

AUSTRALIAN

Forest History

SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter No. 60
December 2012

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



Australian Timbers in War
A "stalwart axeman", Oxley Timber Area, Northern NSW

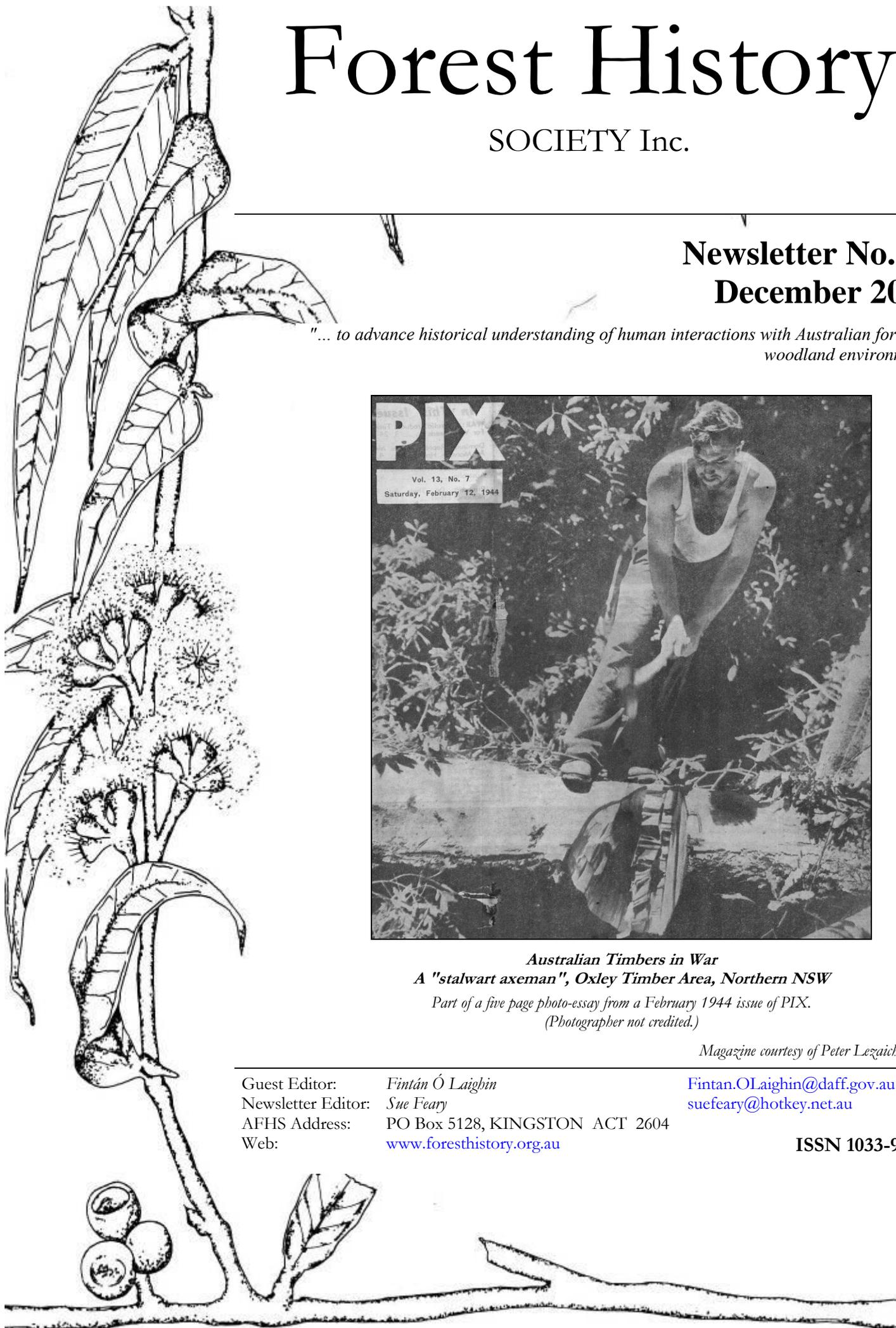
Part of a five page photo-essay from a February 1944 issue of PIX.
(Photographer not credited.)

Magazine courtesy of Peter Lezaich

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GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

It's been a while since our last issue. An edition had been planned for September 2012, but the guest editor who was lined up had to defer and the newsletter's co-ordinating editor, Sue Feary, was in the Solomon Islands doing something or other.

At the recent AGM, Sue advised that she wouldn't be able to continue in this role, so this will be the last issue under her editorship.

Sue has been the co-ordinating editor since the 2004 AGM, with her first issue being no. 39 in December 2004. This makes it her 22nd newsletter. Fourteen different people have been guest editors in this period, with some preparing more than one issue. Sue herself has done four issues, including no. 50 (Sep 2008) which celebrated the 20th anniversary of the society.

In these busy times, it's sometimes been a bit of a struggle to attract guest editors, but Sue persevered and managed to get most issues out on time and meet our aim of three issues a year. She has also imbued the production of the newsletter with a degree of consistent quality control, so leaves a pretty good legacy in her wake.

On behalf of the society, I'd like to thank Sue for her work over these eight years, and look forward to her continued contributions to the newsletter.

All our newsletters are available on our website at www.foresthistory.org.au/newsletters.html, with older issues at www.foresthistory.org.au/archives.html.

REPORT OF THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The society's Annual General Meeting was held in Canberra on 22nd November 2012. Members were provided with updates on various activities, such as the publication of the 2010 conference proceedings (coming soon) and the publication of the newsletter. Reports were delivered by the President Greg Barton and the Treasurer Fintán Ó Laighin.

The following office bearers were elected for 2012-13:

- President Greg Barton
- Vice-President James Beattie
- Secretary Kevin Frawley
- Treasurer Fintán Ó Laighin
- Committee Brett Bennett
Sue Feary
Jane Lennon
Robert Onfray
Brett Stubbs

This is the same committee that was elected at the 2011 AGM, with the exception that James Beattie and Jane Lennon have swapped places.

Juliana Lazzari was reappointed Public Officer.

Stephen Bailey acts as auditor for the society's annual accounts and his contribution is very much appreciated. A vote of thanks to Stephen was carried and it was resolved that the Treasurer approach him to be auditor for the society for 2012-13. (A small honorarium is given to Stephen in acknowledgment of his work.)

A major item of business was a proposal to amend the name (and therefore scope) of the AFHS to the "Environmental and Forest History Society of Australia and New Zealand Incorporated". The matter had originally been notified for the 2011 AGM by John Dargavel who noted that "the decline in the number of people actively working on Australian forest history research, the decreasing membership of the Society and the difficulties of forming an active Committee indicate a new direction is needed". Following discussion at the 2011 AGM, it was agreed that the proposal should be canvassed more widely, especially amongst environmental historians, rather than just members of the AFHS.

The matter was re-presented to the 2012 AGM. The vote (including proxy votes received) was overwhelmingly in favour of the change - 15 votes were cast, 11 of which were for the proposal, and four against.

However, when Kevin Frawley was preparing the paperwork for the name change, he discovered that under ACT law, a vote to change the name of an association requires a majority of at least 75% of the votes. Our 11-4 vote was only 73.33%, hence did not reach the minimum legal threshold.

The AFHS committee will discuss this outcome, and consider options to present to members.

<p>Membership of the Australian Forest History Society (AFHS) Inc is \$25 a year, or \$15 a year for students and for overseas addresses is \$30 (in Australian currency please). These prices do not include GST as the AFHS is not registered for paying or claiming GST.</p> <p>Membership expires on 30th June each year.</p> <p>Payment can be made by cheque or money order, or through Electronic Funds Transfer. Cheques or Money Orders made payable to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Australian Forest History Society Inc. PO Box 5128, KINGSTON ACT 2604</p> <p>Electronic Funds Transfer can be paid into:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Commonwealth Savings Bank BSB 062-911, Account No.: 1010 1753</p> <p><i>(Please also return this form if you pay by EFT.)</i></p>	
Name & Address	
E-mail	
	Please mark the box if you would like a receipt - otherwise an acknowledgment will be sent by e-mail.

SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN TIMBER FESTIVAL



The second Shoalhaven Timber Festival was held on Saturday 24th November in Ulladulla on the south coast of NSW. The festival highlighted the history of the timber industry and its value past and present.

The festival included photos and displays of the early timber getting days dating back to the 1800s, and

provided historic information of the timber industry.

The festival included displays of tools used in the late 1800s and the 1900s to cut and prepare timber for housing, fencing, wharves, boats and much more. There was also a demonstration of slab cutting with a Lucas Mill and a demonstration of a crosscut saw (and even the chance for festival goers to have a turn themselves).

One of the original local bullock drivers was there and brought many photos and gear used in the early days to snig logs from hard to get places.

Visit to the Bawley Point Tramway: As part of festival, a bus and walking tour to the Bawley Point tramway was held on Thursday 22nd November. The visit discussed the history and lives of the timber cutters of Bawley Point and was hosted by local historians Cathy Dunn and (AFHS member) Leith Davis, with Ian Barnes and Ian Bevege (both also of the AFHS) doing a lot of the organisation. Highlights of the trip were:

- * The visit to the Bawley Point tramway.
- * Termeil and Bawley Point Forestry and forest history.
- * The chance to see some of the oldest trees on the South Coast, including "Old Blotchy" (a rather large Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) - see www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au/listing_view.php?listing_id=548).

Unfortunately, the trip was held on the same day as the AFHS AGM which precluded some of us from making it. Leith tells me that the trip went well and that "the best part was after lunch when we risked life and limb down at the creek fighting off the leeches to find the zig zag points, wonderful. :) It would certainly make a great AFHS outing and I would happily do it again."

The great news is that Ian Barnes is organising a timber industry tramlines heritage weekend based in Batemans Bay on **23rd & 24th March 2013**. He is organising it through the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA), but members of the AFHS and the Light Railway Research Society of Australia will be also be invited.

Ian says that the weekend will follow the format of IFA field weekends: Friday night - drinks and catch up; Saturday - all day in the field north of Batemans Bay; Saturday night - formal dinner with guest speaker, Sunday - IFA meeting/travel. The field day will have a heavy

emphasis on tramlines between Batemans Bay and Ulladulla. More details will be provided later.

On a related note, the third AFHS national conference (Jervis Bay, 1996) included a paper by Michael MacLellan Tracey titled "Archaeological evidence for a Horse-drawn Tramway at Bawley Point, NSW". The conference proceedings are available at http://fennerschool.anu.edu.au/files/panel/312/australia_severchangingforestsiii_pdf_18719.pdf or a copy of the paper at www.heritagearchaeology.com.au/Tramway.htm.

LIGHT RAIL - TIMBER TRAMWAY NEWS

Continuing the timber tramway theme, the December 2012 issue of *Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways*, is now available from the Light Rail Research Society of Australia (www.lrrsa.org.au). The journal often includes articles on timber tramways, and the current issue has a short item on the tramway run by the Little Yarra Sawmilling Co. in Powelltown Victoria (pp28-29); a small announcement about the Alexandra Timber Tramway (also home to a steam railway and logging museum) in north-central Victoria (www.alexandratramway.org.au) (p36); and a note that the Water Wheel Creek Timber Experience in Mawbanna in north-west Tasmania has closed due to low patronage (p36). According to www.traveldownunder.com.au, Water Wheel Creek contained Tasmania's only working example of a timber tramway. There are videos on Youtube, including a five minute one at www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-i8ha_Hkgw.

FREE STUFF - ITEMS OF INTEREST

Rod Squire of Bateau Bay NSW has written to say that he has some items of possible interest to members:

- 1) Photocopy of a letter dated 1879 from a Forest Ranger (Mr Griffin) recommending the preservation of an area known as Hogans Brush near Gosford NSW, and two subsequent letters supporting the recommendation. The area became Strickland State Forest in 1916. Rod says that "the expressions of the officers are fascinating".
- 2) *Empire Forestry Handbook 1933*. It lists all members of the Empire Forestry Association (now the Commonwealth Forestry Association), including all Australian states, plus Canberra, and all other Empire countries.
- 3&4) *Australian Forestry* (i.e. the IFA journal), Vol. IV No. 1 June 1939 and Vol. XIX No. 1 1955.
- 5) Two forest assessment field books, in Urunga District (near Coffs Harbour NSW), one undated and the other from 1918. Both written in pencil.

Rod has offered to pass these items onto to any members who may be interested. Any response/queries can be sent to me at Fintan.OLAighin@daff.gov.au and I'll forward them to Rod.

AUSTRALIAN TIMBERS IN WAR

The photo on the cover of this issue comes from the 12th February 1944 issue of *PIX* (Vol 13 No. 7), a magazine published by Associated Newspapers Ltd in Sydney and which ran from 1938 to 1972 (and as *PIX/People* until early 1977). The photo was one of nineteen included in a five page photo-essay (p3 and pp24-27) showing various facets of the timber industry in north eastern NSW, as well as featuring some of the people involved.

The photos come from the "Oxley Timber Area" - this is not Oxley State Forest near Hay/Balranald. The caption of one photo says it was taken "on a mountain road near Mt. Seaview" and that the "Haul from timber area to Wauchope is about 68 miles."

The photo used on our cover was accompanied by some text which is reproduced below. Note that it is printed verbatim, including grammatical and typographical errors. In *PIX*'s defence, it was wartime and a note on page 2 explains that "Owing to an outbreak of fire at *PIX* Rotogravure plant one of our modern printing machines has been put out of action." It explains that they've had to use a different press, so that may have involved some hasty resetting of the type.

RICH RESOURCES TAPPED

AUSTRALIAN TIMBERS IN WAR

IMPELLED by war's necessity Australia is exploiting her timber resources in a way which would have been thought impossible in peace. In much the same way that Australian hardwood was proved suitable for making newsprint, wood technologists have developed adaptability of local timbers to a wide variety of exacting war needs. Outstanding perhaps is use made of NSW coachwood - a relatively unimportant variety in peace. It has now become one of the great aviation woods of the world. When war broke out an enormously increased demand for timber was complicated by stoppage of supplies from overseas. In peace, hundreds of millions of feet of timber were imported each year. Timber control throughout the Commonwealth ensured the most economical use of wood under a priorities system, while new timber areas were opened to meet an ever-growing demand. Activities of one such enterprise, Oxley Timber Area, controlled by NSW Forestry Commission, are shown on this and other pages in this issue. Stalwart axeman (above) is one of tens of thousands of workers in this vast industry.

The story continues on p24:

LOCAL FORESTS FILL NEEDS OF WAR

BEFORE war, Australia imported nearly £3,000,000 worth of timber from overseas each year. With war clouds looming in 1939, Australian Government recognised that reliance on overseas sources for such vast quantities of a basic raw material would be courting disaster in event of hostilities. Surveys of available timber were made and their suitability as substitutes for imported types was the subject of intensified research. As a result, when war did come, Australia's supply of timber for a wide variety of

essential war uses was assured. Following are some uses of local timbers:- Plywood for aircraft - coachwood only; Plywood, marine; brown alder (corkwood), brush mahogany (red Carabeen), coachwood, negro head beech, rose maple (pigeon berry ash), sasafras, silver sycamore (Jackwood), tulip oak; Case plywood (munition cases, etc) - all species as above and crabapple and prickly ash; for matches: coachwood, hoop pine, yellow Carrabeen, crabapple, mountain ash. As a result of experience gained in wartime use of Australian timbers, it is likely that many will be used almost exclusively in peace in preference to types that were imported.

Small reproductions of the other four pages are included on the next page. The print quality is not great, but it will give an idea of how *PIX* covered the timber industry. The captions under most photos also explain a bit about what is happening, or give context to the shot. In summary, they explain:

- p24 top left - Peter Godwin boards his way up a tree.
- p24 top right - Campsite at Oxley Timber Area.
- p24 bottom left - A tractor loads logs onto a truck.
- p24 bottom right - A bulldozer cutting a roadway.
- p25 top left - Laurie Postans shaves hair from Peter Godwin's arm with an axe to prove its sharpness.
- p25 top right - A tractor "snigs" logs to loading dump.
- p25 bottom left - A tree being felled. (The caption advises that "Output of logs from the Oxley timber area is up to 750,000 super feet a month.")
- p25 bottom right - Two trucks pass on a mountain road near Mount Seaview.
- p26 top left - At Wauchope, logs are loaded onto railway trucks for despatch to Sydney. The mobile crane is owned by B.R. Logan.
- p26 top right - Bill Armitage, veteran bushman, hauls timber with his bullock team in Wauchope yards.
- p26 centre right - Doug Branson (L) and Joe Schubert (R) use a chainsaw to cut a log.
- p26 bottom left - A log is peeled at the Veneer and Timber Products factory at Wauchope.
- p26 bottom right - Peeled veneer is cut and stacked for despatch to Melbourne.
- p27 top left - B.J. Zaia, hauler (L) and W. Moriom, storeman (R) play draughts, watched by J. Rossiter, road gang foreman, with Harold Anderson, forester, reading in the background.
- p27, top right - Laurie Postans, special foreman and his wife, Mrs Postans, who is a keen gardener.
- p27 centre left - Charles Baldwin, timber hauler, cooks himself an evening meal.
- p27 bottom left - J. McGuire (L) and Les Pentland (R) prepare for a weekend outing to Wauchope.
- p27 bottom right - Expert forester in charge, Harold Anderson, working on pay sheets and accounts.

Acknowledgment: Thanks to Peter Lezaich who loaned me the magazine. He found it some years ago when he lived in Dubbo; it was under a carpet (or possibly lino) of a house where he lived when working for Forests NSW.

TIMBER-GETTERS AT WORK (Cont.)
LOCAL FORESTS FILL NEEDS OF WAR



BALANCE Peter Godwin "boards" or "peps" his way up the trunk of a big Carrabreen tree. Precarious as these footholds seem, experienced axemen maintain perfect balance as they chop powerfully with a heavy axe. A good faller averages about 1000 super feet of these logs a day—splitting up to 10 trees.



CAMP This is one of several camp sites in timber areas. At present men have to prepare their own meals after work, but shortly it is hoped that a comfortable, well-equipped mess will be opened in leading timber areas.

BEFORE war, Australia imported nearly £5,000,000 worth of timber from overseas each year. With war clouds looming in 1939, Australian Government recognised that reliance on overseas sources for such vast quantities of a basic raw material would be courting disaster in event of hostilities. Surveys of available timber were made and their suitability as substitutes for imported types was the subject of intensive research. As a result, when war did come, Australia's supply of timber for a wide variety of essential war uses was assured. Following are some uses of local

timbers—Plywood for aircraft—couchwood only; Plywood, marine; brown alder (corkwood), brush mahogany (red Carrabreen), coastal wood, negro head beech, rose maple (pyrene berry ash), sandra, alluvial eucalyptus (blackwood), tulip oak; (case plywood (munition cases, etc.)—all species as above and crumple and prickly ash; for matches; couchwood, hoop pine, yellow Carrabreen, crumple, mountain ash. As a result of experience gained in wartime use of Australian timbers, it is likely that many will be used almost exclusively in peace in preference to types that were imported.



LOADING From a ramp at roadside, a tractor moves logs on to a 10-ton truck. Many similar log dumps have been placed along 11 miles of road which have been built through timber areas. For economy haul "gangs" from site of felling to log dump should not exceed half a mile. This involves extensive roadmaking, but ultimate saving is considerable.



ROADS To remove short haulage, or "snigging" of logs to motor transport, gravel surfaced roads are driven as close as practicable to felling sites. Powerful bulldozers quickly cut a swathe for roadway through timber.

PIX—Page Twenty-four



"SHAVE" When a timber-getter acquires an old law in timber, with a head of metal that will hold a sharp edge, he is loth to part with it. Treats it with unflinching care. Laverie Fontaine, shave hair from Peter Godwin's arm, with use to prove its sharpness.



CRASH Expert axemen know which way a tree will fall and were standing well clear when this giant crumbled. It might one day go like again as a plane built of laminated wood. Output of logs from the Oley timber area is up to 750,000 super feet a month.



"SNIGGING" Two logs, logs are easily handled by this tractor, which "snigs" them to loading dump. Drivers show surprising skill in weaving in and out of thick timber to the open track (above) where the going is much easier.

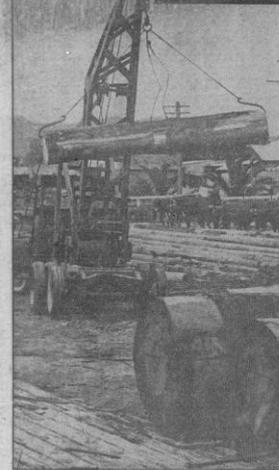


HAUL Two of Commission's 10-ton trucks pass on a mountain road near Mt. Sney view, so named as the point where explorers O'Leary first sighted the sea during his mountain crossing. Loaded weight of truck is about 19 tons. Haul from timber area to Wauchope is about 60 miles. Ten trucks are used for business.

PIX—Page Twenty-five

FEBRUARY 12, 1941. See Next Pages

TIMBER FOR WAR (cont.)



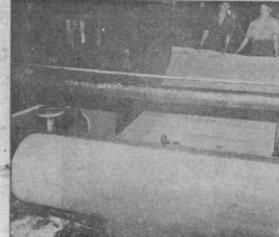
RAIL At Wauchope yards logs are loaded by a mobile crane into railway trucks for dispatch to Sydney, Queensland, Fremantle. Crane, owned by B. R. Logan, operates under contract to Forestry Commission. Some of these great logs weigh as much as 40 tons.



BULLOCKY Bill Armstrong, veteran bullock handler, leads timber with his bullocks down to Wauchope yards. Tackle is used to lift timber into trucks.



SWIFT Portable motor-driven chain saw makes quick work of huge logs. Doug Brennan (left) and Joe Schubert cut this log, 7ft. in girth, in two minutes.



PEELING At Vennor and Timber Products factory at Wauchope a log is shaved to a lath and veneer peeled off. To surface logs as veneer will come off evenly from cutting edges they are steamed in a special vat.



STACKING Veneer peeled from log in one continuous strip is cut into convenient sizes, then clasped in stacks for despatch to Melbourne for processing. Light and strong, plywood has many uses in war.

PIX—Page Twenty-six

TIMBER MEN RELAX



NIGHT After a strenuous day timber-getters are usually ready for bed at an early hour, but find time for various recreations before retiring. R. J. Zala, hauler (left), plays draughts with W. Morton, foreman. Watching game is J. Bannister, road gang foreman. Reading in background is Harold Anderson, forester. It was close to bedtime.



MEAL With a camp crew Charlie Bellamy, a veteran timber hauler, cracks himself an evening meal in foreshop at an Oley area camp. With long experience, most timber men are expert at making both tree meals, and are able to do it with few utensils.



CHAMPION Laverie Fontaine special foreman, is a champion axeman. He has won about 50 (chests and many cups and medals in many parts of Australia and in New Zealand. He lives with his wife in a small cabin built by Forestry Commission. Mrs. Fontaine (above) is a keen parker.



OUTING At weekends most Oley timber men are to be found in Wauchope. Preparing for an outing are J. McQuinn (left) and Len Penland. Although life is hard, with few comforts available, timber men seldom lose their enthusiasm for forestry work.



IN CHARGE Expert forester in charge of Oley timber area work, Mr. Harold Anderson works late at night making up pay sheets and accounts for timber-getters.

PIX—Page Twenty-seven

FEBRUARY 12, 1941. END

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY 1

On 26th July 2012, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an opinion piece by Elizabeth Farrelly titled "We should revere the keepers of knowledge". The Herald describes her as "a Sydney-based columnist and author who holds a PhD in architecture and several international writing awards. A former editor and Sydney City Councilor, she is also Adjunct Associate-Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney."

In her article, Dr Farrelly laments how underfunded State Records NSW is in comparison with other states, saying that it "receives \$0.83 per head of population, compared with \$6.69 in the Northern Territory, \$5.63 in Tasmania and \$4.17 in Queensland". She reports how "outgoing director of State Records, Alan Ventress, describes 'trying to create something of lasting value to the universe while dealing with a pack of accountants and philistines'." She refers to "staff (who) recall their shock at the government hack who suggested they could just 'digitise everything' then destroy these originals to save storage money". She laments the loss of corporate knowledge resulting from the recent move of State Records from The Rocks in central Sydney to Kingswood in the western suburbs.

While recognising the value of digitisation, Dr Farrelly is concerned about the amount of data that is only available in digital format - she wonders how much will be lost when technology moves on and this material can no longer be accessed.

As archivists are so rare, she says they should be treasured. The shortage is compounded by "the dwindling number of vocational undergrad courses (after the recent closure of the course at UNSW there's Edith Cowan and Monash)". This comment elicited at least one letter in response, from Wendy Cousins who said that librarians should be revered as well, and also noted that "governments and private organisations are downgrading both the funding and maintenance of archival and library collections as these are considered a drain on the public/private purse" (SMH, 28th July 2012). Ms Cousins noted that "collections of material are not considered sexy, fashionable or even necessary - they become someone else's problem to provide them."

Dr Farrelly's article is available on the SMH website at www.smh.com.au/opinion/by/elizabeth-farrelly.

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY 2

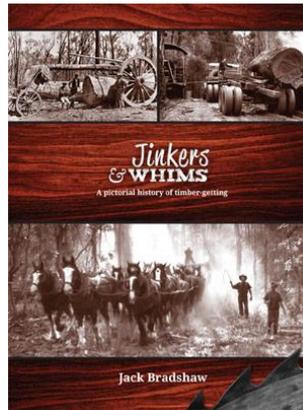
And on that note, Forestry Tasmania closed its library in late December 2012. Some material was passed to Tasmania's State Archives, while other material went to researchers and interested people in Tasmania.

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY 3

Monaro Musings is a monthly newsletter published by the Canberra-based Monaro Folk Society. The November 2012 issue (Vol 21 No. 10) contains an article by John Carroll on the history of the society's logo and includes the following comment:

The folk community is very vulnerable to loss of knowledge. While one of the strengths of folk culture - indeed an essential - is the oral tradition, that strength can also be a weakness. Old men and old women *do* forget or misremember. A good thing about magazines/newsletters is that they can be a repository of information that might otherwise be lost, fragmented or damaged

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



Jinkers & Whims: A pictorial history of timber-getting is the title of a new book by Jack Bradshaw. Released by Vivid Publishing, the book traces the development of the methods and machines used to harvest the forests of Western Australia over the last 150 years, from first settlement to the present day, from horse and steam power to modern mechanical harvesters. It

describes the bush workings and logging operations that underpinned WA's sawmilling industry, and contains more than one hundred photographs dating from the 1890s to the present. The book will be available in early January 2013 and can be ordered from www.vividpublishing.com.au/jinkersandwhims RRP \$34.90.

John Dargavel writes:

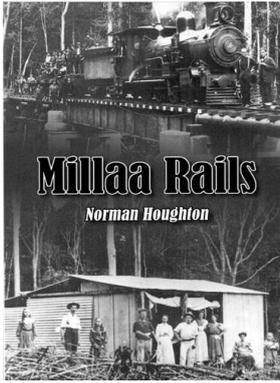
Two more foresters have been added to the nineteen already in with the publication of volume 18 of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in hard copy and on-line. They are Alfred Oscar Platt (Alf) Lawrence (1904-1986) and Geoffrey James Rodger (1894-1982):

* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lawrence-alfred-oscar-platt-alf-14849>.

* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rodger-geoffrey-james-15613>.

No foresters have yet been included in the relatively new *Obituaries Australia* site (<http://oa.anu.edu.au>) that is also run out of the National Centre for Biography at ANU. This site is available for anyone to contribute a scanned copy of a published obituary.

John Dargavel's own book (or rather, one of his books), *The Zealous Conservator: A Life of Charles Lane Poole*, (UWA Press, 2008) has been re-published as an e-book. RRP 14.99. For more info, see <http://uwap.uwa.edu.au/books-and-authors/book/the-zealous-conservator>, including a list of e-book retailers.



Norman Houghton has published *Millaa Rails*, a history of the Tolga to Millaa Millaa railway in far north Queensland from 1910 to 1987. The railway opened the land to timber cutters, and the book is well illustrated with photos, including many of logs being hauled by train, horse and bullock. The book is available from the author at

PO Box 1128, Geelong VIC 3220, or through outlets such as Railshop (<http://railshop.com.au/prod86.htm>). RRP \$35.

The November 2012 issue (Vol. 7 Nos. 1-2) of *ENNZ: Environment and Nature in New Zealand* - was released recently, edited by Paul Star who has taken over from James Beattie (both of whom are AFHS members, in fact, James is our Vice-President).

The current issue includes an article by AFHS member John P. Adam titled "Plant trees now! A short history of the Forest Tree Encouragement planting policy of the nineteenth century, particularly in Auckland and Otago". There is also a review by Paul Star of Neville Peat's book *Seabird Genius: The Story of L.E. Richdale, the Royal Albatross, and the Yellow-eyed Penguin*.

All issues of ENNZ are available for free download from <http://environmentalhistory-au-nz.org/new-zealand/new-zealand-journal>, hosted by the Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network.

ABC RADIO NATIONAL - HINDSIGHT

On Sunday 14th October 2012, the *Hindsight* program on ABC's Radio National broadcast a documentary on early forester, EHF Swain. The program included interviews with four AFHS members - Kevin Frawley, John Dargavel, Greg Barton and Brett Bennett. The description of the show on the *Hindsight* website reads:

EHF Swain, born 1883, was a forester *and* an early conservationist. A passionate man who attracted enemies and acolytes in equal measure, he battled the development of agriculture with an alternative vision of how an Australian society and economy could run. He saw forests as the way forward in every aspect of Australian development.

Swain firmly believed farming families and towns went through unnecessary hardship. The decades spent fighting drought to keep crops in the ground, and the resulting salinity and erosion, were a tragic waste of time.

Those early "hillbilly settlements", as he called them, would have been put to better use planting and revegetating the wasted and degraded farms and deserts, to create new forests - saving the old growth wilderness as a salve for the psyche.

Wood, declared Swain, "was the stuff from which anything could be made".

A few comments have been posted in response to the program. One is from Rosemary Sandford, a granddaughter of Swain, who wrote:

02 Nov 2012 3:20:17pm

Hi All

I have just been listening to a replay of the RN Hindsight program about my grandfather EHF Swain on 14 October 2012.

My mother Nancy Margaret Fulcher Foote (nee Swain), is to be thanked for her efforts in collecting and typing up my grandfather's voluminous papers and notes. This took her some years in the pre-computer days.

Subsequent generations of foresters and forest historians, such as those on your program, have my mother to thank for assembling many of Swain's handwritten and typed papers, notes, poetry and less formal writings.

A direct descendent of Quaker whaling captains and farmers from Nantucket Island, USA, EHF Swain is a hard act to follow ... but I try, in my way!

Since 1980, I have worked, one way or another, at the forestry-conservation interface in Tasmania. I, too, went to the USA. In my case as a Fulbright Scholar of environmental dispute resolution after a stint as Executive Coordinator of the Tasmanian Forests & Forest Industry Council (FFIC 1989-91), which followed the Salamanca Agreement.

So I watch the current Tasmanian IGA negotiations with interest.

Rosemary A. Sandford

This edition of *Hindsight* can be downloaded from www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/new-document/4265230

ABC RADIO NATIONAL - REAR VISION

The *Hindsight* program was immediately preceded by *Rear Vision*, Radio National's weekly broadcast that presents "contemporary events and people in their historical context". On Sunday 14th October 2012, the title of the show was titled "Tasmania: A Divided State" and includes John Dargavel as one of the interviewees. The description of the show on the *Rear Vision* website reads:

The announcement last month by Tasmania's biggest timber company, Gunns, that it was going into voluntary administration is the latest episode in an apparent fight to the death between conservationists and the timber industry in Tasmania. *Rear Vision* looks at the background to the battle over Tasmania's trees.

This edition of *Rear Vision* can be downloaded from www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/tasm-ania3b-divided-state/4295548.

THE RAINBOW GUM



Mindanao in The Philippines has been in the news a bit lately, usually in connection with typhoons or Islamist separatism. However, it is also home to the Mindanao or Rainbow Gum

(*Eucalyptus deglupta*), the only eucalypt to occur naturally in the northern hemisphere; it is also found in Indonesia (on Seram, Sulawest and West Papua) and in Papua New Guinea (including on New Britain). It is one of only four eucalypts that aren't endemic to Australia - the others are *E. urophylla*, *E. orophila* and *E. wetarensis*, which occur in Timor and adjacent islands.

The species was described by German-Dutch botanist Carl Ludwig Blume in 1849 (published in 1850 in *Museum Botanicum Lugduno-Batavum*); its name comes from the Latin "degluptere", to peel or peeling skin, referring to the way the bark peels from the trunk.

It is a common plantation species, mainly for pulp. While plantings were first made in other parts of The Philippines in 1918, it was not until after World War II that it really spread - Papua New Guinea (main island, 1948, from seeds collected on New Britain), Cebu Island (also in The Philippines) (1954), Solomon Islands (1958), Ivory Coast and The Congo (both 1961) and Ceylon (1967).

The photo used comes from Wikipedia, but for more, see www.environmentalgraffiti.com/forests/news-most-colourful-tree-earth and www.amusingplanet.com/2011/10/rainbow-eucalyptusthe-most-colorful.html. A Google search for rainbow gum generates some nice images.

Sources

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REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Since the June 2012 issue of the newsletter, the society has received some requests for information. While they have been forwarded to some people (including non-members) who may be able to help, they are included below.

▫ **Research into 1970 sawmill in Myall Lakes:** Glenn Orgias is a writer researching a novel and is interested particularly in what it was like to work in the timber industry in 1970 in the Myall Lakes area. (Myall Lakes is on the north coast of NSW, near Newcastle.) Glenn asks if the AFHS can recommend any good books, websites or contacts to help with the studies. Glenn can be contacted at Glenn.Orgias@originenergy.com.au.

▫ **Otway sawmills:** Bronwyn Moon (nee Cowley) writes that her "ancestor opened a sawmill on top of the Otway Divide between Callahan and Fisher Creek in 1891. At the time it would have been one of the most isolated mills in the Otways. The timber lease took in the heads of Fisher Creek and Garvey Creeks. The peak now known as Mount Cowley (2200 feet) was almost the centre of the lease area so it is presumed the name was derived from the mill. The mill worked under a manager, Will Rodger, until 1896 when the site was taken over by Hayden Bros. Thomas W. Cowley moved his operations four miles south of Forrest in 1897 where there was better transport infrastructure. It traded under the name of "Otway Sawmills, Forrest". In 1901 he expanded to include Messrs Whitelaw and John McGregor. In 1902, W.R. (Bill) Henry, a plumber by trade and a former Kalgoorlie gold miner joined the partnership. Thomas Cowley was the first to leave the partnership in early 1903. It became "Whitelaw, Henry & McGregor". In 1904 it had been reduced to "Henry & McGregor" but it was not until 1909 that "Henry" began trading as Messrs "Henry & Sons". I would like to know more about the history of the sawmill. Are there any photos? Books? Is it possible to visit these sites? Is there any info about Mount Cowley? Can you advise as to the best place to find out more? I live in northern Victoria, near Echuca." Bronwyn can be contacted at bronnyanddave@hotmail.com.

▫ **Torrington sawmill:** Mike Skinner is trying to locate historic logging records (or any information) on the sawmill that operated in the now Torrington State Forest in northern NSW. He thinks that the sawmill was operating from the early part of the 20th century until the 1960s. If anyone can provide him with information or point him in the right direction, it would be much appreciated. Mike can be contacted at mikeskinner@resolve-geo.com.