



AUSTRALIAN
Forest History
SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter no. **19**

August 1998

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

THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY

Since its inception in 1988, the Australian Forest History Society has operated without any formal structure. In that time, three conferences have been held, books of conference proceedings published and the Society has maintained a presence in other ways. However, in time there comes a need to formalise arrangements and on 27 May 1998, the Australian Forest History Society was incorporated as an association under the ACT *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*. The formal cost of doing so was low (less than \$100) but there were many hours of work in preparing the constitution – for which model rules were followed and specific requirements added.

The timing of the Fourth National Conference, to be held at Gympie in April 1999, will allow the first Annual General Meeting to be held there (it must be held within 18 months of incorporation). In the meantime the Interim Committee will establish a Society bank account. The Interim Committee consists of John Dargavel (President), Ruth Lane (Secretary), Terry Birtles (Treasurer) and John Banks. Kevin Frawley is the Public Officer. The Committee to be elected at the AGM in April is to consist of four office-bearers and up to five committee members.

Incorporation imposes certain obligations, such as providing an annual list of office bearers and audited financial statements to the ACT Registrar-General. It also opens new opportunities such as being able to apply for grants which now generally require organisations to be incorporated.

As well as more routine matters, the constitution sets out the aim and a number of objectives which cover: promotion of interest in forest history; encouragement of research; dissemination of research and studies; and, the identification of, and the promotion of, the safe custody of source materials. Formalisation of the Society provides the basis for making the next decade as productive as the last one has been.

The Society is most grateful to Kevin Frawley who saw the whole process of preparing the constitution and achieving the Society's incorporation through from start to finish.

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Research – recent and in progress

Archaeologists uncover forest history at Dorrigo

Details of the daily lives of pioneer NSW timber communities are being uncovered in a special joint project between State Forests and the University of New England which could lead to the establishment of a new tourist attraction near Dorrigo.

A team of State Forests and UNE archaeologists and students are in the village of Cascade, near Dorrigo, uncovering an old steam engine mill that was abandoned and enveloped by the growing forest five decades ago.

Cultural Heritage Officer for State Forests, Ray Fife said: 'By recording the way these steam mills were built and the artefacts left in the surrounding areas, we can add to what we already know about this important period in forestry history from photographs and anecdotal evidence. Steam was once the main source of power for the forest industry.'

Dr Wendy Beck, of the Division of Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology at UNE, said a group of about six students would record the site and features in detail, using electronic surveying equipment.

'The data we collect will be used to prepare a conservation plan for the area, detailing which parts or relics need to be preserved for their archaeological and historical values.' Dr Beck said: 'Eventually, people will be able to come to Cascade and see the sites for themselves and, hopefully, have a much better understanding about life in these early forest communities.'

Reprinted from the UNE Newsletter,
Smiths 39(10), 19 June 1998, p. 3.
forwarded by *Graydon Henning*.

Washpool and Gibraltar Range

Nicole Secombe writes that she is currently working on a heritage assessment for Washpool and Gibraltar Range National Parks in the New England area for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The team has reviewed the Australian Forest History Society's Newsletter and conference papers but did not find information on the area which includes Curramore, Washpool and Billimbra State Forests. She would be interested to know of any suggestions of specific people, references or other material relating to these parks. Thus far they have not uncovered much, although they have local oral informants lined up.
Contact: nicole.secomb@npws.nsw.gov.au

New Zealand attitudes

Paul Star in Dunedin has been researching attitudes to

New Zealand forests in 1874 (i.e. at the time of Vogel's New Zealand Forests Act). He is interested in thinking about forests and forestry in Victoria and South Australia in the 1860s-1870s, since these examples affected New Zealand views at the time. Goyder's views were particularly important. Contact:

Dr Paul Star, 246 Harrington Rd, R.D.2, Dunedin,
New Zealand. Email: granton@pop.es.co.nz

Book Review – Feral forests

James Noble 1998. *The delicate and noxious scrub*.

Canberra: CSIRO. ISBN 0 643 05980 6 \$19.95

Forest historians in Australia are enthusiastic about tall timber and primeval forest. There is much less enthusiasm for semi-arid woodlands. There are several reasons why these do not seem so 'special'. They occur in country without much geographic relief and the timber is significantly less valuable than that which grows in higher rainfall areas. But there is another reason too. Some of these forests are pests – 'bad' forests – that have emerged since European invasion because of European burning practices. James Noble's new book confronts all the complexity of the 'woody weed problem' of the Western Division of New South Wales.

Noble offers his readers economic, social and scientific history alongside recent ecological studies of 'feral' native plants, demonstrating the many facets of this particular sort of forest history. He also offers nine appendices, including extracts from historical documents, short biographical summaries of key players and short histories of CSIRO Experimental Research Stations.

The Delicate and Noxious Scrub was launched at the Academy of Science on 1 May 1998, by another pest specialist, Hugh Tyndale-Biscoe, a zoologist known for his work on native animals that have become pests.

Libby Robin

Publications noted

J.S. Benson and P.A. Redpath 1997. The nature of pre-European vegetation in south-eastern Australia: a critique of Ryan, D.G., Ryan, J.R. and Starr, B.J. (1995) *The Australian landscape - observations of explorers and early settlers*. *Cunninghamia* 5(2): 285-328.

This important article in the journal of Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens discusses the evidence about the effects of pre-European and early settler fire regimes. It criticises the booklet by Ryan, Ryan and Starr and work by Rolls and Flannery. It provides a

lengthy list of references to the scientific literature as well as the historic sources. We hope to carry a review of the debate about burning regimes in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Pauline Curby 1997. *Narrandera Study on Buckinbong, Gillenbah and Matong State Forests*. 155 pp. ISBN 0 7310 9148 5

Peter Donovan 1997. *A history of the Millewa group of river red gum forests*. 112 pp. ISBN 0 7310 9131 0

Elaine van Kempen 1997. *A history of the Pilliga cypress pine forests*. pp. 109 + Appendices. ISBN 0 7310 9149 3

M.R. Allen 1998. *Case studies of three cypress pine forests in the Lachlan and Bogan River Catchments, Forbes Forestry District on Back Yamma, Euglo South and Strahorn State Forests*. pp.153 + Appendices. ISBN 0 7310 9111 6

All published by State Forests of New South Wales, PO Box 100, Beecroft, NSW 2119.

We welcome the publication of these four studies of the history of forests in the Western Forest Division of New South Wales which were reported at our last conference in Jervis Bay. Peter Donovan's study covers red gum forests, while Curby's, Elaine van Kempen's and Mark Allen's studies cover cypress pine forests. Each volume is illustrated with maps and photographs and supported with tables and detailed references.

Kostoglou, P. 1994-1996. *Archaeology of the Tasmanian Timber Industry Report Nos 4 to 9*. Hobart: Forestry Tasmania.

Forestry Tasmania has put out a one-page Research Note No. 7 on the history of timber-getting in the Southern Forests. It refers to this series of archaeological reports of surveys funded by the Tasmanian Research Council and undertaken in conjunction with the Forest Practices Board.

Richard Harris 1998. *'To Market! To Market!' The Changing Role of the Australian Timber Merchant, 1945-1965*. Canberra: Urban Research Program, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, (Urban Research Working Paper No. 62). pp. 76.

ISBN 0 7315 2889 1 ISSN 1035-3828

Free on request from Publications Officer, URP, RISS, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200

Australian timber merchants have long played a vital role in providing building materials, credit and

product information to builders. A variety of sources, notably the merchants' national trade journal, indicate that after the Second World War they slowly responded to the growing demand from owner-builders and Do-It-Yourself enthusiasts, many of whom were women. They began to stock a wider variety of lines, built and improved showroom displays, adopted new marketing techniques, and offered customer credit.

By comparison with their North American counterparts – the lumber dealers, timber merchants were slow to meet the needs of new customers. For several years, close financial ties with small mills encouraged them to identify with the timber trade and discouraged them from stocking timber 'substitutes'. When, after the 1950s, they offered new materials and services, they helped not only DIYers but also small builders who were facing increasing competition from large builder-developers.

Libby Robin 1998. *Defending the Little Desert: the rise of ecological consciousness in Australia*. Melbourne University Press. pp.293. ISBN 0 522 84831 1 Due for release in October. \$29.95.

The Little Desert Dispute in Victoria was a watershed in environmental politics. Libby Robin explores the ecology of the campaign and its profound impact on the processes of environmental decision-making. Drawing on interviews with the main protagonists on all sides, she offers an account of the nuances of the coalition that assembled to save the Little Desert, and highlights the neglected role of an older generation of conservationists in the history of green politics in Australia.

H.K. Steen 1998. *Evolution of tropical forestry, Puerto Rico and beyond: an interview with Frank H. Wadsworth*. Foreword by S. L. Krugman. pp.73. Available from the Forest History Society, 701 Vickers Avenue, Durham, NC 27701, USA \$US 5.50

Frank Wadsworth conducted research on the management of tropical forests for over 50 years with the US Forest Service in Puerto Rico and has become one of the world's leading experts. This extended interview with Pete Steen covers the status of tropical forest research and the successes and failures of the Tropical Forest Research Experiment Station on Puerto Rico. His comments on UN-based agencies will be of particular interest internationally.

Recent Journals

Environment and History

The UK-based journal has produced an Australian issue:

Environment and History		
Volume 4	1998	Number 2
ISSN: 0967-3407		
European Farming, Australian Pests: Agricultural Settlement and Environmental Disruption in Australia, 1800–1920 Warwick Frost		129
Land Improvement or Institutionalised Destruction? The Ringbarking Controversy, 1879–1884, and the Emergence of a Conservation Ethic in New South Wales Brett J. Stubbs		145
The Coming of Age to Australian Forests John Dargavel		169
Radical Ecology and Conservation Science: An Australian Perspective Libby Robin		191
On the Margins of the Littoral Society: The New South Wales South Coast since 1945 Nicholas Brown		209
Kafka in the Forest: A Personal Note on Monga Forest and Contemporary History in New South Wales Peter Herbst		239

Environmental History

The US-based journal continues to provide extensive book reviews and its 'Biblioscope' guide to archives and recent books, articles and theses.

Light Railways No. 140, April; No 142, August 1998

This journal continues its impressive new format. No. 140 has an interesting article on the Beech Forest railway, 'The Beechy', which hauled so much timber out of the Otways until it was closed in 1962. The excellent photos of bridges and jetties remind us how much timber was used in the light railway age. One shows the rebuilding a wooden railway bridge for an extension of the Puffing Billy Railway to Gembrook in Victoria.

U.S. Forest History Society's web page

The Forest History Society is a non-profit educational institution established in the USA in 1946 to promote the study of human interaction with the natural environment from a historical perspective. Members are invited to visit its new web pages at:

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/>

It contains information on the Society's:

- Library
- Archives
- Photograph Collection
- Oral History Program Publications - including the journal *Environmental History*
- Awards and Fellowships
- Membership Benefits

It provides search access to the Society's:

- Bibliography of over 23,500 records on the history of forests and forestry, environmental protection, land use, natural resources management, parks and protected areas, wildlife conservation, and related topics
- Archival Guide listing 6,500 records describing forest and conservation history collections at over 450 universities, historical societies, and government archives in the United States and Canada.

Future plans for the web site include: environmental education pages for teachers and students; pages relating to U.S. Forest Service history; finding aids for the Society's archival collections; online order and membership forms; and more historic photos. Suggestions for improvements are very much appreciated.

Contact: Cheryl Oakes Librarian/Archivist Forest History Society 701 Wm. Vickers Ave. Durham NC 27701-3162 USA coakes@acpub.duke.edu

News of members

John Banks is working in the tree ring laboratory of the Swiss Forest Research Institute at Biemensdorf, near Zurich, until October.

Judy Bennett at the University of Otago has finished the manuscript of her book on the history of the Solomons. It is currently with the press readers. We look forward to its appearance particularly because of the importance of forests in the Solomons and the history of Australian involvement in their exploitation.

Norm Houghton is re-working his earlier book on the Wombat forest in light of further files which have now come to light. He is also 'bush-bashing' and finding a great deal of archaeological interest.

Margaret Kowald has moved to Queensland's Department of Natural Resources to take up a position as Project Officer (Inventory) where she will continue her interests in the assessment of cultural heritage in the forests.

Ruth Lane has commenced studying for her PhD in

the Department of Geography at ANU. She is looking at environmental and cultural change issues in the East Kimberleys.

Congratulations to *Libby Robin* on both her appointment as Curator in the National Museum of Australia's People and Environment Division and the forthcoming release of her new book, *Defending the Little Desert* (see Publications Noted).

Following the reorganisation of Edith Cowan University, *Dale Sanders* has moved to the School of Social Sciences at Murdoch University to continue her PhD into forest heritage in the South-west of Western Australia. She is currently looking at the history of forest tourism there and would welcome references to similar work in Australia.

Congratulations to *Angela Taylor* on gaining her MA from Monash University for her work on the Creswick forest based on papers of John La Gerche. Melbourne University Press is to publish a revised and expanded version under the title of *A Forester's Log*.

IUFRO Conference at Florence

John Dargavel and Graydon Henning represented Australia at the IUFRO 'History and Forest Resources' conference at Florence in May. It was a very well organised and well administered conference and this extended to the excellent cuisine which was provided each day. There were over a 100 registrants and more than 80 papers were presented on a very diverse range of topics. The morning plenary sessions were usually devoted to topics of general interest and some of the theory and method papers. These sessions were held in a room with simultaneous translation into English or Italian. Each afternoon there were two parallel sessions on more specific topics.

Among the plenaries were 'Preindustrial forests of Central Europe', 'How can history contribute to an interdisciplinary forest history', 'Paradigms and paradoxes in the writing of forest history', 'Spanish forest policy and public forest production', and 'Imagining and creating forests in early 20th century England'. The afternoon sessions included 'Temporal and spatial changes in a boreal forest', 'The study of charcoal burning sites in the Apennines', 'The size and age of hazel in S W Finland', 'The growth of population and the shortage of wood in the Palatinate 1814-1860', 'Forest resources in France', 'Studies on single tree selection from 1860 to 1960', 'Forests as contested landscapes in later Georgian England', 'Social and environmental factors of forest fire history', and 'Woodlands and iron: the energy cost of

iron production'.

It was not uncommon to have four or five papers before a coffee break and so there was only a minimal amount of time available for questions or discussion at the end of each session. If there was any flaw in the conference organisation it was the tight scheduling of papers into only two streams each afternoon.

As one might expect, the thrust of most papers was Eurocentric and even though they ranged widely over time and country, very few dealt with extra-European concerns. There were four papers on US topics, two on India and one each on Australia, Brazil, Canada, Haiti, Iran, Nigeria and Uganda. John Dargavel's paper, 'In the wood of neglect', emphasised the need for Australian forest historians to consider the forests and woodlands on private and leasehold land. In all less than 16 per cent of the papers were focused beyond Europe. That said, the conference as a whole was still a very stimulating experience and enabled all participants to gain new insights at the same time as some of their previous positions were challenged.

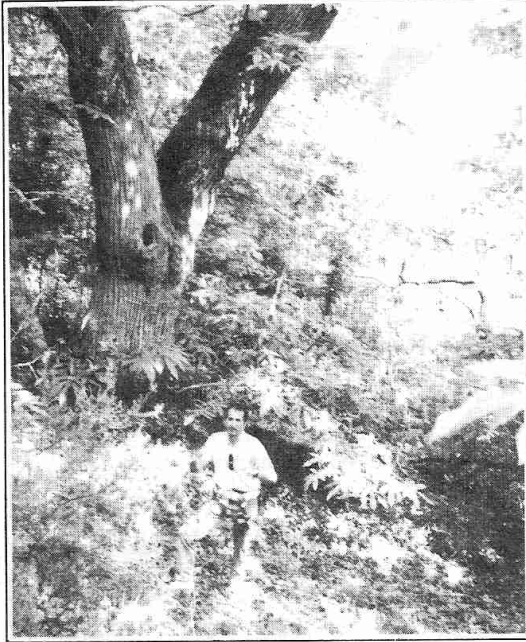
Graydon Henning



Palazzo della Signoria where the welcome reception given by the city of Florence was held.

Excursions

The conference included excursions to the forests of the Castello di Gargonza and those of the Abbey at Valambrosa.

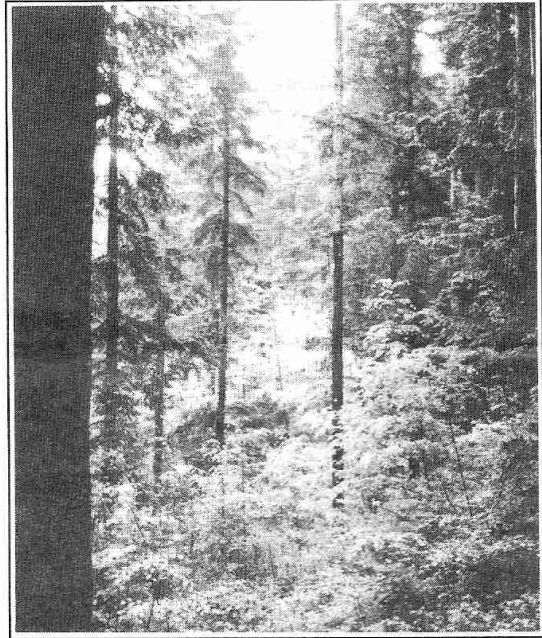


Chestnut tree in old orchard in the forest of the Castello di Gargonza. A stone wall had been built to create a small terrace in which the tree had been planted. Dr Mauro Agnoletti, who organised the IUFRO conference, is researching the history of these forests as the first step in devising a management plan.

Gargonza is a thirteenth century fortified village surrounded by farms and forests. The peasant and labour-intensive forms of managing the oak and chestnut forests has largely been abandoned in recent times which raises many problems of how they may be transformed to productive use and how their historic heritage may be preserved. The owner of the castle is keen to preserve the forests as an attribute of its modern function as an accommodation and conference centre.

The Abbey at Vallombrosa, high in the Tuscan hills, is surrounded by beautiful fir and beech forests which formed part of the Abbey's medieval estate. The Abbey remains a religious centre, though with fewer monks living there now. Interestingly, Italy's first school of forestry was housed in the Abbey

buildings until a separate building, now used as a field studies centre, was constructed nearby. The beautiful forests must have inspired the students even if the Abbey was a spartan and chilly place to study.



Fir and beech grow in mixed stands at higher elevations in the Tuscan hills. Here, a well-thinned stand of fir (*Abies*) is growing with beech (*Fagus*) beneath it in the forests of the Abbey at Vallombrosa.

Ordering our Conference Proceedings

John Dargavel (ed) 1997. *Australia's Ever-Changing Forests III: Proceedings of the Third National Conference on Australia's Forest History*. Canberra: Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, The Australian National University.

\$A30 + \$A7.50 handling (\$A15.00 overseas) from Publications Section, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200

Details and the list of contents are available at URL: <http://cres.anu.edu.au/publications/everchan.html>

There are still a few copies left of the proceedings of our second conference, *Australia's Ever-Changing Forests II*, available from CRES at \$25 plus the same handling charge as above.

Conference Up-date

Australia's Ever-changing Forests IV
Gympie, Queensland, 18-22 April 1999
Field tour to Fraser Island 22-25 April

Arrangements for our conference are well under way and expressions of interest in attending and offers of papers are starting to flow in. John Huth in Gympie and Peter Holzworth in Brisbane have been heartily welcomed in joining the Organising Committee with Jane Lennon, Margaret Kowald, both in Brisbane, and John Dargavel in Canberra.

We always welcome forest historians from other countries and are delighted to learn that Elisabeth Johann and Jane Carruthers are planning to attend. Elisabeth Johann leads the IUFRO Forest History Group and has written a forest history of Austria. She is currently researching the history of mountain farming and its effects on the forests. Jane Carruthers, a historian from the University of South Africa, will be spending a sabbatical period in Australia. She has written on the history of South African national parks.

Timetable:

Expressions of interest and offers of papers	Please return enclosed form as soon as possible
Initial abstracts of papers offered	To Jane Lennon by 1st November
Registration forms	Will be mailed in December with the next Newsletter

Expression of Interest: Numbers may be limited, especially on the tour to Fraser Island, so please put your Expression of Interest forms (enclosed with this Newsletter) in as soon as possible to be sure of a place.

Contacts: See page 8

Single Men's Quarters

The Single Men's Quarters were an institution in Victorian forestry and probably also in other States. Each of the more important and busiest forest districts had one to accommodate one or perhaps two young Assistant Foresters. Typically, they consisted of a simple cottage, quite spartan, but providing the basic facilities to give the young occupant a reasonably comfortable sojourn in the district.

Recently, a female forester-in-training from Melbourne University had an assignment in the Toolangi Forest, and the Department undertook to give her all necessary field assistance including accommodation in the empty Single Men's Quarters. Alan Trevascus, the current Manager of the Toolangi Discovery Centre acted as facilitator. When she arrived, Alan escorted her to the Single Men's Quarters. She entered the front door, looked around with wide-eyed amazement, and out popped the question: 'Good heavens, did people actually live here?'
Norm Endacott

Texas Forestry Museum

The Texas Forestry Museum has forestry and logging exhibits and primary source materials, photos and databases including the East Texas Sawmill Database of 4,669 records of individual mills (owners, mill type, confirmed years of operation, capacity, railroads, social history of and bibliography).

Contact: Texas Forestry Museum, P. O. Box 1488,
Lufkin, Texas 75902-1488 USA Email:
jdhood1@lcc.net

Newsletter items always welcome

Your editors are keen to hear from members about their work in progress, queries, requests for information, new publications and matters of general forest history interest.

Errata Mining History Association

The email address of Mel Davies, Secretary of the Australian Mining History Association was given incorrectly in Newsletter 18. It should have been: mdavies@ecel.uwa.edu.au

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, and Imbil forest and plantations. It will be followed by an optional field tour to Fraser Island.

Papers are called for by 1 November

Contact: Jane Lennon, 11 Joynt Street, Hamilton, Queensland 4007
Tel: (07) 3862 4284, Fax: (07) 3262 7470; Email: jlennon@petrie.starway.net.au

Information:

Margaret Kowald, 9 Bowaga St, Indooroopilly, Qld 4068 Tel: (07) 3371 7670 (h) or (07) 3836 0193 (w),
Email: Margaret.Kowald@dnr.qld.gov.au
John Dargavel, 20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615 Tel: (02) 6258 9102 (h) or (02) 6249 2118 (ANU),
Email: dargavel@spirit.com.au

Australian Conferences

*1998 Australasian Society for Historical
Archaeology Conference*

Sydney – 3-5 October 1998

Papers are sought on all topics relevant to the historical archaeology of Australia, New Zealand and the region. The conference is keen to receive papers on the themes of cultural contact, archaeology of identity, public archaeology and urban archaeology. Contact: Denis Gojak, National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO Box 1967, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Email: denis.gojak@npws.nsw.gov.au

International Conferences

Centralism and regionalism in forestry

Tharandt, Germany – 7-9 October 1998

The conference is being organised by the Institut für Forstökonomie of the Dresden Technical University in collaboration with the French and the IUFRO forest history groups. It will focus on problems of recent history and present development.

Contact: Prof. Dr E.U. Köpf, Institut für Forstökonomie und Forsteinrichtung der Technischen Universität ät Dresden, Weisiger Höhe 1, D - 01737 Tharandt, Germany.

African environments, past and present

Oxford, England – 5-8 July 1999

This conference includes a panel on Commonwealth forest history. Convenors: William Bienart and Richard Grove; Contact: JoAnn McGregor, St Antony's College, Oxford OX2 6JF, UK. Fax +44 1865 554465; Email: joann.mcgregor@sant.ox.ac.uk

IUFRO World Congress in 2000

The International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) will hold its next congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7-12 August 2000. Its theme will be 'Forest and Society: the role of research'. It will consist of plenary, sub-plenary and concurrent group sessions. An information package is being issued in August by:

IUFRO Secretariat
Sechenddorff Gudent-Weg
FBVA, Schönbrunn
1130 Wien, AUSTRIA

The Forest History Group will hold several sessions of papers organised under the theme of 'Forests and Society: Conflicts and Change'. Contact:

Dr Elisabeth Johann
St Margareten
A-9173 Freibach, AUSTRIA
Tel: +43 4226 216
Email: elis.johann@carinthia.com

SUBSCRIPTION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1998

Name:

Address:

.....(State)(Postcode)

Tel: Fax: Email:

Please mail cheque or money order for \$15 (overseas A\$20) payable to the 'Australian Forest History Society Inc.',

20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615

