Australian Forest History Society

Newsletter No. 82
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"... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments."

Lake Corangamite looking south-west from the top of Red Rock near Alvie

Unattributed painting, State Library of Victoria image H11609.

Painted about a decade after "Brighton Bill" and "Jack the Gooser" were operating their timber barge on the lake. The dark line of forest on the distant left is the location of the Stony Rises, the source of the fence posts to be transported.

See "Lake Corangamite Timber Barge" (p4)

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Australian Forest History Society (AFHS) Inc is A$25 a year for Australian and New Zealand addressees or A$15 a year for students. For other overseas addressees, it is A$30.

These prices do not include GST as the AFHS is not registered for paying or claiming GST. **Membership expires on 30 June each year.**

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NEXT ISSUE

The newsletter is published three times a year and the next issue should be out in August 2021.

Input is always welcome.

Contributions can be sent to Fintan.OLaighin@awe.gov.au.

IN THIS ISSUE

SERIES EDITOR'S NOTE

By Fintán Ó Laighin

Thank you very much to Peter Evans for compiling this issue of the newsletter. I always enjoy his contributions, both as an editor and as a writer, not just for the Australian Forest History Society, but also for the Light Rail Research Association of Australia. His own website is at www.peterevans.com.au.

This issue has an introductory article from our new president, Juliana Lazzari, who was elected at our AGM in November last year. She is the fifth person to take the reins, after John Dargavel (1988-2004), Brett Stubbs (2004-2011), Gregory Barton (2011-2014) and Sue Feary (2014-2019). The position was vacant in 2019-2020.

In her article, Juliana notes that the society is looking for someone to take over as our website manager – please contact her if this sounds like you. Juliana also invites members to volunteer to edit an issue or two. I'd also extend that to inviting people to contribute articles. The society is quite broad in what constitutes "forest history" but try as we might, the newsletters tend to be a bit narrower in focus as they reflect the interests of the editors and the contributors. If there's an aspect of forest history that you think isn't being adequately represented in the newsletter – and I'm sure that there must be – now's your chance!

The last newsletter included a call for contributions to a planned "Islands" issue that will be published later this year, probably as a special issue. That call elicited a few contributions, so it's falling into place, with an article on Kangaroo Island (SA) provided and a pointers to one or two others, such as the Tiwi Islands (NT). I also came across something on the pigeon post service that operated from Great Barrier Island (NZ) from 1898 to 1908. Special "pigeon-gram" stamps were issued for the service. There might not be much forest history on Great Barrier Island, but I thought it was interesting.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Juliana Lazzari

I am delighted at taking on the role of president of the AFHS and thank Sue Feary who filled the role for several years. I have been involved with the AFHS since 2000, the year I attended the Perfumed Pineries conference in Coonabarabran and have had minor roles on the committee and served as public officer over the years.

During this time, I have often been reminded what a well-informed and passionate group of people are our members. The dedication to the topics that fall under the broad umbrella of forest history is reflected in our newsletters and our conferences and associated activities and, most notably, the range of backgrounds, interests and expertise. In spite of the unfortunate "brakes" placed on many of our activities due to COVID19, in particular our proposed return to Coonabarabran for a 20th anniversary Perfumed Pineries conference in 2020, the benefits of remaining connected has meant that our newsletter has been able to continue unabated, and indeed with renewed vigour. A positive outcome from the enforced "slow-down".

While I am neither a forester nor a historian, in the early 1980s I did spend a few influential weeks on work experience at CSIRO Forestry in Yarralumla with Martin Benson who had a large-scale experiment at the Pierces Creek pines near Canberra, measuring the respiration rate of radiata in response to different soil inputs. This was during my matriculation year at Narrabundah College in Canberra.

My own PhD research was on fire ecology in mallee landscapes in the northern Eyre Peninsula of South Australia. In particular, reptile and small mammal responses to fire interactions with fragmented landscapes, in and near Pinkawillinie Conservation Park. While my thesis had an ecological focus, it included the investigation of fire history. The importance of fire or disturbance history in forests to enable our understanding of species responses to different times since fire means we are then able to use fire as a tool to manage those landscapes accordingly. Further research was coupled with developing a method to predict time since fire where there is no forest fire history recorded, such as in many small isolated remnants.

I also have a personal association with forest history through my father, Orlando Lazzari. Although my recollection is rather fuzzy, I remember him recounting stories about working in the forests at Pierces Creek in the 1950s/1960s. He owned two or three horses, one called Mary, for his small forestry operation. As Orlando died in 1989 when he was 62 years old and I was 25, I missed my chance to quiz him further about his short time working in forestry. One thing I remember from his accounts is how incredibly hard it was with limited return. In fact, he recalled hunting birds to eat but, as a "New Australian" not long over from Italy, he didn't realise that magpies were not even close to the category of "game" – the term "leather" was one of his descriptors!

Looking forward to the rest of the year, I encourage members to keep sending through items for our newsletter. No story or contribution is too small! I'd also encourage members to put their hand up to be a guest editor for one or two issues. It isn't an onerous task and allows the editor the opportunity to provide their individual flair and stamp to the issue. Editors will continue to be ably assisted by Fintán Ó Laighin as "series editor" to compile and copy-edit the newsletter.

I also would like to thank Jan Oosthoek who will be handing over the reins as our website manager. Jan has managed our website for several years uploading our newsletters and other items, and managing our Twitter site. Before retiring from these roles, Jan has committed to redeveloping the website over the next couple of months (by June/July), including finding out the cost of updating the AFHS hosting plan. The aim is to have the site based on a content management system such as Wordpress which will make it easier to manage, maintain and update – coding experience won't be necessary to use Wordpress or a similar platform. I am looking for a member to take over Jan's role and for a second person to be their buddy so that the role is shared. Please contact me if you are interested – Juliana.Lazzari@anu.ed.au, and if you have a view and experience of other platforms besides Wordpress that you think we should consider, let me know.

ROBERT ONFRAY'S MONTHLY BLOGS – SURREY HILLS, FORESTRY AND TRAVEL

By Fintán Ó Laighin

Robert Onfray is well-known to society members, having presented papers at a number of our conferences, been a frequent contributor to the newsletter, and served on our committee. More recently, he has become a published author with last year's release of his book, *Fires, Farms and Forests. A human history of Surrey Hills, north-west Tasmania.* A review of the book is included in the newsletter of December 2020 (pp17-18).

On his website – www.robertonfray.com – Robert describes himself as a "Retired professional forester and experienced land manager" and that he "write(s) blogs on three different topics each month – stories about Surrey Hills, Travelling around Australia, and about (his) forestry career". The blogs commenced in August 2020 and are published monthly.

The direct links to the blogs are:
www.robertonfray.com/category/surrey-hills,
www.robertonfray.com/category/forestry and
www.robertonfray.com/category/travel

There is a bit of cross-over among the sections – "Surrey Hills" includes articles on "Australia's Longest Wooden Tramway", "Reminiscing about working on Surrey Hills from the 1950s to the early 1970s", and "The life of a young timber cutter on Surrey Hills", while "Forestry" includes some forest-related musings arising from his travels. Meanwhile, the "Travel" section starts with a story called "Travelling full-time during a pandemic". He doesn't seem to have made it out of Queensland yet but, hey, it's a big state.

LAKE CORANGAMITE TIMBER BARGE

By Peter Evans

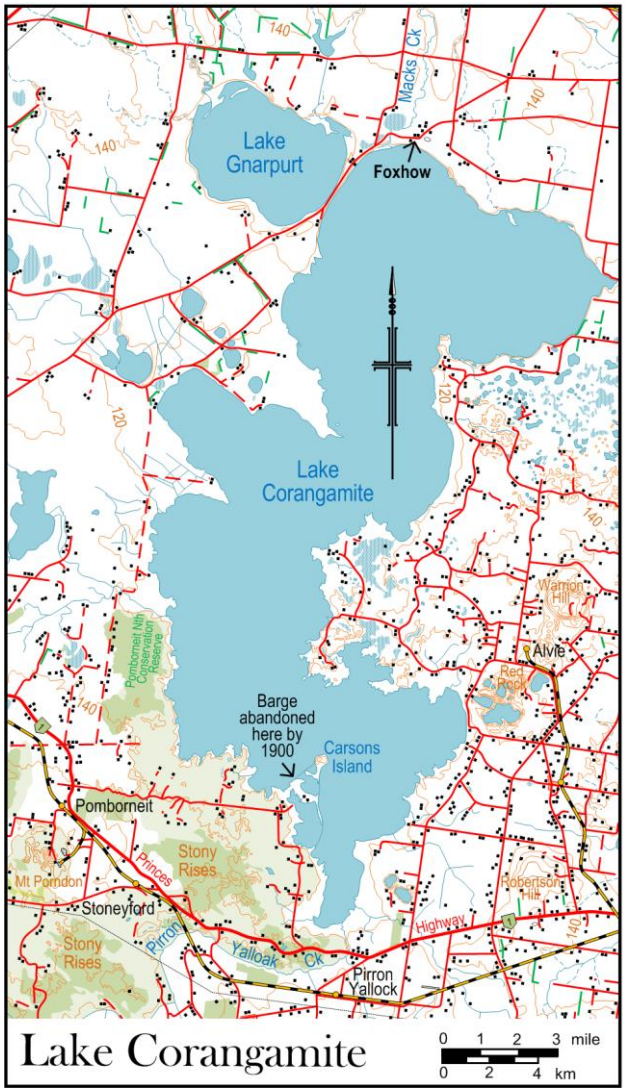
Lake Corangamite sits at the north-eastern corner of the once great Heytesbury Forest in Victoria's south-west. The lake is Australia's largest permanent saline lake covering 230 square kilometres and measures 30 kilometres from north to south. The lake has no natural outlet, and is largely fed by the Woady Yalloak Creek in the north and Pirron Yalloak Creek from the south. In the south are the lightly-timbered volcanic outcrops known as the Stony Rises, formed by ancient eruptions from Mount Porndon in the south-west and Warrion Hill in the east (these same eruptions forming the geological "dam" which created the lake). To the north are vast treeless plains which early surveys described as "well grassed" and "interspersed with swamps",[1] all features highly attractive to graziers. And with graziers came the need for fencing materials. Unfortunately, roads in the area were almost non-existent, and the Stony Rises could only be crossed on foot or horseback in the 1850s. Any bulky or heavy commodity could only be transported with the greatest difficulty.

It was at Lake Corangamite that one of the earliest documented (and certainly the most unusual) utilisations of timber from this corner of the Heytesbury Forest took place. Cutting was underway in the early 1860s by former sailor John Brighton (commonly known as "Brighton Bill"), who built the single-masted sailing barge *Queen of Corangamite* with his one-handed mate John Sparks (commonly known as "Jack the Gooser", who was born in Kent, England, and arrived in Victoria circa 1854).

The barge was built of local timbers hewn somewhere near today's Pomborneit East and was fitted with a mainsail and a jib. Brighton was based at Foxhow (at the northern end of the lake) and normally berthed his barge at the mouth of Macks Creek. The barge conveyed split fence posts from what Brighton described as the "Timboon Forest" (named for the early term for the Camperdown district) at the southern end of the lake, and distributed them to persons requiring the material at the northern end. The capacity of the barge was about 400 fence posts weighing a total of around 40 tons.

The barge was still operating in 1864, but would appear to have been "wrecked" in 1866, and a replacement to serve the same purpose was built by Matthew Jones, proprietor of the Corangamite Hotel, Foxhow. The vessel was described as "a first-class sailing boat, 27 feet, with 8 feet beam, mast and sails complete". The remains of what is probably this replacement barge were left to decay in a boatshed on the north-west side of Carsons Island. (The island is only an "island" in wet years and, even then, the water over the submerged connecting isthmus is only knee deep). The remains of the barge were washed away in the floods of 1950, leaving only the cobble-stone track that was probably the route of waggons bringing fence posts from the Stony Rises to the lake shore.

"Jack the Gooser" (who managed quite well despite his missing left hand, his arm terminating in a leather cap studded with brass nails) worked out his remaining years at Pomborneit shooting rabbits and buying skins. He died of bronchitis in a hut at "The Warrions" in February 1884.[2] "Brighton Bill", however, seems to have disappeared from the archives leaving his fate currently unknown.[3]



From Evans, P. (in prep) *Tramways to Timboon: a history of the resources of the Heytesbury Forest*.

[1] Parish plans, Pomborneit (1939), Pirron Yalloak and Nalangil (1856), Poliah South (1866) and Struan (1866).

[2] History compiled from Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Victorian Public Record Series (VPRS) 24/P0, unit 139, item 1864/161; unit 464, item 1884/220; John Sparks death certificate 759 of 1884; *Geelong Advertiser*, Saturday 17 May 1851, p2; *The Age*, Friday 5 February 1864, p5; *The Argus*, Monday 8 February 1864, p6; *The Australasian,* Saturday 3 July 1869, p12; *Geelong Advertiser*, Monday 17 December 1866, p3; Wednesday 20 March 1867, p3; Monday 17 April 1876, p3; *Colac Herald*, Tuesday 4 March 1884, p2; *Camperdown Chronicle*, Friday 28 May 1880, p2; Thursday 20 October 1921, p2. See also *Colac Herald*, Friday 7 October 1921 and Friday 16 February 1990. The latter two *Colac Herald* references were kindly supplied by Norm Houghton.

[3] Apparently not the "Brighton Bill" in PROV, VPRS 24/P0, unit 164, item 1865/1187.

TROPICAL LOGS BY TRAIN – HOW THE PUFFERS PULLED THE PINES

By Norman Houghton OAM

In Far North Queensland the original Atherton Tablelands tropical rain forests, called "scrub" by the locals, covered around 210,000 ha to the east and south of Atherton. The forests were first opened for selection in the 1880s when a few pioneers established themselves. However the then Land Act was not a suitable vehicle for local conditions, so further settlement faltered. A revised land regime under the Closer Settlement Act from 1906 was more in tune with the Atherton environment and, from this time, settlement began in earnest on the headwaters of the Johnstone River. Settlement now took in the areas that were to become the townships of Kairi, Yungaburra, Malanda and Millaa Millaa.

Settlers were legally bound to reside on their Portions and make improvements subject to forfeiture. Of necessity, such improvements comprised clearing, grassing and fencing. The option to harvest the trees for market consumption was not viable because there was no way to cart logs from the farm. There were no roads, bridges or railways, so trees were felled, the logs rolled into stacks and then burnt on site.

The construction of a government railway from Tolga to Malanda in 1910 changed the economics of land clearing because a settler could then sell timber to loggers. Now the logs could go out by train.

Soon after opening, there were about two hundred bullock teams engaged in log carting along the railway and special log trains were run to Cairns. This log traffic fed sawmills in Cairns but the bulk of timber was for export to large mills elsewhere, particularly Melbourne and Sydney. These interstate mills had sophisticated equipment and economies of scale that the few newly-established Tableland mills could match and the interstaters offered top prices for rain forest logs.

Not all timbers were commercial. The contemporary market was specifically interested in pine, maple, white beech, black bean, walnut, kauri pine and red cedar. These logs were regarded as some of the finest furniture, joinery and decorative timbers available anywhere in Australia. The walnut in particular was in demand for piano making.

The local sawmilling industry was slow to expand under these export circumstances. As well, rail freight rates for logs were cheaper than for sawn timber so the incentive for local value-adding was undercut. The bullock and horse team remained supreme along the railway until 1924 when the first motor powered log transport was introduced in the form of tractors. This was followed by motor powered log winches in 1928 and Caterpillar 40 diesel powered log haulers by the mid-1930s.

Timber was the mainstay of the railway at all times and, once the line was extended through from Malanda to Millaa Millaa in 1921, the railway regularly carted in excess of 40,000 tons per annum or around 14 million super feet (33,000 cubic metres) year-in and year-out to the 1940s. The loadings halved during the 1930s Depression, including the 1933 "big wet" when logging all but ceased for a year, but not for long and recovered to a record year in 1935 of 47,000 tons.

This timber was a mix of sawn and log but log predominated. It was then impossible to cart logs long distances by road either because the road surfaces could not take the traffic or the roads did not exist, so rail continued to be used for inwards logs to the mills along the Millaa Millaa railway and Cairns railway. The big mills at Mareeba and Cairns geared their operations to rail with arrangements of ramps, cranes and skids to handle this. The logs came from private Portions and state forest reserves, the latter abutting to the north, east and south of the rail route from Kairi to Millaa Millaa.

Developments in timber technology such as plywood saw some district mills install peeler plants from the 1930s to produce veneer outputs for plywood, furniture and boxes. The veneer logs added another segment to log cartage on the railway.

Despite the disruptions caused by the Pacific War, the role of the railway as a timber line continued unabated, especially for the post-war construction boom, when tonnages in the order of 35,000 endured to 1952. This timber came off private Portions when the last of the uncleared scrub was removed for agricultural expansion, and from state forest reserves.

In the mid-1950s there were more than ten sawmills feeding the railway from Kairi to Millaa Millaa, although logs rather than sawn timber remained the major traffic with a ratio of three tons to one ton in the 1950s. The cutting rates could not be maintained indefinitely and started to ease by 1952 when the resource then economically available was thinning. Rail loadings for timber settled at a consistent annual average of a little over 20,000 tons through to 1961 when the railway was closed.

Logs being loaded aboard the train on the government railway for transport to Cairns. Image courtesy Norman Houghton.

A SHIP CALLED *EUCALYPTUS*

By Peter Evans

Any island, prior to the development of commercial aviation, was dependant on trade by sea. For the colony of Van Diemens Land (Tasmania after 1856) its most important trading routes were Bass Strait and the Tasman Sea.

This was especially so after the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, when a booming Melbourne demanded large quantities of timber. Tasmania had ports in close proximity to timber resources, while Melbourne was relatively sparsely timbered. Transport was the greatest difficulty and, prior to the first railways being established in the colony of Victoria from 1854, it was easier to ship Tasmanian timber direct to Melbourne wharves than bring it overland even minor distances from local forests. What better subject for an Australian forest history newsletter than the story of a ship called *Eucalyptus*?

Eucalyptus (195 tons displacement, and 121 feet in length) was built with local timbers in 1852 by John Ross for Charles Maxwell, a shipping agent of Hobart. She was launched at Ross's yard south of Hobart on 4 March 1852 and was said to be "one of the finest examples of naval architecture which has been turned off the stocks in Tasmania". She made her maiden voyage under Captain John Smith a little over a week later as an early member of the "Blue Gum Clippers" of Tasmania.[1]

Originally schooner-rigged (fore- and aft sails on all masts), she was described as a "barque" by 1856 (transverse sails on fore and main masts). Captained by John Blackburne, she traded out of her home port in Hobart on a regular basis between the various ports on the south-eastern Australian coast and New Zealand, carrying cargoes as diverse as timber, livestock, building stone, flour, wool and passengers.[2] She was often mentioned in newspaper articles as having made a fast passage. Blackburne was replaced as master around 1857 by Thomas Thomson[3] and, in 1860 by James Taylor. Her working life seems to have been relatively trouble-free; one notable incident being the death of her mate Thomas Ritchie in Melbourne in April 1861 (due to a block falling on his head).[4] A grounding in Hobsons Bay, Melbourne, in 1862, led to an overhaul at Ross's patent slip.[5] Ten years after her construction, her bulwarks were said to be "almost as clean and sharp on the edges as the day she was launched; and she is as tight and dry a vessel now as then".[6] By May 1863, her master was Captain Robert Rae.[7]

Charles Maxwell put the barque up for auction in Hobart in June 1864, but *Eucalyptus* was withdrawn from sale when the bidding stalled at £1400. She was subsequently privately purchased by timber merchants and ship owners Messrs William Belbin and Charles Dowdell for £1900.[8] Her captain in 1865 was Thomas Brown and, in 1866, James Riddle.[9] In 1866, she was chartered by Bernhard Ehrenfried to replace the wrecked barque *Cosmopolitan* and refitted to transport cattle between Gladstone and Hokitika on the South Island of New Zealand, meat being urgently required for the miners then engaged in the gold rushes on the rugged west coast. She was due to make six trips (subsequently reduced to three as the rushes waned), but the charter was ended when Ehrenfried got into financial difficulties.[10] However, now fitted for the cattle trade, she found ready use in the transport of that commodity (but also carried much coal and timber).

Barque Eucalyptus *being overhauled on the slip in Hobart (almost certainly that owned by John Ross either at Secheron Bay or at Battery Point). State Library of Victoria image H99.220/942.*

The barque was again slipped in Hobart in June 1867 for re-coppering her bottom, having touched heavily on the bar at Hokitika on her previous voyage (in 1866 the patent slip had been relocated from Secheron Bay to Battery Point, Hobart).[11]

One Hobart newspaper reporter described *Eucalyptus* as "always remarkable for a smart appearance, both alow and aloft, and in this respect has suffered nothing in her long absence from these waters".[12]

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[1] *The Courier* (Hobart), Saturday 6 March 1852, p3; Friday 12 March 1852, p1.

[2] *The Star* (Ballarat), Tuesday 2 September 1856, p2; *Colonial Times* (Hobart), Monday 22 September 1856, p2; Monday 8 December 1856, p2; *Launceston Examiner*, Thursday 23 October 1856, p2; *The Mercury* (Hobart), Monday 27 May 1861, p2; Saturday 10 May 1862, p2. Additional information from VPRS 14, 944 and 948, passenger lists, Public Record Office Victoria.

[3] *The Hobart Town Mercury*, Wednesday 30 September 1857, p2.

[4] *The Argus* (Melbourne), Wednesday 1 May 1861, p5; Thursday 2 May 1861, p4.

[5] *The Mercury* (Hobart) Monday 24 March 1862, p2.

[6] *Leader* (Melbourne), Saturday 23 August 1862, p7.

[7] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Tuesday 26 May 1863, p2.

[8] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Wednesday 8 June 1864, p2; Thursday 9 June 1864, p2; Tuesday 21 June 1864, p2. Belbin & Dowdell were active in the timber trade as early as 1854 – see *The Courier* (Hobart), Thursday 7 September 1854, p3.

[9] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Saturday 25 February 1865, p2; Saturday 27 May 1865, p2; Tuesday 20 March 1866, p2.

[10] *Tasmanian Morning Herald* (Hobart), Wednesday 7 November 1866, p3; *The Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston), Saturday 30 March 1867, p5.

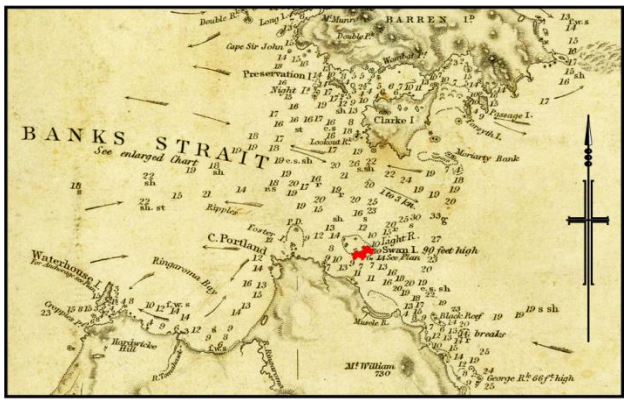
[11] *The Tasmanian Times* (Hobart) Tuesday 25 June 1867, p2. Additional information from HLCD Pty Ltd (2008) *Battery Point Conservation Management Plan*. For the Hobart City Council.

[12] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Monday 16 December 1867, p2.

A further overhaul at Ross's slip late in 1870[13] was to be her last. On Monday 28 November 1870, bound for Adelaide with a cargo of timber and beating westwards through Banks Strait, *Eucalyptus* was totally wrecked on the Black Reef at Swan Island (just off the north-eastern tip of Tasmania). All crew were saved, and both the vessel and her cargo were insured.[14] Captain James Biddle conveyed the sad news to her owners by letter:

> In beating up to Swan Island on Monday forenoon, blowing strong from the WNW with squalls and showers of rain, she struck on some rocks that are not on any chart that I have seen, they lie about 2 or 2½ miles ENE from the Black Reef, which I saw at the time and thought I was at a very safe distance. Owing to it blowing very hard I did not get her off until near high water, about 3 hours, when she drove over the reef. She had 5 feet of water in the hold, her stern post started, and her rudder knocked right through the deck. Both sea and wind increasing I was obliged to leave, and saw her founder about one hour and a half after we landed. I have just arrived here and a gentleman has promised to forward this from Fingal. The crew are all right and we will come up by the *Robert Burns.*[15]

Belbin & Dowdell lost no time in replacing her with a new barque *Acacia* of 223 tons built at Ross's slip at Battery point at a cost of £2250.[16] The name *Eucalyptus* seems to have had little subsequent maritime use, although there is currently a luxury yacht bearing that name.[17]



Marine chart of 1844 similar to that which would have been used by Eucalyptus in 1870. Swan Island is highlighted in red. Courtesy State Library of Victoria.

QUESTIONS OF STAG

By John Dargavel

I was asked nice questions from the Australian National Dictionary Centre about the definition of "Stag". Is it a distinctively Australian term? What exactly does it mean? I sent the quick response below, but it needs checking, especially as meanings can differ between states. It also needs examples of where it has been used.

> **Q1.** I don't know whether STAG is distinctively Australia. However, STAG-HEADED is also found in USA, as per caption for US Forest History Society 1930s photo FHS8291.
>
> **Q2.** STAG. I take it to mean a large dead tree standing in forest and surrounded by live trees. The archetype for me is the landscape of Victorian mountain forests decades after the 1939 fires with the white stags still towering above the growing forest. A stag has lost all its leaves and loses its branches progressively.
>
> STAG-HEADED. I take it to mean a live tree whose top branches have died.
>
> WIDOW-MAKER. I think that this might be a distinctively OZ bush term for a dry branch on a live tree, that might fall on your head, especially if you were felling the tree.

Please send any comments and suggestions to: john.dargavel@ozemail.com.au; Bernadette Hince coldwords@gmail.com.

Stags? Marysville Timer & Seasoning Company incline tramway in the 1940s following the 1939 bushfires. Peter Evans collection.

[13] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Saturday 22 October 1870, p2.

[14] *The Australasian* (Melbourne), Saturday 3 December 1870, p15; *The Tasmanian Times* (Hobart), p2.

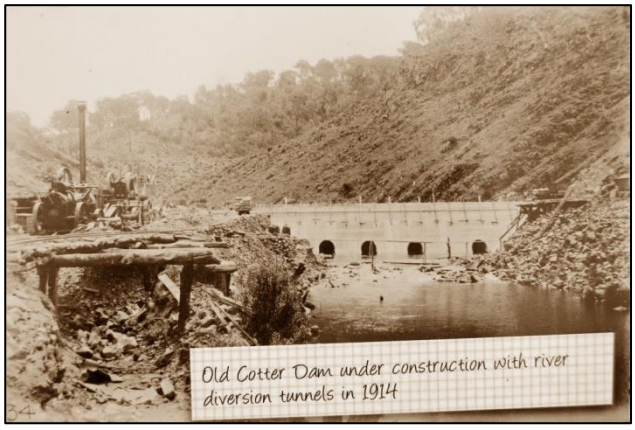
[15] *The Mercury* (Hobart), Saturday 3 December 1870, p2.

[16] *Adelaide Observer*, Saturday 11 March 1871, p2.

[17] https://eucalyptusleaves.com.au, accessed 2 January 2021.

THE POLITICS OF PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT IN THE COTTER CATCHMENT

By Graham McKenzie-Smith AM



Introduction

The June 2017 newsletter carried an article on the pine plantations in the Lower Cotter Catchment Area.[1] Although detailing the sequence of plantation development in the catchment from 1926 and their subsequent history, the article does not dwell on the reason new planting ceased in 1961, except to say that "*Some concerns were expressed at the time about the increased turbidity in the Canberra water supply* ...". All these plantations were taken out of production after the 2003 bushfire and the area is now being "restored" as the Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve. In their 2018 Management Plan for the new reserve the ACT Parks & Conservation Service have a minimal outline of the plantation history of the catchment, concluding with "*Concerns were raised over increased turbidity from the road network and further clearing of native forest was prohibited in 1961*".[2] Continuing research for the ACT Forests history (still a work-in-progress) has allowed a more detailed look at the circumstances round the cessation of new planting in the Cotter Catchment.

Plantation Establishment Program (1926 to 1938)

Before the Cotter Dam was built in 1915 the area around the dam had been cleared for grazing and severe erosion was causing serious siltation of the dam, so the first pine plantations were established at Uriarra in 1926 to address the problem. By 1927, Max Jacobs (as the young Forest Assessor) had done the detailed assessment of the lower Cotter catchment and identified the areas suitable for planting. G.J. Rodger (as Forestry Officer) in his annual reports repeatedly indicated that most of the dry sclerophyll type forest up to 850m was "unproductive" with only a thin canopy, so was susceptible to erosion and should also be converted to pine. This would not only reduce siltation of the dam, but also increase access for fire protection and provide a long term income to fund the protection of the catchment. Both Rodger and Jacobs had moved on by 1929 when Cyril Cole continued planting pine in the catchment until 1938, concentrating on the areas that had been cleared during the pastoral period, before moving north in Uriarra into the non-catchment area of Blue Range.

The rate of plantation establishment during the war years was less than target and then forestry had to compete for funds with other higher profile areas of Canberra's post war development. Land availability was a significant factor, caused by delays in the withdrawal from lease of land outside the catchment. In August 1950, ACT Forests became a division of the Forestry & Timber Bureau (F&TB) with G.J. Rodger now as Director General, so the Cotter catchment again became the focus for planting at Uriarra. Rodger's initial concept plan from 1926 was for conversion of most of the dry sclerophyll forest to *P radiata*, while in the higher areas the wet sclerophyll eucalypt forest would either be regenerated to eucalypt after harvest or converted to *P ponderos*a. However, ACT Forests was entering a minefield which saw plantation establishment in the catchment cease in 1961.

Cotter Dam

Bill Bates examines the build-up of fine silt at the head of Cotter Dam

The initial Cotter Dam had been built in 1915 with a capacity to supply a population of ~15,000, at a time when the population was less than 2,500. Although the catchment produced good water, the previous excessive clearing for grazing led to erosion after every storm and this built up a considerable silt layer on the floor of the dam, before the pine planting generally brought the bulk of the erosion under control. This silt build up was deepest in the headwaters of the dam, so when a flood entered the dam after a heavy rainfall, the silt was disturbed to exacerbate the turbidity in the dam. The size of the dam's storage initially allowed any turbidity to settle out before the water entered the town's reticulation system. By 1945, the population reached 15,000 and the increased water usage meant that turbid water could not settle, reaching the intakes for the household supply regularly after heavy rains. The dam wall was raised in 1951 with the increased storage designed to supply a

[1] Graham McKenzie-Smith, *The Forgotten 77 Years: Plantation Forestry in the Lower Cotter Catchment of the ACT*, Australian Forest History Society Inc, Newsletter No 71, June 2017, pp4-7.

[2] *Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan 2018*, ACT Parks & Conservation Service 2018, p9.

population of ~ 30,000, but the water supply was still discoloured after heavy rain.[3] This new population level was reached in 1954 and investigations belatedly started for a new water supply. A site was chosen for what became Bendora Dam in 1954 and although access and site work soon began, construction was delayed until 1958 and it was not operational until 1961.

Until the Bendora Gravity Main was completed (planned for 1963, but delayed until 1967), the Bendora water was released into the Cotter River to flow down to Cotter Dam from where it was pumped to Canberra. So, until 1967 when the Canberra population had reached 103,000, their water supply came directly from the seriously undersized Cotter Dam which only held five days' supply.

Expansion of the Plantation Establishment Program (1951 to 1961)

With G.J. Rodger now in the driving seat, the planting program returned to the Cotter Catchment, so clearing began at Halls block in 1950 with the first area planted in 1951. Planting then progressed through Halls and Pago blocks, into Shannons and the southern side of Blundells in 1955. The northern side was being cleared in October 1955 when a storm dumped 88 mm of rain at Uriarra in just over an hour.

The turbidity in all the feeder streams to the Cotter Dam increased, but the flash flood into the dam also stirred up the fine silt on floor of the dam causing even more turbidity. While the streams ran clear within a few days, the dam turbidity took over a week to settle, feeding turbid water into Canberra for that period. This coincided with an outbreak of gastroenteritis which led to multiple complaints about the water quality.

The Health Department was quick to test the water to find no bacteriological cause[4] and attributed poor water quality to forestry activity in the catchment. The recently expanded ACT Advisory Council called for an inquiry[5] and many Letters to the Editor followed, amid calls for a filtration plant. With workers now living in the catchment at the Bendora Dam site, a chlorination plant was installed in early 1956 but without a filtration plant, so the over-chlorination of turbid water led to even more complaints. By April 1956 Health was publicly claiming the "*deterioration in the physical qualities of the water were due to the indiscriminate and excessive afforestation on the Cotter River Catchment area and the increased demand on the inadequate water storages*".[6] This started a long correspondence between Interior, Health and Works on who was to blame and as a result an inter-departmental committee (IDC) was formed, meeting for the first time in November 1956.[7]

Inter-Departmental Committee

Although their brief was to "*make investigations and recommendations with a view to improving the quality of water from the Cotter catchment area*" the IDC meetings were characterised by repeated claims by the Health representative that all the problems were caused by afforestation and that practices should change or cease. The Works representative generally agreed but remained silent on any contribution to the turbidity from the new dam construction or the associated road and powerline works. The Interior representative (Kel McGrath) outlined the extensive protocols used by ACT Forests and reported on actual water quality measurements which were by then standard practice, but was unable to change the opinions of the other members. The Committee made no investigations or made no recommendations but became a vehicle for Health and Works to call for cessation of the forestry activities, while ignoring any data, observations or counter arguments placed before their representatives.

To give the planting program some clear air, Ron Green attended the IDC meeting on 7 March 1957 to outline the 1957 program which was "given approval", with the Soil Conservation Service to do some additional work above Vanities Crossing. By this time the program in the catchment had fallen behind schedule and the planned 1958 program was increased to 320 ha. After a field inspection of the 1957 plantings the IDC indicated that they were satisfied with the 1958 program, especially as the Soil Conservation Service was to be involved with various erosion control measures.

The Turbidity Monitoring Program

ACT Forests had by this time introduced a comprehensive stream monitoring program with 23 sample points at Uriarra and seven at Pierces Creek where the turbidity was measured after each heavy rainfall. With similar readings taken along all streams in the plantation area over several years they were able to isolate any problem areas and apply remedial action. Although elevated turbidity readings continued after heavy rain the clearing techniques used, along with the filter strips of native vegetation along the permanent streams minimized the contribution from areas cleared for planting, but roads and firebreaks continued to be the biggest contributors. With the larger than normal 1958 program, a supervision slip up led to an overly steep area of Upper Cotter block being cleared, but subsequent stream monitoring failed to indicate added turbidity from that area.

Over winter 1959, several severe thunderstorms led to frequent occasions where a flash flood of water stirred up the silt layer in Cotter Dam and although the creeks again ran clear after a few days, the water delivered into

[3] *Canberra Times*, 29 March 1952, *Water pure but discoloured*, p4.

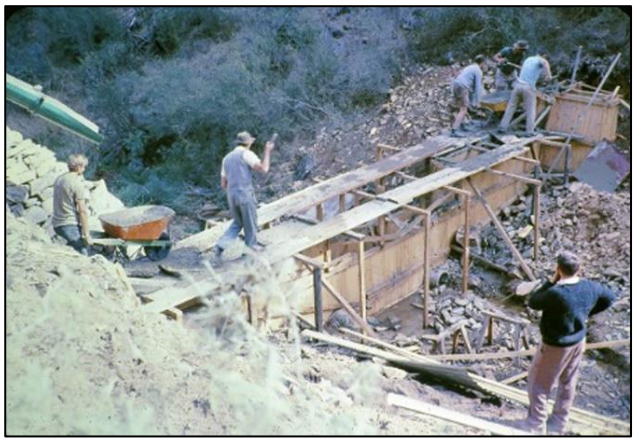
[4] *Canberra Times*, 27 October 1955, *No Contamination in Tap Water*, p2.

[5] *Canberra Times*, 1 November 1955, *Council Urges Inquiry on Water Supply*, p1.

[6] *Canberra Times*, 10 April 1956, *Laboratory to Investigate Water Supply*, p6.

[7] ACT Admin General – Water – Departmental policy on water supply; Interdepartmental Committee – matters associated with Cotter River Catchment Area [National Archives Australia, NAA A1658, 83/6/7 Parts 1 & 2]

Canberra retained a degree of turbidity for lengthy periods. Continued letters to the *Canberra Times* and questions in both houses of parliament[8] kept the shortcomings of the water supply before the residents of Canberra.



Construction of one of the CSIRO catchment research stream gauging stations

The IDC gets bolshy

Late 1959 also started a period when the polarized positions of the representatives on the IDC hardened. A tender call for clearing at Wombat block[9] caused Health to hark back to the October 1955 event, claiming that "*everyone had accepted that forestry was to blame*". This was countered by Interior denying that this was the case and a demanding to see any evidence to support such a claim, which Health could not provide. Meanwhile Health continued to tell the Advisory Council that afforestation was to blame, prompting a letter to the *Canberra Times* from Kel McGrath as Chairman of the ACT Division of the Institute of Foresters (IFA) which set out the facts.[10]

One of the issues with the Cotter Catchment was that Works, ACT Forests, Health, Bush Fire Council and others all controlled different aspect of the area's management under a raft of ordnances, some with conflicting provisions. During 1960, the rhetoric calmed down with the IDC proposing a single ordinance for the control of the Cotter. After ministerial approval an officer from the administrative area of Interior was to join the IDC to draft the new ordinance. However, the Director of Agriculture and Stock was added to the committee instead and given his public position of opposing further afforestation the IDC became even more opposed to forestry. When informed in February 1961 that land had been cleared at Lees Creek to be planted in 1961, the IDC unilaterally expanded its charter to resolve that details of all new clearing should be considered by the committee before any decision was made.

Institute of Foresters Submission

In May 1961, the ACT Division of the IFA made a detailed submission and presentation to the Minister for the Interior on catchment management[11] which was received well, but when referred to the IDC it was "noted" and not considered further. When ACT Forests notified the IDC in August 1961 of the areas proposed for planting in 1962, the Committee resolved without any inspection, analysis or discussion, and without detailing any reasons that the proposed clearing would be "detrimental to public health". This led to heated correspondence between the three departmental secretaries.

Max Jacobs had succeeded G.J. Rodger as Director General of F&TB in 1960 and the continued hostility of the IDC, together with the availability of other land, encouraged him to postpone the 1962 planting program in the Cotter and the clearing tender was withdrawn on 21 September. This decision was also influenced by the announcement of the delay in constructing the Bendora Gravity Main (delayed from 1963 to 1967). This would mean the Cotter Dam would continue to be used beyond its capacity and that turbid water would continue to be supplied to Canberra for this period no matter what was done in the catchment area. After continued public statements by Health about afforestation being the cause of the turbidity, even after clearing and establishment ceased, Jacobs wrote a detailed article in the Canberra Times[12] to refute all the arguments. This caused the IDC to claim that he had no right to issue such a statement, despite the continual statements from Health over the previous five years.

The Teakle Inquiry

The National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) had been formed in 1958 to co-ordinate the development of Canberra and as they were the construction authority for Bendora Dam they also had an interest in the Cotter catchment. Although they were never invited to join the IDC, they liaised with it and in June 1962 commissioned Professor L.J.H. Teakle of the University of Queensland to report on the Cotter Catchment to assist any decision on its future uses. His Interim Report dated 17 August 1962[13] was a result of his consideration of the data placed before him by F&TB, Health and Works but did not reach any conclusions, instead proposed a detailed research program to be undertaken in 1963 before a more detailed report. A further Interim Report in November gave specific details of the research program and allocated responsibilities to Health, Works, NCDC and F&TB. While Professor Teakle was undertaking his study, Max Jacobs decided to maintain the suspension of the planting program in the Cotter catchment.

[8] *Canberra Times*, 31 October 1959, *Early Water Supply Hopes Disappointed*, p5.

[9] *Canberra Times*, 26 August 1959, *Tenders*, p16.

[10] *Canberra Times*, 9 November 1959, *Discolouration of Cotter Water*, p2.

[11] Institute of Foresters of Australia, *ACT Division Report on Watershed Management in the Cotter Catchment*, May 1961.

[12] *Canberra Times*, 30 March 1962, *Expert's Answer on Water*, p5.

[13] Teakle, L.J.H., *Interim Report on Cotter Dam Catchment*, National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), unpublished report, 17 August 1962.

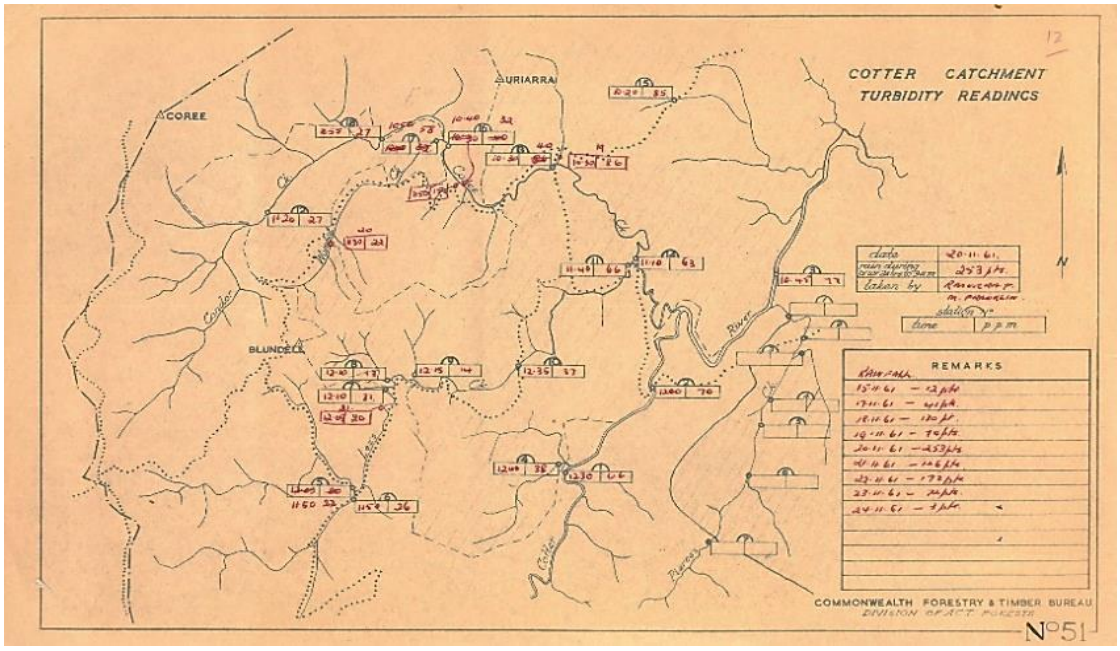
The Forest Research Institute (newly created within F&TB) formed a Watershed Research Group and developed a series of calibrated catchments within the Cotter to monitor streamflow from different forest types, particularly during storm events. Their interim report of 2 October 1963 identified the soil type as the most significant factor in the turbidity issue. The soil type on the eastern side of the valley had a high percentage of dispersed clay, giving high turbidity immediately after storms, from both the pine and native forest part of the catchment. Soils on the western side were generally deep skeletal and permeable, so contributed little sediment even from areas recently cleared or with poor vegetative cover. All new plantation areas since 1938 had been on this western side of the catchment. Roads and firebreaks were assessed as the major contributor to the continuing turbidity issue.

Professor Teakle's final report in February 1966[14] generally quantified the well-known issues of turbidity in the catchment and the operational recommendations required no significant changes to those recommended in the IFA Submission, as had been applied by ACT Forests for many years. Although clearing for plantation establishment had ceased, Canberra continued to have "dirty water" delivered from the inadequate storage of Cotter Dam after each storm event, long after the feeder streams had run clear. This persisted until the Bendora Gravity Main became operational in 1968 delivering water directly from the Bendora Dam which had the capacity to ameliorate any turbidity after storm events.

Attention turns elsewhere

With the suspension of planting in the Cotter, new areas were required to reach the planned 16,000 ha of plantation needed to sustain a viable processing industry. Withdrawal of grazing land for planting continued to be slow, with opposition from graziers abetted by their supporters in the Stock and Agriculture Branch. The program initially concentrated on some "infill" planting around existing plantations until the construction of Corin Road, leading to the new Corin Dam, opened the Gibraltar area for development. A proposal for a dam on the Naas River near Mount Tennant would require plantation establishment on the degraded grazing areas in that catchment, so plans were developed for a plantation cell based at Boboyan. When that dam was shelved the compulsory acquisitions did not proceed and the initial plantings were left as a stranded resource.

CSIRO by 1965 was developing the techniques for land capability surveys and for their Queanbeyan/Shoalhaven trial area had used the plantation growth data that had been collected by the many years of AFS plot measurements at Kowen. Ian Gordon then used the techniques to assess all the land in the ACT for the comparative Land Expectation Values of forestry and agriculture.[15] This indicated that using cleared land close to the potential market was preferable to clearing new land at a distance. This work identified some 25,000 ha of land in the ACT which was better suited to plantation establishment than continued agricultural production. Then working with the landscape planners at NCDC a total of 8,300 ha was identified from which the 5,300 ha needed to complete the Cabinet approved area could be sourced. Although the commissioning of the Bendora Gravity Main in 1968 took Cotter Dam out of the water supply system, further planting in the Cotter Catchment was quietly abandoned. With ongoing resistance to land withdrawals and alienation of plantation land for other uses nibbling away at the land base, ACT Forests never reached the approved 16,000 ha before the mis-managed 2003 bushfire took out all plantations except Kowen.



The booking sheet for measurements made by Ron Murray and Maurice Franklin on 20 November 1961 after 63 mm fell overnight.

[14] Teakle, L.J.H., *Canberra Water Supply, Cotter River Catchment, Catchment Control Relating to Water Quality*, NCDC, unpublished report, 19 February 1966.

[15] Gordon, I. *An Evaluation of Land in the ACT for Plantation Purposes*, Department of the Interior, unpublished report, 14 November 1969.

MORE TALL STORIES OF TALL TREES

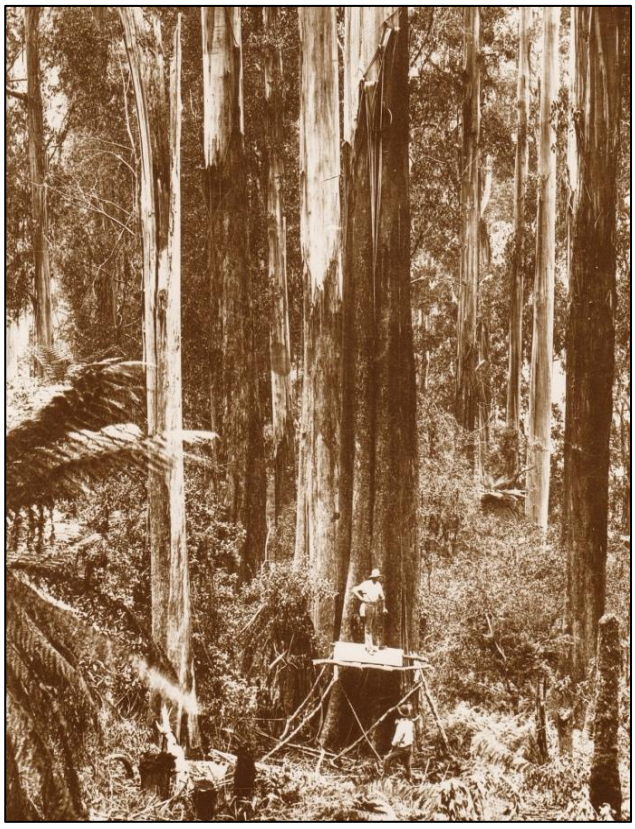
By Roger B Smith

There are many trees that we regard as having special significance, whether it is because of height, girth, colour, shape or longevity. Trees can also be significant for mythological, cultural, religious, scientific and historic reasons.

Artists, painters, poets, storytellers and philosophers have depicted trees they regard as significant in their creative works since the beginnings of ancient civilization. These topics are explored further in a booklet published by the Geelong Art Gallery, titled *Giant – Ancient and Historic Trees* (Edwards 2003).

The Gallery Director Geoffrey Edwards referred to one of the earliest recorded publications about natural history by Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) who reflects on trees as "earth's gift to mankind" and forests as "temples of the gods". Pliny also refers to some famous trees in mythology, specifically some "unusually large trees" (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, Penguin, London, 1991).

Humans continue to be preoccupied with size, and particularly size extremes. At the large extremity of the size scale, the terminology describing these trees invariably uses one or more of a suite of adjectives including giant, massive, monster, mammoth, colossal, monarch, venerable, gigantic and majestic.



Falling a large mountain ash at Narbethong, typical of the forest encountered by early European visitors. Photograph by J. Duncan Pierce, from an album titled "Giant Trees of Victoria" prepared for the Centennial Exhibition in 1888, copy courtesy Historic Places Section, Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Stories of tall (and large) trees have also been a recurring theme in the published history of forests and forestry – including in the AFHS newsletter (issue no. 43, April 2006). When the issue of size relates to tree height, there are invariably only two trees in contention – the Victorian/Tasmanian *Mountain Ash (Eucalyptus regnans)* and the Californian *Coast Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens).*

Redwood Memorial tree to Mary Sutherland (New Zealand's pioneer woman forester, born 1893, died 1955) in the plantation at Rotorua: Photograph by Peter Evans.

One of the earliest references to tall trees in Victoria was recorded by Edward Snell in 1856 when travelling overland from Forrest to Apollo Bay. He wrote, "The trees were magnificent, hundreds of them at least 400 feet high and 20 feet in diameter at the base running up as straight as if turned in a lathe without a branch until near the top." (Ron Hately, *The Victorian Bush: its 'original and natural' condition,* Polybractea Press, Melbourne, 2010.)

And furthermore, according to the online edition of Guinness World Records, 2004 "the tallest tree ever measured was an Australian *Eucalyptus regnans* at Watts River in Victoria, reported in 1872 by forester William Ferguson. It was 435 feet tall and almost certainly measured over 500 feet originally". Incidentally, this historical account, widely quoted in numerous publications, has an element of truth and authenticity as it was purportedly measured while lying on the ground.

Guinness went on to state that "the Dyerville Giant, a *Coast Redwood*, estimated to be 1600 years old when it fell in March 1981, was proven to be 372 feet (113.4 metres)

high, not counting the 5 feet (1.5 metres) of buried base. It grew in the Humboldt Redwoods State Park California, and was the tallest tree of modern times".

Whether in Victoria or California, the "tall tree" literature contains countless stories of phenomenal tree heights from the pioneering days of European occupation of Australia and North America. The folklore surrounding timber cutters and loggers is rich with tall-tree tales, recounted around the campfire or at the bar of the local watering hole.

It must be said, however, that the available documentation of tall tree heights is riddled with exaggerations, inconsistencies, incorrect metric conversions and unverified data. This applies particularly to the early records which were based on traditional methods of measurement involving trigonometry and triangulation using clinometer and measuring tape. Modern measuring techniques now use commercially available laser range finders where laser beams can bounce off the top of a tree from distances of over 1500 metres. The most accurate of all methods, however, is the use of a climber-deployed drop tape.

It is now widely accepted that *Mountain Ash* may have been the tallest tree species on earth, and certainly taller than any *Coast Redwood* now living.

In recent times however, the search for the tallest tree has intensified and in late 2006 a *Coast Redwood* now named the Hyperion was discovered with a top height of 115.57 metres. The measurement of the Hyperion was undertaken by Professor Stephen Sillett, renowned tall tree and tree canopy researcher at Humboldt State University, who confirmed its status as the tallest living *Coast Redwood* and tall tree champion of the world.

But what of *Coast Redwood* planted in many other countries around the world? Could we see intensively cultivated and fertilised sites, aided by selective tree breeding, produce growth rates significantly higher than those grown under natural regimes? Perhaps the most well positioned candidates to take the record from under the noses of the Californians might already be growing in planted Redwood forests in Australia or New Zealand.

Putting aside any theories about future growth rates, we already have an outstanding example of a planted forest of *Sequoia sempervirens* flourishing in our backyard, in the Aire Valley Plantation of the Otway Ranges in south-west Victoria. Planted in 1936 by the Forests Commission as one of a series of trial planting of several conifer species to reforest abandoned farmland and establish whether fast growing exotic conifers would thrive in this environment, the growth of this planted forest, now at 85 years of age is matching that of second growth stands of the same species of the same age growing in their native state of California.

I first entered this forest as a young lad of about eight years of age living in the small town of Beech Forest in the Otway Ranges where my father was the district forester. With my six siblings we regularly trudged some 5km down a rough gravel road to the Redwoods, not to inspect the trees, which were then about the size of broom handles, but to search for birds' nests and wander past the camp of small fibro huts alongside the rows of these slender saplings of Redwoods. The huts were part of the displaced persons camp established by the government as part of their "populate or perish" policy to accommodate WWII refugees from war-ravaged Europe. The purpose of our visit was to wander past the rows of these huts, hoping for the camp chef to invite us into his kitchen, sit us down at a table in the mess hut and serve us pastries, cakes or hot scones with jam and cream. Coming from a large family, you can imagine our delight at being fed these foreign delicacies, a little more enticing than our standard diet of rabbit stew and bread and blackberry jam!

And then in 1955 after moving with my family to Creswick, I went on to become a forester myself where throughout my forestry career I returned to the Otways many times in connection with a wide range of projects from vegetation mapping, timber assessment, fire fighting etc., managing to visit the Aire Valley as much as possible reinforcing my strongly held childhood bond and attachment to the area, to the extent that later in life after retirement I felt compelled to share my knowledge and write a book about the Redwoods of the Otway Ranges.

The book not only compares the size and growth rate of this planted forest of *Coast Redwood* in the Otways with both old growth and regrowth forests of the same species in California, it also makes detailed growth comparisons with the neighbouring stands of *Mountain Ash*. My conclusion from this study is that by the year 2075, not only will *Mountain Ash* reclaim the title of tallest tree in the world, the *Coast Redwood* now growing in the Otways will, providing it survives the ever-present threat of damage by fire, storm or human visitation, also remain a strong challenger for this title.

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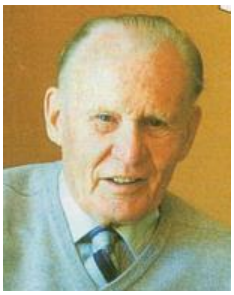
Smith, Roger B. (First published 2015, updated and reprinted 2019). *The Redwoods of the Otway Ranges,* Lothian Custom Publishing, Melbourne. ISBN 9781921737138, RRP: $34.95 (discounts may apply).

Available from the author rogbsmith@bigpond.com.

Measuring the "Cumberland Mammoth" (58 feet girth) near Marysville, Victoria. Unattributed photographer but possibly N.J. Caire, from a postcard in the Peter Evans collection.

PHIL HADLINGTON, OAM, 1924-2021

By Ion Staunton



Phil Hadlington has been missing in dementia for the last few years but in the early hours of Monday 19 March 2021 he left us aged 97.

He was a change agent. He changed us for the better.

Most would immediately think of him as the author of industry text books, as the teacher of the pest control course, as the marker of their correspondence course. He was more.

He was an entomologist at the NSW Forestry Commission with responsibilities in the control of insects that attacked trees (and logs). He mixed with others in the stream of scientists in the late 1940s and early '50s. There was another stream in the community – many of them returned servicemen who, without qualifications, took up pest extermination, setting up family businesses using "witch doctor brews" and fear-tactic sales talk to get customers.

Then there was the government. It was trying to sort out the chemicals being used and the *Pest Destroyers Act 1945* (NSW) was passed and finally the Regulations came into force about 1950, by which time there was a steady stream of complaints from customers about exterminators. Someone wise suggested these exterminators should have a course to find out what really made pests tick and what pesticides were suitable in what situation (and not suitable).

Phil Hadlington was based in Sydney in a tower in Scots Church, Margaret Street, rented by the Forestry Commission. He was already receiving visits from the top people at Flick and from Houghton & Byrne down in George Street. They visited to find out more about mostly termites and borers. He was offered and accepted the task of preparing a one-year pest control course. First he had to learn about the other insect and rodent pests, structure the presentation of this information in a way understood by men in their 40s and 50s who perhaps hadn't taken notes or done calculations since they were in school.

The course began in 1956 and Phil and I wrote the first textbook in 1960.

That was just the beginning.

The rest of his story has been placed on the Termiteer website – https://termiteer.com.au/phil-hadlington. I hope it generates good memories of different times.

Phil left us better off. As a pest control industry, their customers, as termiteers, as individuals.

In June 1990, in the Queen's Birthday Honours, Phil was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia "For service to the arboricultural and pest control industries as a consultant, researcher, author and teacher".

NORM HOUGHTON, OAM

By Fintán Ó Laighin

Congratulations to Norm Houghton for being awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Honours in January 2021. The citation records it being "For service to community history" which is perhaps a bit of an understatement, but is followed by a long list of the various groups in which he is, or has been, involved. These include the Australian Forest History Society, the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, and the Otways Historical Society. His involvement with the both the Geelong Heritage Centre where he was a foundation director and chief archivist, and as the historian of The Geelong Club, is noted. He is a life member of both organisations.

The full record can be read at "It's an Honour" – https://honours.pmc.gov.au/honours/awards/2007948.

ON AIR

1. Tempered by fire: *Tempered by fire – Stories from the firefighters and survivors of the 1961 Western Australian bushfires* is a 2011 book edited by Roger Underwood which has now been turned into a dramatic radio play, *Tempered by Fire,* broadcast recently on Perth's Capital Community Radio (101.7FM) and available as a three-part podcast at www.capitalcommunityradio.com/podcasts.html.

Narrated by Roger himself, who also wrote the script linking the stories, the play commemorates the bravery and stoicism of all those involved in the fires at Dwellingup. It was produced by Western Australian actor/writer/producer Jenny Davis, and employed professional actors and technicians managed by Theatre 180. Each episode lasts about 10 minutes, and Roger's advice is to make a cup of tea and sit back and have a listen.

2. The harder they fall - stories of life and death in the South East Forests of NSW: This is the title of a recent episode of ABC Radio National's program *The History Listen*, presented by Kirsti Melville. The program notes say that "Author & naturalist John Blay is our guide as we venture deep into the South East Forests of New South Wales – Coolangubra, Tantawangalow, Eden – they're full of stories from the distant past and the present; a history from pristine wilderness to industrial logging, from old growth trees to woodchips. Using rare archival recordings and recent interviews *The Harder They Fall* tells a tale of the precarious balance, between the value of wild nature, the ongoing need for jobs and a changing climate. Some of us remember the "Forest Wars" of the 1980's and 90's – what if those wars are not over?"

The program can be heard at www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-history-listen/the-harder-they-fall/13180584.

RICHMOND PARK NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

By Sybil Jack

Richmond Park, in the London borough of Richmond upon Thames, was created by King Charles I in the 17th century as a deer park. It is a place I've known since I was a child.

In 2018, it was the subject of a nature documentary, *Richmond Park – National Nature Reserve*, presented by David Attenborough and, more recently, was the subject of a Zoom film, *The Remarkable Trees of Richmond Park: their history, care and management*, presented by Clare Balding, the patron of the Friends of Richmond Park.

The remarkable trees in the park range from 700 year old oak through beech, sweet chestnut and horse chestnut which comprise 45% of the 130,000 trees in the two and a half thousand acre park to the more recent arrivals. It includes an interesting discussion of the ideas that underlie the balance between native and non-native species.

Surely we should press for a similar film to be made about native Australian trees with an indication of where they can be seen. Perhaps someone such as Stuart Read who has written on the New Zealand trees that were brought to Australia in the 19th century could make the film?

It would be difficult to select among the 800 or so species of eucalypts and the thousand acacias as well as the melaleucas, the araucarias (including of course the newly rediscovered Wollemi pine), callitris and casuarinas, but it would be an excellent way of drawing the attention of northern hemisphere countries to the immense forest resources of Australia – and indeed Australasia. Any one of the botanical gardens should have a suitable collection of examples or, if they are uninterested, perhaps the guardians of one of more of the great private specialist gardens. Sir John Hay's garden at Overthorpe in Double Bay NSW comes to mind.[1] The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage tells us it has a remarkable collection of rare and exotic rainforest trees dating back to the nineteenth century. These include large areas of palms and figs, and specimens of great botanical significance such as a watermelon tree (*Syzygium moorei*), a silver quandong (*Elaeocarpus kirtonii*) as well as species such as bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), Illawarra flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolium*) and black bean (*Castanospermum australe*).

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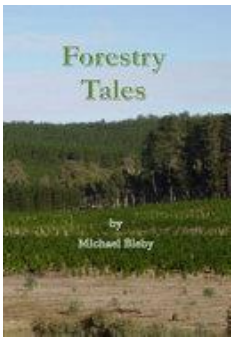
More more information on Richmond Park, see www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/richmond-park and https://www.frp.org.uk.

FRIENDS of RICHMOND PARK

[1] For detail of Overthorpe see Colleen Morris, 2010, *Conservation Management Strategy Overthorpe, gardens and grounds*.

NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Michael Bleby, 2020. *Forestry Tales.* Published by the author, PO Box 855, Millicent SA 5280. ISBN 9780646823843. $20 + $6 postage. Available from the author forests@bigpond.com.

An anthology of short stories collected during Michael Bleby's 40 year career as a forester in South Australia. Life as an operational forester involved many and varied contacts with people which sometimes had nothing to do with growing trees. These accounts typify the interesting and unusual incidents and events that arose during everyday life on a Forest District.

Editor's note: Michael is a member of the AFHS, and some of the stories in Forestry Tales *have been published in the newsletter.*

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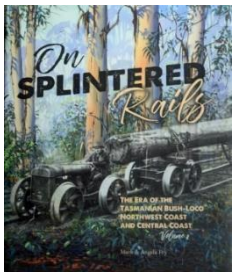


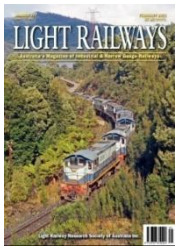
Mark and Angela Fry, 2020. *On Splintered Rails Volume 2.* Published by the authors, Tasmania, ISBN 9780648804505. Available from the authors markfryoldina4@gmail.com.

Review by Peter Evans.

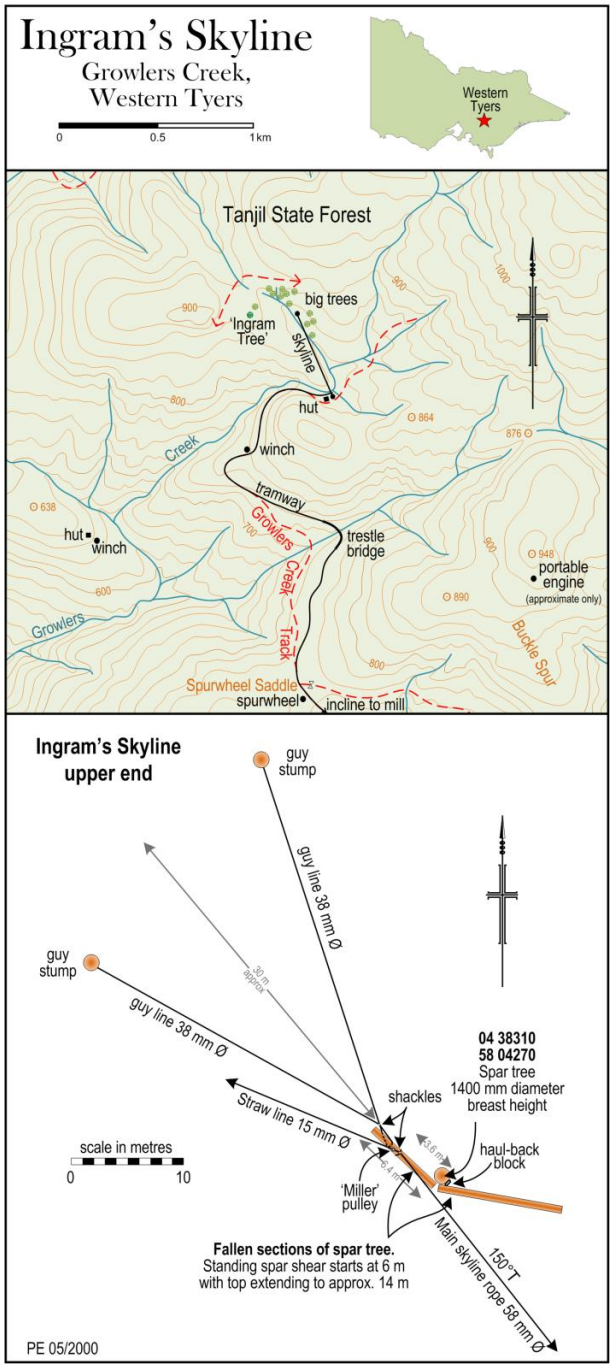
This limited edition printing of 300 hard cover and 200 soft cover books is the second volume in a series on Tasmania's sawmilling enterprises using locomotive-powered tramways. The first volume was a very detailed overview of historic logging and sawmilling technology for the whole state. This second hefty volume of 360 pages covers the sawmilling and tramway enterprises in the north-eastern and central coast portion of the state, including the operations of J.S. Lee & Sons (1884-1971), the Marrawah Tram (1913-1961), Britton Brothers (1911-1974), E.H. Fenton Pty Ltd (1920-1949), Frank Fenton Pty Ltd (1924-1942), Frank Jaeger & Sons (1921-1951), Dunkley Brothers (1924-1943), Sam Adams (1925-1950), Tasma Sawmilling Company (1912-1916 and 1916-1918), Arthur Taylor (1931-1945), Cumming Brothers (1920-1949), Messrs. Cummings, Henry & Coy (1873-1896) and Edward Hobbs / Tasma Hardwoods (1900-1980). Future volumes will cover North, East Coast, Midlands, West and South.

This volume continues the detailed photographic coverage of the first, with well-researched and written histories of the individual mills and tramways. Where it is let down is in the lack of comprehensive mapping. The small sketch maps included have no topographic detail, making it difficult to understand the difficulties facing sawmillers dealing with the terrain. Otherwise, this is a valuable publication for anyone interested in the technical side of Tasmanian sawmilling.

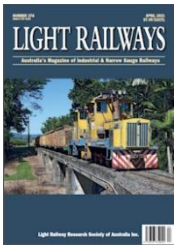
Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways, February 2021 (LR277) and April 2021 (LR278). Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISSN 0727 8101. www.lrrsa.org.au and www.facebook.com/groups/LightRailwaysAustralia.



LR277celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Light Railway Research Society of Australia, one of the pioneers in Australian forest history research. This edition carries a 4-page field report on Ingram's logging skyline east of Erica. This is the only in situ historic skyline in Victoria with demonstrable remains. The use of this technology, initially developed in Germany but brought to its ultimate fruition in North America was rare in Victoria, and largely limited to the Warburton and Erica forest districts.



Of particular note is the mention of an old-growth stand of mountain ash at the northern end of the skyline. These trees escaped the 1939 bushfires and were deliberately left by sawmiller Hec Ingram as a memorial to his brothers. There are at least sixteen trees in the stand, the largest of which ("The Ingram Tree") is 11.2m girth at breast height. Hec asked the local forester if he could retain these magnificent trees, but was told that he must cut them down. He disobeyed this instruction with the result that a small stand of remnant forest, largely undisturbed, surrounds the head of the skyline. These trees are important not only for what they represent environmentally, but as a statement of the ambivalence of a sawmiller towards the forest from which he obtained his living. On one hand, it was a resource to be utilised, on the other, something to be admired and respected. This stand of trees adds a further element to the cultural significance of the skyline site.



LR278 includes a short field report from Norm Houghton on the remains of a few tramways around Echuca in northern Victoria, used by the James Mackintosh sawmill (1873-1881), the Echuca & Moama Red Gum Sawmill Company (1881-1893), the Fresh Food & Frozen Storage Company (1898-1902) and the Milo Bacon Company (1902-c1920). The accompanying map also shows lines to the flour mill, and one called the Blair & McGrowther tram. Norm's report is a follow-up to earlier reports published in issue nos. 49 and 242.

There is also an article on Norm Houghton being awarded an OAM in the Australia Day 2021 Honours. It focusses on his work for LRRSA but also mentions his work in other areas of history, including forest history.

LR278 also includes a review of the Mark and Angela Fry book, *On Splintered Rails, Vol. 2.*

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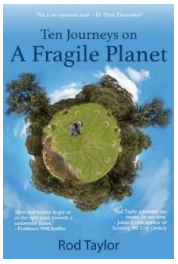

Rod Taylor, 2020. *Ten Journeys on a Fragile Plant.* Odyssey Books. ISBN 9781925652789. $27.95.

From the publisher's notes.

Humanity is sliding toward a collision between global warming, resource depletion, and population growth. The evidence is daunting but we are hampered by anti-science demagogues who tell us everything's okay, that we'll run forever on our current course. The problem we are facing is on a global scale, far beyond any individual. It can be overwhelming and it is difficult to remain cheerful. In *Ten Journeys on a Fragile Planet*, journalist Rod Taylor interviews ten outstanding Australians who have – and are – doing something to confront the perilous state of the environment. This book tells their stories.

www.odysseybooks.com.au/titles/9781925652789

Editor's note: Rod is one of the panel of presenters on the Fuzzy Logic science broadcast on Community Radio 2XX in Canberra (98.3FM). Podcasts are available at https://fuzzylogicon2xx.podbean.com.