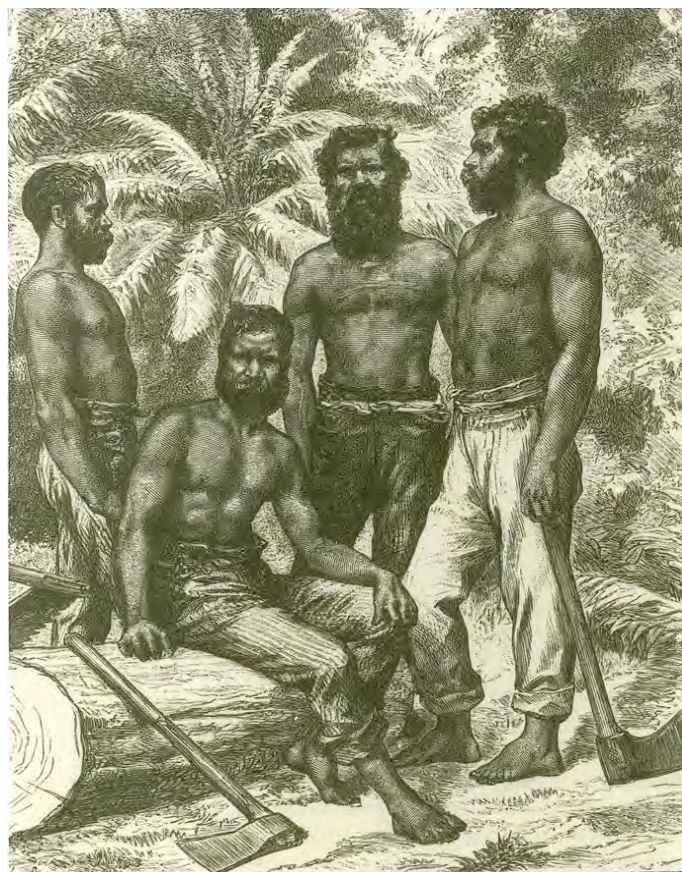

AUSTRALIAN

Forest History

SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter No. 48
January 2008

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



Reflecting the patronising vision of its time, the original caption in Harold Willoughby's Australian Pictures published in 1886 read 'Semi-civilised Victorian Aborigines'. The image probably comes from the Gippsland forests—clearly, these men were doing some work in the timber industry.
ILLUSTRATION: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA.

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VALE ERIC CHARLES ROLLS (1923–2007)

Eric Charles Rolls was many things: farmer, poet, storyteller, historian, cook, writer and above all an inquisitor of the world he delighted in. To forest historians, he was the author of *A million wild acres*, an intimate and evocative history of the Pilliga cypress pine forests in New South Wales. It came out in 1981, making it Australia's first full-length forest history to be commercially published (Carron's *A history of Australian forestry* did not appear until 1985). Tom Griffiths contributed an insightful paper to our conference on the history of the *Callitris* forests on how Eric wrote the book (*Perfumed Pineries* Canberra 2001) and a long obituary in the *Canberra Times*. Those of us who knew him can return to the book with happy memories of him and many more will discover the pleasure of reading him as the years pass.

John Dargavel

Eric Rolls was more recently known as one of Australia's great nature writers – but he was also a poet, farmer, gastronome, fisherman, historian, and friend. His wife, Elaine van Kempen, called him "Epic Rolls", a perfect name for Australia's chronicler of the land, the people and their spirit. The author of more than 20 books, Rolls died at home on 31 October 2007. Rolls and van Kempen moved 13 years ago to North Haven, overlooking the Camden Haven Inlet on the northern NSW coast, and helped found the Watermark Literary Muster, a biennial festival about writing on nature and place. Rolls attended the 2007 Muster in early October as its patron but was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer a few days later.

He was working on a book with the provisional title *An Unknown People*, which will be published next year. It claims Aborigines settled, fished and farmed the land thousands of years before European colonisation. He was always prepared to challenge ideas and this book will be a fitting finale. His controversial writing on subjects ranging from native fauna to human sexuality has fuelled debate in literary pages here and abroad. He wrote many award-winning books: *Sheaf Tossers*; *They All Ran Wild*; *The River*; *A Million Wild Acres*; *The Green Mosaic*; *Celebration of the Senses*; *Doorways: A Year of the Cumberland Diaries*; *Selected Poems*; and *From Forest to Sea* as well as *Sojourners* and *Citizens*, which tell of the centuries-old relationship between China and Australia. His publication *A Celebration of Food & Wine* was first published in three separate volumes and later released as a combined edition. We enjoyed some of the research for this book over dinners while discussing forest history and revegetation.

Eric had an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Canberra and was a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. He became an Australian Creative

Fellow in 1991 and a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Literature and environmental awareness in 1992.

Eric Rolls was born to a farming family, and was first educated through the New South Wales Correspondence School. He went to Fort Street High School, then served as a signaller with the Australian Imperial Force in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. His observations there are reflected in his poems about birds of paradise, butterflies, swamps, bamboo and rainforest in the collection *The Green Mosaic*, and it was from there that he sent his first poem to Douglas Stewart who published it on the Red Page of the *Bulletin* confirming for Eric that writing was worthwhile.

From 1948 till 1986 he farmed his own land in the north west of NSW on the banks of the Namoi which he immortalised in *The River* with its beautiful charcoal drawings by Marianne Yamaguchi, and then at Cumberland on the edges of the Pilliga Scrub. This forest he made famous in his masterpiece *A Million Wild Acres* (1984). Its story is of growing a forest but Eric's original achievement was to confront Australians with the idea that in many areas of the country the landscape that had been open and grassy was now densely vegetated resulting in more trees now than before European settlement when Aboriginal fire regimes had affected the composition and structure of some forest types. He was fascinated by the invaders of the forests too—the cattle, rabbits, foxes and ungentle white men. He celebrated the 'wild' in nature rather than wilderness and the volatile, stirred up and feral nature as a result of his observations and research for his earlier landmark book, *They All Ran Wild* (1969). The impact of humans in shaping and reshaping our landscapes became a favourite topic.

In November 2000, the Australian Forest History Society brought together at Coonabarabran many people who have studied and managed the *Callitris* pine forests to examine the science-humanities divide and to provide a new environmental history of those forests. The resulting publication, *Perfumed Pineries* (2001), has a chapter by Tom Griffiths on the debates stirred up by the writing of *A Million Wild Acres* and a finale by Eric in which he tells stories about the perfumed pineries and concludes:

A polished white cypress pine floor seems to be alive. The wood glows yellow and the brown knots swirl in it... the best way to celebrate the perfumed pineries is to revive admiration of their timber.

It was especially fitting that we farewelled him in a simple coffin made of white cypress pine at the School of Arts in Kendall, a village named after another poet of the Australian forests.

Jane Lennon

For Eric (from Jane Lennon)

Questions of habitat—his habitat,
Ploughing river flats and watching birds wheeling high
above or flitting into the fringing trees,
Seeing the evidence of feral creatures running
everywhere;
At home in a million wild acres
At home girt by the sea
At home with fresh food and good wine
At home in a world of ideas transmitted with right
words
At home with whoever provided stimulating
discussions.
The convoluted query,
the considered response after a long pause...
Such pleasure in shared ideas,
in providing firsthand knowledge and new ideas.
The tiller of fertile soil has laboured long.
The crop of ideas sown has flourished,
changing the face of the land.
Its story and practice must be retold,
The habitat renewed.

VALE LINDSAY POOLE (1908–2008)

Lindsay Poole died on 2nd January 2008, two months short of his 100th birthday. This severed one of the last remaining direct links to the earliest days of state forestry in New Zealand. Poole was one of a small number of graduates of the short-lived Forestry School at Auckland University College which he attended on a Smith Wylie Scholarship, provided by two of the principal companies promoting exotic afforestation activity in NZ in the 1920s. He recounted how the ebullient first Director of Forests, Canadian McIntosh Ellis, quizzed the students on their forestry knowledge and told a hesitant Poole he would have to pull his socks up if he wanted to be a forester.

Indeed Poole's entry into forestry was neither seamless nor easy. He spent seven years as 'Labourer' in the State Forest Service from 1930-36; McGavock the Director having no belief in the value of forestry graduates. He then secured a position in the Botany Division of the DSIR in 1937. This led to involvement in a range of projects including detailed surveys of Ragwort, a problem species, and of the Motoua Estate, a government-owned wetlands (unproblematically termed a swamp) which was an important source of raw material for the flax industry.

On the outbreak of WWII Poole volunteered for service in one of the Forestry Companies. He was soon

appointed to the position of Scientific Liaison Officer for the DSIR in London. After hostilities in Europe had ceased he was able to visit and report on Nazi impact on managed forests in Germany. Back in NZ in 1946 he completed an MSc at Victoria University and rejoined the Botany Division of DSIR, quickly rising to the position of Director from 1948-1950 during which time he conducted original research into Beech species. In 1951 he applied for the position of Deputy Director of the much larger New Zealand Forest Service. The State Services Commission appointed Poole, who was not the preferred candidate of Director of Forests Alex Entrican. The two men differed in temperament, in terms of management style, and in their vision for forestry. Entrican's engineering background saw him seek to bring his 'Murupara project', the industrial utilisation of the exotic forests, to fruition. Poole had reservations about the basis of the log sales agreement underpinning the Tasman Pulp and Paper project as well as a more expansive view of the role of state as a forest owner. This included a genuine interest in protection forestry and animal control which Entrican readily enough ceded to him, and a belief in the possibilities of Beech (*Nothofagus*) management on sustained yield lines.

In 1961, on Entrican's retirement, Poole was appointed as Director General of Forestry, a position he held till his retirement in 1970. Somewhat ironically, the major achievement of the NZFS during his time as Director General was the planning and implementation of what became known as the second planting boom. This was intended to meet a predicted short fall in wood in the 21st century and to broaden the national export base. In 1969, with Poole's active support, the NZFS was proactive in participating in an era of national indicative planning where state, industry, and farmer growers set agreed-upon regional planting targets.

Poole retired in 1970 before the NZFS Beech scheme was implemented, triggering the formation of the Beech Forest Action Council and later the Native Forest Action Council (popularly known as NFAC). NFAC challenged the NZFS plans for indigenous harvesting and expansion of exotic plantations throughout the remainder of the 1970s and into the early 1980s. The exchanges were acrimonious on both sides with the NZFS over time losing some critical public support. It is worth speculating what might have happened if Poole had remained Director General for another three years. Even if the final outcome for the NZFS remained the same, with the politicians taking the state out of indigenous production forestry, undoubtedly this would have happened in a much less combative and acrimonious fashion.

Retirement was in name only for from 1972 to 1978 Poole chaired the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council. Established in 1941 this was the central body responsible for approving large amounts of funding for erosion and flood control schemes. Its combination of

soil conservation and rivers engineering suited Poole's integrated view of environmental management.

Alongside his work as a senior public servant Poole had always retained an interest in botany and what today might be rather grandly called 'science communication'. This included *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand* authored jointly with Nancy Adams that went through six editions from 1963 to 1994, his own review of forest history from a policy perspective (*Forestry in New Zealand; the shaping of policy* 1969 and *Catchment Control in New Zealand* 1983), a return to his favourite *Nothofagus* species (*Southern Beeches* 1987) as well as several reflective books about trees and forestry in New Zealand (e.g. *Trees, timber and tranquillity* 1989).

During the mid-1980s Poole entered the debate over the government's decision to sell the exotic forest estate. It would be wrong to think of this as a rear guard action of an official responsible for planting so much forest; Poole was more forward looking. His concern remained unabated, represented in his last jointly written book, *The great wood robbery?: political bumbling ruins New Zealand forestry* in 2006. Poole's long life was spent in administering and writing about NZ's forests, his interests and concerns were wide ranging. His management style, which included the capacity to listen to others' viewpoints, marked him out from some of his predecessors—in this respect he would be closest to Edward Phillips Turner (Director from 1928-1931). He was a FRSNZ (1962), was awarded a CBE (1971), an honorary DSc from the University of Canterbury (1999) and typically modestly opted for an absolutely minimalist entry in *Who's Who in New Zealand* (1978). At a personal level he was a gracious host when I interviewed him in the mid-1980s for my forestry book and willing to answer all my inquiries, including some rather difficult ones about working relationships in Head Office. I don't doubt that he would have disagreed with some of my interpretations of events involving a department in which he served for 25 years. Ellis, however, should have been pleased with Poole's period at the helm of the Forest Service.

Michael Roche

CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

Please note the change of contact details for the newsletter's co-ordinating editor:

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NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change

A HISTORY OF ALIDADES

A range of alidades used for many years in fire control over rural Australia has been collected, thanks to a big shed clean out at the forestry office in Batemans Bay, NSW.

An alidade is a simple sighting instrument mounted on a plane surface to determine the angle (usually a part of 360°) between objects observed from the one location. In forestry, it was often used at fire lookouts on high topographic places before magnetic compasses became more affordable and therefore commonplace.

The instrument was fixed to a post or similar immovable object at the centre of the fire tower with the base plate's compass rose aligned to a previously agreed datum, usually magnetic north. The operator sighted an object, in this case a smoke column, and read the bearing or angle from the base plate. When this bearing was relayed by telecommunication to a fire coordination office which had a map with the same compass rose alignment, the line of sight of the fire tower operator's observation could then be mapped.

Of course, it is essential that both the alidade and its corresponding clone in the office are aligned to the same datum, otherwise bias will have an adverse influence on field location of the suspected fire. For some years a NSW south coast fire coordination centre, which will remain nameless, fell into this trap by aligning its maps to magnetic north when the alidade had been aligned to grid north, about 12° "to the left". It is rumoured that field crews gradually learned to take this into account, quietly cognisant that 'those young foresters in the office don't know their left from their right anyway', but it has not been verified!



A variety of alidades. *Upper left:* A modern fully manufactured model yet to be bolted to correct alignment.

Upper right: The same manufactured sighting and base plate fixed to a homemade square plywood base which, when placed in commonly aligned posts in the field, automatically aligned the base plate to magnetic north. *Lower left:* An older model yet to be fixed in place. *Lower right:* A double sighting instrument of similar vintage, manufactured by the Forestry Commission of NSW.

Ian Barnes

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

14th National Engineering Heritage Conference

The Institute of Engineers, now 'Engineers Australia', has a sub-section of members keen to preserve our engineering heritage sites. They held their annual conference in Perth in September 2007 with a pre-conference trip to the South-west. It was similar in size and arrangement to our forest history conferences. They included a session on the forest industry for the first time and invited four papers:

- ❑ Mathew Churchward (Museum Victoria), 'The role of steam power in the Victorian hardwood sawmilling industry'
- ❑ Gail Cresswell (WA local historian), 'M.C. Davies timber empire, Karridale WA'
- ❑ John Dargavel (ANU), 'Iron, steel and timber: a transient heritage'
- ❑ Lloyd Margetts (WA, Main Roads), 'The conservation of large timber structures'

A keen group of WA engineers has been actively concerned with the conservation of the old Bunning Bros. sawmill at Donnelly River. This large steam-powered mill was built in 1948 and operated until 1978. When it closed, the company donated the mill complex, including most of the machinery that was left *in situ*, to the State so that its heritage could be conserved and displayed. It is probably the last nearly intact large steam sawmill remaining in Australia. The engineers group lobbied to have a heritage assessment conducted and for the mill to be placed on the State Heritage Register. Although this was done and some funds provided for conservation, the structure is deteriorating and is now too dangerous to enter.



Donnelly River sawmill, 2007. Photo: John Dargavel

The pre-conference tour visited the site and was able to glimpse some of the machinery even though we could not enter the building. A poignant moment was when a recording made by Jenny Mills of the mill's closure was played. We could hear the chug of the steam

engine, the blasts on the whistle to mark the end, and the final slow wind down of the engine.

We can only hope that the engineers are successful in securing sufficient funds to be able to conserve and develop the mill as an educational resource.



Donnelly River sawmill, log carriage and twin breaking down saws. Photo: John Dargavel

Old Forests New Management. Conservation and use of old-growth forests in the 21st Century

17-21 February 2008, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart, Tasmania

Society members may be interested in this international conference which offers multidisciplinary views on the ecologically sustainable management and use of old growth forests into the future. There will be few papers with a historical perspective including one with the provocative title of "Timber from eucalypt forests: we like it and will miss it when its gone".

For information on the conference go to:
<http://www.oldforests.com.au>

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Kaye McPherson 2007. *Van Diemens Land colonial timber industries pre 1830*. Lindisfarne, Tasmania: Manuta Tunapee Puggaluggalia Publishers (\$40 + \$9.00 postage and packing from the Publishers, PO Box 1437 Lindisfarne 7015).

This is the first time Tasmania's early timber industries have been recorded. It is a book that looks at not only the cutting of trees for shipbuilding and export but considers the various uses of trees from soap making to charcoal. The timber industry is much more than sawmills and timber cutters. It is about the very ordinary uses for timber. The government institutions of Hobart Town used 600 tons of firewood a month just to keep cooking fires alight. Included is a comprehensive list of species-specific timber uses that puts the reader into the past allowing them to know which tree made the best hop poles, the best barrels, or had the most endurance for wharves. (*We hope to carry a review in a later issue of the Newsletter—Ed.*)



Don Watson 2006. *Wooden wonders: Victoria's timber bridges*. Flemington, Vic.: Hyland House Publishing for National Trust of Australia. 207 pp. hardback \$49.95.

This book tells the story of the host of timber bridges built throughout Victoria—and over the Murray River—for roads and railways. For the last decade or so a group of dedicated people in the National Trust's Timber Bridges Committee, led by the author, have been documenting and photographing the State's timber bridges. Their work has resulted in 26 bridges being placed on Victoria's Heritage Register, and in this book which records and celebrates their important place in the landscape. It is full of historical and technical information and is arranged region by region making it a valuable travelling companion.

Steven Anderson (ed.) 2006. *Proceedings of the U.S. Forest Service Centennial Congress: a collective commitment to conservation*. Durham, N.C., USA: Forest History Society, book and CD. (See www.foresthistory.org for price and order details).

In January 1905, the American Forest Congress gathered politicians, government officials, industrialists and academics together to 'establish a broader understanding of the forest in its relation to the great industries depending upon it; to advance the conservative use of forest resources for both the present and the future needs of these industries; to stimulate and unite all efforts to perpetuate the forest as a permanent resource for the nation'. The declaration of national forest reserves and the establishment of the US Forest Service flowed from the Congress.

In January 2005, the US Forest Service celebrated its centenary with another Congress conference, the proceedings of which have been published by the Forest History Society. The CD version has the proceedings of both congresses. The 2005 Congress will be of most interest to readers concerned with current forest policy and to future historians. The 1905 Congress will be of most interest to Australian forest historians as a comparative and influential statement at a time when our own directions were being formed. We can be particularly grateful to the Forest History Society for bringing out the 1905 Congress proceedings on CD because (as far as I can determine from the Libraries Australia data base) there is no accessible copy of the book in Australia. As each Congress proceedings generated roughly 500 pages, Steven Anderson tackled a daunting editorial and production task. The result produced to the Forest History Society's high standards makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

J.M. Powell 2007. "'Dominion over palm and pine"; the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-1947' *Journal of Historical Geography* 33(4) 833-852.

Joe Powell has cast his sharp eye on the first five of the Forestry Conferences that started out as 'Empire' conferences but turned in 1947 into a 'Commonwealth' one. The paper describes the conferences in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, South Africa and the UK and draws out the way in which six principles of forest policy were asserted for application across the Empire. Powell brings out 'some influential preoccupations during a formative period in the making of modern forestry' and 'permits a glimpse of a heritage of service which was seldom fully appreciated during the subsequent politicisation of conservation'.

Anyone wanting to follow up Powell's paper could turn to S.Ravi Rajan's *Modernizing nature: forestry and imperial eco-development 1800-1950* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

John Dargavel

Recent NZ publications

Jackson K 2006 Guilt by Association: Attempts at Domination of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Auckland timber trade, in Hunter I and Morrow, D (eds) *City of Enterprise, Perspectives on Auckland Business History*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, pp. 93-107.

Wilcox M and Spencer D 2007 Stand Up the Real Anzac Lone Pine of Gallipoli, *New Zealand Journal of Forestry* 52(1), 3-9.

Michael Roche

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2007

The Society continued to operate successfully during the financial year 2006-2007. Aside from the regular activity of newsletter publication, most of the Society's business during the year was centred on its seventh conference, held in Christchurch, New Zealand, in January/February 2007.

Conference. The Trans-Tasman Forest History Conference, the society's seventh conference, was held on the campus of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand from 29 January to 2 February 2007, followed by a study tour to the West Coast from 3-5 February. Many people contributed to the great success of this event, but I would like to acknowledge two of them in particular: Dr Paul Star, chairman of the conference organising committee, and Prof. Eric Pawson, who organised and led the West Coast study tour, and also led field trips and a campus tour during the course of the conference.

Arrangements have been made by the conference organising committee with the journal *Environment and History* for the publication of a selection of papers from the conference as a special edition of that journal. This is presently in preparation, and is expected to be



published towards the end of 2008. In addition, a CD containing almost all (around thirty) of the conference papers, lightly edited by Paul Star and myself, has been produced and distributed to all who attended the conference. Distribution had been effected by June 2007.

Website. To facilitate organisation of the conference, a conference website (www.foresthistory.org.au) was established and became active in June 2006. Soon afterwards, in the interests of simplicity and efficiency, the general society files were transferred from their home on the CRES website to our new site. From around the end of June 2006, therefore, the Society has had a more recognisable and more independent web presence. During the early part of 2007, arrangements were made to have printed copies of early Society newsletters scanned and made available through the website as downloadable pdf files. Consequently, all AFHS newsletters, from no.1 in 1988 to the current edition, are now accessible without restriction through the society website. I acknowledge the work of our webmaster, Michael Goasdoue, who scanned our printed newsletters and added them to the website.

Newsletter. The system of having Guest Editors prepare newsletters, under the overall guidance and co-ordination of a 'Series Editor' (Sue Feary), has been continued. Three newsletters were published during the financial year (August 2006—John Dargavel; December 2006—John Taylor; and May 2007—Mike Roche). Since the end of the financial year a further edition has appeared (September 2007—Kim Wells); another is due in December 2007.

Next Conference. It is proposed to hold the next AFHS conference in Lismore, northern NSW, either at the end of 2009 or early in 2010. I have assembled a small conference organising committee to begin planning for this event. The committee at present consists of myself, Jane Lennon, John Taylor, and Alison Specht, two individuals from Queensland and two from New South Wales. We held an informal first meeting in Brisbane in July 2007. It is intended that cross-border issues (comparisons, contrasts, relationships) form an important theme of the conference.

It is noted that after the next event, only one Australian state will not have hosted an AFHS conference. Although South Australia is not well represented within our membership, and was never well endowed with native forests, it has a long and fascinating history of plantation forestry, which would make an ideal theme for a South Australian conference (perhaps held at Mount Gambier, the headquarters of plantation forestry in the state).

Administration. As always, the successful continuation of the Society is due to the good work of many people. Their contributions are greatly valued. In particular, but in no particular order, I acknowledge the work of newsletter co-ordinator, Sue Feary; Conference Committee Chairman, Paul Star; Secretary, Kevin Frawley; and Treasurer, Fintan O'Laighin.

Brett Stubbs

REPORT FROM THE 2007 AGM

The Annual General meeting of the Australian Forest History Society Inc. was held in the Forestry Building at the Australian National University on 29 November 2007. The meeting elected the following office bearers for 2007: Brett Stubbs (President); Paul Star (Vice President); Fintan O'Laighin (Treasurer); Kevin Frawley (Secretary); Sue Feary (Newsletter Coordinator); Andrew Wilson; Peter Davies, Jane Lennon and Tessa Bird *nee* Mahoney. We say goodbye and thanks to retiring members John Huth and Jenny Mills and a warm welcome to Jane and Tessa. Thanks are also extended to retiring public officer Robert Boden who will be replaced by Juliana Lazzari.

The meeting approved of the idea of publishing a special issue of the newsletter to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Society. This will comprise a collection of personal reminiscences and reflections by inaugural members on the creation and evolution of the Society. It was agreed subsequently to coincide the special newsletter edition with the 50th issue of the newsletter, to come out in August 2008. Sue Feary is coordinating its production and she will be in contact with relevant people regarding their contributions

Brett Stubbs

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2007

The AFHS finances are relatively stable, with our bank balance (which forms almost our entire asset base) at the end of June 2007 being \$7411. This includes \$2150 remaining from a \$9000 heritage grant the Society received from the ACT Government for a Conservation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan for the Blundells Flat area of Uriarra Forest. Excluding the grant, we had \$5260 in June 2007, compared with \$5470 in June 2006.

While we had a conference during the financial year, the conference account is managed separately by the Organising Committee which has reported a modest profit. Any proceeds from the conference are usually transferred to the Society.

The vast bulk of our income last year came from membership subscriptions. As at 30 June 2007, we had 67 financial members, plus about another 40 who haven't renewed but who haven't quite dropped off our circulation list just yet. We are a small society and while our expenses are small, we do need people to renew to help fund our activities.

One of the activities funded last year was the posting of all of our newsletters onto our website. It's always good for a history society to be aware of the need to record its own history, and this is one part of ensuring that our own history isn't lost.

Fintán Ó Laighin

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Norman Houghton is being very productive; not only is his book on Beech Forest now out (*to be reviewed in a future issue – Ed*) but he has three other books on the go. He has substantially rewritten his *Sawdust and Steam* and has taken it to the printers. There is a certain irony in that it will be released in 2008 'just in time to mark the closure of Otway state forest logging'. Norm has also revised and rewritten his history of the Wombat forest. Not content with all this, he has almost completed a history of the copper boom railways at Cloncurry. Somehow he manages to do all this as well as working as a contract archivist in Brisbane.

Sue Feary has submitted her PhD to the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society for examination. Entitled 'Chainsaw Dreaming: Aboriginal Australians and the Forest Sector', the dissertation explores the ability of an inclusively defined forest sector to contribute to alleviating the social and economic disadvantage faced by many Aboriginal people today. Four case studies involving engagement between Aboriginal people and a range of forest based activities—Cape York, Southwest Western Australia, the Riverina and the NSW far south coast—revealed some of the deeply seated socio-cultural factors, especially at the local level, that inform Aboriginal people's attitudes towards the forest sector. Many of the findings are relevant to the forest history theme, for example, as the **photo on the first page** shows, Aboriginal employment in timber getting and sawmilling in the 1960s was commonplace and has been critical for shaping contemporary associations with the managers of crown forests (*a summary of the thesis will appear in a future issue – Ed*).

The outstanding contributions of environmental historians **Libby Robin** and **Tom Griffiths** to our understanding of the planet continue to be recognised. Libby Robin received the 2007 NSW Premier's Australian History Prize for her new book *How a Continent Created a Nation* (UNSW Press).



Away from Casey station, Tom Griffiths catches up on some Antarctic literature. *Photo: Tom Griffiths*

Tom Griffiths created his own history on ice for his new book *Slicing the Silence* when he took the long trip to the frozen continent in the summer of 2002–2003 as a humanities fellow with the Australian Antarctic Division. 2007–2008 is the International Polar Year, and is a perfect time for a new history of human endeavour in Antarctica. In his book, Tom alternates between his own diary entries, reproduced faithfully just as he jotted them down on the ship, and more scholarly historical essays. He says the approach was an attempt to retain the innocence of someone voyaging south for the first time.

STOP PRESS!!!

THE SOCIETY IS CONVENING A HALF-DAY SYMPOSIUM OF WORK-IN-PROGRESS RELATED TO FOREST HISTORY TO CELEBRATE ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY.

THE SYMPOSIUM WILL BE HELD AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ON

FRIDAY 9 MAY 2008.

To register an interest in giving a paper, or if you wish to attend, please contact symposium coordinator John Dargavel on john.dargavel@anu.edu.au

AFHS Membership

Membership of the Australian Forest History Society (AFHS) Inc is \$25 a year, or \$15 a year for students. For overseas addressees, it is \$30 (**in Australian currency please**). These prices do not include GST as the AFHS is not registered for paying or claiming GST. Membership expires on **30th June** each year.

Payment can be made by cheque or money order, or through Electronic Funds Transfer. Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to the AFHS and sent to:

Australian Forest History Society Inc.
 PO Box 5128
 Kingston ACT 2604

Electronic Funds Transfer can be paid into:

Commonwealth Savings Bank
 BSB 062911 / Account No.: 1010 1753

(Please also return this form if you pay by EFT.)

Name:	
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Tel:	
Fax:	
E-mail	

Please mark the box if you would like a receipt - otherwise an acknowledgment will be sent by e-mail.