

# ROBB RUGBY

Robb is a great sporting college, its traditions and success date back to its Premiership success in the early 60s. The last UNE Rugby Union team in 1960 included six Robb students, our first Junior Common room president. Laurie Piper was a member of that team. The Robb Rugby club is part of the Robb operational structure. It has supported all aspects of College life, played a major part in charity fund raising events and Robb project weeks. Their end of year dinners organized by the Rugby club are legendary. Robb Rugby teams of the late 60s and early 70s were special and George Souris, a current member of the NSW Parliament was a significant part of these teams. The Onus brothers, Don McRae and 'Shaky' Pittman were ever reliant Rugby players for Robb College of the early 70s. Robb College has had teams in the Armidale competition without a break since 1960 till the present; it is only one of two colleges that have been able to do this (with St Alberts). For many years up until the mid 80s Robb was able to field four teams. One of the standout Robb teams over the years was the social grade team called the 'keg kickers'. Probably about half the males in college up until the 80s played with the keg kickers at some time.



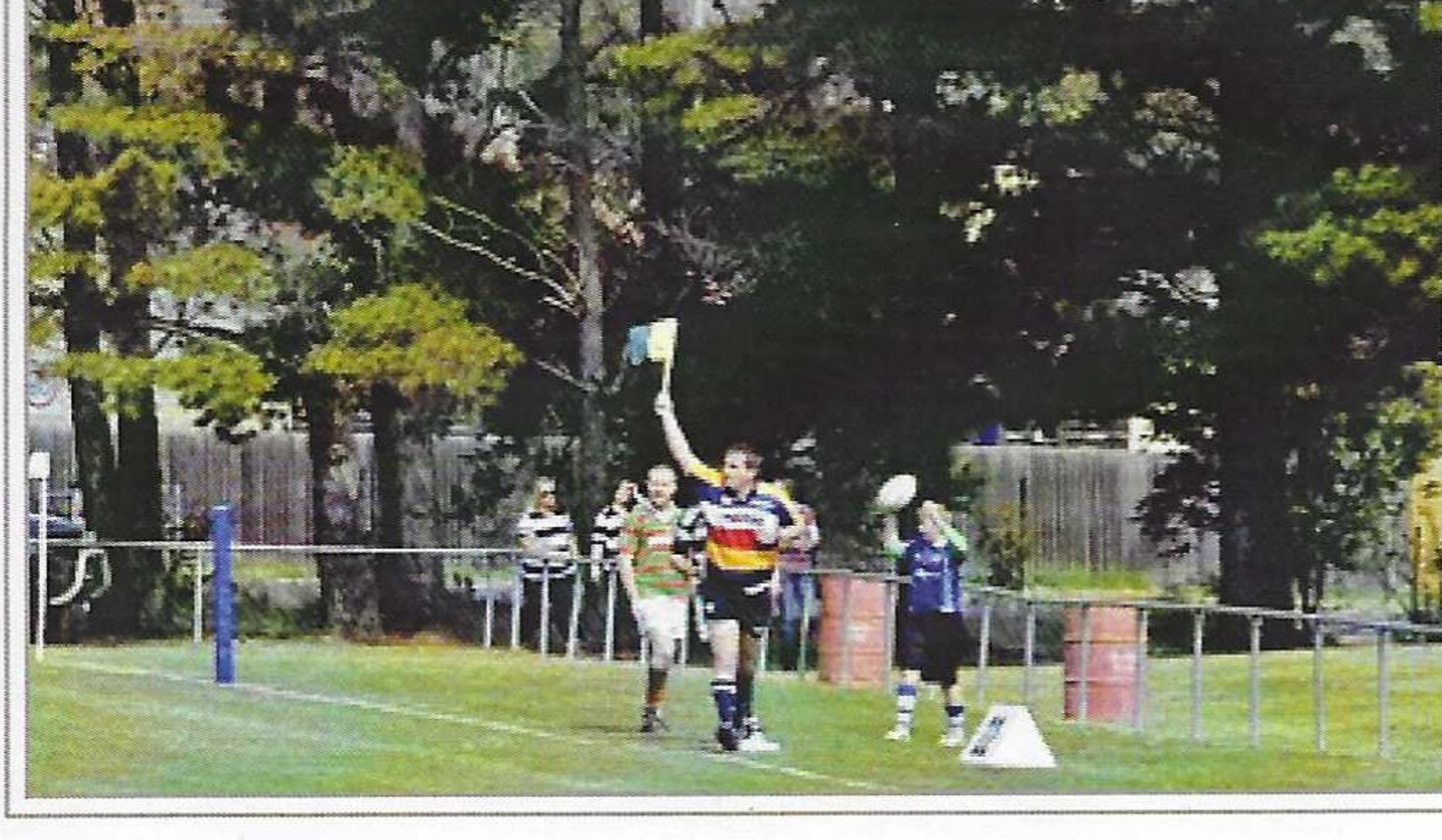
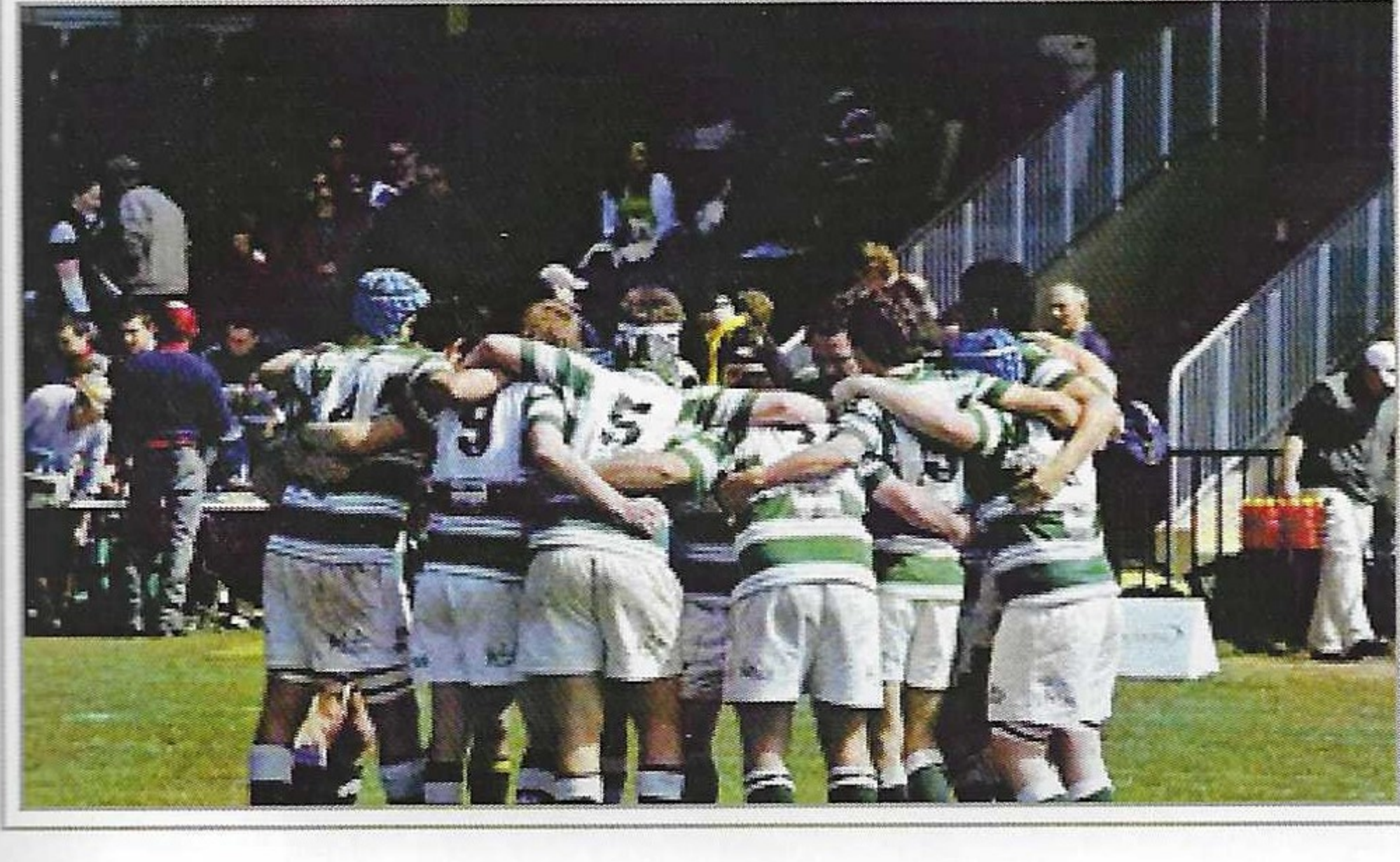
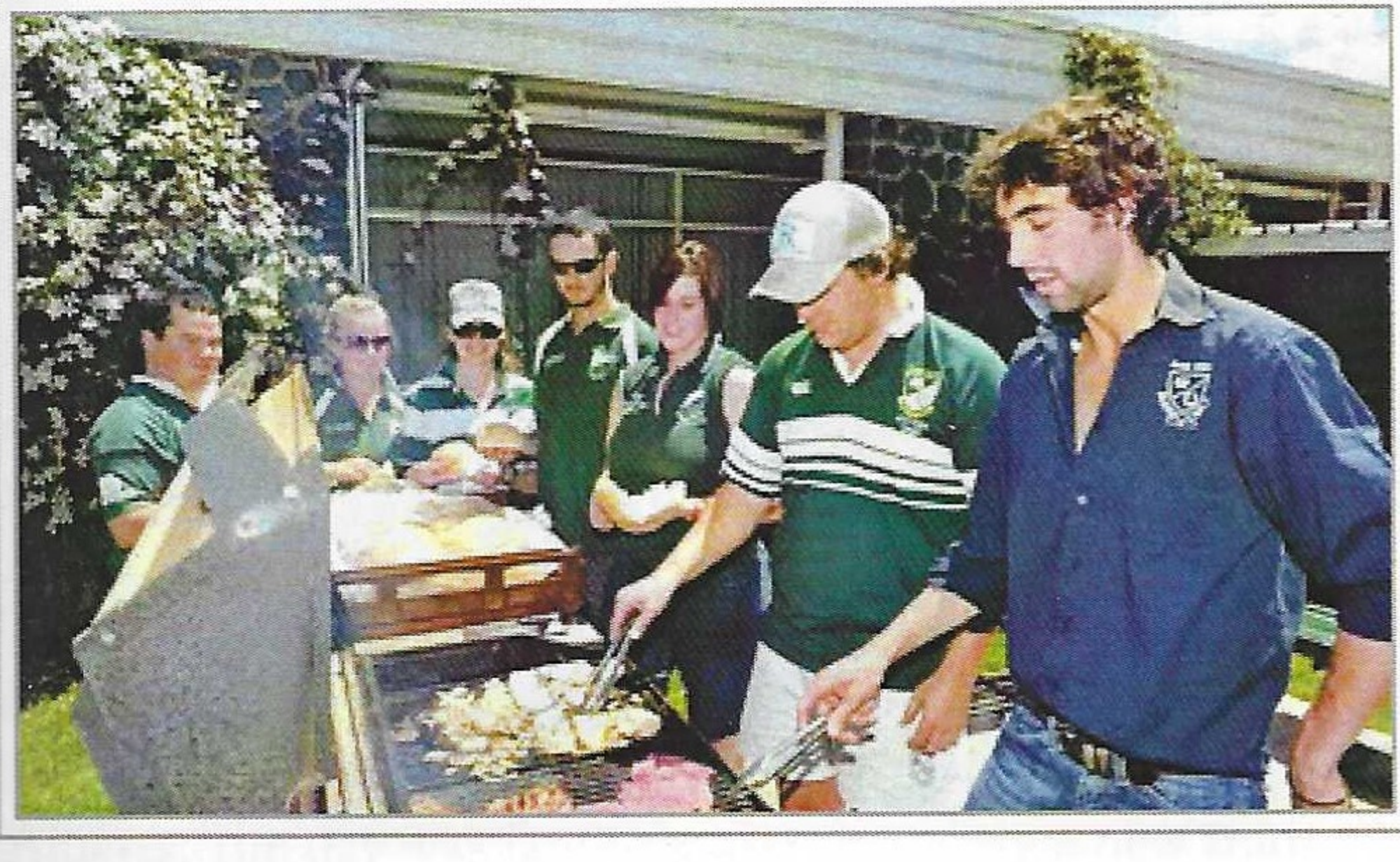
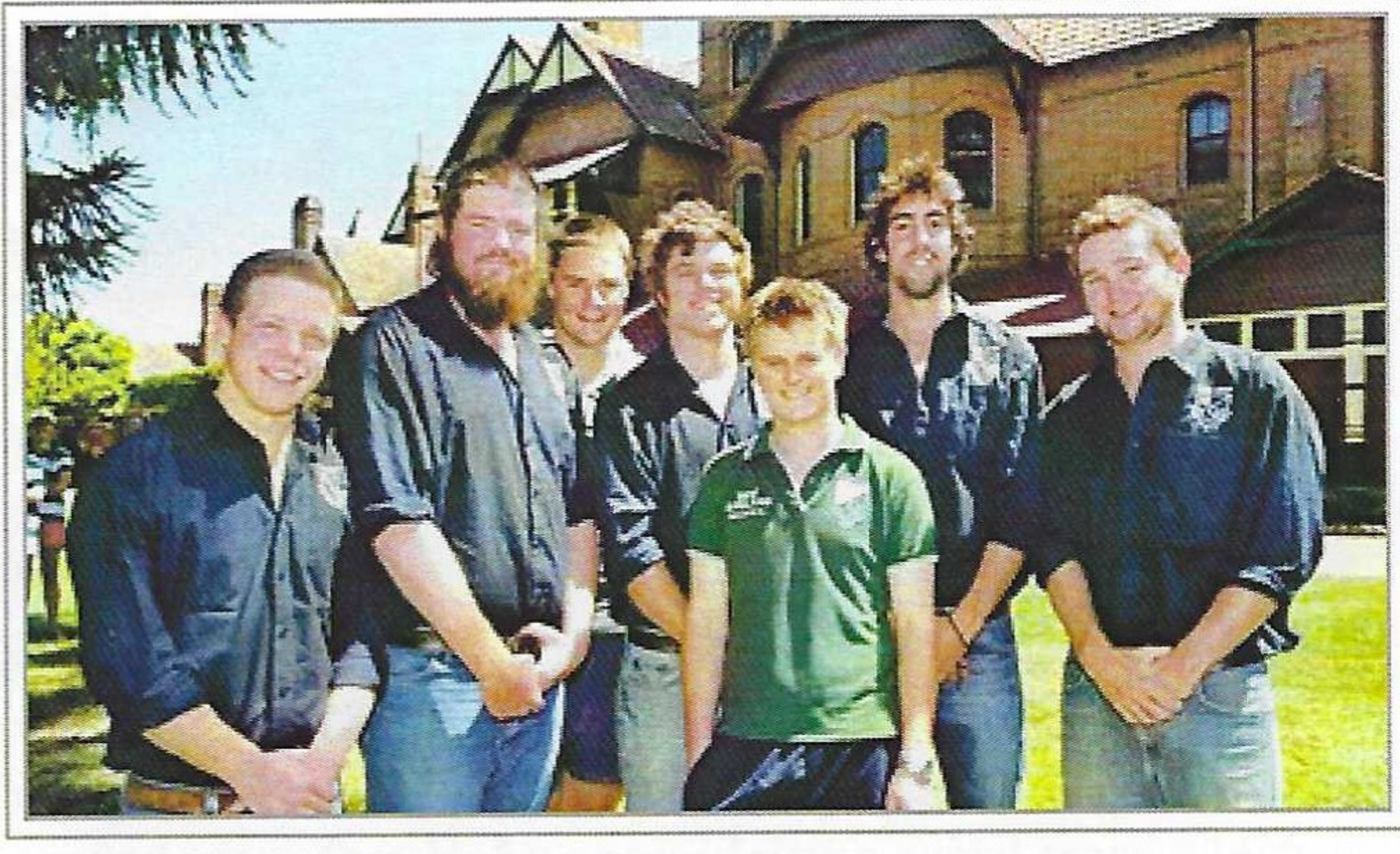
*The Rugby club has mounted five major overseas tours, including; Europe, British Isles and the USA in 1989, 1993, 1996, 1999 as well as Argentina and Uruguay this year. The European tours were a great opportunity for players to experience different cultures and different styles of Rugby. The boys that recently returned from the South America Tour have found the same, playing everything from the stereotypical South American front row with the Uruguay Development Squad to a team playing free flowing super fast loose forward Rugby in Buenos Aires. These Trips often result in excellent results in the season following the tour as the club all comes together to both organise and fundraise but also to reminisce.*



## ROBB RUGBY CLUB 2010

- President: Robert Scott  
Vice-President: Sam Martin  
Rugby Treasurer: Hamish Ross  
Rugby Secretary: Angus Keene





## Robb's First First Fifteen

The records show that the first New England Rugby Union competition match in which Robb participated was on 27th March, 1961. The match was played at Consett Davis and the opposition was provided by Armidale City. Robb's first foray into Rugby Union proved successful, with the Greens defeating the Blues by 20 points to 5. The team on that day was:

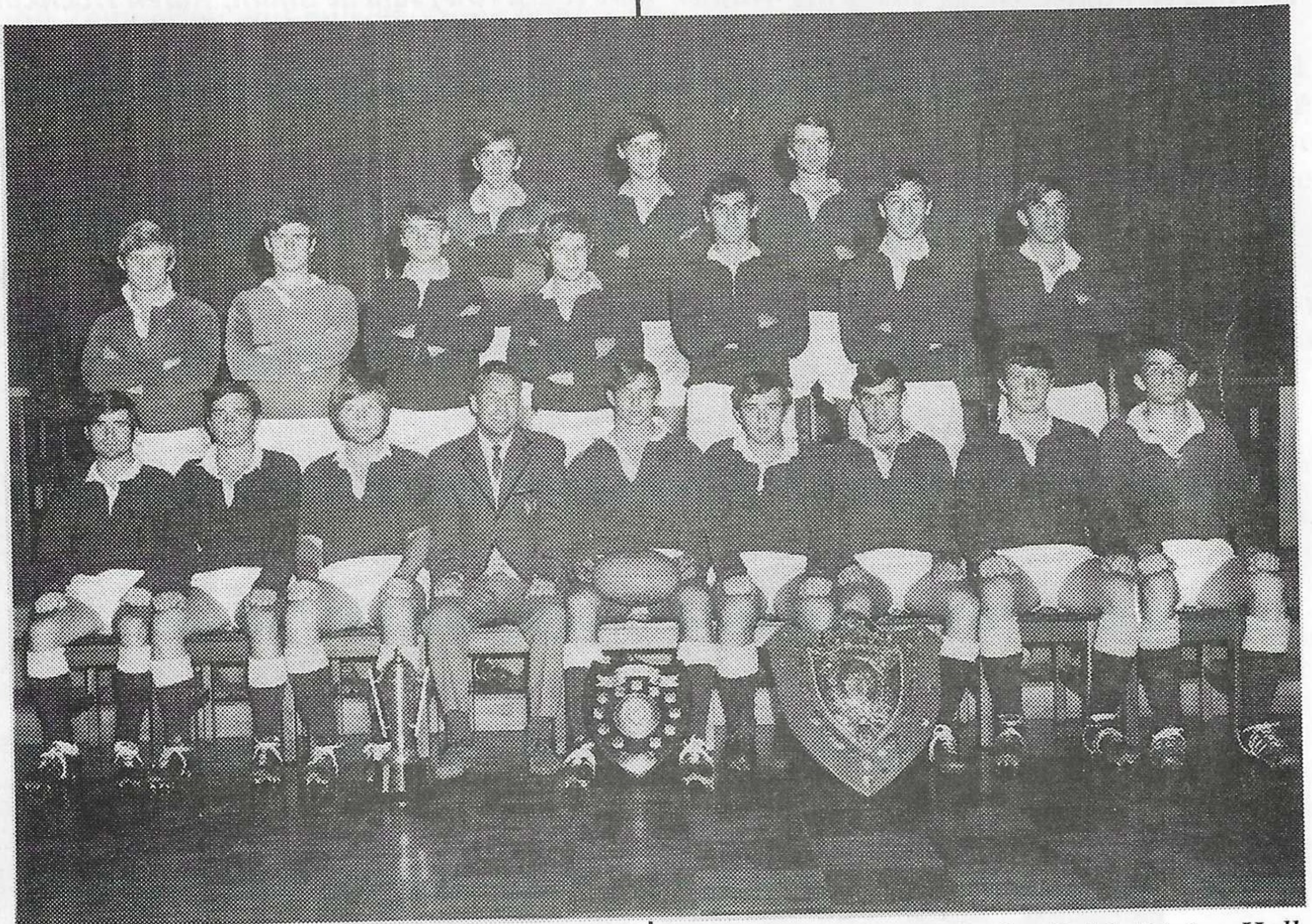
Fullback: J. Obst  
 Wing: C. Bradbury  
 Wing: D. Gooley  
 Outside Centre: C. Creal  
 Inside Centre: A. Cooper  
 Five-eighth: B. Bindon  
 Halfback: D. Smart  
 Breakaway: L. Piper  
 Breadaway: D. Reid  
 Lock: G. Miller  
 Second Row: W. Dangar  
 Second Row: A. Wherrett  
 Prop: R. Locke  
 Hooker: G. Patterson (c)  
 Prop: N. Koch

The coach was Mr. D. Russell. Those were the days of the three-point try, so

Robb's victory was even more convincing than it sounds. Robb's six tries were scored by Miller (2), Wherrett, Patterson, Creal and Bindon. Dangar landed one conversion.

The Armidale City side was: McKay, Savage, Rawlings, Hiscox, McLeod, Moffatt, Brewer, Viner, Cunich, Browning, Morse, Knight, Wake, Roan and Menlove. Their sole try was scored by Roan and converted by Rawlings. The referee for the match was D.R. Lamond.

Meanwhile, the Robb Second Grade side also took the field for the first time on the same day, and also ran out winners, by 19 points to 3 over City. Details of this team are now, sadly, incomplete, but among those who played are believed to be the following: I. McKay, A. Barron, R. McKillop, K. Russell, J. Judson, D. Saville, M. Kelk, D. Tonkin, C. Boydell, P. Clapin, G. Clark, B. Topham. Tryscorers for the Seconds in their inaugural match were McKay (2), Barron, McKillop and Russell, while McKillop landed two conversions.



*The victorious 1969 first grade premiership side pose for posterity in the Robb Dining Hall shortly after their historic win. They are: (back row) Michael Rose, Paul Pitman, Tom Vincent; (middle row) Peter Buzacott, John Hudson, Rod Nicholls, Paul Williams, George Souris, Rob Lander, John Wilson; (front row) Rex Ward, Bill King, Peter Carter, Dr Eric Darling (coach), Jim O'Connor (captain), Adrian Brett, Vern Cook, Tim Marshall and David Green. Photo: Courtesy of Rex Ward.*

# Robb College - In General; Robb College Rugby - In Particular

*Memories of a 1965 Entrant - 20 Years On*

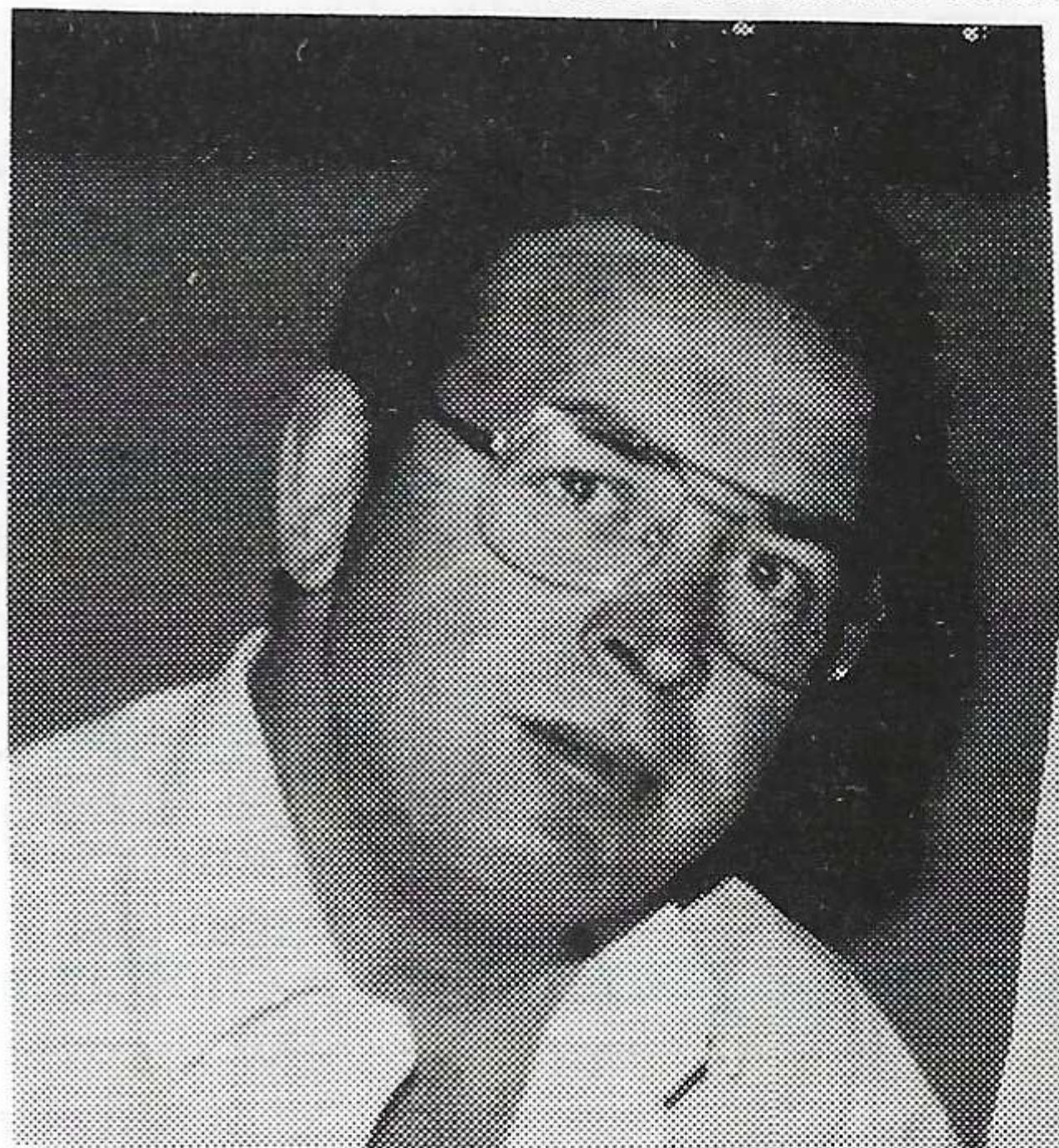
I have vivid memories twenty years ago of being led by Charles O'Hanlon, a "heavy" in Robb College in 1965 to a room in South Court, which was upstairs. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, fresh out of a Sydney private school and used to boarding, I was absolutely sure that I was going to be in complete control in this residential establishment. After a few early set-backs, I eventually found my ground and spent four of the most enjoyable years of my life - one, in that room in South Court, and three in West Court in what was known as "Skid Row", 185 West Court.

In those days Ben Meredith was the College Master, Miss Goodfellow ran the kitchen, Charlie O'Hanlon, Mike Saddington were College heavies - and, especially, heavies in the Rugby world. Al Dunlop and Fez Parker, Peter Gates - all these were the names of those in charge when we entered, and they guided us as young freshers through that first non-drinking year at Robb College. In those days, of course, a fresher had to get permission to drink from the College Master. No buildings existed between Robb College and Duval College. Women's Colleges were out of bounds unless one had special permission to visit them and one used to cast longing looks over the plains of Ben (as they were called in those days). These, of course, no longer exist as they are filled up with what appears to be a rabbit warren of other colleges such as Page and Austin.

They were great years - those years twenty years ago. Some of the names that entered with me and spent those years there were Jim O'Connor, Jamie King, who spent many more years than four in Robb College, Bill Barrett, Sam Campbell, Tony O'Sullivan, "Swampy" Ford, Richard Croft.

Wright College existed in those days as did Mary White, up on the hill. All the Page students lived in town in various houses, and many of the members of Duval College lived up in the makeshift huts near the present Arts Centre. I remember there was a dining room where the Page people ate, its name escapes me, which was just outside the Library.

*By Hugh Rose  
Former Wallaby  
Robb Resident 1965-68*



It was all very primitive, when one looks back, however it had a great welding effect upon all the residential members of the University and in particular, I guess, Robb College was a special place in that our physical surroundings were much newer and far more presentable than the rest of the University.

I intend to make the main point of my reminiscing over the last twenty years associated with the Robb College Rugby Club. In those days we trained on Consett Davis at 8.00 p.m., usually in the frost, and I suppose it is no different now. We used to train with Wright, and Page used to train earlier at 7.00 p.m. underneath the lights of Consett Davis. In those days no gymnasium existed as it does now. The Robb College football uniform consisted of University of New England socks with the gold, black and green bands, the white shorts and the green jerseys. One thing that occurred at the end of 1965 was that we brought in the green socks with the white tops, and I believe that they are still worn today.

In the Competition in those days was ourselves, Robb College, Page College, Wright College, Teachers College, Armidale City, Guyra, Inverell, and in 1967-68, Glen Innes joined. And so Robb College played really good country Rugby in that we had three visits to other country towns during the Competition.



*Line-out action from the Robb-Page grand final of 1969, Robb's first-ever first grade premiership win in the NERU competition. Second row George Souris leaps high for the ball as hooker Adrian Brett (foreground) and half-back Rex Ward look on. Photo: Courtesy of The Armidale Express/ Danieli Studios.*

One always remembers the big drive to Inverell, in the days before random breath testing, as a bunch of thirty (because 1st and 2nd Grade used to travel) rugby players heading up from Armidale to Inverell all aged between the years of 18 and 21 and playing usually hardened thirty year old wheat "cockies", getting a physical hiding but always being too quick for them, and in the end eventually managing to win. And so, having barely scraped home on the rugby paddock, we would lose gloriously when it came to the hard drinking afterwards - and then we had to face the drive home!

How many of us survived, I really don't know, and when one looks back on it, as I guess when we look back on many of the things that we did in our youth, we shudder.

Then there were the trips to Guyra. These, again, were a case of the men and the boys - Robb College being the boys. Many of the Guyra team played League on Sundays and had their warm-up against the youthful Robb College teams and College teams from the University. I'll never forget in 1966 playing up there in the snow and not being able to feel the cuts, the bruises or the thumps from the Guyra "spud diggers" because of the intense cold.

Robb College's "pub" in those days was Bruin's Hotel, and many a Saturday evening was spent standing in the back bar in our dirty, sweaty, very cold rugby gear, drinking rum and cokes until 10.00 p.m. - then, in the true chauvinistic style of the '60's - moving to Women's College expecting to be social - at least. That was a particularly Robb College activity at the back of Bruin's bar and I wonder now what poor pub has taken the College Rugby Club over since Bruin's has been demolished for a new shopping complex.

My first coach in those days was Dr. Eric Darling, a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast, and a great enthusiast and supporter of Robb College Rugby.

From a Rugby point of view, these country town games and ice-cold training conditions "matured" many of us in the rugby sense. I was fortunate enough to be the first International to play for Robb College and therefore the College Rugby Club always holds a special place in my memories for that reason, having played for N.S.W. in 1966 and gaining a Test, my first Rugby Cap, against Ireland at the Cricket Ground in May '67 as a 3rd Year Arts student from Robb College. One of the great thrills of playing against Ireland in the First Test was of course that Robb College was coached by an

Irishman, Eric Darling. Later that year in August I played in the Jubilee test versus the All Blacks at Athletic Park, Wellington. The following year, 1968, there were two tests against the All Blacks, the first at the Sydney Cricket ground in which the Captain and great Australian half back, Ken Catchpole, was severely injured in a maul/ruck and his career finished. I was in that ruck. The second test of that series was the first test ever played at Ballymore, it was also the famous penalty try test.

Later that year I played against France at the Sydney Cricket ground and then, in October/November of '68, toured Ireland and Scotland playing in tests at Lansdowne Road and Murrayfield. This completed my Robb College Rugby career.

In 1968 there was a new College Master, Mick Sinclair-Wilson who was very supportive when it came to applying for leave to do the Rugby tour in October-November as this was just prior to exams. It took a great deal of sweet talking in the Geography Department with Professor Fox to enable me to be allowed to tour. However I have always been greatly appreciative of the support that the University Geography Department gave me when I was playing International Rugby and attempting to major in Geography at the University.

I have two vivid memories of my Robb College days. I have many, but two that stand out. One was when I was sent off for the first time in my Rugby career

versus Armidale City and, in those days the Judiciary was on Monday night in Bruin's Hotel. Sent off with me was another Armidale City back rower and I fronted up on the Monday afternoon looking the typical university student to find the Armidale City back row forward in his police constable's uniform. I certainly felt I was behind the eight-ball right from the start in this particular judicial enquiry. We both got away, I might add, with a severe warning.

I still have in my possession a pewter awarded to me by Robb College Rugby Club which holds pride of possession in my office. It is engraved "To Hugh Rose from The Robb College Rugby Club - our first International" and on the back of it, it has that "while he was a member of this Club he played for Robb College, University of New England, N.S.W. Country, N.S.W., and Australia". In my Rugby days I have been lucky enough to win many pewters, but none comes in any way near to holding the pride of place which that pewter from Robb College Rugby Club does.

After leaving University, I played another eight Tests for the Northern Suburbs Club in Sydney and finally finished playing in 1974.

I hope that this revives some memories for those of us that were in Robb between 1965 and 1968 and that, along with this article, are many more from people of our vintage because I am sure we will find it all great fun reading through this memorabilia.

## Grand Final Bogey

Don't mention the words "Grand Final" to Robb rugby players! The records show that while Robb first grade teams have been almost unstoppable in their drive towards grand finals over the years, it seems that somehow the big one has just as frequently eluded them.

Consider the following statistics: since 1968, when Robb reached their first-ever NERU Grand Final, the first grade side has contested no fewer than 11 out of 18 to be held. The net outcome of those 11 has been just two wins and a draw, the other eight losses telling the story of what might have been.

In the worst patch, Robb reached seven grand finals in the decade from 1970 to 1980, and didn't come up with a single win!

These, then, are the results of grand finals in which Robb has played since 1968:

- 1968 Robb vs Page. Drew 9-9
- 1969 Robb vs Page. Won 19-10
- 1970 Robb vs City. Lost 8-13
- 1971 Robb vs Page. Lost 6-9
- 1973 Robb vs Page. Lost 4-8
- 1975 Robb vs City. Lost 3-22
- 1976 Robb vs City. Lost 15-29
- 1978 Robb vs City. Lost 8-14
- 1980 Robb vs City. Lost 9-17
- 1983 Robb vs City. Won 11-6
- 1985 Robb vs St. Albert's. Lost 7-16

At least the players in this year's grand final can take some consolation in the fact that, in the College's Silver Jubilee year, they were upholding a kind of 'tradition' - one Robb could well do without!

*One of only two Robb teams to win a New England Rugby Union grand final, the 1983 side is all smiles after their victory at the Armidale Sportsground. They were (back row) Ian 'Doc' Halliday, Jamie Stier, Steven 'Bruno' Broun, John 'Zulu' Mosse, Andrew Wollen, Chris 'Grinner' Kourt, Bruce Cairns, Andrew 'Baz' Adams, Peter 'Screw' Sgouros, coach Evan Thomas; (front row) John Manley, Hugh 'Stumpy' Sutherland, Tony 'Bullet' Penwill, Iain 'Bonehead' Rathie, Billy 'Buster' Hyman, Dave Pratten, Greg 'Afe' Schaefer and Clinton 'Wally' Waters. Photo: Courtesy of Phil Cronan, of Robb College.*



## Robb Rugby postscript....

The illusive grand final record was truly put right in 2018 and 2019 when the Robb Rugby First XV made history with the first ever consecutive premierships wins for the College. In 2018 the Robb Womens Rugby Sevens Team also won their first premiership and all 5 Grades were in the Grand Finals.

### 2018 Robb First XV Rugby New England Premiers.



### 2018 Robb Womens 7's Rugby New England Premiers





2019 Robb First XV Rugby New England Premiers for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year running...



2019 also saw the Robb 2<sup>nd</sup> XV team as Premier winners



**2019 Robb College First XV Rugby New England Premiers Captains accept the New England trophy.**



**New England Rugby 1<sup>st</sup> XV Premiers Table:-**

NEW ENGLAND RUGBY UNION 1ST GRADE PREMIERS		
<i>Presented by William Sawers Esq. M.A.R.</i>		
1902 WEST TAMWORTH SENIORS	1967 ARMIDALE CITY	2000 ROBB COLLEGE
1903 WESTEND SENIOR	1968 ARMIDALE CITY & ROBB COLLEGE	2001 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS
1904 CARLTON SENIOR	1969 ROBB COLLEGE	2002 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS
1905 HILLGROVE SENIOR	1970 ARMIDALE CITY	2003 ARMIDALE BLUES
1906 CARLTON	1971 EARLE PAGE COLLEGE	2004 ARMIDALE BLUES
1907 WESTEND F.	1972 EARLE PAGE COLLEGE	2005 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1908 HILLGROVE ALL BLACKS	1973 EARLE PAGE COLLEGE	2006 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1909 EAST TAMWORTH	1974 EARLE PAGE COLLEGE	2007 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1910 EAST TAMWORTH	1975 ARMIDALE CITY	2008 ARMIDALE BLUES
1911 WEST TAMWORTH	1976 ARMIDALE CITY	2009 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1912 SOUTH ARMIDALE	1977 ARMIDALE CITY	2010 ARMIDALE BLUES
1913 SOUTH ARMIDALE	1978 ARMIDALE CITY	2011 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1914 HILLGROVE	1979 ARMIDALE CITY	2012 UNE BARBARIANS
1915 - 1947 NOT AWARDED	1980 ARMIDALE CITY	2013 ARMIDALE BLUES
1948 ARMIDALE TEACHERS COLLEGE	1981 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE	2014 ARMIDALE BLUES
1949 N.E. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE	1982 UNITED	2015 ARMIDALE BLUES
1950 ARMIDALE TEACHERS COLLEGE	1983 ROBB COLLEGE	2016 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1951 ARMIDALE CITY	1984 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE	2017 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE
1952 ARMIDALE CITY	1985 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE	2018 ROBB COLLEGE
1953 WALCHA	1986 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	2019 ROBB COLLEGE
1954 UNE	1987 GLEN INNES	
1955 TAMWORTH	1988 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE	
1956 UNE	1989 GLEN INNES	
1957 ARMIDALE TEACHERS COLLEGE	1990 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1958 GUYRA	1991 ROBB COLLEGE	
1959 UNE	1992 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1960 UNE	1993 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1961 ARMIDALE TEACHERS COLLEGE	1994 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1962 ROBB COLLEGE	1995 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1963 WRIGHT COLLEGE	1996 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	
1964 ARMIDALE TEACHERS COLLEGE	1997 ROBB COLLEGE	
1965 WRIGHT COLLEGE	1998 ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE	
1966 WRIGHT COLLEGE	1999 ARMIDALE OLD BOYS	

*Donated by St. Albert's College Rugby Club 40th Anniversary 2009*