

Introduction of Geography at Melbourne University, 1946

As a Melbourne Teachers' College student taking an "extension" my fees were paid by the Education Department which funded my course and living allowance. In return, however, my subject choice had to be approved by the lecturer in charge — proof that my selection was appropriate to my chosen teaching subjects was required. Fortunately this auditor was also the resident lecturer at the Teachers' College so I knew him, especially as he was a jazz music fan and I had occupied the room above his amplifiers for two years!

In those days an Arts degree required two major studies (six subjects) a sub-major (two subjects) and two extra subjects, a language other than English and a science. I had enrolled in 1942, passing English A that year, and was accepted for training as a primary teacher in 1943. As I had been psyched from my earliest childhood that I was to be a teacher as my mother had been, this seemed natural,

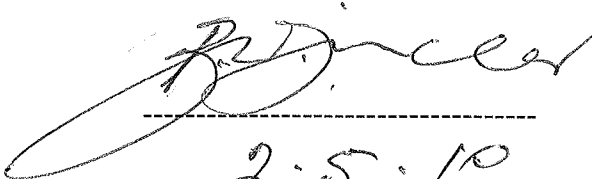
Appointed a junior teacher at Alphington in 1941, I took the prep class (about 35) from the first day. Transferred to Hamilton in 1942, I was astonished to receive instructions from the Education Department in June (my eighteenth birthday) that I was to travel to Vasey, a settlement about 50 miles away, as Acting Head Teacher to reopen the school which had been closed for several years while a new building was arranged. As this was wartime there was no argument! During the flurry of my transfer the Grade 6 teacher at Hamilton had suggested to me that I should enrol for an Arts degree at Melbourne, taking English A by correspondence, as I would find it quiet and isolated at Vasey, especially with severe petrol rationing restricting travel. I had a bike, but it was 10 miles on steep rough roads to tiny Balmoral, the nearest town. Lecture notes were mailed to me and, having been excellently taught English at high school, I duly passed the exam.

When I was granted a university extension to my training my plan was to teach in high schools - English and History, and when I had passed Economic Geography and Geology 1, I was qualified in Geography also, according to the Education Department. Then the College Resident Lecturer told me that a new Geography subject was to be available in 1946. It was being introduced as an additional single subject as large enrolments of ex-servicemen, who would need general options, were anticipated. He intended to enrol and suggested that I join him. I think there would have been less than ten students in the first year.

Arthur (?) Wilcox, a high school teacher, was appointed to take charge of the new subject but he was unavailable at the start of the academic year. No syllabus was produced but we were told that, as geographers, we would need a knowledge of climate so the first six weeks would be an introduction to Meteorology, the lectures to be given by Professor Loewe of that Department. Considering my weak background in mathematics and general science this was a traumatic experience for me. It was followed by studies of the origins and execution of various forms of map projections, with associated practical exercises which I never could have contemplated, much less executed without the coaching and support of my friend Roma, who was a science

and maths major! I believe Wilcox was still in the Geography Department when Ruth studied there in the 1970's.

I completed my year including a "supp" test in projections! And I finished with two subjects – Geography and Australian History – more than I needed to qualify B. A. No doubt the Education Department needed to find qualified teachers to staff the mushrooming secondary schools established after the 1939-45 war, but I am grateful that I was able to profit from the expansion.



2.5.10

(BEATRICE
FINCHER)

No 1436

NOTE: THIS CARD MUST BE FILLED IN IN PREPARATION
 If the course is approved, one copy will be returned to the student for reference.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF COURSE FOR ORDINARY DEGREE OF
 BACHELOR OF ARTS

The University of Melbourne

SURNAME SHADY Date 13th February 1944

CHRISTIAN NAMES Beatrice Margarete

ADDRESS DURING TERM Teachers' College Carlton Postal District N3
 (Give each name in full)

PERMANENT ADDRESS Analoh's Clover Flat PO. Via Coleraine
 Date of Birth 5th June 1924 School at which educated Mac Robertson C.M.S.

SUBJECTS PROPOSED.

1st Major		2nd Major		Sub-Major	
Subjects Passed and Proposed	Date	Subjects Passed and Proposed	Date	Subjects Passed and Proposed	Date
English A	1942	Eco Geog	1944	Philosophy I	1944
English B	1945	Eco. Hist	1945	Philosophical	1945
English C	1946	Int. Relations	1946	Philosophy	1945
		Mod. Hist.	1946		
		War. Hist.	1946		
Remaining Subjects:					
Geology	1944	French I A	1944	Geog	1945

For instructions see other side.