



AUSTRALIAN
Forest History
SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter no. **31**

December 2001

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

The year past and the years to come

The year has been a good one for Australian forest history. Of particular importance was the opening of the Melbourne Museum. It has forest history as its central gallery and we salute Tom Griffiths for his input to its content and for his recently published book to complement it. The *Rings of History* exhibition, which is currently touring Australia, is a further major contribution to forest history.

Three activities have marked the Society's year. The collection of oral histories in Queensland by Peter Kanowski (Snr) and Peter Holzworth working with Margaret Kowald and Judy Powell has proceeded most successfully. The Society collaborated with the Queensland State Library in this project. The Society collaborated with various parts of the Australian National University and Macquarie University to hold the *Perfumed Pineries* conference in November 2000. The Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at ANU published its proceedings. The Society now has a presence on the Internet as part of the Australian Environmental History site established by CREs. We have been most fortunate to enjoy the continued support of CRES and the Department of Forestry, now the School of Resources Environment and Society, at ANU and we express our sincere gratitude to Professors Bob Wasson and Peter Kanowski and the staffs of these institutions.

Our Committee, elected at the AGM, consists of John Banks (Treasurer, ACT), John Dargavel (President, ACT), Peter Davies (Vic), Kevin Frawley (Secretary, ACT), Denise Gaughwin (Vice-President, Tas), Sybil Jack (NSW), Ken Jackson (NZ), Jenny Mills (WA), Brett Stubbs (NSW).

Although the Society has flourished, its future is vulnerable to the trends that affect many similar bodies—the time pressures on younger members and the greying of older ones. A discussion paper on the future of the Society forms part of this Newsletter and will be discussed at a General Meeting during the Hobart conference. It covers issues of viability, our conference and proceedings model, our policy on independence from external funding and our relationship with environmental history generally. Those who can not be at the meeting are urged to make their views known to a Committee member.

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News of members

We welcome John Husmann and Gregg Muller to the Society. John is a doctoral student in Nebraska in the USA who is undertaking a comparative study of the history of plantations there and in South Australia. He recently visited South Australia. We can look forward to the verve and humour of Gregg's presentations, as evidenced at the Perfumed Pineries conference.

Elaine van Kempen has been active in getting a 'Nature Writers' Centre' established in the old Pilot's Station at Campden in NSW. Eric Rolls is its patron. See later in the Newsletter for details.

Terry Birtles is now a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Geography and Oceanography at the Australian Defence Force Academy. He is busy organising the national conference of Australian geographers.

Member lost!

Does anyone have an address or email contact for Andrew Winter? Please let the editors know.

New publications

G.N. Baur 2001. *Notes on the Silviculture of the Major Forest Types of New South Wales*. CD. \$16.50 incl. GST and domestic postage from Institute of Foresters of Australia, PO Box 477, Coffs Harbour, NSW 2450.

The *Notes on the Silviculture of the Major Forest Types of New South Wales* are a unique historical reference. They describe how silviculture has been applied over the past century to produce the ecologically diverse, multi-purpose forests that we value today in New South Wales. They are published here for a new audience who have many points of view about the establishment, management, regulation, conservation and preservation of native forests. If you have an interest in any aspect of NSW forests, you will benefit from taking the time to read these Notes. While forest values have changed since these Notes were written, the forests have not.

The Silviculture Notes were compiled and revised between 1982 and 1989 by George Baur while he was Silviculturist for the Forestry Commission of NSW and just prior to his retirement in 1990. The citation for the N.W Jolly medal awarded to George in 1984 and reproduced in this collection provides a good biography of his contributions to the profession. George had been a forester and researcher with the Forestry Commission for many years by the time he came to work on this compilation. He had carried out

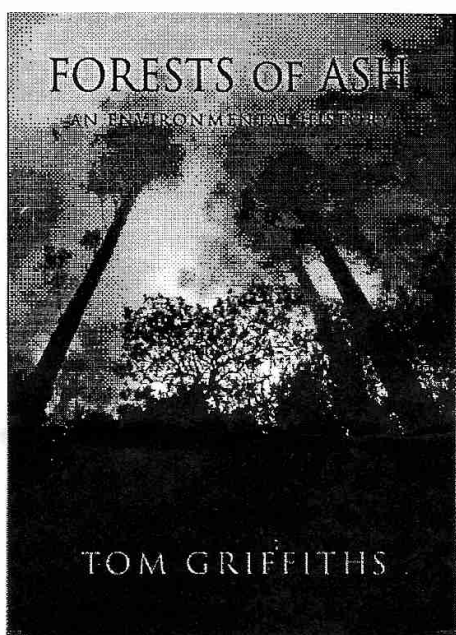
research into the silviculture of NSW forest types, particularly rainforests, and was involved in developing practices that are now standard world-wide for the management of Australian forest species. In his long career in silviculture he gained wide knowledge of the range of species, ecosystems, vegetation associations and forest types in NSW. It was because of George's work and understanding of the dynamics of NSW forests that the Forestry Commission asked him to produce the Silviculture Notes. He also found time to compile and contribute to Forestry Commission Research Note 17, 'Forest Types in New South Wales' published in 1965, revised in 1989, and still a standard reference.

The Silviculture Notes are not a silviculture textbook or a scientific paper. George's purpose was to provide information that was relevant, practical and easy to read. The Notes were intended for use by working foresters so they could gain from the knowledge of those who preceded them. George recorded the experiences and observations of generations of foresters and forest workers and added to that the published and unpublished research. The whole mix is leavened with his experience, style and humour. The result is a readable body of work that demonstrates a long-standing and profoundly professional understanding of the ecosystems of these forest types and the silvicultural processes that have shaped them.

Older professional foresters in NSW have long recognised the value of the 'Baur Notes' in providing an authoritative basis for the active management of native forests. There is now a much wider interest in understanding and managing our productive and biodiverse native forests to deliver a range of values and products using progressive silviculture. Members of the Northern NSW Branch of the Institute of Foresters familiar with the Notes recognised the opportunity and the need to introduce a new audience to the knowledge they contain. With greater knowledge on the part of all people involved in their use, our forests should benefit from better informed and improved forest management.

Over 640 pages and eleven documents have been reproduced on CD here just as George wrote them, using the terminology and scientific names of the day. George resisted having his name attached to the Silviculture Notes because of the vast amount of material contributed by others, something he acknowledges at the end of each Note. Despite his modesty, if it were not for his efforts this unique body of knowledge would not exist and forestry as a profession would be far poorer for it.

Contact: Spencer Bruskin, Tel: 02 6652 1932; email: Spencer@lesleyschoer.com



Tom Griffiths 2001. *Forests of ash: an environmental history*. Cambridge University Press. 227pp. ISBN 0 521 01234 1 9 (pbk) also available in hardback.

Tom Griffiths has developed *Forests of ash* from his earlier book on Victoria's mountain ash forests, *Secrets of the forest* (Allen & Unwin, 1992). Those readers who enjoyed the earlier book will find much that is new in this.

Forests of ash underpins and complements the Forest Gallery which is the centre-piece of the Melbourne Museum. Those who were intrigued by the Gallery can now follow the themes in depth with this.

The history is narrated in eleven thematic chapters dealing with fire, water, mining, the timber industry, forestry, tourism, ecology and so forth. Each is accompanied by short boxes on various topics by different authors and the book is copiously illustrated with photographs and maps. These nicely complement Griffiths' elegant writing to make a volume which is both scholarly and attractive. The perfect Christmas gift for anyone interested in Australia's environment and its history.

Libby Robin 2001. *The flight of the emu: a hundred years of Australian Ornithology*. Melbourne University Press. ISBN 0-522-84987-3 Hardback \$69.95.

This book describes the achievements and the increasing importance of ornithology in Australia—

both amateur and professional—over the last hundred years. From Bass Strait to the Kimberley, collectors have searched for and identified hundreds of species of Australian birds. This is a discipline in which exceptional amateur contributions have helped shape science. The book explores the tensions between amateur and professional ornithologists, and discusses issues of conservation and environmental management, scientific collecting, smuggling and bird protection.

The book is very handsomely produced—another good Christmas present for any 'birdo'.

J.B. Sclater. 2001. *Lost your block? The origins of WA's Forest Block names*. xxxviii, 289 p., plates, ill, maps. ISBN 0646410075. \$35.00 + \$7.00 postage from J.B. Sclater, 20 Hubbard Place, Safety Bay, WA 6169.

This book lists over 520 forest block and plantation names used by the Forests Dept. and CALM since the passage of the Forest Act in 1918. Location maps have been provided. The origins of names have been established with a reasonable degree of certainty.

Some of the original names were dropped when the Department consolidated the forest estate during its formative years, and block names were dropped, but later restored, in the newly created National Parks in the mid-1980's. Recent structural changes may again result in a loss of what has been a major feature in the administration of state forests.

Recent journals

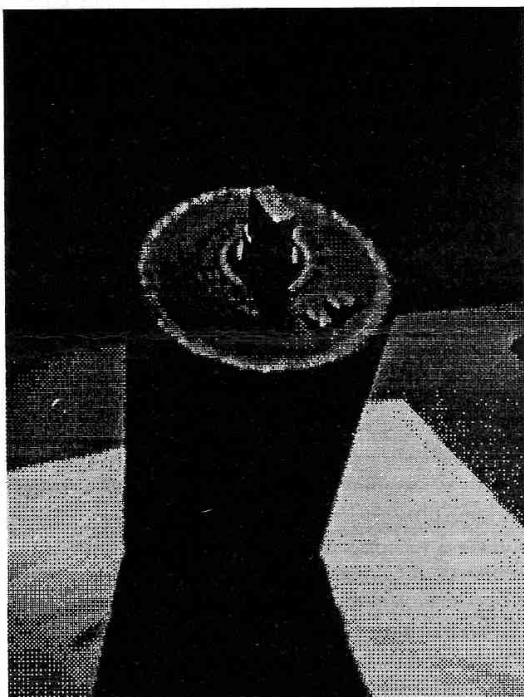
Environmental History 6(4), October 2001

There are two papers in this issue which are likely to interest Australian readers. 'Imagining nature and erasing class and race: Carleton Watkins, John Muir and the construction of wilderness' by Kevin DeLuca and Anne Demo considerably extends William Cronon's arguments on the social construction of wilderness. They take environmental justice as their starting point and report the attitudes to class and race held by two of the founding fathers of American environmentalism in their advocacy of what DeLuca and Demo call 'white wilderness'—a term that might apply equally well in Australia.

The northern regions of Canada and Australia have been usefully compared on several occasions. 'A conceptual framework for environmental history in Canada's North' by three Canadian academics lays out some myths and suggests four themes for productive work: ecological paradoxes and ambiguities; southern dreams, northern realities, 'dangerous drift' of improvised development, and the accumulation of pollution.

Research queries

The mysterious Wombat thingy



I hope that someone may be able to help me identify this container/canister that I found in Wombat State Forest in Victoria (South of Gisborne).

Date: 1990 (approx)

Specific Area: Disused logging camp (many years old)

Material: Steel, all joints hand welded (electric arc)

Cylinder: Length 9.5 inches, Diam. 5.0 inches, Base is dished upwards

Other: Stamped information circling the base of the tapered plug with the words ALMADEN 107750 ESPANA PATEN A Serial No. 639857

Contact: R.Evans

Email: bobandmolly@bigpond.com

Is this the oldest planted fruit tree?

I saw what is claimed to be the oldest planted fruit tree in Australia: a mulberry near Kingscote planted the day after the first settlers to South Australia arrived in July 1836. Propped up and heavily braced it still produces mulberries sufficient for the Lions Club to make jam each year. (Is this older than the Tasmanian apple tree once reported in these columns by Anne McConnell?—Ed.)

Robert Boden

Nature Writers' Centre

The Camden Head Pilot Station is being refurbished, with assistance in capital works funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts, to become a Nature Writers' Centre and an environmental education centre and community facility.

Nature Writing or Place Writing is rapidly gaining recognition in Australia as a specific genre and this is the first Writers' Centre to be established to honour it. Appropriately, its Patron is Eric Rolls.

The Camden Haven is a suite of villages situated approximately four hours drive from Sydney between Taree and Port Macquarie. The former Pilot's residence, built in the 1950s, is self-contained and fully-furnished and sits on a private beachfront site overlooking Pilot and Washhouse Beaches and the entrance to the Camden Haven Inlet. It can accommodate up to six people.

The surrounding countryside offers beaches, rivers, lakes, wetlands, mountains and rainforests with extensive State Forests, National Parks and Nature Reserves west to the Comboyne Plateau and Werrikimbe National Park. The Camden Haven's shopping village is Laurieton which also has an excellent cinema. A vehicle is essential.

The Pilot Station is administered by Camden Haven Adult and Community Education Inc. It receives no recurrent operational funding and must be self-supporting. During school holidays the beachfront house will command a high rental and this allows the Management Sub-Committee to offer it during term time to nature writers for \$60 per night (minimum 3 night stay) or \$400 per week inclusive of basic services. Writers will be assured of privacy to concentrate on their own work, however, those who spend a week or more in residence will be asked to spend one day of each week interacting with the community in a manner of their choice e.g. readings in the Boatshed, visits to schools, workshops etc.

Established, developing or emerging writers in this genre are invited to contact the Management Committee through Elaine van Kempen, PO Box 2038, North Haven, NSW 2443; email: elainevk@nor.com.au

'Federation and meteorology': a history of meteorology

A new web resource relating to the history of meteorology in Australia has been developed by the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (Austehc) in association with the Bureau of Meteorology. You can find it at:

<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/fam/fam.html>

The site takes as its starting point some of the parallels between the development of federation and the organisation of meteorology (as described in Home and Livingston's article on the site), but covers a wide range of topics from Clement Wragge's 1902 rainmaking attempts to the discovery of El Nino.

The full text of over 20 articles is included. These are mostly drawn from the Bureau's 'Metarch' series of publications, recording the recollections of former staff. However, a number of other historical articles are included, as well as a couple of introductory essays by Tim Sherratt.

The articles are fully indexed and searchable, and links are included to Bright Sparcs (Austehc's biographical database) for further biographical and bibliographical information on individuals mentioned in the text. There is also a brief introductory exhibition

Anybody for the history of plantations?

The history of Australian plantations has not received the attention it deserves, especially in view of their current economic and policy importance. There are moves too for an international IUFRO conference on the history of plantations to be held in 2-3 years time. Chile has been mentioned as a possible venue.

Meanwhile a conference on the scientific and policy aspects of plantations will be held in Canberra in August 2002. No history component has been included, but the Society could convene a half-day seminar if there were enough people interested. Please contact John Dargavel if you are interested (John.Dargavel@anu.edu.au).

Search for old timber cut from Australian Red Cedar

My name is Ingo Heinrich, a PhD student from ANU Forestry. The title of my thesis is 'Dendroclimatology of the Australian Red Cedar'. I have taken core samples of living trees and reconstructed the climate in parts of eastern Australia. Because the trees sampled were only up to 100 years old, I am now looking for older material. Using a method called cross-dating one can use material from dead trees and cross-date it with that of living trees. By doing so the chronology can be extended further back into the past. In the end of the process chronologies can date back hundreds of years and be very helpful in reconstructing climate patterns in Australia, a country with remarkably few records of that kind. The purpose of this letter is to ask for help from the reader.

I am still looking for stands of Australian Red Cedar. If you own a property with Australian Red Cedar growing on it and you would like to know how old it is, I can tell you after taking a 4 mm core sample of it. If you know of that species growing in the bush somewhere else, please let me know too. If the stand is suitable for the study, I could then apply for a permit to collect scientific material and include the stand in the study.

If you know about a cross section or other pieces of Australian Red Cedar please also contact me. Additionally, I would be interested in furniture made from Australian Red Cedar. The analysis of the ring patterns of this old material is totally non destructive. I would not take a core sample at all but analyse the ring patterns visible on the surface only. For example the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney allowed me to analyse the ring patterns of a tree disc cut from a tree felled in 1923. It has a diameter of 2 metres and exhibits roughly 350 rings. It is a magnificent piece of timber and well worth a visit to the Powerhouse Museum.

Contact: Ingo Heinrich, School of Resources, Environment & Society (Building 48), Australian National University, ACT 0200. Tel.: 02-61252623
Email ingo.heinrich@anu.edu.au

(Did you know that red cedar is distributed from southern NSW to India? Ed.)



Future of the Australian Forest History Society Inc.

A discussion paper by John Dargavel

The Society was formed in 1988 and will be 14 years old at the time of our next conference in Hobart in February 2002. Then will be an opportune time to discuss the future of the Society. If any significant changes are suggested, they could be put to the AGM in the second half of 2002.

The Society operated as an informal organisation until 1998 when it adopted a constitution and became a legally incorporated body in the ACT. It acquired an ABN but is not registered for GST. The Society has produced 3-4 Newsletters a year and has run national conferences in 1988 (Canberra), 1992 (Creswick), 1996 (Jervis Bay) and Gympie (1999). It has collaborated with other organisations in an oral history project in Queensland and in running the *Perfumed Pineries* conference (2000). Membership has fluctuated in the 60-100 range, including a good representation from New Zealand.

At our Gympie Conference, we resolved on a number of things that the Society should do, but few have occurred. However, other things have—the oral history programme, and the Pineries conference, for example. We can note new members joining and the function of the Society and its Newsletter in providing an entry point to Australian forest history. The web site now augments this.

The Society has distanced itself from the forest policy conflicts by not undertaking any advocacy, apart from the preservation of historical records, by not seeking or accepting any outside funds, and by not providing a platform for politicians, senior bureaucrats, executives or lobbyists.

The Society has considered its future at General Meetings held with each national conference. The main questions that need to be reviewed are:

1. Whether a viable committee can be recruited to run the Society in the long-term?
2. Whether the present model of conferences and proceedings should be maintained?
3. Whether our policy of strict independence from outside funding is still appropriate? and
4. Whether the wider scope of environmental history should supercede our focus on forest history?

1. A viable Society?

Many Societies relying on voluntary work find it difficult to recruit younger members to their Committees with sufficient time from increasingly pressured jobs. At the same time they face an increasing 'greying' of their office bearers (ever more evident in my seventieth year!). At present I am also de facto Treasurer, Secretary (except for minutes), Newsletter Editor, and co-organiser and editor of conferences and their proceedings. I need to see a lessening of my activities.

2. Conferences and proceedings model?

We have held a series of national conferences in ACT, Victoria, NSW, Queensland and shortly in Tasmania. We have not held a conference in Western Australia (7 members) or South Australia (2 members), nor have we ventured to New Zealand (7 members).

The proceedings of the conferences now form a useful and recognised series of publications. We print 300 copies of each that CRES at ANU underwrites and distributes. They are sold by distributing fliers and from reviews. They sell out in 3-4 years. We have aimed to include nearly all the papers presented at each conference, and have not used a peer-review process. Although we have been able to improve the

presentation of the volumes, such non-commercial publication and the lack of peer reviewing has meant that the Federal Government does not accord them status for academic funding.

Has our model run its course?

3. Independence from funding bodies?

Our strict independence from the fraught debates over forest policy has been successful in not letting the Society be, or be seen to be, 'captured' by any of the interest groups. It has meant that we have taken a low public and bureaucratic profile. As a Society, we have not developed links with other bodies or agencies, nor have we obtained funds from them.

If the forest policy debates have abated somewhat, should we consider if this policy has run its course?

4. Environmental history

There are forest history organisations in British Columbia, France, Sweden and the USA, and an international group in IUFRO. Elsewhere forest history is a prominent component of environmental history. It is at this level that the two major international journals, two international associations (the American Society for Environmental History, ASEH and the European ESEH) and much of the debate occurs. If it is difficult to maintain a viable forest history society, would a larger environmental history society, with forest history prominent, be any easier?

Joining the discussion

You can join the discussion at the General Meeting in February in Hobart either directly if you are attending or making your views known to the Committee. It would help if they were in writing or email.

AUSTRALIAN FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY Incorporated
ABN 56 477 824 185

Statement of Accounts for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Income (\$)	1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000	1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000	
Interest	9.82	14.03	
Subscriptions	1643.47	1326.94	
Total	1653.29	1340.97	
Expenditure (\$)			
Accounting advice fees	75.00		
Accounting audit fee		550.00	
Annual registration		27.00	
Bank charges and taxes	99.50	105.28	
Committee teleconference		230.29	
Conference – AFHS IV	2450.00		
Conference – AFHS V	350.00	67.00	
Conference–Callitris Pineries	110.00	355.25	
Insurance	353.31	444.68	
Oral History Project		44.63	
Petty cash	200.00		
Postage	375.30	238.80	
Printing Newsletters, etc	681.60	661.80	
Stationery	33.60	33.85	
Web domain name		203.50	
Total	4827.71	2962.08	
Profit and Loss (\$)			
Income	1653.29	1340.97	
Expenditure	4827.71	2962.08	
Profit/(Loss)	<u>(3174.42)</u>	<u>Loss (1621.11)</u>	Loss
<u>BALANCE SHEET</u>			
Cash in Bank at 30 June 2000		3176.11	
Petty cash		64.85	
Total			3240.96
Cash in Bank at 30 June 2001		1555.00	
Petty cash		62.60	
Total			1617.60

Calendar

Rings of History: Contemporary Craft from Historical Timber. Touring Exhibition

Contact: Aroona Murphy, ☎ 02 6262 9333

21 Nov – 6 Jan 2002

28 Jan – 3 Mar

16 Mar – 21 Apr

3 May – 2 June

14 June – 28 July

31 Aug – 29 Sept

1 Nov – 17 Jan 2003

31 Jan – 16 Mar

Cooloola

Riddoch Regional Gallery

Araluen Centre, NT

Flinders Art Museum

Bunbury Regional Gallery

Gippsland Art Gallery

Geelong Gallery

Tasmanian Museum

18-20 February 2002. Hobart. *Australia's Ever-changing Forests V: Fifth national conference on Australia's forest history.* The conference will be held in Jane Franklin Hall at the University of Tasmania. Thirty papers will be presented on a wide range of topics including dendrochronology of the newly discovered woolemi pine, convict sawing stations, biographical study, labour and conservation disputes in the forests, national parks, trends in writing environmental and forest history and much else. It will be followed by a study tour of the southern forests which will stay at Port Huon near Geeveston on 20 and 21 February. The tour will include a visit to the 'Air walk' through the canopy of tall eucalypt forest, an opportunity to see huon pine trees and the heritage of the timber industry in the region. Registration forms available by post or at <http://cres.anu.edu.au/environhist/>

Contact: Denise Gaughwin, ☎ 03 6336 5384 email: deniseg@fpb.tas.gov.au, or

John Dargavel, ☎ (02) 6258 9102 email: dargavels@ozemail.com.au

APPLICATION/RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP FOR THE YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2002

The subscription for the year to 30 June 2002 has been set at \$25 (overseas \$30 Australian).

Discounted rate for students of \$15.

Name:

Address:

.....(State)(Postcode)

Tel: Fax: Email:

Please mail cheque or money order for \$25 or \$15 for students (Overseas \$30 in Australian currency) payable to:
Australian Forest History Society Inc., 20 Laidley Place, Florey, ACT 2615

