
Australian Forest History Society

Newsletter No. 83
August 2021

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



Victorian School of Forestry, VW Kombi – 1958

Jack Newey (VSF graduate of 1935 and Lecturer), with VSF Students – Dave Hocking, Bernie Evans and Gus Geary, 10 August 1958. Photo: Gregor Wallace.

See page 5.

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NEXT ISSUE

The newsletter is published three times a year and the next issue will be a special "Islands" edition should be out in October 2021.

Input is always welcome.

Contributions can be sent to
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EDITOR'S NOTE

By Fintán Ó Laighin

Welcome to another AFHS newsletter, one which has a heavy emphasis on Victoria for no other reason than that's what the contributors have written about. But we also have articles about NSW and Tasmania to extend our coverage to other states. I enjoyed reading the articles that I received, we have some very fine writers among our membership.

The association's Annual General Meeting will be held in November. The date hasn't yet been set, but there is a possibility of holding it online if the ACT Assembly further extends a temporary provision in the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* which allows for meetings to be held other than in person, even if an association's rules don't normally provide for this. The AFHS is registered in the ACT which is why ACT law applies. Regardless of how it is held, members are encouraged to consider getting involved in the committee – the meeting papers will include a nomination form and a proxy form. Note that you have to be a financial member to take part in the AGM and to sit on the committee.

The COVID-19 pandemic means that our activities are a bit constrained at the moment, but there are opportunities to get involved in the society. In the last issue, the president – Juliana Lazzari – invited members to contact her about managing the society's website, and there is a standing invitation for members to be a guest editor of the newsletter. On that point, thank you to Juliana for help with this issue.

Finally, the long awaited "Islands" issue of the newsletter will be out in October. This will be a special issue, similar to issue no. 75 (June 2018) which focussed on "Early Forestry and 100 Years of Timber Research in Queensland". Contributions should be submitted by early October.

RON GROSE – THE EXAUGURAL FORESTER CHAIRMAN OF THE FCV – A LASTING HERITAGE

By Roger Smith

Most definitions of the term "heritage" include people, places, events and traditions that capture where we've come from, where we are now and give context to where we are headed. Heritage is essentially an inheritance that serves to define our future. One of the most significant events marking a major turning point in the history of forestry in Victoria, came with the demise of the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) and the dismissal of its last forester chairman, Dr Ronald Jeffrey Grose.

At the outset it is important to note that in describing the "Dismissal" as a major turning point, this paper does not attempt to debate the merits or otherwise of the outcomes arising from this change toward a new direction for forest management in Victoria.

No single organisation has done more to build the foundation of a strong and lasting heritage for forestry in Victoria than its governing body, the FCV, from the time it was first set up by the *Forests Act 1918* through to its virtual demise in 1985. (Notwithstanding the fact that the FCV continued to exist in name until 1987 to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Forest Act.)

When the Forests Commission was first established as a statutory authority, it consisted of three commissioners comprising members drawn from sister departments in the Victorian Government (these being Forests; Lands; and Mines and Water Supply) for the purpose of providing united, consistent and continuous management of Victoria's state forests.

Almost from its inception and over the ensuing 65 year period, the FCV became widely recognised throughout the state, especially in country Victoria where it quickly built a reputation as a well-run organisation, with a highly trained staff and a strong corporate spirit. Much of the credit for building and maintaining the high standards of the forestry profession, its forestry practices and the overall success of forestry in Victoria over six decades must go to the leaders of that organisation and particularly to the successive chairmen of the FCV.

Over this period, from 1919 to 1985, from a total of 21 commissioners, there were eight chairmen of the FCV. Each occupant of the chair served initially for a period of several years as a member of the three-person commission, including a period serving as deputy chairman. Because of this smooth transition to the top job, it may be postulated that each of these men helped to build a trademark model to be handed down to their successors. Furthermore, their terms of service as chairmen were clearly identifiable milestones along the roadway towards a progressive improvement in professionalism, resulting in the continual raising of forestry standards.

The eight chairmen of the commission were as follows:

Chairman	Years as Commissioner	Including Years as Chairman	Time Span as Chairman
Owen Jones	6	6	1919-1925
W Code	9	3	1926-1928
A Galbraith	23	19	1929-1948
F Gerraty	7	6	1948-1954
A Lawrence	20	13	1955-1968
F Moulds	12	9	1969-1978
A Threder	14	5	1978-1983
Ronald Grose	7	2	1983-1985

While the forestry careers of the six occupants of the FCV chair over the period 1925 to 1983 had some obvious similarities with an emphasis on field-based experience, both the first and last chairmen came from a more diverse forestry background.

The inaugural chairman, Owen Jones, initially served the forestry profession in countries in both Europe and Asia before applying for a position with the FCV before resigning six years later to join New Zealand Perpetual Forests.¹

The exaugural chairman, Ron Grose, could be described as a home-grown forester whose celebrated career will best be remembered for his leadership in forestry research. But unlike Owen Jones, Ron did not voluntarily resign but was removed from his position by a newly elected state government.

The life and times of Owen Jones are documented in AFHS Newsletter no. 74, and the career of Ron Grose, one of Victoria's most distinguished foresters, is also worthy of record in this society's newsletter.

The recorded histories, the anecdotal accounts, and the folklore surrounding all eight occupants of the chair reveal a cohort of charismatic men with conviction of purpose, strength of character and outstanding leadership qualities. The historical record also reveals that among this group were a few colourful characters who attracted an element of controversy during their tenure.

These characteristics serve to demonstrate why they were regarded with such reverence, not only by those many communities in country Victoria who depended on them for their livelihood and very survival, but also by successive Victorian governments, of different political persuasions, for helping to implement their social, environmental and economic policies. Furthermore, the FCV was held in such high esteem by its own employees that it was referred to by its widespread field staff and their families, as well as dependent industries and other organisations, as "the Commission" – to the extent that when mentioned in daily discourse it was spoken about in almost reverential tones.

¹ Michael Roche, 2018, "Owen Jones: Inaugural Chair of the Forests Commission of Victoria, 1919-1925", *Australian Forest History Society Newsletter*, no. 74, April 2018, pp4-5. www.foresthistory.org.au/newsletter/afhsnewsletter74.pdf

And so it came to pass that the very last forester to occupy the position of chairman was Ronald Jeffrey Grose, born in 1929, the son of a forester, Norm Grose, and as it turned out, the father of a forester, Peter Grose. Following the completion of his secondary school education, Ron commenced his forestry training at the Victorian School of Forestry in 1947 during a growth period in that school's history which saw a rapid rise in the student intake from about five to 15 students per year. Ron graduated in 1949 with the Associate Diploma of Forestry A.Dip.For (Cres), later gaining a Bachelor of Science in Forestry B.Sc.F (Melb), a Doctor of Philosophy Ph.D (Melb) and, in 1966, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to undertake post-graduate study at the Petawawa National Forestry Institute in Canada.

Following graduation from the School of Forestry, Ron was thereafter employed by the FCV, becoming involved in ground-breaking studies through the 1950s, a boom period of research into the genus *Eucalyptus*, with acclaimed workers in the Mountain Ash (*E. regnans*) regeneration field, such as Ashton, Bachelard, Cunningham, Grose and Teller making important contributions. Following the 1939 bushfire disaster that burnt most of the Mountain Ash forests, and the subsequent salvage program, the focus of hardwood timber production turned to Alpine Ash (*E. delegatensis*).

Satisfactory regeneration of Alpine Ash following harvesting was problematic due to seed dormancy and other seed characteristics influencing germination and growth. Grose's studies in this field, initially mentored by renowned research forester John Walter Zimmer (whose reputation was built on his botanical studies in northwest Victoria), proved to be an object lesson in careful field and laboratory work (published in FCV Bulletins nos. 3, 4, 9 and 10) carried out over a number of years by a first-class researcher with an abiding interest in the field of practical and successful regeneration and management of Victoria's eucalypt forests.

During this period, Grose worked under John Chinner, then Reader-in-Charge of the Forestry School in the Faculty of Science at the University of Melbourne. In the 1950s, Grose became a full-time colleague of Chinner as a lecturer, and a Research Fellow in 1959, before completing post-graduate studies and gaining his doctorate, partly published in his seminal work, "The Silviculture of *Eucalyptus delegatensis*, Part I, Germination and Seed Dormancy".²

Following completion of these post-graduate studies of Alpine Ash, Ron returned to the Forests Commission to take responsibility for its forest research program. Forestry research in Victoria broadened considerably under the leadership of Grose as he was very largely responsible early in his career in changing forest management from the traditional emphasis on resource utilisation to a more multi-disciplinary approach through his encouragement of research in silviculture with the inclusion of noted scientists such as Bachelard, Attiwill and Webb. He encouraged other research disciplines

such as hydrology (Teller), nutrition (Craig), genetics (Pederick), riverine Red Gum forests (Dexter), forest pathology (Marks), entomology (Neumann), and management information systems (Gibson and Opie). He clearly recognised that the future of forestry lay in building our knowledge of the entire environment. And it was during this period that Ron distinguished himself in leading research and sponsoring post-graduate studies in the ecology of forest ecosystems across Victoria.

Grose worked his way through the ranks of the FCV to Chief of Division, Education and Research, then to Chief of Division of Forest Management, where he demonstrated his belief in a multi-disciplinary approach to forestry, by the establishment of a Forest Environment and Recreation Branch (Hodgson). Throughout this period, his support of research on the forest environment continued with a wide range of studies into the environmental effects of native forest harvesting (McKimm, Loyn, Fagg, Macaulay, Chesterfield and Macfarlane).

In the broader forestry context in the early 1970s, he further served the profession with distinction in his role as President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia. He held many other leadership positions across diverse areas including as a member of the Public Service Board, chairman of the Committee of Management of the Mount Buller Alpine Resort, and president, board chairman and life member of the Natural Resources Conservation League of Victoria.

Whenever the name Ron Grose is mentioned in any discussion of Victorian forestry throughout this period of three decades, it becomes immediately apparent that he was regarded with great esteem not only as a highly intelligent and knowledgeable man across a diverse range of disciplines, but also as a highly respected forester by both those in academia and higher echelons of bureaucracy. He was also greatly admired by younger colleagues fortunate enough to enjoy his company and knowledge of bush craft when working with him in the field. Following this stage of his career he was appointed a Commissioner of Forests in 1977 to replace commissioner Jack Cosstick. In 1983, following the retirement of Alan Threader, who had been chairman since 1978, the deputy chairman Ron Grose was to become the last person to occupy the position of chairman of the Forests Commission.

In summing up his career, Ronald Jeffrey Grose not only occupied a position in the upper echelon of his profession, he will also be remembered by his colleagues as one of the most capable, dedicated, respected and revered foresters in the history of forestry in Victoria.

A change in 1982 to the Cain Labor Government with ambitious social, economic and environmental policies eventually led to a major reform of organisations in the natural resource and resource management sectors. This institutional reform involving the amalgamation of government departments in this sector was the catalyst

² "The Silviculture of *Eucalyptus delegatensis*", Bulletin no. 2 of the School of Forestry, University of Melbourne, 1963.

for the dismissal/sacking of Ron Grose as chairman of the FCV, ostensibly on the grounds that he could abide neither the forest policies of the incoming government nor the views of vocal conservation ideologues/lobbyists and conservation groups of that period such as the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). Although initially set up as a representative and balanced organisation, the ACF had later become known as one of the more extreme conservation lobby groups in Victoria.

After he was forced to resign in 1985, Ron Grose continued his lifetime commitment to public service by undertaking a number of assignments for the government of the day including organising the closure of Willsmere psychiatric facility and occupying the position of general manager of the Alpine Resorts Commission.

And so it was, in 1985, that the dismissal of the last recognised forester chairman of the FCV came as a surprise and shock not only to staff and colleagues, but more importantly, it sparked a further scathing attack on a range of long held multiple-use forestry policies in Victoria. In the view of many, one of the unfortunate outcomes of this dismissal was the early retirement of a number of experienced and talented foresters. The departmental restructure involving the amalgamation of departments that accompanied these policy changes has been well documented in a number of publications including "A Fraternity of Foresters" by Gillespie and Wright in 1983 and also an unpublished paper by Endacott, "The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Forests Service" in 1999. In the former document it was stated that the talent drain that accompanied the downfall of the Forests Commission was a tragedy for forest management in Victoria, from which it was likely to take a considerable period of time to recover.

While it is abundantly clear that the operating climate of this period of time was driven by local political imperatives, the events surrounding the dismissal of Ron Grose have been canvassed at length in both local media and academia and discussed widely by his professional colleagues in both Australia and overseas. An example is the paper by Professor Eric Bachelard titled "Ron Grose Dismissal" 24 April 1985, later reported in the local media.³ An account of the activities of the Forests Commission over this period is provided by the last chairman to formally resign – Alan Threader.⁴

While the current paper does not attempt to judge the pros and cons of the "Dismissal", it is apparent that the demise of the FCV and the sacking of its chairman Ron Grose signalled a dramatic change in the direction of forestry in Victoria. It was such a momentous event that it will forever be remembered and debated as a major cornerstone in any serious discussion of Victoria's forestry heritage from that time forward.

COVER PHOTO: THE 1958 KOMBI

By Peter McHugh, photograph by Gregor Wallace

Reprinted from "Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage" Facebook page (post of 26 August 2021)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/forestcommissionheritage>.



This split-screen VW Kombi would probably be worth a fortune these days if it was still alive and restored.

It was an early model with an outward opening side door rather than the more common sliding one.

But this old school bus would have undoubtedly had a tough life with Victorian School of Forestry (VSF) students thrashing it all around the countryside.

The students were doing pine needle sampling for nutrient analysis to guide possible fertiliser treatment of the maritime pines at the Waarre Plantation near Port Campbell.

And the bush was cold and windswept and alive with leeches.

Ownership of rifles and shotguns was officially sanctioned by the school, and practical firearm lessons were still part of the curriculum even when I was there in the mid-1970s.

Forest Districts usually kept a .22 pistol in the office safe.

BRITAIN'S ANCIENT AND SACRED TREES

Thanks to Sybil Jack for pointing out this site.

Britain's Ancient and Sacred Trees is a Facebook page which, as Sybil points out, "has a lot of really interesting photos". It was started in January 2014 and has about 63,000 members. As its name suggests, it focuses on Great Britain but a few photos from elsewhere have crept in, such as the following photo from Tipperary in Ireland - it was posted by Louise Hogan who says the tree is growing in her front yard. She thinks it has an "Eye of Sauron" look about it - I had to look it up, it's a "Lord of the Rings" reference, but I can see what she means – the illustration is based on a design by Tolkien that was used on the cover of the first edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring* in 1954.



There is also a website at www.ancientandsacredtrees.org which doesn't have the array of photos but does have more information about the group.

³ "Sacking sparks off attack on forestry policy", *Weekly Times*, 8 May 1985. www.highcountryhistory.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/10386.pdf

⁴ Ian Ferguson, Peter Greig and Rob Youl, 2016, "Obituary: Alan John Threader 1922-2016", *Australian Forest History Society Newsletter*, no. 69, September 2016, p19. www.foresthistory.org.au/newsletter/afhsnewsletter69.pdf

HUDSON BROTHERS NARANI SAWMILL TRAMWAY – TRAMLINE BEACH LOG LANDING RAMP, SMITHS LAKE NSW

By David Cameron

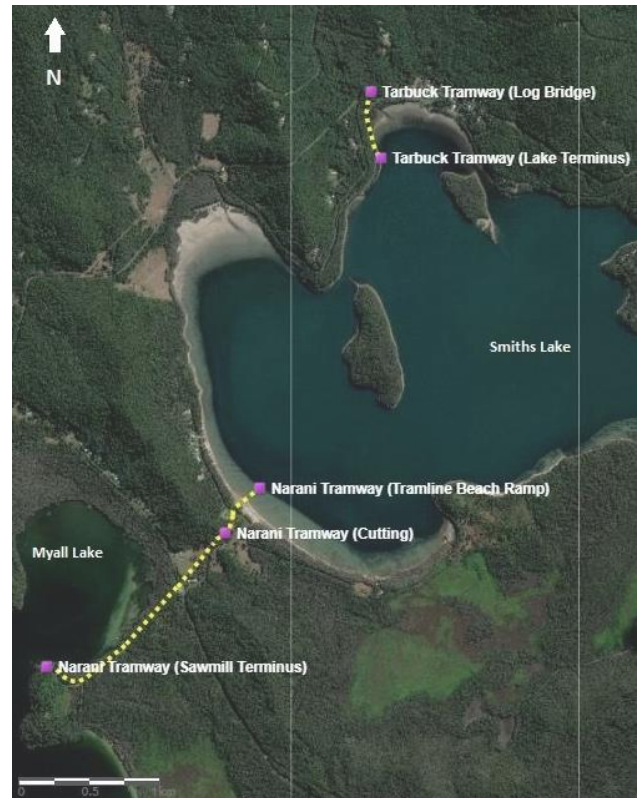
Over the last 18 months or so, I have been conducting an archaeological investigation of an unusual timber tramway log landing ramp located within the littoral zone of the aptly named Tramline Beach on the southern shore of Smiths Lake near Bungwahl on the Mid North Coast of NSW. The Tramline Beach log landing ramp is situated at the northern end of what was the Hudson Brothers Narani sawmill tramway.¹ The Narani sawmill commenced operations in 1873 and was located on the northern-most shore of Myall Lake near the present Neranie (as it is now named)-Hearts Point day use area of the Myall Lakes National Park.

By the mid-1870s, a short 2.2km horse drawn portage tramway was built to connect the sawmill with Smiths Lake located to the north. In 1879, the horses were replaced by a steam locomotive, with a second loco joining the first in 1881.²

The Hudson Brothers sawmill sourced most of its saw logs from the Tarbuck Brush area (now Wallingat National Park) situated to the north and west of Smiths Lake. There the Hudson Brothers constructed a second horse drawn tramway which ran for about 8km out from the Tarbuck Brush to its terminus at Tarbuck Point on the north-western shore of Tarbuck Bay on Smiths Lake. At Tarbuck Point, the logs were rolled off the tram trucks and onto a steam powered paddle drogher for the short 2.6km haul over to Tramline Beach on the southern shore.

At the Tramline Beach log landing, the logs were then rolled off the drogher and "wet" loaded onto the tram trucks running on rails submerged in the water. Horses and a steam winch were used to load the logs onto the trucks and to haul the loaded trucks further up the beach on the gently inclined tramway ramp to be marshalled into sets. At the head of the beach, the sets were hitched to the steam locomotive for the short run over a low saddle ridge through a 5m deep cutting and onto the sawmill and village at Narani.

The logging tramways, drogher transshipment and log landing ramp operations appear to have continued to function in one form or another until the Narani mill was closed in late 1906 or early 1907. The Tramline Beach to Narani sawmill and Tarbuck Brush to Tarbuck Bay tramways effectively operated as two sections of a single tramway system separated by the waters of Smiths Lake.



In the absence of any detailed contemporary descriptions of the operation of the tramway log landing ramp, I undertook an investigation of surviving archaeological features with the view to ascertaining details on the construction, dimensions and other technical aspects of the operation of the tramway ramp log landings. I was particularly intrigued as to how the log landings operated within the littoral zone when either partly or fully submerged.

It is fortunate that a 1904 photograph of the Tramline Beach log landing ramp site exists that shows "wet" loading operations with horse team drawn log tram. Despite its grainy resolution, the photo does provide some very useful contextual details that aided my archaeological examination.³



*A log tram at Smiths Lake, 7 September 1904 (detail).
National Library of Australia.*

Reproduced from Light Railways no. 155 (October 2000)

¹ The Hudson Brothers Company operated large-scale railway rolling stock factories in Sydney at Redfern, and later Granville, and also Wickham in Newcastle. Hudson Brothers was the antecedent company from which Clyde Engineering was formed. For details on the history of the Hudson Brothers vertically integrated timber, sawmilling, shipping and manufacturing interests see David Jehan, 2019, *Hudson Brothers: A History of Hudson Brothers Carpenters, Engineers & Manufacturers 1866-1898*, Eveleigh Press, Sydney.

² Ron Madden, "The Narani-Forster-Ulverstone Locomotive Conundrum", *Light Railways* no. 153 June 2000 media.lrrsa.org.au/apix153/Light_Railways_153.pdf (pp6-9), and Jim Longworth, "Hudson Brothers' timber tramways between Tarbuck Brush and Narani", *Light Railways* no. 155 December 2000 media.lrrsa.org.au/vita155/Light_Railways_155.pdf (pp5-11).

³ The full version of this photo was published with Longworth's article in *Light Railways* no. 155, p5.

The original design, layout and construction of this unusual (perhaps unique) littoral zone log landing tramway ramp, and the existence of its remnants today, are certainly entirely due to the topography and hydrology of Smiths Lake and its immediate environs.

Smiths Lake is a brackish mixed fresh and sea water body, but is not a permanently tidal lake. Rather, it is what is referred to as an ICOLL (Intermittently Closing and Opening Lake or Lagoon). The lake is subject to irregular and unpredictable fluctuations in its water level by as much as 2m or more. Its water level is influenced primarily by rainfall within its catchment, but also ocean tidal flows from irregular and intermittent breaches of the sea entrance sand bar and evaporation during drought.⁴

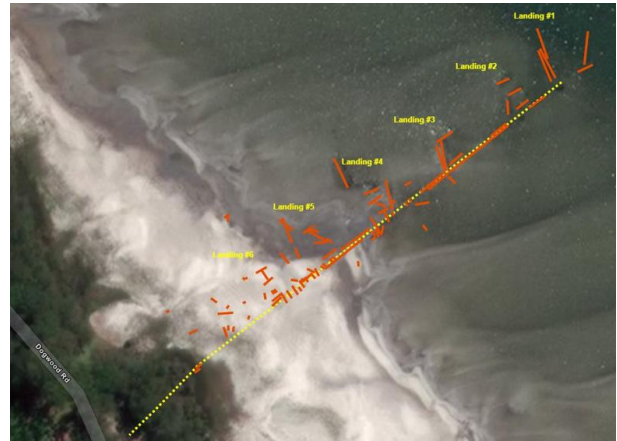
At the time of my first inspection of the site in January 2020, the area was experiencing a period of prolonged drought and the sand bar was closed so the water level in Smiths Lake was very low – just 0.047m above the mean sea level Australian Height Datum (AHD). The lake's high-water flood level limit is 2.1m AHD. The dry conditions afforded the rare opportunity to inspect sections of the Tramline Beach site that are usually completely submerged in the lake.

The timing of that first inspection was indeed fortunate as just a month later, the Smiths Lake catchment received 500+ millimetres of rain in a week and the lake level rose rapidly to 1.205m AHD within a few days, submerging the entire Tramline Beach site. By late July 2020, the water level had risen higher to 1.872m AHD with the northern end (lake side) of the tramway ramp submerged under 2.3m of water.⁵

Why all the focus on water levels you might ask? Developing an understanding of how the water levels vary in Smiths Lake (the water level having always been variable and unpredictable) is key to understanding the design and operation of the "wet" tramway landing and tramway ramp.

The Tramline Beach tramway ramp complex can be described as being comprised of two key elements. The first is the tramway formation incline ramp rising from the water up the beach toward the south. The second element is comprised of six log landing structures, which I have designated log landings #1 to #6, numbered from the lakeside to landside, located on the western side of the tramway ramp formation.

The tramway ramp is a 3'6" (1067mm) gauge tramway formation aligned N-E to S-W running up a slight incline (<1 per cent grade) for a distance of about 230m over a wide soft sandy beach from the lake southwards toward the shoreline at Dogwood Road.



Tramline Beach Landing #1 (top right) to Landing #6. Dogwood Road can be seen in the bottom left.



Tramline Beach Landing #4

The northern lakeside section between log landings #1 and #4 was built on a 2-3m wide rough stone foundation laid over a footing of heavy timbers embedded longitudinally and laterally in the soft sandy and silty lake bed. The buried timber footing provided a stable "semi-floating" platform for the stone formation within which were laid longitudinal log bearers onto which the sleepers were fixed. The sleepers were further ballasted with small stones, sand and shell grit.

The southern section, beginning from the southern side of landing #4 and continuing to the head of the beach, was constructed mostly without the rough stone formation south from landing #4 nor the buried heavy timber footing south of landing #6.

Adjacent to landing #6, the arrangement and longer length of the visible timber sleepers embedded in the sand suggests that there may have been a short 40m long passing loop or siding there. A metal detector and steel rod probing survey at the head of the beach indicates that a 50m long section of iron rails and timber sleeper formation still exists in situ buried under 250mm of sand.

Just south of landing #5 lies the highly corroded remains of a squat cylindrical fire tube boiler measuring approximately 2m (6'6") long by 1m (3'3") in diameter. Local theories suggest the boiler might be from a paddle wheel drogher punt used to haul logs across Smiths Lake, or from a small locomotive, or that it powered a steam winch or crane to assist with handling logs.

⁴ Great Lakes Council, September 2008, *Smiths Lake Flood Study*, Webb, McKeown & Associates Pty Ltd, Sydney.
www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/document-resources/environment-docs/flooding-management/great-lakes/smiths-lake-flood-study.pdf

⁵ The depth measurement for the submerged north end of the tramway ramp was achieved by line and sonar soundings taken from a boat. Water level data for Smiths Lake was sourced from the Manly Hydraulics Laboratory's Tarbuck Bay water level gauge station that can be accessed live online at www.mhlfit.net/Station-209465 (NSW Coastal Data Network Program, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment).

The boiler looks to have been too small to power a drogher or a locomotive so it would most likely have been used for a steam powered cable winch used to haul logs between the landings and/or onto the tram trucks. A few metres west of the boiler, surface water run-off into the lake has partially exposed what could be sections of the blunt bow of a small drogher wreck situated between landings #5 and #6. Metal detector and steel rod probing survey indicates that the possible drogher wreck remains extend a further 20m to the south-west buried under 200-300mm of sand.

As mentioned, along the western side of the tramway ramp formation are the remnants of six log landing structures (#1 to #6 from the lakeside to landside). Landings #2, #3, #4 and #5 are comprised of three large-diameter (700mm to 1000mm) log bearers laid out parallel to the tramway formation and set several metres apart. Another single or pair of large log bearers ran at an angle along one end of the three parallel bearers. The remains of rusted iron spikes along the top face of several of the log bearers indicate that a timber skid deck (heavy planks or logs) had once been fixed to the log bearers to allow the logs to be rolled over the landing and onto the tram trucks.

Landing #6 is different to the other landings being constructed of two 5m long by 600mm wide squared off bearers running parallel with the tramway formation. This landing is set back 8m from the tramway so may have been used to store overflow logs rather than for loading logs directly onto the tram trucks.

Log landing #1 (at the northern lakeside end of the tramway ramp) is comprised of four large diameter logs running generally north to south in an open V shaped alignment 10m wide at the base and opening to about 20m wide at the northern end into permanent deeper water. This would have been the landing used by the drogher when water level was low. Indeed, even at a time of very low water as was observed in January 2020 (0.047m AHD), landing ramp #1 would have been functional while the other five ramps further up the tramway ramp were high and dry.

The layout, orientation and construction of the tramway ramp and log landings at Tramline Beach are functionally quite ingenious adaptations to the local topography, hydrology and bathymetry of Smiths Lake. The archaeological observations confirm that the tramway ramp and log landings were specifically designed to take account of the unpredictable non-tidal and tidal variation of water levels in the lake over time and for handling heavy logs on the shallow and often choppy water. The design allowed for logs to be rolled off a drogher directly onto which every log landing had sufficient water depth (not too shallow, not too deep) for handling the logs onto the waiting tram trucks.

The author would be interested to know of any other examples of tramway to water to tramway transshipment operations like this one that may have operated elsewhere in Australia.⁶

ROBERT ONFRAY'S FORESTRY BLOG

By Fintán Ó Laighin

The April 2021 issue of the newsletter included an article titled "Robert Onfray's Monthly Blogs – Surrey Hills, Forestry and Travel" which reported on Robert's website – www.robertonfray.com – on which he writes on all manner of things, broadly grouped into the three categories. Robert has since advised that he is "more than happy for any relevant forestry blog I write to be copied in the newsletter as a contribution, if deemed appropriate regarding forest history".

As the blogs are readily available through Robert's website, rather than reprint them, I thought instead that a summary of what has been posted since the most recent newsletter would be a better approach.

Including the post on 30 April 2021, Robert's forestry blog has grown by five articles. The first, "[Memorable faunal encounters in the forest](#)" is about snakes, jack jumpers (a type of bull ant), spiders and wasps and is perhaps Robert's contribution to encouraging people to heed the COVID-19 lockdowns.

May's article, "[The aristocratic satinay](#)", is about this magnificent species on Fraser Island in Queensland – a beautiful tree that produces beautiful timber, used in high-class furniture, panelling, polished floorings, and fittings. As Robert writes in his e-mail to blog subscribers, "Fraser Island has a rich forest management history that ceased in the early 1990s. The brush box-satiny forests on the island are unique. Satiny is a tall tree with a straight bole. They are only found on Fraser Island and the adjoining Cooloola sands. ...

Unfortunately, bureaucrats are doing their best to erase the forestry history on the island. Here is my contribution to retain some knowledge of the management and use of a special timber on Fraser Island."

The article in June, "[Living within a forest in a fire environment](#)", is the first of three stories looking at some of the forests Robert visited in Victoria and issues associated with bushfire management. This article focuses on the forests of the Dandenong Ranges and provides a fire history of the area. The following two stories, "[A Charred landscape](#)" and "[70 years of bushfires – have the lessons learnt been ignored?](#)" were published in July and August. The final article uses the 1939 Stretton Royal Commission as its starting point.

There is sometimes crossover among the three different blogs, such as the latest article on the Surrey Hills page titled "[Unique partnerships for conservation](#)", about Robert's collaboration with Threatened Plants Tasmania.

The direct link to the Forestry blog is www.robertonfray.com/category/forestry, while the links to the blogs on Surrey Hills and Travel are www.robertonfray.com/category/surrey-hills and www.robertonfray.com/category/travel. Each page includes information on how to subscribe.

⁶ David can be contacted through the newsletter editor at Fintan.OLaighin@awe.gov.au.

EGYPTIAN POLES

By Peter McHugh¹

In September 1939, at about the same time as the outbreak of WW2, the Egyptian State Railways placed a huge order with the Forests Commission of Victoria to supply 26,455 messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and brown stringybark (*E. baxteri*) telegraph poles.

The poles ranged in length from 22 feet to 60 feet and totalled over 3 million superficial feet of timber. (>7000m³). A further 1437 poles were supplied for military purposes. The poles were supplied by thinning stringybark forests at Daylesford and Trentham. These forests had grown back after the devastation of the earlier gold mining period.

Remembering that by 1897, the entire Wombat State Forest near Daylesford had been officially declared a "ruined forest" ...²

The poles were treated to stop decay with a coating of creolatum on the ends.

The commission had experimented earlier in 1936 at the Glen Park pole site near Creswick with a range of timber preservation treatments including charring with oxy-acetylene.

Because of shipping shortages caused by the war, it took until mid-1940 to complete the order.

But the sale was a particularly profitable one for the commission, being worth over £21,000, which was more than enough to cover harvesting costs, wages and railway freight, leaving a tidy margin for royalties.

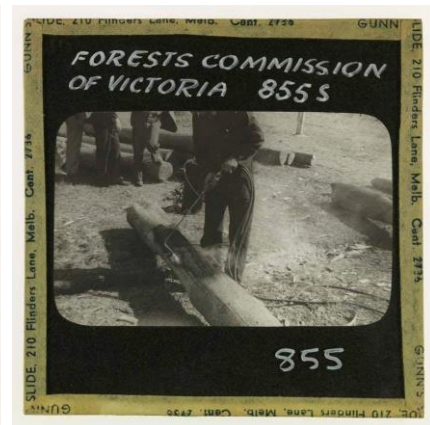
<https://www.victoriasforestryheritage.org.au/forest-estate/native-forests/forest-descriptions/553-the-wombat-forest.html>



Egyptian poles. Station Yard, Trentham, Wombat District, 1939.



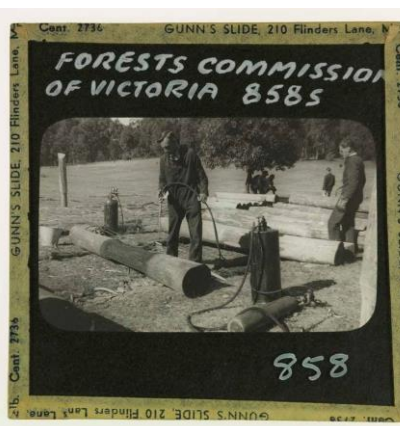
Measurement of poles for Egypt. Wombat District, 1939.



Oxy-acetylene treatment of poles. Pole test site, Glen Park, 1936



Oxy-acetylene treatment of poles. Pole test site, Glen Park, 1936.



Oxy-acetylene treatment of poles. Pole test site, Glen Park, 1936.



Egypt poles – creolatum on ends.

¹ Peter McHugh is a new member of the AFHS (Rob Youl twisted his arm) and is a regular contributor to the "Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage" Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/forestcommissionheritage and to the "Victoria's Forestry Heritage" website www.victoriasforestryheritage.org.au. A brief bio of Peter is at www.victoriasforestryheritage.org.au/people1/author-bios/223-peter-mchugh-bio.html.

² **Editor's note:** The reference to "ruined forest" occurs in the 4th progress report of the Royal Commission on State Forests and Timber Reserves which was presented to the Victorian Parliament in 1899. This report focussed on "Wombat Forest: its resources, management and control". The Royal Commission commenced in 1897 and the final report was presented in 1901.

DISABLED DIGGERS MAKING WOODEN TOBACCO PIPES IN MELBOURNE

By Peter McHugh

Driven by a deep philanthropic desire to provide employment for some of the more seriously maimed returned soldiers, several prominent Melbourne citizens, with the support of the Department of Repatriation, established the Tobacco Pipe Manufacturing Company in Leicester Street Carlton in 1918.

The factory needed to not only invent, but also build, its own machinery, and even had its own wood testing laboratory, while the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry (a forerunner of CSIRO) was engaged to investigate the suitability of various Australian timbers because little was known at the time.

Timber was selected for its low flammability qualities.

The ideal wood for making pipes needed to be even grained, dense and heavy and with long and firm structural fibres that could take a highly polished finish.

Some species contained essential oils and tannins that tainted the pipe smoke which ruled them out.

The famous wood technologist, Richard Thomas Baker, in his important work published in 1919, *The Hardwoods of Australia and their Economics*, refers to the combustibility and suitability of certain pipe woods.

Southern Mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryoides*) from Gippsland proved most popular while other species included Swamp Mahogany (*E. robusta*) and Jarrah (*E. marginata*). Somewhat surprisingly, River Red Gum, then known as *E. rostrata*, was rejected.

Logs were first broken down at the circular saw bench and, after passing through numerous cutting, docking, and shaping machines, pipes were finished by hand.

I'm unable to find out whether the enterprise flourished and proved a success, but I certainly hope it did.

<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-7270009>

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/25317603>



Pipe factory - Sawing up logs



Pipe factory - Wood blocks awaiting



Pipe factory - Shaping pipe bowls



Pipe factory - Making their own machinery



Pipe factory - Correcting stems



Pipe factory - Polishing stems



Photos: State Library of Victoria

TASMANIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM, HOBART

By Fintán Ó Laighin¹, photographs by Juliana Lazzeri



A visit to Tasmania in January 2021 included a trip to the Tasmanian Transport Museum in Glenorchy in Hobart's north. The museum has

a small but interesting display on timber railways and tramways, and includes locomotives, photographs, and maps. It also has displays of railways, trams, and road transport (especially buses); it houses the Tasmanian Fire Museum, and also runs special trains. Its website is at <https://tasmaniantransportmuseum.com.au>.

The Vertical Boiler Logging Locomotive

One of the locomotives in the collection was built in 1889 by Markham & Co. in Chesterfield, England. It has 3'6" gauge and was fitted with cast iron wheels with 7" deep flanges, making it suitable to work over rough bush tramways such as those laid with logs rather



than conventional steel rails. An interesting feature is that it is powered by a wood-fired vertical boiler, making it particularly useful for working on steep terrain compared to a typical horizontal boiler.

Its first recorded use in Tasmania was in 1898, on the tramway for Hay's mill at Hastings. Around 1918, it was transferred to the tramway between the Weilangta mill and Rheban on the east coast. In March 1911, it was fitted with a new boiler constructed by Cowley's of Ballarat, Victoria. The locomotive was again transferred in about 1936, this time to Sharp's mill beside the Tyenna River near National Park, where it saw limited use hauling sawn timber from the mill to Sharps Siding on the Tasmanian Government Railways (TGR) Derwent Valley Line. The boiler was later removed from the frame of the locomotive for use elsewhere, but was refitted before the loco was taken to the end of the tramway in the hills above the Tyenna River where it provided steam to drive a water pump. The locomotive and boiler were abandoned in about 1946. In February 1983, museum members transferred it to the museum. Restoration work commenced in 1987 and was largely completed in 2003. It is probably the last surviving vertical-boilered locomotive in Australia.

Locomotive 1653

Another locomotive in the collection, the 1653, was built in 1923 by the Climax Manufacturing Co. in Pennsylvania, USA. It was intended for a New Zealand company, but instead found its way to Australia.

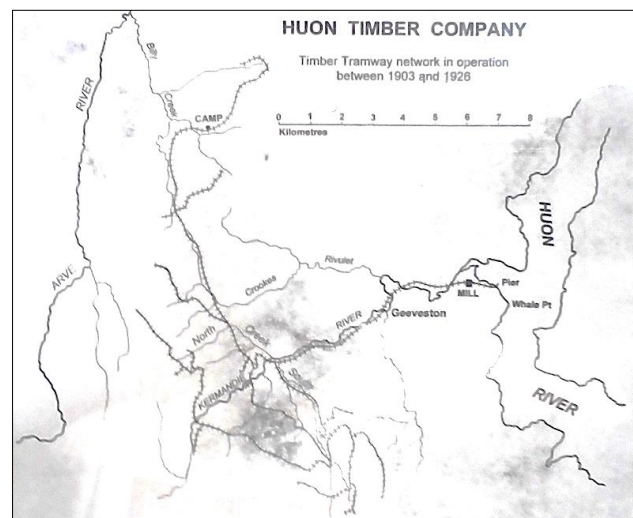


By 1925, it was known to have been working on the tramways of Pines and Hardwoods Ltd in the Simmsville area of NSW. The 1653 was sold to Australian Newsprint Mills (ANM) and arrived in Tasmania in 1941. It was modified in the Emu Bay Railway workshops before entering service hauling log wagons along the 5km spur line between the TGR Derwent Valley Line and the log loading areas in the Tyenna and Styx valleys.

One of the 1653's claims to fame is its appearance in the 1937 film, *Tall Timbers*, directed by Ken G. Hall. (See the article on p12 for more information.)

The Display Boards

The museum has a number of display boards with photos and text of "Forest Tramways", "The Vertical Boiler Logging Locomotive", and the "Huon Timber Company" in Geeveston, the latter including a map of the company's timber tramway network from 1903 to 1926. The photos range from the 1890s to the 1940s, to more recent ones of museum members inspecting the abandoned vertical boiler before its move to the museum in 1983. One display board has an undated photo of a bullock team hauling logs, one of a horse tramway, and photos from Marrawah, Trowuth, Bruny Island, Meander, the Derwent Valley, Fortescue Bay, and the Forentine Valley, as well as one of a log train passing the Tyenna River on its way to the ANM mill at Boyer.



¹ The descriptions of the locomotives in this article draw heavily from the museum's website – tasmaniantransportmuseum.com.au/exhibits/rail-exhibits/locomotives.

TALL TIMBERS AND LOCOMOTIVE 1653

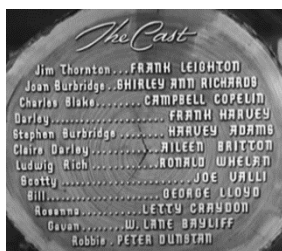
By Fintán Ó Laighin¹



In 1937, Australian director Ken G. Hall's film, *Tall Timbers*, was released by Cinesound Productions. The film stars Frank Leighton as young forestry graduate Jim Thornton, and

Shirley Ann Richards as Joan Burbridge, the adopted daughter of Stephen Burbridge, owner of a timber company. The screenplay was written by Frank Harvey (who appears in the film as Darley), and is based on a story by Frank Hurley.²

The plot focuses on Jim Thornton who "is involved in a race between timber companies to fill a major contract. Jim has joined the crew of a genial timber baron, Burbridge, and foils attempts by a rival, Blake, to sabotage their work."³



Tall Timbers has been released under at least three different titles, including an edited version for the US market under the title *Timberland Terror*. The original Australian release was 89 minutes long, but the American release was shortened to 56 minutes. It was also released as *Thundering Forest*, with the lead actor credits changed to Ann Richards (listed first) and Frank Leighton. This re-release was probably due to Richards's success in Hollywood where she had moved in December 1941. The studio dropped "Shirley" from her name and she appeared as Ann Richards in her first American film, a short called *The Woman in the House*, in 1942.^{4,5}

Tall Timbers includes footage of the 1653 locomotive, built in 1923 by the Climax Manufacturing Co. in Pennsylvania, USA, and now on display at the Tasmanian Transport Museum in Hobart (see p11).



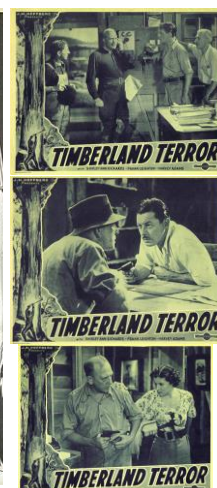
In an e-mail exchange I had with Peter Evans, he wrote that "*Tall Timbers* is a very famous film both for its recording of forest 'stories' and its place in Australian cinematic history. Anyone who has worked in the film industry is familiar with the work of Ken Hall. Some years ago, David Burke spoke to Ken and the interview was published in *Light Railways* no. 75, January 1975."⁶



The 1653 as it appears in Tall Timbers, with Joe Valli (in the role of Scotty) leaning out of the cab.



Daybill



Lobby cards



Lobby card detail

¹ This article draws from a number of film-related websites: Australian Centre for the Moving Image www.acmi.net.au/works/97967--tall-timbers; the National Film and Sound Archives Australian Screen Online aso.gov.au/titles/features/tall-timbers [Warning: this website gives away the ending, although that might also be apparent from the poster]; the Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com/title/tt0122282; and Oz Movies www.ozmovies.com.au/movie/tall-timbers. Thanks also to James Sandry and David Hogan from the Reel McCoy Film Group in Canberra www.reelmccoy.org.au.

² Frank Hurley, while perhaps better known for his photographs and as a documentary maker, including of Antarctica and the world wars, wrote and directed two feature films in 1926, *Jungle Woman* and *The Hound of the Deep*. His entry on the Australian Dictionary of Biography was written by film historian Andrew Pike adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hurley-james-francis-frank-6774. On the ASO website, curator Paul Byrnes says that the film came from a story idea by Hurley; a poster for *Timberland Terror* sources it to "the novel TALL TIMBERS by Capt. Frank Hurley" vintagemoviepostersforum.com/uploads/editor/o0/yyz8odz2j1rs.jpg.

³ Australian Centre for the Moving Image www.acmi.net.au/works/97967--tall-timbers.

⁴ *Tall Timbers* does not seem to be commercially available, but a 74 minute version (plus advertisements) is available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCxTEoWmq9s, posted by Craig's Guided Rail Tours. Excerpts are available at aso.gov.au/titles/features/tall-timbers. An American company, Loving the Classics, sells DVD-Rs of *Timberland Terror* as a public domain film www.lovingtheclassics.com/lcm1/by-title/t/timberland-terror-1937-5597.html.

⁵ Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com/title/tt0144016.

⁶ "Making Tall Timbers as told to David Burke by Ken Hall", *Light Railways*, no. 75 (Vol. XIX no. 3), January 1982. media.lrrsa.org.au/magi075/Light_Railways_075.pdf (pp54-58).

JH MAIDEN'S BOOK ON WATTLES

By Fintán Ó Laighin



The celebration of Wattle Day on 1 September is an appropriate time to mention an 1890 book by Joseph Henry Maiden titled *Wattles and Wattle-barks, being hints on the conservation and cultivation of wattles, together with particulars of their value*.

Maiden was director of the Botanic Gardens in Sydney from 1896 to 1924, but at the time the book was published, was curator of the Technological Museum of Sydney, a position he held from 1882 to 1896.

In the preface, Maiden writes that:

THIS pamphlet is issued to supply farmers, tanners, merchants, and others with authentic information in regard to the value of wattles. The demand for good wattle-bark becomes greater every year, while the supply does not cope with it.

The cultivation of wattles is not a theoretical matter; it is easy, remunerative, and has already entered the domain of practical farming. Australia is the native country of wattles; they grow in the poorest soil, and require only a moderate rainfall. Their cultivation is strongly recommended to farmers who have a patch of poor soil which they cannot otherwise profitably utilize. The return is in about five to seven years, and attention to the wattle plantation can be chiefly given in the spare hours which are available on every farm. Farmers in some districts could be recommended to put as much land as possible under wattle, provided they had the means to wait. At present only the following wattles are recommended to be planted:—

The South Australian Broad-leaved Wattle,

Acacia pycnantha.

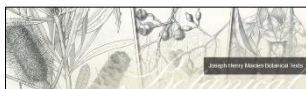
The Sydney Black Wattle, *Acacia decurrens*.

The Tasmanian and Victorian Black Wattle,

Acacia mollissima.

At the same time, reference to the detailed information given in regard to other wattles will show that many of them are worthy of conservation if farmers have them on their land, and further experience may show that some are even worthy of local cultivation. The three wattles specially mentioned, however, with their extended geographical range and proved value, are sufficient for all practical purposes at present.

His pamphlet ran to about 40 pages and included seven illustrations. He analysed 38 species of *Acacia* as well as some sub-species, classifying 10 as being of value (despite recommending that only three species be planted), another nine as being of secondary value, and 19 as "worthless".



The first edition is available on the University of Sydney's

Australian Digital Collections as part of the Joseph Henry Maiden Botanical Texts collection – adc.library.usyd.edu.au/data-2/p00111.pdf and adc.library.usyd.edu.au/index.jsp?database=maiden&page=home.

A second edition was published in 1891 and is available through the Google Books Library Project www.google.com.au/books/edition/Wattles_and_Wattle_barks/dx02AQAAMAAJ. A further edition was published in 1906.

Maiden was responsible for describing a great many species of *Acacia* – World Wide Wattle attributes 112 species and sub-species to Maiden, sometimes on his own, sometimes in collaboration with others worldwidewattle.com/speciesgallery/search.php. He has also had a species named after him – Maiden's Wattle – (*A. maidenii*) named in 1892 by Ferdinand von Mueller.

Further reading

Jodi Frawley, 2011. "Maiden, Joseph", The Dictionary of Sydney. dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/maiden_joseph

Mark Lyons and CJ Pettigrew, 1986. "Maiden, Joseph Henry (1859-1925)", Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/maiden-joseph-henry-7463

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, 1971

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Australian Government's first environment department. The process happened in two stages. Stage 1 occurred on 12 March with the establishment of the Department of the Vice President of the Executive Council. Its four principal responsibilities were Aboriginal Affairs, Support for the Arts, National Archives, and Government printing, publishing and advertising. (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 28, 15 March 1971, www.legislation.gov.au/file/1971GN28).

Just over two months later, on 31 May, the government **renamed** this department as the Department of the Environment, Aborigines and the Arts and added "Activities related to the Environment" to its list of responsibilities (along with War Graves, and the Acquisition and leasing of land and property outside Australia and the territories for Commonwealth purposes). (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 56A, 31 May 1971, www.legislation.gov.au/file/1971GN56).

Prior to this, an Office of the Environment had been established on 24 December 1970 as a division of the Prime Minister's Department (as it was then called), although its functions were limited to "advising the Commonwealth and recommending action that should be taken to prevent or reduce pollution arising out of the activities of any Commonwealth Department or Authority" *. The office later became a division of the environment department.

On 31 March 1971, then Opposition leader Gough Whitlam raised a "Discussion of Matter of Public Importance" in the House of Representatives in which he said that while the office had been established, no staff had been appointed and that the Prime Minister McMahon "has consigned the Office itself to that limbo of left-over Gortonian aspirants and ideals, the Department of the Vice-President of the Executive Council" †.

* House of Representatives Hansard, 18 August 1971, p274.

† House of Representatives Hansard, 31 May 1971, p1218.

OBITUARIES – CFA NEWS, JUNE 2021

The June 2021 issue of the *CFA Newsletter*, published by the Commonwealth Forestry Association, includes obituaries of three Australian foresters: Alan Eddy (1929-2020), Geoff Stocker (1941-2021) and Robert Thistlethwaite (1941-2021).

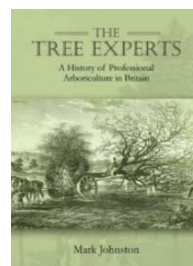
The full obituaries are available at https://issuu.com/cfa_newsletter/docs/cfa_newsletter_june_2021 But summaries are below.

Alan Eddy is described as a "venerable forester" whose death represents a loss of more than 70 years of forestry knowledge and community service. He is best known for a 16-year tenure as senior lecturer and principal of the Victorian School of Forestry (VSF) at Creswick. The obituary documents his lengthy career from his graduation from the VSF in 1949 to his first postings to the Bruthen and Nowa Nowa Forest Districts in East Gippsland, his 1954 marriage to Nell, his post-graduate study in the USA on a Fullbright Scholarship, his term as VSF principal from 1969 until 1978 when he was appointed to a position in Melbourne at the Forest Commission's head office. And a lot more.

Geoff Stocker started his forestry degree at the University of New England in Armidale in 1959, before moving to the Australian Forestry School in Canberra, graduating in 1963. He moved to the Northern Territory where he was involved in the pine plantation trials on Melville Island and elsewhere, and also documented Aboriginal burning practices and fire dynamics in tropical landscapes. In 1971 in the Atherton Tablelands, he established a regional station of the national Forest Research Institute, which subsequently became the CSIRO Tropical Forest Research Station. After leaving CSIRO, he moved to Papua New Guinea to be professor and head of the Forestry School at the University of Technology in Lae, and director of the Forestry Research Institute PNG. After returning to Queensland, he became involved in local government and was even deputy mayor of Tablelands Regional Council from 2014 to 2016. Geoff has a bloodwood (*Corymbia stockeri*) and two species of orchids (*Dendrobium stockeri* and *Bulbophyllum stockeri*) named in his honour.

Robert Thistlethwaite (a one-time member of the AFHS) attended the Australian Forestry School in the early 1960s and was awarded a PhD from the Australian National University in 1970. His thesis was on "Forests and water supply in the Cotter catchment, with reference to *P. radiata* (D Don) plantations". His professional career started in Papua New Guinea at the Department of Forests and his work on developing plantations is summarised in his paper "Further domestication of PNG's indigenous forest species". A move to Darwin saw him at the Berrimah Research Laboratory, before moving to the AIDAB (a forerunner of AusAID) to be part of its Pacific Regional Team as natural resource adviser. He established his own consulting company in 1989 and continued to focus on islands in the Asia-Pacific.

NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Mark Johnston, 2021. *The Tree Experts: A History of Professional Arboriculture in Britain*. Oxbow Books, Barnsley UK, 560pp. ISBN 9781911188889. £55.00 Also available as an e-book.

www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/catalog/product/view/id/66860/s/the-tree-experts

From the publisher's notes.

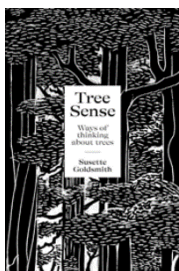
Trees are now in the public eye as never before. The threat of tree diseases, the felling of street trees and the challenge of climate change are just some of the issues that have put trees in the media spotlight. At the same time, the trees in our parks, gardens and streets are a vital resource that can deliver environmental, social and economic benefits that make our towns and cities attractive, green and healthy places.

Ever since Roman times when amenity trees were first planted in Britain, caring for those trees has required specialist skills. This is mainly because of the challenges of successfully integrating large trees into the urban environment and the risks involved in working with them, often at height and in close proximity to people, buildings and roads. But who are the people with the specialist expertise to care for our amenity trees? While professionals such as horticulturists, landscape architects, conservationists and foresters have a role to play, it is the arboriculturists who are the 'tree experts'. For centuries arboriculture was often synonymous with forestry or considered an aspect of horticulture, until it emerged in the nineteenth century as a separate discipline. There are now some 22,000 people employed in Britain's arboricultural industry, including practical tree surgeons and arborists, local authority tree officers and arboricultural consultants.

This is the first book to trace the history of Britain's professional tree experts, from the Roman arborator to the modern chartered arboriculturist. It also discusses the influences from continental Europe and North America that have helped to shape British arboriculture over the centuries. *The Tree Experts* will have particular appeal to those interested in the natural and built environment, heritage landscapes, social history and the history of gardening.

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2. The Romans Bring Arboriculture to Britain
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6. Arboriculture in the English Landscape Garden
7. Heroic Arboriculture in the Nineteenth Century
8. The Rise of the Tree Experts, 1900-1945
9. Professional Arboriculture 'Comes of Age', 1946-Present



Susette Goldsmith (ed), 2021. *Tree Sense: Ways of thinking about trees*. Massey University Press, New Zealand, 256pp. ISBN: 9780995140745.

www.masseypress.ac.nz/books/tree-sense

From the publisher's notes.

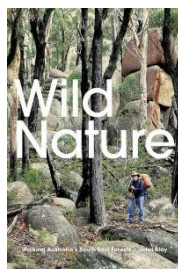
Thanks to Mike Roche for advice of this book.

A tree miscellany with a focus on our planet's future

At a moment when the planet is so clearly in peril, the trees stand as both guardians and messengers. They have words for us – if only we would listen.

As climate change imposes significant challenges on the natural world we are being encouraged to plant trees. At the same time, urban intensification and expansion threatens our existing arboreal resources and leads to disputes among communities, councils and developers over the fate of mature trees. To find our way through this confusion, we need to build our respect for trees and to recognise their essential role in our environment, our heritage, our well-being and our future. We need to build a robust 'tree sense'.

This collection of essays, art and poetry by artists, activists, ecologists and advocates, including Philip Simpson, Anne Noble, Elizabeth Smither, Kennedy Warne and Glyn Church, discusses the many ways in which humans need trees, and how our future is laced into their roots and their branches.



John Blay, August 2020. *Wild Nature: Walking Australia's South East Forests*. Newsouth Books, Sydney, NSW, 336pp. ISBN: 9781742236902.

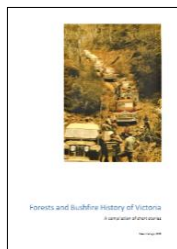
www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/wild-nature

From the publisher's notes.

An epic journey of discovery into the heart of a vast and contested Australian wilderness.

John Blay laces up his walking boots and goes bush to explore Australia's rugged south east forests – stretching from Canberra to the coast and on to Wilsons Promontory – in a great circle from his one-time home near Bermagui.

In *Wild Nature*, the bestselling author of *On Track* charts the forests' shared history, their natural history, the forest wars, the establishment of the South East Forests National Park and the threats that continue to dog their existence, including devastating bushfires. Along the way Blay asks the big questions. What do we really know about these wild forests? How did the forests come to be the way they are? What is the importance of wild nature to our civilisation?

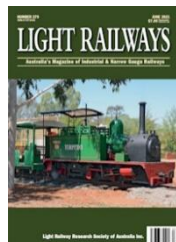


Peter McHugh, December 2020. *Forests and Bushfire History of Victoria: A Compilation of Short Stories*. Self-published, Sale, VIC, 499pp. ISBN: 9780645063103. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2899074696>

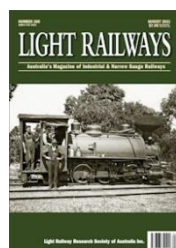
This free e-book is a collection of stories compiled from the "Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage" Facebook page and the "Victoria's Forestry Heritage" website. In the introduction, McHugh describes it as "a jumble of written oddments and photos, (a) vague idea (which) emerged to do something to mark and celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the creation of the Forests Commission (of Victoria) which was formed in 1918. ... Having been penned for social media (the articles) are deliberately short, written in a "conversational style" and have lots of photos and links. There are also 18 separate Wikipedia entries as well as a small book published about the 1965 Gippsland Bushfires."

A second volume is being prepared.

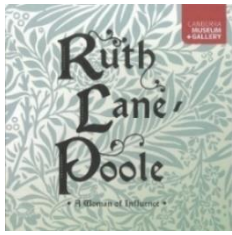
Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways, June 2021 (LR279) and August 2021 (LR280). Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISSN 0727 8101. www.lrrsa.org.au and www.facebook.com/groups/LightRailwaysAustralia.



LR279 is a rare issue of *Light Railways* that doesn't include any articles on timber tramways. Still, there is plenty of good reading. There is a very brief mention of the South Coast Railway Museum in Lake Tabourie (NSW) which refers to the Bawley Point to Termeil tramway. This tramway has been discussed in the AFHS newsletter, in particular in an article by Ian Bevege and Ian Barnes, "Timber Tramways of the South Coast", published in issue no. 61 (Sep 2013, pp3-4). It is also mentioned briefly in issue nos. 46 (May 2007, p6) and 60 (Dec 2012, p3).



LR280 includes a field report on the sawmill tramways in Southport (Tasmania) while the back page features three photos from the Weston Langford Railway Photography collection (westonlangford.com) taken at Yarloop in Western Australia. The accompanying text explains that Yarloop (a contraction of "Yard Loop"), established in 1895, was the centre of a vast network of timber railways to tap the Jarrah forests to the east of the escarpment, a few miles from town. In addition to the sawmill at Yarloop for processing the logs nearer to town, a number of mills were built far into the forest, all feeding sawn timber back to Yarloop for seasoning or dispatch.



Canberra Museum and Gallery, 2021. *Ruth Lane-Poole: A Woman of Influence*, CMAG, Canberra ACT, 54pp. ISBN 9780987545534. \$15.
Review by Fintán Ó Laighin.

This book has been published to accompany the exhibition of the same name currently showing at

the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) and presented in partnership with the Australiana Fund.¹

The name "Lane-Poole" is well known in forest and forestry circles, being the surname of one of Australia's eminent foresters, Charles Lane-Poole.

The exhibition focuses on his wife Ruth who rose to prominence in 1926 when she was appointed the interior "furnisher" for the two official residences in Canberra – Government House and The Lodge – that would house the Governor-General and the Prime Minister.

However, both the exhibition and the book also recognise her connection to forestry. As Harriet Elvin, CEO of the ACT Government's Cultural Facilities Corporation, writes in her introduction, "A major theme of the exhibition is to reflect on the beauty of Australian timbers, by exploring Ruth's commitment to showcasing the individual properties of specific Australian woods in her designs, and by discussing the work of her husband, Charles, and his far-reaching impact on the Australian forestry industry" (p7).

The book contains many photos of the items on display, including a 1927 photo of the entrance hall of the Australian Forestry School (p40) which shows the wonderful parquet floor and a table designed by Ruth. A 1930 photo of Ruth and Charles's home, Westridge House, is on the following page, while photos of Ruth and Charles themselves appear on p39, including one of their presentation to the Governor-General in c.1934, and another at the opening of the Australian Forestry School in 1927. (While not shown in the book, the exhibition displays the school's flag which was designed by Ruth.)

The director of CMAG, Sarah Schmidt, has also written an essay in which she notes the involvement of the ANU's Matthew Brookhouse. While examining a desk at Government House, he "gave insights into its Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Tulipwood (*Harpullia pendula*, a Queensland timber) surfaces, pointing out small circular features in various sections, explaining these were small notches in the wood where fine twigs have broken off; now they form part of the delightful patterning on these polished timbers. Ruth Lane-Poole enthused about Tulipwood as 'that most decorative of all Queensland's woods.' (pp11-12)"

The main essay is by curator Margaret Betteridge in which the Lane-Pooles' backgrounds are discussed and their lives in Australia, starting with their arrival in 1916 when Charles was appointed Western Australia's Conservator of Forests. She writes:

"For Ruth Lane-Poole, time in Western Australia gave the opportunity to become acquainted with the local native timbers and their properties, no doubt encouraged by her husband who had attempted to persuade English cabinetmakers to consider using these for furniture, visiting respected cabinetmakers in London while there in 1920 to attend the first Empire Forestry Conference. Perhaps the greatest compliment paid to Australian timbers that year was the gift to HRH the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) during his tour of Western Australia of a presentation box of samples of Western Australian timbers which Ruth designed on behalf of the Saw Millers' Association, the Chamber of Mines and the Pearlers' Association." (p24)

The final essay is by Jennifer Sanders, chair of the Australiana Fund, with the rather lengthy title of "Champions of Australia's Timbers: Richard Baker, Curator and Economic Botanist, and Sir Ronald C. Munro Ferguson P.C. G.C.M.C., Governor-General and Forester". The essay includes three pages of photographs, including one of Baker's 1919 book, *The Hardwoods of Australia and their Economics* – a book which is dedicated to Munro Ferguson. One photo is of a set of Australian timbers carved by Frederick W. Tod, a "renowned woodcarver and cabinetmaker" and which are in the shape of books. The photo is impressive, but the carvings are even more so. The production of these "books" (or "xylotheques") was commissioned by Baker to present to Munro Ferguson.

Sanders describes the enthusiasm that both Baker and Munro Ferguson have for forestry. She quotes John Dargavel's essay, "Australia's Foresters" (on the Australian Dictionary of Biography, adb.anu.edu.au/essay/17) in which he writes that Munro Ferguson "was an outstanding example (of a forester) who encouraged forestry in Australia and nurtured his plantations in Scotland" (p47). Both Baker and Munro Ferguson recognised the contribution that forestry would make to the post-war reconstruction.

On Baker, she notes that he "undertook extensive research on eucalyptus and its commercial applications, research supported by his colleague H.G. Smith. Their work, which challenged more orthodox botany, is now recognised as pioneering" (p45). Sanders also notes his encouragement of Australian timbers in decorative and applied arts. "His 1915 book, *The Australian Flora in Applied Art*, is a passionate call for the nation's flora to be the inspiration for decorative motifs for design, art, craft and industry", themes which were "closely identified with Federation in 1901" (p50).

Finally, in addition to John Dargavel's article on "Australia's Foresters", another source of information for the exhibition is his 2008 book, *The Zealous Conservator: A Life of Charles Lane Poole*, published by the University of Western Australia Press uwap.uwa.edu.au/products/the-zealous-conservator-a-life-of-charles-lane-poole.

¹ Unfortunately, plans to include a review of the exhibition were thwarted by the COVID-19 lockdown in Canberra. Hopefully the exhibition will be extended beyond its scheduled closing date of 2 October 2021 www.cmag.com.au/exhibitions/ruth-lane-poole-a-woman-of-influence.