



AUSTRALIAN Forest History SOCIETY

Newsletter no.17

November 1997

'... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments.'

INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

There are many international linkages in forest and environmental history which help our understanding of Australian forest history. Closest is our connection with New Zealand through similarities in our developments and through the trade in timber between us. We are reminded of the ecological connections to countries to our north through the work of Tom Heinsohn presented at our last conference. Further afield is our connection to the Forest History Society in the United States whose Director, Pete Steen, came to our inaugural meeting in 1988.

The International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO), founded in 1892, has a Forest History Group with various Working Groups which hold international meetings periodically and usually publish their proceedings. Most Australian forestry-related organisations are members of IUFRO and have copies of the proceedings in their libraries. The conferences are open to other researchers and several Australians plan to attend the meeting on 'History and Forest Resources' to be held in Florence in May 1998.

We are also linked and stimulated intellectually by the work of forest historians in other countries, by the questions they raise and how they go about their studies. But it is a two-way process in which Australian forest history, and particularly the regional assessment work at present, has much to contribute.

Coming events

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING 12.30 p.m., Monday, 3 December 1997.

CRES Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Hancock Building, The Australian National University
Agenda: Consider the draft constitution and the Society's incorporation in the ACT.

Copies are available from John Dargavel (02 6258 9102) and Kevin Frawley (02 6271 2883).

INVITATION TO BOOK LAUNCH 5.00 p.m., Wednesday, 19 November 1997.

CRES Seminar Room, 5th Floor, Hancock Building, The Australian National University.

Australia's Ever-Changing Forests III: Proceedings of the Third National Conference on Australia's Forest History will be launched by Professor Henry Nix.

Members and friends cordially welcome.

Editors: John Dargavel, 20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615 Tel/Fax (02) 6258 9102 email John.Dargavel@anu.edu.au
Caroline Scowcroft, P.O. Box 154, Horsham, Victoria 3042 Tel/Fax (03) 5382 2515 email scowcrof@comirc.co.au

ISSN 1033-937 X

CSM

In honour of the hoop pine*

Brett Stubbs

The best known and romanticised aspect of the timber trade of north-eastern New South Wales is that associated with red cedar, *Toona ciliata*. Cedar was the principal commercial species during the first two or three decades of the European occupation of this region from about 1840. Another species, however, became a far more important item of regional commerce, surpassing cedar in both value and volume cut. This was the hoop pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, a tree little considered by historians of the forests of New South Wales, but honoured in this brief article.

The red cedar was the first timber tree to be exploited on a large scale in NSW. By the 1880s, few mature timber trees of the species remained standing, but long before this it became scarce in accessible locations. The timber featured in diminishing quantities in the export figures for the Richmond River, one of its most important sources, from about the middle of the 1870s. Earlier still, cedar had been superseded in importance by hoop pine, which dominated the export figures for the river by the end of the 1860s. Cedar had been far the predominant timber shipped from the Richmond in the 1840s (more than 90 per cent in 1845 and 1846) but in 1869 it contributed only a quarter of the total exports with hoop pine making up about half.

The demand for pine began on the Richmond River in the 1860s. Demand for the timber was brisk in the early 1870s when there were two sawmills on the Richmond primarily engaged in cutting hoop pine.

The hoop pine, also known as Brisbane pine, Moreton Bay pine, and later Richmond River pine and Colonial pine, first became known to Europeans in the early 1820s. In 1823, Surveyor-General Oxley reported the discovery on the Brisbane River of 'a new description of pine, from 100 to 140 feet high'. The following year Allan Cunningham identified the 'stately and magnificent pines' as a new species of *Araucaria*, 'the first discovered in New South Wales'. He gave the tree the name 'Brisbane pine, as being first discovered on the banks of the river of the same name'. The tree was noticed on the Tweed and Richmond Rivers in 1828 by Captain Henry Rous, and Captain Butcher saw it in 'great abundance' on the Clarence River in 1838.

Hoop pine was soon found to be unsuitable for naval service, but being one of the few pale, soft timbers in the colony, and being so abundant in the coastal brushes of northern NSW and southern Queensland, it became extensively used for purposes such as flooring, joinery and cabinet work, especially as the red cedar resource dwindled. It was vastly less durable than cedar, so was confined to interior uses. Nevertheless, hoop pine eventually replaced cedar as the mainstay of the timber industry in northern NSW.

Just as the red cedar had been exploited to scarcity, the hoop pine resource too eventually diminished, and early this century concern was expressed about the dwindling supply. In 1907 the Royal Commission on Forestry raised the subject as a matter of urgency. Hoop pine, it pointed out, was 'the only noted softwood which is largely used for building purposes in the eastern part of NSW, and the quantity standing reasonably accessible is very small'. There was a keen and increasing demand for the timber for both local use within the 'populous and prosperous' districts of Grafton, Casino, Lismore and Murwillumbah, and for export. The timber in those districts had been 'largely cut out', however, and an increased royalty rate on the remaining pine was recommended.

The chief source of pine at this stage was the Richmond Range, the western watershed between the Richmond and Clarence Rivers, where a large timber reserve had been created, containing over 70,000 acres. Each year about 5 million super feet was taken off the Richmond Range. Most was drawn by teams eastwards to Casino, and some in the opposite direction to Tenterfield.

In the late nineteenth century a vigorous timber trade developed between New Zealand and softwood-scarce Australia, based principally on sawn kauri, rimu and kahikatea. The trade underwent considerable growth in the 1890s as increasing quantities of kahikatea were required as raw material for boxes and crates for the expanding Australian dairying industry. There is no doubt that the enormous quantities of New Zealand pine imported into NSW greatly relieved the pressure on the indigenous resource, but despite this and various other factors tending to mitigate the demand for hoop pine, its harvest could not be sustained. Reflecting the diminution of the resource, output of hoop pine from NSW forests decreased from more than 30 million super feet per annum in the early 1920s to about 3 million in the early 1950s. Thus did the humble hoop pine follow the path of the flamboyant red cedar from abundance to obliteration.

* This is a condensed version of a paper in preparation which is based on material in my PhD thesis 'A question of competing values: forest and timber conservation in NSW, 1838-1996'.

Australia's Ever-Changing Forests IV: Fourth National Conference on Australia's Forest History

Gympie, Queensland, 18-22 April 1999

Field tour to Fraser Island, 22-25 April

Call for papers

Papers are sought across the range of Australian forest and woodland history and specifically on the theme of public history and historiography.

** Range of forest and woodland history*

As in earlier conferences, papers are welcome from across the broad range of perspectives taken to examine human interactions with Australia's forests and woodlands.

** Public forest history and historiography*

One day of the conference will be devoted to the progress of public forest history and the issues which it raises for the integration of social and ecological understandings of the forest. Several of the Comprehensive Assessment processes which are being undertaken in the major forest regions at present will have been completed by the time of the conference so that it will be timely both to report on them and reflect on issues of their historiography, analytical and integrative methods.

Contact for papers:

Jane Lennon, 11 Joynt Street, Hamilton, Queensland, Tel: (07) 3862 4284, Fax: (07) 3262 7470.

Indicative conference timetable

Sunday, 18th Travel by train from Brisbane to Gympie, or independently. Evening barbecue and social.

Monday, 19th 3 Sessions of papers, tour of Woodworks Museum. Evening optional videos and slides.

Tuesday, 20th 1 Session of papers, train and bus tour to Imbil forest and plantation. AGM.

Wednesday, 21st 3 Sessions of papers, tour of Gold Museum. Conference dinner.

Thursday, 22nd 2 Sessions of papers. Close. Optional Fraser Island tour or return to Brisbane.

Conference venue

The conference will be held in the Forestry Training Centre in Gympie which provides accommodation, meals and well-equipped meeting facilities in its pleasant tree-covered campus which also includes the Woodworks Museum, Forest Research Institute and Regional Forestry Headquarters.

Fraser Island tour

Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1992, Fraser Island is a place of exceptional beauty, with its long uninterrupted white beaches flanked by strikingly coloured sand cliffs, its majestic tall rainforests and numerous freshwater lakes of crystal clear waters. Called K'gari by its Aboriginal inhabitants, the island shows evidence of Aboriginal occupation of at least 5000 years. It contains many sites of archaeological, social and spiritual significance. It has a history of logging and forestry activities which lasted for a century until 1992. The island is only accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles. The indicative programme is:

Thursday, 22nd pm. Travel to Fraser Island and stay at the old forestry station at Dili village.

Friday, 23rd Visits to sites of indigenous, forestry and natural heritage significance.

Saturday, 24th Visits continue.

Sunday, 25th Return to Gympie and Brisbane.

Contacts:

Margaret Kowald, 9 Bowaga St, Indooroopilly, Qld 4068 Tel: (07) 3371 7670 (h) or (07) 3227 8988 (w),
email: Margaret.Kowald@env.qld.gov.au

John Dargavel, 20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615 Tel: (02) 6258 9102 (h) or (02) 6249 2118 (ANU)
email: John.Dargavel@anu.edu.au

Threat to close the Noel Butlin Archives: report to members

John Dargavel

In August, the Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Professor Ian MacAllister, announced that he proposed to close Australia's principal collection of business, union and station records on 31 December 1997 unless some way could be found to divest the Research School of budgetary responsibility.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I contacted all those members for whom I had email addresses and asked whether the Society should express a view on the matter to the Vice-Chancellor. Members were unanimous that we should, a draft letter was circulated for comments and the following letter was sent.

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

Members of the Australian Forest History Society wish to express to you their grave concern about the proposed closure of the Noel Butlin Archives at The Australian National University and the possible dispersal of its collection.

The Society's members come from all States and Territories and are drawn from universities, a wide range of government agencies and several disciplines in both the biological and the social sciences. The Society has had a close association with The Australian National University since its inauguration in 1988.

The Noel Butlin Archives contain Australia's major collection of station and other records which cover great areas of the Murray-Darling Basin and other parts of the rural landscape during their transformation to agricultural and pastoral use. Australian biological science was closely involved in raising the productivity of the pastoral and rural industries so that many clues to the links between science and these industries, which are important in shaping our understanding of science and the industries, are housed in the Noel Butlin Archives. Increasing attention is now being given to historical studies in order to understand the long-term nature of the serious environmental problems which are now apparent. These records are an important source for future studies by both academic researchers and government agencies. Other records in the Noel Butlin Archives, such as those of timber companies, timber industry associations, timber unions and conservation societies, are also of considerable importance to Australian forest historians.

Members would like to draw attention to the fact that they and depositors have regarded the Noel Butlin Archives as a *national* facility whose integrity and security was inherent in the reputation of the *national* university. We would like to point out that many researchers throughout Australia have collaborated with archives staff over many

years in persuading depositors to lodge records in the Australian National University. The fact that, for historical reasons, the Noel Butlin Archives are administered by a particular part of the university is not thought to be germane to the university's present responsibilities to ensure the security, preservation and access for research in Australia of these records. The following are members' major concerns:

1. The collection contains many deposits, such as those of the Australian Agricultural Company for example, which are major items of Australia's national heritage. Members are particularly concerned that there should be no possibility of them ever falling into private hands or being sold overseas.
2. Continued access to the existing collection, including its finding guides and other documentation, needs to be ensured so that current research can be brought to fruition and new research commenced.
3. If the existing collection is dispersed or transferred to another depository, it is vital that accurate and accessible records are provided of how the material is dispersed and that the finding guides and documentation also remain accessible.
4. The Noel Butlin Archives has provided a valuable national service by seeking out or accepting deposits from private organisations which might otherwise destroy them. They have become such a valuable research resource because of the steady collecting policy which has been pursued over many years. Members are anxious to see that this national service should continue for the benefit of future researchers.

We hope that these concerns will weigh in the Australian National University's consideration of its responsibilities for the great archival collection that it has built up.

We received a reply from Professor MacAllister explaining the budget pressures which had led to his decision. However, so many other societies and individual researchers expressed their concerns that the University has developed a minimalist strategy to keep it open under the control of the University Library but with drastically reduced staffing. It is hoped to move the archive to new premises, raise external funds to assist its upkeep and review the physical condition and legal status of individual deposits. The proposal does not meet the concerns of the Society and serious problems remain. A Friends of the Archive group has been formed in which the Society is represented.

I would like to thank members who responded to the email requests and apologise to those who I could not contact by normal mail in time. If approved, the proposal to have a constitution and committee will enable our decisions to be made more easily in future.

News of members

We welcome *John Huth* and *Judith Powell*, both from Queensland. Judith is working in the Department of Environment as part of the Regional Forest Agreement process for South-east Queensland. She lives at Pomona which seems a serendipitous address for a forest historian when one remembers that John Evelyn appended his treatise, *Pomona or an appendix concerning fruit-trees in relation to cider, the making and several ways of ordering it*, to his *Sylva* (1664). Apparently cider was popular in the Restoration court of Charles II as the royalists had acquired a taste for it during their West Country campaigns of the Civil War. John works in the Forestry Research Institute at Gympie and is researching the history of forest nurseries—or as Evelyn called them, ‘seminaries’.

Hilary Smith has moved from Queensland to State Forests in New South Wales where she is now managing the ‘Management History Mapping Project’ as part of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment process. She is based at Pennant Hills.

Congratulations to *Brett Stubbs* on successfully completing his PhD at Southern Cross University at Lismore. His thesis is titled ‘A question of competing values: forest and timber conservation in NSW, 1838-1996’.

Publications noted

Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (Eds) 1997. *Ecology and empire: environmental history of settler societies*. Melbourne University Press [published in UK by Keele University Press]. 248 pp., bibliography. ISBN 0 522 84793 5. \$A29.95.

The 15 papers in this volume were first presented at a conference organised by the editors in the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies (part of the Institute for Commonwealth Studies in the University of London). The Australian emphasis is matched by several papers on South Africa including one by Jane Carruthers on national parks and one by Richard Grove on a nineteenth century Scottish clergyman, John Croumbie Brown, who wrote extensively on the problems of deforestation. Michael Williams has a paper which makes a comparative study of deforestation in Pacific Rim continents. J.M. Powell has a paper on Australian water management. We hope to have a review of this book in a later issue of the *Newsletter*.

John A. Kininmonth 1997. *A history of forest research in New Zealand*. Rotorua, NZ: Forest Research Institute (Private Bag 3020 Rotorua). 271 pp. \$NZ50 including GST plus \$NZ5 postage and packing (\$NZ10 overseas).

This book provides a comprehensive review of forestry research in New Zealand from the 1920s to the present day. It also looks back briefly to earlier efforts of Maori people, the early botanical explorers and those responsible for establishing the first plantation forests.

Ken Klitscher (Ed.) 1997. *Characters of the FRI*. Rotorua, NZ: Forest Research Institute (Private Bag 3020 Rotorua). 153 pp. \$NZ30 including GST plus \$NZ5 postage and packing (\$NZ10 overseas).

Over 2000 people have worked at the FRI over the years. This book presents pen-portraits of 63 of them including a nice mix of eccentrics, comedians, petty dictators, and mild-mannered men and women.

Richard Grove 1997. *Ecology, climate and empire: colonialism and global environmental history 1400-1940*. Oxford University Press India [White Horse Press in UK]. 205 pp. \$A38 paperback.

Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan (Eds) 1997. *Nature and the Orient: the environmental history of south and south-east Asia*. Oxford University Press India. 2 vols, 1116 pp. \$A160.

These books, released in July and August, can be ordered directly from Oxford University Press India, PO Box 43 New Delhi, India. Fax: 00 91 11 3732312 or email: ibho@oup.oup.wiprobt.ems.vsnl.net.in

J.A. Bennett 1996. Logging labour in Vanikoro, Solomon Islands: the achievements of the ‘Most feeble in the commercial world’ 1923-1964. *Pacific Studies* 19(2): 1-x.

Alan Gunzburg and Jeff Austin 1997. *Rails through the bush: Timber and firewood tramways and railway contractors of Western Australia*. Light Railways Research Society of Australia. 290 pp., illustrated. \$46 plus postage \$6.50 in Australia (LRRSA, 9 McGregor St., Canterbury, Vic 3126). Due for release in November.

The book describes in words and pictures the timber milling industry in the south-west, firewood lines in the goldfields and the contractors who built the railways of Western Australia.

Identifications made

This photo was shown in our last newsletter and the same characters appear on the cover of *Australia's Ever-Changing Forests III*. Many thanks to those who identified the people concerned and particularly to Trevor Clifford and John Brookes who recalled the name of the foreman, Harry Jamz, and to Nairne Taylor who kindly passed on the information from him. We understand that Dave Ashton has re-mapped the vegetation of Wallaby Creek 50 years after the original work. Perhaps a Victorian member could provide further details?



Visit of the Botany School of Melbourne University to Wallaby Creek Catchment about 1947. From left to right:

Back row: Norm Endacott (Botany III student and now AFHS member), John D. Brookes (Botany III student, later General Manager, APM Forests Pty Ltd, and Director, Victorian National Parks), John Fitzpatrick (Botany III student), Harry Jamz (MMBW, Foreman Wallaby Creek).

Middle row: Jack Newey (Botany III student), Sophie Ducker (member of Botany School staff, now Dr Sophie Ducker A.M.), Professor John Turner (Head of Botany Dept.), Iona McLellan (postgraduate student, later Petersen), Jean Mathieson (Botany School staff), Assoc. Prof. Ethel McLelland (Head of Mycology Section).

Front row: Bob Oldham (Head Forester, MMBW), Kingsley Rowan (postgraduate student and later staff member)
Photo taken by E.J. Hartung, Professor of Chemistry.

Stop Press - IUFRO Meeting - Forests and Resources - Florence, May 1998

Dr Agnoletti has sent registration forms and further program details. See *Newsletter 16* for details. Some members plan to attend. This meeting provides an important international forest history forum for us to discuss the remarkable work being undertaken in the Comprehensive Regional Assessment process. Contact John Dargavel for further details (02) 6258 9102 home or (02) 6249 2118 ANU.

AUSTRALIAN FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY

Statement of Accounts for the financial year to 30 June 1997

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

Income	\$	
Subscriptions	1,265.72	
Conference	10,781.00	
Donation	30.00	
Interest	33.19	
Adjustment of Govt. debit tax	<u>1.20</u>	12,111.11
Expenditure		
Printing Newsletters	632.00	
Postage	365.30	
Conference	8,796.96	
Stationery	44.80	
Govt. debit tax	<u>12.58</u>	<u>9,851.64</u>
Surplus of Income over Expenditure		<u>2,259.47</u>
Petty cash expenditure (not included above)	49.35	

BALANCE SHEET

Cash in Bank at 30 June 1996	2,479.84
Cash in Bank at 30 June 1997	4,739.31
Value of Newsletter shells at 30 June 1997	100.00
Petty cash at 30 June 1997	10.80

NOTES

The Conference Proceedings will be published jointly with the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, The Australian National University, at an agreed cost to the Society of \$1,600.00

I have examined the statement of accounts and the books and financial records of the Australian Forest History Society. On the basis of the material supplied to me, it is my conclusion that the statement of accounts is an accurate statement of the financial position of the Society as at 30 June 1997 and an accurate statement of the transactions undertaken during the financial year ended 30 June 1997.

Kevin Frawley

Kevin Frawley

15 September 1997

Australia's Ever-Changing Forests IV

Gympie, Queensland, 18-22 April 1999, Field tour to Fraser Island 22-25 April

The conference will be held at the Forestry Training Centre in Gympie with visits to the Woodworks Museum, the Gold Museum and Imbil forest and plantations. It will be followed by an optional field tour to Fraser Island. See page 3 for details and call for papers. For further information on the programme, contact: Jane Lennon, 11 Joynt Street, Hamilton, Queensland Tel: (07) 3862 4284, Fax: (07) 3262 7470. For other information, please contact: Margaret Kowald, 9 Bowaga St, Indooroopilly, Qld 4068 Tel: (07) 3371 7670 (h) or (07) 3227 8988 (w), or John Dargavel, 20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615 Tel: (02) 6258 9102 (h) or (02) 6249 2118 (ANU)

Australian Conferences

The River

AHA Regional Conference

Newcastle, NSW, 28-30 November 1997

1997 is the Bicentenary of the naming of the Hunter River. Topics include the environment, public and applied history. Contact: Dr Nancy Cushing, Dept. History, Univ. Newcastle, Callaghan NSW 2308

Celebrating Parks:

a symposium on parks history

Mt Buffalo Chalet, Vic. 17-19 April 1998

1998 is the Centenary of founding Wilsons Promontory and Mt Buffalo National Parks. Papers are called for on all aspects of parks history including city parks. Contact: Elery Hamilton-Smith, PO Box 36, Carlton South, Vic. 3053. Tel: 03 9489 7785 Fax: 03 9841 2439 email: elery@melb.alexia.net.au

The People's Forest

at the National Folk Festival

Canberra, Easter 1998

An exhibition, concerts and release of music CD.

Contact: Gregg Borschmann,
PO Box 227, Blackheath, NSW 2785

International Conferences

*International, multicultural, interdisciplinary:
public history policy and practice*

Austin, Texas - 15-19 April 1998

Contact: Carl Phagan and Kris Mitchell, Batelle
Pantex, PO Box 30020, Amarillo, Texas 79120-0020
USA email: kcmitch@pantex.com

History and Forest Resources

Florence, 18-23 May 1998

IUFRO Forest History Group and Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali have called for papers on forest history and socio-economic development with attention to scale of investigation. See Newsletter 16 for further details and up-date on page 5.

Contact: Dr Mauro Agnoletti, Istituto di Assetamento e Tecnologia Forestale, Università di Firenze, Via San Bonaventura 13, 50145 Firenze, Italy.
email: agnoletti@cesitl.unifi.it

Australian contact: John Dargavel

SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1997

The Australian Forest History Society is open to all who support its objective which is '... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments.' New members will be welcomed and existing members are asked to make the Society known to all who might be interested. Subscriptions are for calendar years.

Name:

Organisation (if any):

Address:

.....(State)(Postcode)

Tel: Fax: email:

Field of interest in forest history:

Please mail cheque or money order (made payable to the 'Australian Forest History Society') to:
20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615 with \$15 cheque or postal order (Overseas \$A20).



