This work is as much reminiscence as it is history, with most of the information reported here gleaned from annual reports, newsletters or my memory. While the staff members deserve full biographies of their own, here, the contributions from many individuals, including staff and visiting fellows, provide brief information about their research and teaching.

Surprisingly, it was difficult to find hardcopies of all Faculty of Science Annual Reports. Maree Coldrick helped with access to departmental files and assisted with computing and student information. Thanks are also due to Maggie Shapley at the Menzies Archives, who kindly provided indexed early faculty Annual Reports; Angela Firth and Erica Walls-Nichols helped compile the list of student prizes; and Judith Shelley undertook the tedious task of checking the departmental lists of theses against the official lists in the Menzies Library. Professor David Brown provided an early history of the department, from 1959 to 1984. A major effort was made to contact former students, and brief reviews of their career activity since graduation make up a separate section of this history.

Christine Keller-Smith of the ANU Alumni Office kindly advertised the project and sought contributions from former students, as did Ron Hackney at Geoscience Australia, and Colin Simpson for the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, while Sue Fletcher for the Geological Society of Australia arranged publicity to attract student contributions. David Brown, Ken Campbell, Tony Eggleton, Patrick De Deckker, ‘Bear’ McPhail and Robin Westcott kindly read and commented on sections of the report. ‘Bear’ McPhail, Patrick De Deckker and Peter Hancock provided information on the new millennium (Chapter 9); Ted Lilley contributed an account of geophysics teaching.

Photos and illustrations are acknowledged where possible. Several found in the department are of unknown origin. Surprisingly, there are no formal photographs of staff or students. George Halford provided a copy of Lithenea and other diagrams. Neil Williams, Ken Williams, Tony Eggleton, Patrick De Deckker, Ian Lambert, Sue Jephcott, Gavin Young, Andrew Lawrence, David Moore, Michael Conan-Davies, Anne Felton and Greg Miles provided photos of student activities; space precluded using several other submissions.
Richard Barwick has made a major contribution in printing and organising most of the illustrations for the manuscript. Judith Caton kindly undertook the onerous task of editing and, without her dedicated effort, this manuscript would never have been completed. Tony Eggleton, Anne Felton, Judith Shelley and Ted Lilley assisted with the final copyediting. An outside referee and the staff of ANU E Press are also thanked for their assistance. Mike Avent and Marilee Farrer (RSES) assisted in organising the reunion dinner held on 7 March 2009 at University House.

Mike Rickard, 2009