporary offices in the Vice-Chancellor’s house and garage, of the library beginning in the Volkswagen factory downtown, a move to Mclaren on Campsie, and later to the old offices of The Australian. 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 head 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 prevailing 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 area of the Science building, in which all the students from Vice-Chancellor to the freshest freshman could be found in the lunch hour.

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 (1599), and reached almost 6000 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), Music (1965). Staff and buildings expanded to keep pace.

In accordance with an early decision to avoid temporary buildings for the University, it was inevitable that by 1969 the first several departments had started 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 Metheson.

As Vice-Chancellor, his resilience in taking crises as they came, his ingenuity and his pragmatic openness to all manner of day-to-day prophecies 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 was the early rapid preparation — the move to the old Press building (which became the Library), the purchase of Bundoora, which brought an orderly and patient mind to the chairmanship of the Interim Council and to the first Chancellorship, the beginning of a blend of conventional and unconventional wisdom involved in 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 thinning of the arteries, institutionalised procedures and the notion of proper channels replaced, of necessity, the corner-cutting administrative methods and the improvisation that have been the most effective for the past few years. Within departments the small groups of people who planned courses together in 1961 had become large, unwieldy groups in 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 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 broad section of the staff became more and more of a rarity.

The loss in that respect was no doubt inevitable, but the gain was the richness of growth.

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 obvious that it should be a man close enough and within reach so we 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 1964). He had just returned from a year’s work 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 a crude 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...

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(*) Popular legend has it that the unruly one who “went in over the tops of his gum boots” was Professor 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 A.S. 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 disciplines other than their own; but students resented traditional faculty and departmental organisation of other faculties. Course coordination was specially prepared and designed to introduce students to the assumptions and methods of disciplines other than their own. But students resisted the coordination 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 academic departments, was given a serious trial but was eventually abandoned.

Other developments were more successful: course work Masters' degrees for a new clientele in the Faculties of Economics and Politics; a number of other new deanships common elsewhere. Having seen itself in the early Monash as the Vice-Chancellor me world of scholarship - but as a traditional rather than as an innovating institution, faculties instead of the rotating deanships common elsewhere.

Success and failure

But in general the Monash pattern was the standard pattern of faculties and academic board 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 innovation. But his main commitment was to excellence in teaching and scholarship and so far as university organisation was concerned he looked to achieve that goal through a strong, long-standing organisation, with the Academic 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 did not regard it as usurping the Board's authority.

The adoption of conservatively 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 Ecosci students to take a half course in a science field and vice versa, media 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 designed to introduce students to the assumptions and methods of disciplines other than their own. But students resisted the coordination 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 have to be a hard 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 risk 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 hailing.

To its critics the whole idea of MAS, with its provision for the direct participation of all students in student government, 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 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 operation was out of place in a university (despite the radical argument that of course it is there anyway).

The Organisational as a backdrop is to distinguish two waves of student action.

The first began 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 say whether these demands were essentially tactical moves used by a skilful leadership to rally support for itself. And it lay the basis for institutional modification. 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 of which on they depended was forthcoming only so long as the specific objects of a particular campaign could be seen as reasonable and so long as that stirred up and other demonstrations stopped short of violence.

The movement faded after the University Council in 1971 managed to achieve reconciliation, not with the radicals but with MAS representatives, on acceptable guides 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-nationalism or even with the subversion of universities to capitalist society, but was directed rather to genuinely 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 exercise; and for a few a genuine exercise of political power. But for the rest, the movement was part of a wider establishment of which on they depended was forthcoming only so long as the specific objects of a particular campaign could be seen as reasonable and so long as that stirred up and other demonstrations stopped short of violence.

The tenor of protest was, for the most part, very different from that of the late '60s and it reflected a genuine disconnection 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 have been possible for some of them to be highly experimental, departing from formal degree structures as we know them today and perhaps seeking quite different standards from those of the traditional university. In different ways in different institutions students could play a major part in determining course content and pursuing, with more freedom the lines of inquiry that attracted them with 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, 1981, 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 Astra 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 Jack Marshall.

"He got a kid who was working as a technician and worried 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 equipment and often the Metropolitan Security Service fellows crowing 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 lorem ipsum, 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 sign alongside.

One day there was to be a presessional meeting and the students knew who and where everyone was. And as people arrived that morning they found each sign 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 Spot with a Commanding View of the Dandenongs'... They didn't miss anyone — they had 88 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 chalk) 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, theadder it got.

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

Sporting physiologist Left: Dr Gordon Trup (centre rear) with one of the early fencing teams he coached. Below: Professor Bob Street felled by a bowler in a staff student cricket match. (Ben Baxter photos)
ON THE MOVE

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 Bayes Professor of Engineering in Manchester, until he took the post of Vice-Chancellor of this University in 1960. Somehow, through all of that, 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 1986 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, we will continue so to serve the University. With this in mind, we have included him in this tribute. If we have not been able to include all of them, it is because of space limits.

In all these activities, he has shown many great qualities, first the qualities of the great engineer, which I take to be the formation of an idea into a practical kind and the sense of responsibility in very detailed and exact planning — the aspect of genius, that is. And the second in addition is the possession of a sense of the proper way to use 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 for an alibi, 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 we record his services as the Vice-Chancellorship of this University, a recognition of what he has done for it should be made.

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. Though 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 the instruction of her home in 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 presided over by the President, and at 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 residential 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, survive 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 friendship 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.

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 ladies 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 removed 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, while 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 instruction of her home in stride.

In all these activities, she 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. And the second in addition is the possession of a sense of the proper way to use 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 for an alibi, 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 we record his services as the Vice-Chancellorship of this University, a recognition of what he has done for it should be made.
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 contemplate the achievements and the tasks ahead. It is time to reflect upon the past, to examine what has been done and to consider what the future may hold.

TRIUMPHS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

In the early days, the establishment of Monash University was greeted with enthusiasm and support from all sections of society. The idea of a new university in Victoria was seen as a great opportunity to enhance the educational and cultural life of the state. The University was founded in 1958, and it soon became clear that the new institution had a strong commitment to excellence and innovation.

The University's early history was marked by a series of triumphs and disappointments. One of the most significant achievements was the establishment of the Engineering faculty, which played a key role in the University's development. The faculty was founded in 1960, and it quickly established itself as a leading institution for engineering education and research.

However, the University also faced its share of challenges. One of the most notable was the controversy surrounding the establishment of the Medical School. The Medical School was to be located in Clayton, on a site in Clayton Road, but the plan was met with strong opposition from the local community.

In the end, the Medical School was established in the University's Clayton campus, but the process was a long and difficult one. The University's efforts to establish the Medical School were met with significant resistance, and it took many years of hard work and dedication to overcome the opposition.

Despite these challenges, the University continued to grow and develop. It is now one of the leading universities in Australia and is recognized for its excellence in teaching and research. The University has played a significant role in the development of the Australian higher education system, and it continues to be a source of pride for the state of Victoria and the wider community.

As one looks back on the University's history, it is clear that it has made a significant contribution to the development of higher education in Australia. The University has played a key role in the shaping of the country's educational landscape, and it continues to be a source of inspiration and innovation for generations to come.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of Monash University. Whether as students, faculty, staff, or community members, each and every one of you has played a vital role in the University's journey. As we look to the future, I am confident that Monash University will continue to be a beacon of excellence and innovation, a place where ideas are born and knowledge is shared.

I leave Monash I shall leave a fine array of buildings that I properly take some pride in it.