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AUSTRALIAN

# Forest History

SOCIETY Inc.

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Newsletter No. 32

May 2002

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

The AFHS was formed in 1988 by what our website calls 'a friendly network of people interested in the history of Australia's forests and woodlands'. Like its predecessors, our February 2002 Hobart conference gave pause for reflection and demonstrated that our members continue to value at least three of the dictionary meanings of the word 'society'. We are a 'group of people forming a single community with its own distinctive culture', we 'share a common aim or interest', and our members 'enjoy the companionship' of our shared society.

Thus, once again our members have highlighted their appreciation of our distinctive culture of openness and encouragement to members with diverse backgrounds and opinions. Our culture of tolerance allows a pursuit of excellence in scholarship through informed debate, constructive criticism and mutual encouragement, and it enables an encounter with a much broader circle of experience and perspective than our own narrow worldviews or professional engagements might allow. Our regional conferences offer the grounding of our knowledge in local conditions and experience, from the expert contribution of papers on local issues to the accompanying regional field trips. We choose to focus on the Australasian region, but continue our interest in, affiliations with, and contributions to, international scholarship. Along with the *Perfumed Pineries* volume, our fifth published conference proceedings will be another important contribution to an emerging systematic survey of Australia's forest history – with a proposed Western Australian conference and proceedings not too far distant.

We have managed to maintain a small but broad membership unified by a joint passion for history and environment. We wish to encourage participation by other environmental history specialists while maintaining our focus on forests, which have touched so many of our lives and continue to do so. In part, this flows from the ecological role of forests, as well as their great historical significance and broad geographical distribution. By avoiding the formation of an elite, or cliques within, we have also managed to value the expertise in all and thereby avoid a fourth possible interpretation: that of 'high society'.

Like all societies, the AFHS shares a number of challenges, (for which I will avoid the use of silvicultural metaphors!) At the Hobart conference we resolved to pursue our original vision, so ably forged by John Dargavel to whom we owe so much of the continuing success of our 'society' in every sense of the word. It is essential that we continue to communicate effectively together. We need to go beyond the rounds of our conferences; use the AFHS newsletters and our website as effectively as possible and keep in contact more regularly on an individual and group basis. By fostering greater local input and a further diversification of interests, the rotation of the editorship of this newsletter offers one such opportunity, and gives the added bonus of reducing some of the burden on our hard-working President.

Guest *Stephen Legg, School of Geography &*  
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## News of members

We welcome Fintán Ó Laighin and Kaye McPherson to the Society. Fintan works in Canberra for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Kaye is a Tasmanian who among many other activities is studying the early resource industries there. Her paper on the wattle bark industry in the 1830s was delivered to our fifth conference.

Andrew Winter has been found! He has moved from Tumut to the ACT where he has been very busy as the Harvesting Officer, salvaging some of the burnt pine plantations.

Anitra Nelson has brought her ecoforestry project to the stage of making detailed information available on a web site: [www.ecoforestry.info](http://www.ecoforestry.info)

## Reviews

Carruthers, Jane. 2001. *Wildlife and warfare: the life of James Stevenson Hamilton*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 244pp, illus, ISBN 0 86980 986 5 (HB).

Reviewed by Libby Robin.

Members of the AFHS who attended the Gympie conference in 2000 will remember Jane Carruthers, the visiting South African environmental historian, whose new book *Wildlife and warfare* has just been released.

James Stevenson-Hamilton, although not a forester, was one of the world's pioneering game managers. In his era (particularly the first three decades of this century), forest and game management had many overlapping characters—probably the most notable being Aldo Leopold. Stevenson-Hamilton was in some ways the Leopold of Southern Africa. His most important 'monument' was the Kruger National Park, but his life includes travels and work in other parts of the African continent, as well as Scotland.

*Wildlife and warfare* is a wonderful read. It takes the reader from the Scottish heritage of the nineteenth-century landholding family to the emergence of the scientific national parks management of the generation after Stevenson-Hamilton, through Transvaal, Zululand, Barotseland and Sudan – with Egypt, Portuguese East Africa and Gallipoli thrown in for good measure. A truly amazing life.

The book explores much of the politics of the 'struggle for Africa' in the era of the rise and decline of the British Empire. The natural history of Africa was essential to the expansion of biological knowledge when there were so few 'new' animals in Britain. The centrality of hunting to natural history is

another aspect of this period, but the life of James Stevenson-Hamilton is much more than a simple story of a 'penitent butcher.' Stevenson-Hamilton's dual loyalties to the family landscape in Scotland and to his adopted Kruger one make his life complex and 'unsettled'. The remembered, nostalgic 'Olde Britain' is so much part of the everyday life of 'colonials' everywhere (even six or seven generations on and with or without landed-gentry connections like Stevenson-Hamilton's). It makes for an ongoing ambivalence to landscape in un-European places like Australia and South Africa. This biography explores the 'still settling' dimension that Steve Dovers captured in the sub-title to his book, *Environmental History and Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2000), and will be of great interest to Australian forest historians.

Shepherd, Winsome. 2000. *Wellington's Heritage: Plants, Gardens, and Landscape*. Wellington: Te Papa Press. 256p. ISBN 0-909010-73-0.

Reviewed by John P. Adam, New Zealand.

The content of this book is described by the author as an 'eco-history' (p. viii). Eleven chapters tell the story; four geographically and the remainder focus on topics such as Horticultural Societies, nurserymen/seedsmen, tea gardens and public parks. The emphasis of his book, as the title suggests, is a story about plants and private gardens.

This reader was interested to learn about, one, the history of ecological theories that influenced afforestation and tree planting movements in Wellington and, two, the design theories and processes that created the urban landscapes of the Capital City of New Zealand. This second topic is a persistent subject excluded from many histories published in New Zealand since at least the 1950s beginning with Allan Hale's (1955) *Pioneer Nurserymen of New Zealand*. He was disappointed on both topics.

There is no explanation about the ecological theories advanced last century by British, American and New Zealand theorists, such as Tansy (UK), Clements and Gleason (USA), and two locals, L. Cockayne and H. H. Allan. Any assessment of the process of design history/theory is contradicted by the author. Shepherd says, "But it is doubtful if any... immigrant ... would have been aware of trends in landscaping and the use of terms such as 'gardenesque' and 'picturesque' ..." (p.15). This is not to deny, in Shepherd's terms, that our historic meaning for these aesthetic ideas will have a different meaning today.

Shepherd's book perhaps confirms the speed at which this knowledge of an essential design process in public and private landscape development is lost. One can go and read the original early to mid 19th century editions of John and Jane Loudon's *An Encyclopedia of Gardening*, for example, to gain some understanding of the complex visual perceptions, perambulations through a landscape and the social processes underlying these processes and the theoretical connections.

The selective nature in the geographical coverage of the story—that may be related to the anti-aesthetic narrative—misses any explanation of the creation of the substantial urban streetscape history. How, why, where and when were trees planted into the urban city streetscape of Wellington and the Hutt Valley? There is one picture (p.121) of Kent and Cambridge Terrace c 1875, for example, without an explanation of the possible source of the trees in the picture (see also p.110 private right-of-way?). Any urban focused environmental history should discover the Wellington Scenery Preservation Society, founded in February 1895, and their various transformations into Socialistic, Progressive and Town Planning societies that existed throughout the 1910's and beyond the Second World War. The social history of these institutions impacted on Wellington's aesthetic ideas and resulting man-made landscapes. They must surely have been the foundation of much of our diverse contemporary attitudes about the environment today. They include the origins of urban planning design which were led from Wellington by such important individuals as Town Planner, John W. Mawson, who made considerable public and private contributions towards the design of the Wellington urban environment.

Of relevance in understanding Wellington's (and New Zealand) planning history is Hammett and Freestone (2000) *The Australian Metropolis. A Planning History*. But here (and perhaps like Shepherd?) there is a suggestion by Freestone that 'there appear to have been no city wide city beautiful-type bodies'. This does not stand up in research read and the reviewer's own research findings for Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

The book was a finalist in this year's National Montana Book Awards. The book is well illustrated with historic colour as well as black and white images and will be read by those people who want to learn about the plants and the old gardens that once were created for private and public eyes and minds.

#### References

Hale, Allen. 1955 *Pioneer Nurserymen of New Zealand*. A. H. & A. W. Reed. 188p.

Wellington Scenery Preservation Society. *The Evening Post*, 14 February, 1895. p.4, c1.

Kershaw, P., David, B., Tapper, N., Penny, D. and Brown, J. (eds.) 2002. *Bridging Wallace's Line: The Environmental and Cultural History and Dynamics of the SE-Asian-Australian Region*. Advances in Geoecology 34, Catena Verlag GMBH, 35447 Reiskirchen, Germany. 276pp, illus, ISBN 3-923381-47-6 (HB)

Reviewed by Stephen Legg.

Remarkably broad in its scope, *Bridging Wallace's Line* represents a major contribution to research into the environmental history of the SE-Asian and Australasian Region. Following a wide-ranging preface, sixteen technical papers are presented, each with comprehensive literature reviews in their respective areas of expertise, and some with research undertaken specifically for this publication. The papers are presented in roughly chronological order. They span the geological setting from 1000 million years ago, through to Tertiary vegetation history before focusing predominantly on palaeoenvironmental reconstructions of Quaternary vegetation and human interactions with the region.

This ambitious volume comprises three broad parts: the 'environmental setting' (including climate, tectonics, and biogeography), 'Quaternary environments' (including palaeoceanography, climatic fluctuations, and vegetation change) and the 'peopling of Sunda and Sahul' (spanning the period from early hominids, through a consideration of migration throughout the region, to human-environment relations in the historical period). The parts are not mutually exclusive; for example the issue of human impacts on and responses to environmental change are common threads through the last two parts, and all three parts are integrated by a focus on spatial interaction throughout the region. Given the geographical perspective, the attempt to investigate such a diverse region, and the sheer size of that region, the notion of 'Bridging Wallace's Line' proves an apt choice of title (in 1856, pioneer biogeographer Alfred Russell Wallace's attempted to delineate zones of transition between the fauna of two remarkably different worlds – Sunda to the east and Sahul to the west). Case studies come from as far afield as the Pacific in the east, Tasmania in the south, China in the north and India in the west. Most of the studies, however, focus somewhere in the transition or 'bridging' zone between SE Asia, New Guinea, the SW Pacific and tropical Australia.

Common to all papers is a critique of appropriate methodology and discussion of recent debates. The various authors are also careful to

contextualise their contributions into both the wider regional setting and chronological sequence. To this end, the editors have succeeded in integrating the whole – perhaps due in part to their (and many of the contributors’) geographical training. Although designed for a technical, academic audience, the volume gives general readers considerable insight into the state of environmental history especially in relation to the incorporation of such a large range of techniques. These include sedimentology, palynology, dendro-chronology, radio-isotope dating and the problematic conversion to calendar years, archaeology and the investigation of various historical records. The use of these and other methods to reconstruct climate both directly and indirectly is a common thread. As well as surveys of much broader geographic areas, the papers include comparatively local studies of key indicators of palaeoenvironmental change in critical locations or environments such as in threshold or transition zones. The latter includes mangroves as indicators of sea-level change, New Guinean glaciers indicative of climate change, Carpentarian cave deposits used to reconstruct forest dynamics near a continental shelf, sub-continental pollens and lake levels reflective of changes to the monsoon, the use of fossil and genetic evidence to trace human occupation and interactions with the environment, and the reconstruction of floods and droughts from historical records (and its correlation with independent evidence of ENSO events).

Apart from Godley’s lucid investigation of five hundred years of Chinese historical records of flood regimes, only Potter’s history of forest use in post-1800 Borneo is entirely based on historical sources. Members of the AFHS will, however, find human interaction with forests, and vegetation change in general frequently mentioned throughout the volume, and the book offers a useful insight for those interested in the formation and distribution of the forests of tropical Australasia and Asia. The elegant paper on plant biogeography by Whiffin, along with Kershaw et al’s comprehensive investigation including possible human involvement in vegetation change from Quaternary records, provide valuable regional overviews for environmental historians. The incredible dynamism of the region captured in all of the papers provides a sobering foundation for studies of human-environment interaction, and the difficulties of integrating techniques from the sciences with those from the humanities represents a considerable gulf that still needs ‘bridging’. Potter’s paper shows, in microcosm, the complexity of reconstructing changing environments and cultures in even so brief

a period as two hundred years – a mere blink of an eye compared to the time-scales studied by the other authors.

Many years in compilation, some of the papers are slightly dated, although there has been a more recent attempt in most to bridge the literature of the late-1990s through to 2001. Although lavishly illustrated throughout, the excellent maps are not reproduced as crisply as the tables and graphs, the front cover offers an orientation puzzle on its own, and there are about a dozen minor typographic errors throughout the 370 pages of text. Despite these minor criticisms, *Bridging Wallace’s Line*, can be highly recommended. With its systematic coverage, innovative ideas and comprehensive reviews, it will provide a firm foundation for research in years to come.

### **Environment, Culture and Community Conference—Queensland, July 2002**

Call for expressions of interest in/suggestions for papers, sessions, for a conference on Environment, Culture and Community, to be held at the University of Queensland, St Lucia and Ipswich campuses 2-5 July 2002. It is to explore the role of social and cultural processes in relation to environmental awareness. It will bring together those whose scholarly and artistic work addresses ways in which people create, sustain and represent relationships with the natural environment. Please submit a 200 word outline by 30 April 2001.

Contact: Email: [r.blair@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.blair@uq.edu.au)

Website: <http://emsah.uq.edu.au/conferences/ecc/>.

### **Rescheduled 2001 International Symposium on Society and Resource Management, 2002**

The theme of the conference is the “Global Challenges of Parks and Protected Area Management”. It is to be held at La Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy October, 10-13. The conference themes relate to the challenge of maintaining the integrity and sustainability of parks and protected areas. The United States based Symposia on Society and Resource Management, established in 1986, have organized two previous conferences: the 1997 Central American symposium held in Belize, and the 1999 South Pacific symposium held in Australia. The Sardinia conference will emphasise Europe, North Africa, and the Mediterranean. Abstract submissions are due by September 7, 2002. For more detail, contact [www.cnr.colostate.edu/nrrt/ssrm](http://www.cnr.colostate.edu/nrrt/ssrm)

## International Conference on the Environmental History of Asia, 2002

The theme of the conference is "The History of Water, Health, Forests and Commons". The co-sponsors of the conference are the Jawarhalal Nehru University, New Delhi (JNU), the University of Sussex and the Australian National University. Held at JNU on 4-7 December, 2002, New Delhi, India.

The Conference will also be the first meeting of the International Environmental History Association. It will be held at JNU, a premier academic institution of South Asia. The core fund will come from the DSA Programme of the Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, JNU, and possibilities of grants are being explored from other agencies such as UGC, Ministry of Environment and the Society for South Asian Studies of the British Academy.

The conference builds on the highly successful 1992 conference on the Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia published by Oxford University Press India under the title *Nature and the Orient; the Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*. However the 2002 conference seeks involvement by those writing on the environmental history of all areas from Turkey in the west to the Western Pacific in the east (including Australia and New Zealand), and including central and east Asia.

It is anticipated that the bulk of papers will be on South and Southeast Asia. Papers are invited on theme subjects and also on subjects including or related to the histories of:

- prehistory of the environment;
- pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial forest conservation and management; river
- control; flood control; national parks; ornithology; arable expansion;
- climate history and change; environmentalism; management of commons;
- indigenous knowledge; tribal/indigenous/adivasi/ aborigine people and environment;
- the natural sciences; museums;
- public health;
- the medical profession;
- disease epidemiology;
- famines;
- extreme events;
- impact of railway and road building;
- dam-building;
- popular environmental movements;
- tourism and the environment;
- the timber trade;
- globalisation and the Asian environment;
- art and the environment;
- urban environmental history;

- dance/drama/artistic portrayals and the environment;
- film and the environment;
- environmental justice issues.

This list is not intended to preclude other related subjects. All submissions will be considered by an academic committee of experts. The proceedings of the conference will be published by Oxford University Press or Manohar Press and the International Journal of Environmental History.

Accommodation at a reasonable charge will be available for delegates to the conference on the JNU campus and early booking is advisable if this accommodation is required. Assistance with travel will be available for delegates attending from within India and for selected non-Indian delegates. Please enquire if you think you may need assistance.

Paper titles and abstracts for the conference should be submitted by May 31st 2002. Complete papers should be submitted in BOTH electronic and paper form by Sept. 30th, 2002.

All enquiries and submissions should be made to [envhistasia@hotmail.com](mailto:envhistasia@hotmail.com). Postal enquiries and paper submissions should be made to Professor Deepak Kumar (JNU) and Dr Richard Grove (Australian National University) at this address: c/o Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawarhalal Nehru University, New Delhi 110067. (Tel. 91-11-6107676 Ext.2416 (Office), Residence-6198211, Dean Office Fax- 91-11-6101841).

## Forest, Desert, and Sea Conference—Queensland, 2003

This one of several conferences related to ANU's Humanities Research Centre theme for 2003 on Culture, Environment and Human Rights. It is to take place at the Cairns campus of James Cook University in either late May or early June, 2003.

This conference has two aims. The first is to explore the history of coexistence and interconnection between indigenous and settler cultures in forests, deserts and seas, thinking especially about how they have figured in both indigenous and non-indigenous sciences, and other forms of cultural expression. The second is to explore points of common interest, and tension, between European science, environmentalism and indigenous knowledge, with a view to arriving at better ways of reconciling the aspirations of all who see forest, desert and sea as profoundly important places.

Contact: [paul.turnbull@anu.edu.au](mailto:paul.turnbull@anu.edu.au); or Leena Messina, Programs Manager, Humanities Research Centre, [leena.messina@anu.edu.au](mailto:leena.messina@anu.edu.au)

## **International Conference on the Forest and Environmental History of the British Empire and Commonwealth, 2003**

Sponsored by the University of Sussex, (Centre for World Environmental History) in collaboration with the Australian National University. On March 19-21st 2003 at the University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton U.K.

This conference will be the first ever held on the forest and environmental history of the seventy-plus territories that made up or make the area of the British Empire and Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. Debates over deforestation and modes of forest management have served in recent years to focus attention on the state policy histories that produced or influenced current land-use patterns. The need to document and preserve the archives of the administrative history of forestry and other kinds of colonial and Commonwealth land use is now seen as highly relevant to contemporary issues, not least to assessing rates of change and the effectiveness of management methods. The common historical descent and intellectual connectivity of forestry and environmental policy in the anglophone Empire and Commonwealth lends a natural coherence to the conference theme. The conference will serve to facilitate contacts and discussion between professional actors and academics working in the Commonwealth, as well as cross-fertilisation between professionals working in 'North' and 'South'.

Due to current concerns over rates of deforestation the forest history of the Commonwealth forms the core part of the conference. However several other major kinds of land use will be considered, so that panels are likely to include papers on the history of:

- irrigation, rivers and water catchments
- anti-pollution policy
- national park, game and wildlife protection
- environmental history of cities
- history of soil and water conservation and soil erosion
- history of pastoralism
- climate, environmental change and history
- biodiversity history
- history of ecological ideas
- ideas and images of tropical landscapes
- history of botanic gardens
- histories of plantations and commoditisation
- history of agroecology and entomology
- histories of wildlife film-making.

Accommodation and food will be available at Sussex University during the conference at modest cost. We may be able to subsidise some costs and fares for those in serious need whose costs will not be sponsored by their institution.

Deadline for Abstracts: June 15th 2002. Deadline for complete papers: Jan 31st 2003. Please contact the Conference Secretary, Ms Rosa Weeks, email address:-

r.l.weeks@sussex.ac.uk Please copy your email to v.damodaran@sussex.ac.uk

Organisers: Dr Richard Grove and Dr Vinita Damodaran, School of African and Asian Studies, University of Sussex, UK. BN1 9QR tel 00 44 1273 606755 Ext. 2222.

## **Research Query**

As childhood lead poisoning is prevalent in the United States, our office is attempting to locate any archival manuscripts that indicate that the Australian Forest Products Laboratory transmitted information to the US Forest Products Laboratory concerning the causal nature between lead poisoning of children and their exposure to lead-based paints. One of our letters from the 1930s states that an Australian emissary from the Australian Forest Products Laboratory discussed this matter at great length, but does not name the emissary. Do you know of the existence of any files from the 1920s or 1930s, which discuss lead poisoning or lead-based paints? Any assistance that you might be able to provide would be most appreciated.

*Karl Smith*

Providence, Rhode Island  
Email: [Ksmith@nmlrp.com](mailto:Ksmith@nmlrp.com)

## **Promoting Research Into Early Forestry Politics**

At the 1911 Interstate Forestry Conference, Victorian Conservator of Forests Hugh McKay called for the formation of an 'Australian Forest League for the advancement of forestry'. The League's inaugural meeting in Melbourne in October 1912 was followed over the next fourteen months by the establishment of branches in every state. Membership comprised politicians, industrialists, bureaucrats, and the representatives of interest groups within the general public. During the inter-war years, the League was arguably the most influential group lobbying Australian parliaments on forest issues. It led the movement for the promotion of an Australian 'forest conscience', and had powerful patronage.

Although its aims broadened through the 1920s and 1930s, the priority remained the establishment of a sizeable systematically-managed estate of exotic plantations and native forests with the added advantage of securing the sylvan beauty of the rural landscape. In this critical pioneering period in which state forestry was institutionalised in independent and permanent forest services, the League's strategies included persistent lobbying, regular public meetings, and a well-orchestrated media campaign. In the early 1920s, a number of off-shoot organizations were established such as Victoria's 'Save the Trees' campaign used to promote forestry in primary schools.

Published analyses of the membership, activities, external relations and influence of the various branches of the League are few, and a far more systematic and coordinated historical examination is required. This will be a valuable adjunct to our understanding of the political dimensions of Australia's forest history. The AFHS newsletter might be a useful forum for researchers interested in the League's activities. At our recent Hobart conference, Stefan Petrow's paper dealt with the Tasmanian branch's activities leading to the 1920 Forests Act, and its 'Spare the Trees, Save the Land' campaign of the late 1930s. He noted parallels with the American Forest Congress, and some of our AFHS members from across the Tasman new of similar lobby groups in New Zealand. Links with related organizations such as an Australian branch of Richard St Barbe Baker's 'The Men of the Trees', noted in John Dargavel's 1995 *Fashioning Australia's Forests*. O.U.P., also need exploration. The large and powerful Australian Natives Association was occasionally a significant ally, but the relationship was complex and at times uncomfortable.

My own research into Victorian and South Australian forest management has highlighted the League's contribution to policy formation, and it is likely that it provided a significant link between grass roots lobbying and top-down decision making in the political arena in the two decades from the Great War. In this regard, the League filled a vacuum left by the decline of numerous smaller, more narrowly-focused and largely-industrial lobby groups such as those on the Victorian goldfields in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The National Forests Protection League formed on the Maryborough, Bendigo and Ballarat goldfields to secure long-term timber supplies is a prime example.

These opportunistic groups were influential in the few advances made such as the 1898 Land Act, the 1897 Royal Commission and the 1908 Forests Act which embodied most of that Commission's recommendations. And of course, much of the real power contributing to both policy formation and its actual implementation in the field may have been largely faceless and nameless – an aspect which, regardless of our theoretical approaches, requires much more research.

The Victorian Forest League's monthly journal, *The Gum Tree*, was published for more than twenty years after March 1917. As the League's public face at least, it represents an unparalleled documentary source. The well-illustrated journal documents all of the various political campaigns, it evaluated the various forests bills and acts, and was given an educational role for the dissemination of wider knowledge on forests and forestry from throughout Australia, the British Empire and the wider world. Photographs were used evocatively to promote a reappraisal of the beauty and majesty of forests, especially through the 1920s when nature conservation, roadside planting, parkland preservation, and a growing fascination with heritage trees as remnants of our pioneering past became fashionable.

Information on any three of the research areas noted above: the Australian Forests League; the earlier forestry lobbies; or the other political influences on forest policy at the time, will be gratefully received through the newsletter or at: Stephen.Legg@arts.monash.edu.au

### Publications noted

- Montagu, A. S. 2001. Forest Planning and Management in Papua New Guinea, 1884 to 1995: a political ecology analysis. *Planning Perspectives* 17: 21-40.
- Stubbs, B. J. 2001. 'The 'Grasses' of the Big Scrub District, North-eastern New South Wales: their recent history, spatial distribution and origins.' *Australian Geographer*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 295-319.
- Pierce Colfer, C. J. and Resosudarmo, A. P. (eds) 2002. *Which Way Forward? People, Forests, and Policymaking in Indonesia*. Resources for the Future, Washington DC, USA; Centre for International Forestry Research, Bogor, Indonesia; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

## Recent Journals

*Forest History Today*, 2001.

The U.S. Forest History Society has progressively expanded this annual magazine until, in this 80 page issue, it is now larger than the old 54 page *Journal of Forest History*. While the quarterly publication of some forest history material is continued in the



scholarly *Environmental History* journal. The 2001 issue of *Forest History Today* is a most attractive publication, its short but authoritative articles being liberally illustrated with very high-quality photographs. Two articles are likely to be of interest to Australian readers. One is by David Lowenthal on George Perkins Marsh, the other consists of extracts from Gifford Pinchot's diaries introduced and edited by Harold Steen. The latter draws out Pinchot's belief in conservation as the foundation for permanent peace, an idealism that is as needed today as it was a century ago.

*Environment and History* 8(1), February 2002

This is an important issue because it marks the association of the journal with the European Society for Environmental History and a re-assertion of its international coverage. Four pages at the end give news of the Society, but as the editorial points out the European Society is concerned with environmental history being studied *in* Europe and not necessarily *about* Europe. The articles in this issue include one by Warwick Frost on the attitudes of farmers, tourists

and naturalists towards trees in Eastern Australia, and others on US environmentalism, weather and energy in cities, agricultural chemistry and floating timber in Sweden. An important review article by T. Smout considers the problems facing global environmental historians. It is based on Donald Hughes recent *An environmental history of the World: humankind's changing role in the community of life* and raises the interesting question about how we as forest historians address the big issues of our time.

## Research snippets from Monash Uni.

Forest history research in the School of Geography and Environmental Science spans forest management, resource conflicts, social constructions of nature, social and environmental impacts of plantations, palaeoenvironmental reconstructions, and fine resolution studies which merge historical methods with scientific techniques.

Monash University Logan Research Fellow Dr Simon Haberle will soon be joining the 'Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Program' team at the Australian National University (<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/rmap/>). The program undertakes 'cross-disciplinary' research into social, political and economic aspects of change in the Asia-Pacific environment. Simon will work as Environmental Historian/Ecologist investigating environmental change and human impact in the region. His research will provide essential baseline data for environmental impact assessments of proposed large development projects such as logging and mining. Simon's previous research comprises the history of El Nino, human impact and environmental change on remote oceanic islands and New Guinea, the influence of climate change on human society, and postglacial vegetation dynamics.

David Aagensen of the Dept. of Geography, State Univ. of New York, Geneseo, New York, recently delivered a seminar here on the environmental history of Patagonia. A forest historian, David has published widely on indigenous resource rights and conservation practices in the temperate forests of Argentina and Chile – especially regarding the Monkey-Puzzle Tree (*Araucaria araucana*). His research can be found in *Environmental History*, *Environmental Conservation*, and *Society and Natural Resources*. His most recent work focuses on regional forest policy and the expansion of exotic conifer plantations in the foothills of the Andes.

A recently completed honours thesis by geographer Matt Jenever provides the basis for a forthcoming publication reconstructing the environmental history of Whitsunday Island. Matt investigated a 7,000 year old record of fossil pollen cored from a terrestrial swamp on the island. The core revealed significant vegetation change around 5,500-4,000 years ago when the once rainforest-dominated landscape experienced a major shift to sclerophyll forests more typical of those found today. These changes are indicative of reduced rainfall, and parallel the broader aridification typical of the region stretching northward to the Atherton Tablelands. Co-authors, geographer John Grindrod and archaeologist Barker Bryce analyse human-environment interactions, especially in the period of mid-Holocene sea level rise and subsequent island formation.

A forthcoming special issue of the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria, edited by geographers Prof. Peter Kershaw and Dr Meredith Orr will be devoted to the development of the landscape of Victoria's volcanic Western Plains as a tribute to retired geomorphologist Bernie Joyce. The issue will focus on the last 2 million years, for which there is a detailed vegetation record. The region is of international significance for high resolution studies of different aged depositional sites (such as volcanic lakes). Biostratigraphy, climate history, volcanic activity, and human-environment relations will be highlighted. The latter includes the intensification of human occupation and the development of complex hunter-gatherer societies as well as studies of the environmental impacts of Aborigines. The nature and pattern of deforestation, along with research into the various limits to forest growth over time are examined. A million years ago, the region's forests comprised more Callitris and dry rainforest remnants compared to the more common eucalypts of today. Relations between soils and forests on the plains were found to have changed significantly over time.

### Mark Allen's poetic reflections on Australia's Ever-changing Forests V Conference in Hobart, February 2002.

The Chinese forests may not approve;  
The presenters of papers may not agree;  
But this is my own summary:

Tasmania – Erstwhile apple isle;  
Forest history . . . still some mystery.

A welcome first from John, one man  
Who's a keen Jane Franklin fan.  
We're here today from several nations  
To think of early generations.

Projector hitch saw start by Brett,  
Who studies the Big Scrub to get  
Ideas of early densities  
From portion flaws and reference trees.

PIGAS

Then Eden region – animals and trees:  
How settlement affected these.

Next to tracheids, vessels, pits and rays  
Of Auracarias since early days.  
Now Wollemi Pine, a recent find,  
Is also included among this kind.

John Banks was crook; we wish him well.  
Of the Wollemi Pine he was going to tell.

We turn to Hooker on Van Diemen's Land –  
Was he ecologically "head in sand"?  
To track down relics was Peter's goal  
At Yarra, Heytesbury and Mount Cole.

Elizabeth Johann stressed the past  
Must be understood for forests to last;  
While Jan says that some praise tradition in  
woodlands,  
And believe modern ways leave us "not such good  
lands".  
In New Zealand it once was whites v. Maoris,  
Later on it's pines v. Kauris!

Stephen tells (I think) of local's failure  
In conserving forests in South Australia.  
And John suggests some studies to do:  
Could provide a Ph.D. or two?

Plenty of people, but workforce changes  
At Henry's Mill in the Otway Ranges.  
Social cohesion or lonely life  
For protestant, Catholic, husband and wife.

Sigrid says hunting's no sport but a hobby,  
Despite the animal lovers' lobby.  
Hunting and forests are closely related,  
Though commoners' rights seem rather belated.

The home-grown forests are Tuesday's theme;  
A turbulent history it may seem:  
Starting with sawpits, convict-manned,  
Supplying wood for Van Diemen's Land.

And stripping bark for export trade  
Soon scenes of devastation made.

And pyrolignite, it came too –  
That's wood distilling to me and you.  
It was aimed at keeping the lid  
On unemployment . . . and making a quid.  
Decades later there came a push  
For creation of Parks in Tasmania's bush.

Junee caves have very old bones,  
But the timber on top the government owns.  
There's some opposition to logging concession,  
As this could destroy a treasured possession.

Problems for locals there'd clearly be,  
But that didn't stop the HEC.  
"Lowina over what bridge"? say,  
For they use a different road today.

Cathedral-like the trees he saw,  
Henry Hellyer: gloom yet awe;  
But real privation, sure no heaven  
Was his winter of eighteen twenty-seven.

Spare the trees and save the land:  
The Forestry League's ideals were grand.  
Protect the woods from man's abuse;  
Promote the theme of multiple use.

Days of nature, they were fun . . .  
Out of classroom, into sun;  
Look at flowers, birds and bees,  
But did it boost economies?

Several speakers then went on  
To tell what they're engaged upon,  
Before meeting starts, and John –

Declares he's getting old.  
Do we see Society fold?  
Surely not say all the members,  
They'll rally round to stir the embers!

At dinner Alison speaks awhile  
Of Lady Jane, true anglophile.

Wednesday morn found Peter and Jenny  
Describing achievements of "men amongst many" –  
Visionary leaders, each in his way,  
For the forest of Queensland and W.A.

Wartime timber in PNG  
For Australia did not come free.

Conditions were tough and mistakes were made,  
As species were new to the timber trade.

Forests in Europe once held in awe;  
For settlers down under this was no more.  
Question later of "greater good" –  
Scenery, electricity or wood!

Some folk were unhappy with logging of Wombat,  
But tried very hard to refrain from combat.  
More sensible ways were used and, where able,  
They aim to resolve disputes round the table.

Exclusion of fire an unnatural move,  
So in USA they're trying to prove  
That occasional burning is not a bad thing.  
For Australia too many alarm bells ring.

Long Creek . . . now called "wilderness" despite  
It once was well-known tramway site.  
The problem's how best to suit each side;  
Could forestry records be used as a guide?

Once "doing things the Queensland way"  
Meant history held very little sway.  
But changing attitudes . . . at last  
Are demanding recognition of the past.  
National Parks, at least, now deem it best  
That cultural heritage are assessed.  
Model takes in numerous criteria  
To determine sites which are superior!

Some trees have links to people or events of  
yesteryear,  
And we wish that they would last, for they are dear;  
But Nature (oft helped along by man)  
Decrees that there's an end to their life's span.  
Should we resuscitate, or with their kind replace?  
Or lay to rest with dignity and grace?

For numbers of people I think you'll find  
Chairing a meeting's a real bind:  
Speakers too fast, speakers too slow,  
How to make the questions flow.  
So to all ten of you, and Mark as well,  
Really, the job you did was swell.

For a great few days to reflect upon  
Our special thanks to Denise and John.