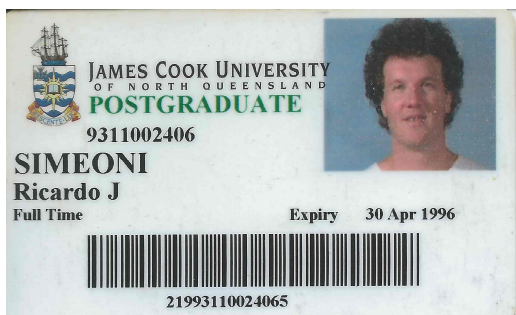


James Cook University of North Queensland (PhD) 1993-1996

In March 1993 I moved to tropical Townsville to commence my PhD at the James Cook University of North Queensland (JCU). Like most traditional PhDs my studies were quite challenging, but especially so being in a field (theoretical Atomic and Quantum Physics) well outside the comfort zones of my then primary area of knowledge/training (Medical Physics) and QUT's familiar educational environment. Contracting Ross River Fever soon after moving to Townsville also added to this new academic challenge.



My previous Medical Physics role involved travelling to Townsville Base Hospital (then located near the Strand), so I was already familiar with and loved Townsville, but enjoyed living there even more. JCU was unique and laid back, with for example dingoes and wallabies on campus. Even surviving the heat and humidity was all part of the experience (no air conditioning in accommodation or university buildings then). During the time I also occasionally visited some other areas of North Queensland, including Mount Isa as part of a JCU science road show.

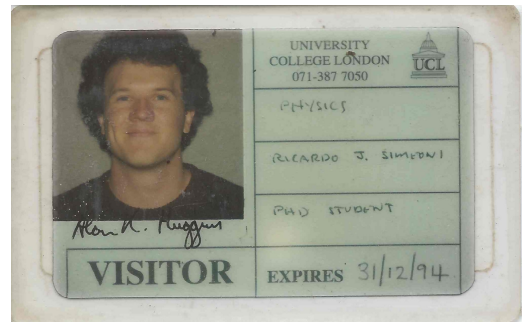
I previously described my QUT days as the most fulfilling times as an (early) *developing* student where I felt in control of a well organised learning environment/routine with no thought or need of looking to new horizons. This previous QUT description does not in any way detract from the wonderful but very different multidimensional experience at JCU. *Developing* was the operative word within that previous QUT description (though PhD learning still naturally had developmental aspects), and achieving a PhD under challenging circumstances was still incredibly fulfilling as perhaps reflected in the April 1997 graduation photos.



Some of the happy social JCU memories from this period are shown by the photos below. The first photo of Cecelia, Jim and myself shows a fun time as a Residential Tutor at John Flynn College (Cecelia and Jim being fellow Residential Tutors). Jim was a big Red Dwarf fan (responsible for my now similar leaning) and Cecelia, with strong Italian Family roots in North Queensland, loved a good laugh. The Scotland rugby jersey was a nice memento of the PhD-enabled trip below, which included visiting my Scottish Grandparents' home cities.



The following set of rugby photos represents the incredible experience of a three month "exchange" visit to University College London and playing for the London Goodenough Trust (London House) Rugby Football Club. The first of these photos shows the London House rugby team forwards who from left to right are: Chris (England), Andrew (Aus), Ricardo (Aus), Robert (France), Morris (S. Africa), Johnathon (S. Africa), Andrew (Aus).



The London House rugby team was made up of postgraduate students from Australia, France, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK. I do not recall the grade of Rugby – not first grade or anything like that but it was a registered club and quite serious nonetheless with most of the postgraduate students from strong rugby backgrounds. For me it was quite a rapid initiation into rugby from a great bunch of new friends and I still look back and laugh (as did everyone at the time) at my first training session when after breaking away from a lineout drill I ran down and mistakenly tackled my own winger! It is hard to tell from the above photo but I received quite the bloody nose during that game. We actually had a very tight and well drilled/technically strong scrum as shown by the next photo (from a different game) which I often used (anonymously) when teaching vectors to students (vectors were annotated onto the photo for a question involving the addition of forces).





Johnathon (team captain) and myself, #4 and #5 (second row) respectively, are shown in the next photo showing the post-game situation of his black eye and my broken leg from the same game! Our tight scrum formation was spearheaded by Chris. Although I did not know Chris overly well, I recall my Mum posting out a commemorative Canterbury 1995 Rugby World Cup jersey for him from Australia (they were not available or had sold out in the UK). I wore mine for years afterwards, serving as a memory of these happy times.

Together with some other team members, I was also lucky enough to attend the 1994 Wembley rugby league test match, again with some great memories – in addition to the game itself, Cliff Richard provided a laugh (in a good way, being a good sport with cheery entertainment) and here my meeting Laurie Nichols (a real gentleman). Back to JCU and speaking of rugby league, it was nice being in Townsville during the Cowboys inaugural year.



At the end of my three month London study visit my parents travelled over to meet me for a few weeks holiday during which time we travelled to Scotland on the Flying Scotsman (still in operation that year) to visit my Mother's heritage (both parents being Scottish from Glasgow and Dumbarton) and then to Italy to stay with Relatives (in Dignano, my Father's humble home town) for a white Christmas. The photo from the time is of my Mum (and proprietor) staying at the lovely Bonnington guest house in Edinburgh. The photos below are of my: Scottish Grandparents on left, Italian Grandparents (with neighbour and my Father) centre, and Italian Grandfather (with neighbour and my Father working plough) on right. Some might be amazed that there are people alive in 2022 who used a horse-drawn plough as part of everyday life.

