

# Australian Forest History Society

Newsletter No. 86  
September 2022

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

## A Dangerous Occupation: Fatalities in the WA Timber Industry, 1853 to 2014



*Trees falling over the line were a common hazard on bush lines*

*See pp7-8*



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### NEXT ISSUE

The newsletter is normally published three times a year, with the occasional special issue. The next issue should be out in December 2022.

**Input is always welcome.**

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### IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Note .....	2
Correction .....	2
The Diggers Sawmill Company and "White Pine"	
Exports to Australia, 1920 to 1928, Part 1 .....	3
A Dangerous Occupation: Fatalities in the	
WA Timber Industry, 1853 to 2014 .....	7
Manjimup Heritage Park .....	8
School Endowment Plantations .....	10
Alumni Portrait of Mary Sutherland Unveiled	
at Bangor University, Wales .....	12
Request for Information: Royal Australian	
Engineers Forestry Company .....	12
ABC Radio National .....	12
Wind-power Firefighting .....	13
Fenner Seminar – "Mihi cura futuri": The Future	
of Forests and Forestry .....	13
Gare (and Byles) Collections in the National	
Library, Canberra .....	14
Robert Onfray's Forestry and Surrey Hills Blogs ...	14
Coming Up – The Annual General Meeting .....	14
A New Species of Eucalypt .....	15
New Books and Publications .....	15

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*By Fintán Ó Laighin*

I'll start this edition with an apology to Jack Bradshaw who provided two articles for the newsletter in 2021, neither of which was published. I can't explain how this oversight occurred, but I'm pleased that Jack drew it to my attention. Both articles are included in this issue – on pp7-9 – and one of the photos he provided adorns our cover. My profuse apologies to Jack.

We cover the world in this issue (our bit of it anyway), from New Zealand to Western Australia, and most states in between, along with a side trip to Wales.

As mentioned on page 14, our Annual General Meeting is fast-approaching, and will be held in Canberra in mid to late November. It's been a number of years since we've had a full committee, and it would be great to see some new and/or returning faces getting involved. Even if you can't make it to the AGM, you can nominate yourself. The nomination form will be included with the meeting papers that will be distributed by early November.

Thanks to Juliana Lazzari for her help with this issue.

### CORRECTION

*By Fintán Ó Laighin*

In the April 2022 issue, an article on Captain James John Ker Edwards, MBE (pp9-10) included a photo taken at a 1942 Christmas dinner. The details of the photo were taken from the State Library of SA website, but Graham McKenzie Smith has pointed out that while Edwards is listed as a major, he wasn't promoted to this rank until October 1944. There is also an error in the text just above the photo which refers to "Lieutenant Cole" rather than Lieutenant Colonel Cole. Despite the article's shared by-line between Graham and me, that error was all mine.

## THE DIGGERS SAWMILL COMPANY AND "WHITE PINE" EXPORTS TO AUSTRALIA, 1920 TO 1928, PART 1 By Michael Roche

### Introduction

The "Debt of Honour" that New Zealand's Prime Minister Bill Massey felt was due to those who served in WWI has largely been studied in terms of the discharged soldier settlement act. Not all returned service personnel went farming under the scheme, considerable numbers borrowed money to build or purchase a home or to set up a business. There were failures and successes within all these groups. What follows is an examination of a returned soldiers' sawmill company, established in Westland in 1920, to mill some 630 acres of kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydiodes*), also known as "White Pine".

### The Diggers Sawmill Company shareholders

In January 1920, the Westland Repatriation Board, charged with assisting ex-service personnel back into civilian life, agreed to loan £300 each to 13 returned soldiers to set up a private company – the Diggers Sawmill Company (DSMC) to establish a sawmill at their hometown, the small Westland settlement of Woodstock. Through the initiative of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, DSMC secured access to 630 acres of forest on land close to Woodstock that would ordinarily have been auctioned off to existing millers. Westland was the site of gold mining in the 1860s, although after the 1900s coal mining and timber milling, along with some gold dredging, dominated the region's extractive economy. On low fertility soils, farming was only a minor land use. There was accordingly limited uptake of the soldier settlement scheme in Westland. Sawmilling offered better prospects though this was also not without difficulties. There was no rail link through the Southern Alps to Canterbury until 1923, the main Westland ports had harbour bars making navigation difficult, and the chief export markets were in Australia. Overlaying this in 1918-1921, politicians began to take an interest in forestry in terms of "New Zealand timber for the New Zealanders" and put in place export restrictions in 1918 and formed a State Forest Service in 1921. Nevertheless, in 1920, four new operations, including DSMC were established in the Hokitika area, where the local "Sawmilling industry is enjoying a period of exceptional prosperity".<sup>1</sup>

The DSMC name is a reminder that the label "digger" had not yet been lost to across the Tasman. The 13 shareholders' service records enable their pre-war and wartime experiences to be compared (Table 1). One incidental detail is that many of the men had false teeth. Several other points can be made. They all came from the same district, some having known each other since school days. Three were married. One had served previously, in the South African War. The number of Roman Catholics is greater than the national average, but sectarianism did not seem to have been an issue in its operations. Most of the men were in their late 20s and early 30s when they became shareholders in DSMC.

Under the discharged soldier settlement scheme, men with no agricultural experience were able to go farming – often with predictably bad results. Not that farming experience alone was sufficient to guarantee success. In this instance, nearly half of the men had pre-war experience in the timber industry, mostly with one of the larger local sawmills.

In terms of war service, one man, John Nancekivell served for the duration of the war. Most of the others volunteered in 1915 and 1916. Conscription was introduced in late 1916, but those in the group who served later, such as Frederick Willoughby and Andrew Wells, were volunteers. There were five NCOs: John Nancekivell, William Willoughby, William Boyd, Thomas Stuart, and James Corsan, the remainder being privates or riflemen. All but William Boyd served overseas, depending on when they volunteered, in combinations of Egypt, Gallipoli and the Western Front. Reinforcements were assigned to units as required so that the men were spread across various battalions although five were in the 3 NZ Rifle Brigade. Three had suffered from gunshot wounds. Two were diagnosed with "shell shock", one was gassed, and others suffered from a variety of illnesses. Nine were discharged as unfit for further military service on account of illness and injury.

Their physical injuries may have healed by 1920, though one died in 1926 and two others in 1948. Psychological trauma was not well understood at the time, but all must in some ways have been impacted by their war service. How fit they were for sawmilling work in 1920, not in terms of practical experience, but in terms of wellbeing is open to question.

Six of the men had previously worked for Stuart and Chapman Ltd which was established in 1903. It began in 1890 as a sawmilling partnership between Christchurch carpenter John Chapman and Australian David Stuart. Butler Brothers Ltd and the Kauri Timber Company, however, held a controlling shareholding in the new company. Stuart and Chapman operated sawmills at Waitahi, Kanieri and Ross. They were a successful long-term presence in Westland.<sup>2</sup> Thomas and John Stuart are both seemingly related, but not directly, to company founder David Stuart.

DSMC was registered as a private limited company in 1920. It was headquartered at Woodstock and had a nominal capital of £1,300 in 1,300 shares (each of the men held 100). Over two dozen sawmill companies were formed nationally in 1919 and 1920, most with a nominal capital of £2,000 to £3,000.<sup>3</sup> DSMC was one of the smaller in terms of capital. It was also one of 45 sawmill enterprises in Westland – amongst the largest grouping of private companies (20), ahead of partnerships (14). Like virtually all the other Westland plants, and the vast majority of the sawmills in the country, it was steam powered. It was close to the provincial average value of plant and equipment at £3,511.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Turner, F. (1941) From Sapling to Forest Monarch. Richards, Hokitika.

<sup>3</sup> Company Registrations. New Zealand Mercantile Gazette, 1919-1922.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated from lists of "Sawmills Sash and Door Factories: Character of Organisation". Statistics of New Zealand Manufactories. Government Printer, Wellington.

<sup>1</sup> West Coast Notes. *Sum* (Christchurch), 24 March 1920, 3.

Table 1: Shareholders in the Diggers Sawmill Company, 1920

Name	Life span	Pre-war occupation	Religion	Location	Enlist/Conscripted	Service	Other	Occupation 1935 Electoral roll
William Nancekivell	1881-1948	Labourer	Anglican	Woodstock	Private, Auckland Regiment 1916 Discharged termination of service 1919	Western Front		Sawmill hand
John Nancekivell	1892-1961	Sawmill hand, Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Anglican	Westland	Sergeant, Canterbury Infantry Regiment 1914-19 Discharged termination of service	Egypt, Gallipoli, Western Front	Main Body enlistment Gunshot wound 1915	Sawmiller
William Willoughby	1892-1957	Sawmill hand, Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Presbyterian	Woodstock	Lance Corporal, Auckland Infantry Regiment 1915-19 Discharged termination of service	Egypt, Gallipoli, Western Front	Gunshot wounds 1915 Trench fever 1918	Sawmill hand
Frederick Willoughby	1898-1990	Sawmiller, Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Anglican	Woodstock	Private, Canterbury Infantry Regiment Attested 1918 Discharged 1919 Bronchitis, no longer fit for military service	Hospitalised on arrival in UK	Influenza 1918	Sawmiller
William Boyd	1876-1971	Storekeeper	Roman Catholic	Rimu	Quarter Master Sergeant, 1916-17 Discharged, injury, no longer fit for military service	New Zealand	Married	Engine driver
James Cooper	1887-1966	Miner	Anglican	Rimu	Private Canterbury Infantry Regiment 1915-19 Discharged end of period of engagement	Egypt, Gallipoli, Western Front	Shell shock 1916	Sawmiller
James Corsan	1891-1975	Sawmiller, Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Presbyterian	Rimu	Lance Corporal, 3 NZ Rifle Brigade 1915-19 Discharged illness contracted on active service	Western Front	Hospitalised – Rouen 1917 Trench fever	Sawmiller
Francis Keenan	1890-1926	Coach proprietor	Roman Catholic	Rimu	Private, Wellington Infantry Regiment 1916-18 Discharged, no longer fit for military service – parenchymatous goitre	Western Front	Initial medical noted right thyroid gland enlarged but not sufficient to disqualify from active service	-
Andrew Wells	1880-1952	Carpenter	Anglican	Woodstock	Rifleman, 3 NZ Rifle Brigade (volunteer) 1917-20 Discharged, no longer fit for military service	Western Front	Bronchitis Outpatient Hokitika – October and November 1919	Builder
Harry Wells	1896-1988	Clerk	Anglican	Woodstock	Rifleman, 3 NZ Rifle Brigade 1916-18 Discharged no longer fit for military service on account of illness	Western Front	Shell shock 1917 AWOL 1917	Storekeeper
Edward Stoop	1894-1975	Clerk	Anglican	Greymouth (formerly of Woodstock)	Private, Canterbury Infantry Regiment 1915-18. Discharged on account of injuries (knee) suffered on active service	Egypt & Western Front	Rejected on original attempt to enlist because of a stiff knee 6' 2"	Sawmiller
Robert Stuart	1885-1963	Sawmiller, Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Roman Catholic	Rimu	Rifleman, 3 NZ Rifle Brigade 1916-17 Discharged unfit for further military service because of wounds	Western Front	Married with 4 children Gunshot wounds 1917 Gassed 1917 Corporal – relinquished	Sawmiller



Name	Life span	Pre-war occupation	Religion	Location	Enlist/Conscripted	Service	Other	Occupation 1935 Electoral roll
Thomas Stuart	1881-1948	Farmer but previously engineer for Stuart and Chapman Ltd	Roman Catholic	Rimu	Corporal 3 NZ Rifle Brigade 1915-19 Fractured ankle – Extended sick leave in Hokitika 1916, Hospital (tetanus) May 1918; abscesses elbow July 1918; influenza December 1918 Discharged unfit for further military service	Western Front	Married Served in South African War Medical report noted "Heart action somewhat rapid – six months previously had failed the medical"	Sawmiller

Source: Individual service records – accessible via Archway – <https://collections.archives.govt.nz/web/arena>; Westland Electoral Roll 1935.

### "White Pine" – Kahikatea

The merchantable forests of Westland contained large quantities of rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), small amounts of miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*) and more difficult to mill beech (*Nothofagus*) species. In addition, there were sizable areas of kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), then still widely known and traded as "White Pine". In the early 20th century, rimu comprised around 80% of Westland's timber exports with the remainder largely made up of kahikatea. In New Zealand and Australia, kahikatea was particularly valued for the manufacture of butter boxes and cheese crates because it did not taint the produce. It was also used in Australia for shelving, lining, white wood furniture and in small quantities for toymaking. Furthermore, grades of kahikatea for which there was no New Zealand outlet could still find a market in Australia. In 1918, it was estimated that New Zealand's kahikatea supplies could be exhausted in a decade.<sup>5</sup> The DSMC forest and mill was on Back Creek Road by the Hokitika River on the edge of Woodstock. It contained an estimated 9 to 12 million sp. ft. Unlike most New Zealand timber trees, kahikatea grew in relatively pure stands. Average merchantable volumes of kahikatea forest ranged from 6,500 to 7,000 cu. ft. per acre but the DSMC block at 1,190 to 1,587 cu. ft. per acre fell well below this figure.<sup>6</sup> Some 200 acres was immediately granted to DSMC as a Sawmill Reserve, with the remaining area a Forest Reserve for future cutting. The company estimated in 1920 that it had nine years reserve cutting.

Access to the forest was provided by a peculiarity of the district's gold mining past, whereby the Mining Wardens could offer cutting rights to forest on Crown land. Not until 1926 did the Forest Service consolidate its control over cutting rights on Crown forests. The initial expectation, publicly at least, was that DSMC would supply kahikatea for fruit cases in nearby Nelson, a centre of the pipfruit industry.<sup>7</sup> In reality challenging – the costs of getting it to Nelson meant it would not be

"payable to us to cut" and so the mill was from its inception depended on exports.<sup>8</sup>

### The Sawmill in Operation

Immediate tasks for DSMC included gaining permission to construct a tramway, dam, tail race, and develop the mill site. A small deviation of a public road meant DSMC was able to avoid blocking it when hauling logs.<sup>9</sup> In 1920, their output was a modest 6,000 sp. ft. daily with the timber priced at 12/6d per hundred sp. ft.<sup>10</sup> For the year ended 31 March 1921, 494,730 sp. ft. of kahikatea was produced along with 27,945 sp. ft. of rimu. Of this, 70% of their kahikatea was exported to Australia and 73% of rimu sold in New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> Contractual difficulties with Farrow Bros over hiring horses and wagons ended up in court in 1921.<sup>12</sup> The mill was some distance away from the road and there was an 8km gap in the railway line which necessitated further carting of timber by road before railing it on to Greymouth. This all amounted to extra transport costs for what was at the time one of the most distant mills from the port of Greymouth. There was also in the following year court action over a dishonoured promissory note for £408. Although DSMC was not directly involved, the episode does point to their somewhat fragile finances having borrowed the money at 7 1/2%.<sup>13</sup> The company meantime obtained a siding at Hokitika port in 1921 where it could stockpile sawn timber before it was dispatched to Greymouth.<sup>14</sup> In 1923, along with other mills DSMC lobbied Gordon Coates, the Minister of Public Works and of Railways, for improved wharf storage conditions.<sup>15</sup>

DSMC acquired, in 1921, cutting rights to a further 80 acres of forest at a royalty rate of 3d per 100 sp. ft.<sup>16</sup> The optimism of 1920 was short lived however and, in 1921 when the mill recommenced operations, it was in the "timber slump now prevailing".<sup>17</sup> The situation worsened

<sup>8</sup> E. Stoop to Secretary of the Board of Trade. 24 May 1920. Diggers Sawmilling Coy SF 43/293 R 17283198. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

<sup>9</sup> Warden's Court Hokitika. *Hokitika Guardian* 27 February 1920, 3; Westland County Council. *Hokitika Guardian* 7 July 1920, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Diggers Sawmill. *Sum* (Christchurch), 25 August 1920, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Return of Sawn Timber for 31 March 1921. Diggers Sawmilling Coy SF 43/293 R17283198, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

<sup>12</sup> Local and General. *Grey River Argus*, 18 November 1921, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Westland Supreme Court, *Hokitika Guardian*, 20 March 1922, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Hokitika Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 14 May 1921, 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Hokitika Guardian*, 12 November 1923, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Westland Land Board. *Hokitika Guardian*, 21 July 1921, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Hokitika Guardian*, 8 July 1921, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (Hereafter AJHR), H44, 1918, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Entrican, A.R., Hinds, H.V. and Reid, J.S. (1957) *Forest Trees and Timbers of New Zealand*. New Zealand Forest Service. Bulletin no. 12. Government Printer, Wellington.

<sup>7</sup> By Motor to Christchurch and Back. *Nelson Evening Mail*, 12 May 1920, 2.

and in 1922 they closed the Back Creek mill because of falling demand for kahikatea.<sup>18</sup> Further development work on a new tramway at Back Creek was delayed until 1926.<sup>19</sup>

Unexpected difficulties arose in 1924 when the government Fisheries Inspector took DSMC to court for discharging sawdust and mill waste into the Hokitika River.<sup>20</sup> Trout and salmon had recently been introduced into the river and DSMC was the test case before the courts. The fine was a nominal 20s, but the new regulations imposed unwelcome changes on sawmill practices. Mill-related fires were a regional problem in 1924 when 114 acres of private cut over land was burnt and 1,480 acres in 1925.<sup>21</sup> Dumping sawdust in the rivers was commonplace to reduce the fire risk. DSMC then unsuccessfully lobbied the Minister of Marine and the Hokitika Borough Council for an exemption to continue dumping into the Hokitika River.<sup>22</sup> In 1927, after further court action, they began work on a dam to prevent sawdust from entering the river.

In 1925 DSMC began milling another block of kahikatea described as "very valuable timber just now, as it is very scarce in these parts".<sup>23</sup> Within months they also obtained permission to cut from a Road Reserve near Inangahua Junction on the Christchurch Road.<sup>24</sup> This was some 150km distant from Woodstock but offered direct rail access to Greymouth some 113km away. In 1926, after laying a new tramway they commenced milling rimu from this bush.<sup>25</sup> Almost simultaneously the funeral took place of one of their original shareholders, Francis Keenan, attended by company staff and Returned Soldiers' Association members.<sup>26</sup> In 1927, the Back Creek mill again remained closed for some time. Some of the men found other work in the district before the mill reopened late in that same year.<sup>27</sup>

Of the original 13 shareholders, five were centrally involved in the operations of the mill. Early on Andrew Wells appeared before the Warden's Court and various local bodies in presenting company requests. Edward Stoop acted as Company Secretary. Harry Wells, however, departed quickly, he had intended to go farming in 1922 but instead became a storekeeper, Keenan had died in 1926. By 1928, six of the men were still actively involved in the company, these included only two pre-war sawmillers, Frederick Willoughby, and John Nancekivell. The other originals were William Boyd (storekeeper), James Cooper (miner), William Nancekivell (labourer) and Edward Stoop (clerk).<sup>28</sup> Some of their experience had been hard won; Boyd had lost a finger cutting firewood for the mill's boiler in 1926 and Cooper also lost a finger in 1928.<sup>29</sup> The Woodstock mill

remained in operation to 1930, but then appears to have closed until 1933 after which it resumed cutting a further block of forest at Kokatahi, but under new ownership.<sup>30</sup> Reflecting the peripatetic nature of the industry for smaller operations established to mill a particular area of bush, in 1926 the Turiwhate Sawmill Company Ltd was formed. Its shareholders included members of the Wells (two with interests in DSMC) and Stoop families.<sup>31</sup> In 1930, this concern took over DSMC's timber cutting rights near Inangahua Junction.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusion

The DSMC was a creative response to providing employment for returned soldiers on the part of the local Repatriation Committee and the Commissioner of Crown Lands. Difficult trading conditions through most of the 1920s and into the 1930s notwithstanding, it might also be regarded as being relatively successful. A sizable number of the shareholders had previous sawmill experience. They enjoyed support and assistance from the local council. While not a large operation nor cutting off especially high yielding forest, they did engage in a substantial export trade with Australia and operated into the early 1930s (see Part II). By way of comparison, from some 4,000 holdings on 1.4 million acres in 1923, by 1934 through sales, forfeiture, and abandonment, farm numbers had shrunk to 2,700 holdings on 900,000 acres.<sup>33</sup> Against this yardstick, by 1935, nine of the surviving 12 described themselves as sawmillers or sawmill hands. Sawmilling arguably called for more specialist skills than farming and was less likely to attract casual interest from discharged soldiers. But if the company was successful, how had the men coped in the post-war environment? One died in 1926, of health conditions not caused by but exacerbated by war service. One of the "shell shock" sufferers left in 1922 to farm and then became a storekeeper. Was this mobility a sign of war time trauma? Perhaps so, but another "shell shock" survivor remained with the company. It is difficult to say more in the absence of additional detail. Where sawmilling and farming coincide, however, is that both were outdoor activities sometimes carried out in remote localities. In that sense they were both part of a "new battle front" that some MPs, somewhat misguidedly, imagined as the ideal environment for men to labour in and recover from the war.



John Nancekivell  
*Otago Witness*,  
16 June 1915, p48



William Willoughby  
*Otago Witness*,  
29 Sep 1915



James Cooper  
*Otago Witness*,  
13 Sep 1916, p29

<sup>18</sup> Hokitika Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 22 May 1922, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Local and General. *Grey River Argus*, 19 August 1926, 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Hokitika Guardian*, 6 August 1924, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *AJHR*, C3, 1924, 8 and C3, 1925, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Hokitika Borough Council, *Hokitika Guardian*, 13 September 1924, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Fergusson's Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 12 May 1925, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Westland County Council. *Hokitika Guardian*, 8 August 1925, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Fergusson's Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 16 February 1926, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Hokitika Guardian*, 22 February 1926, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Hokitika Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 2 September 1927, 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Grey River Argus*, 23 May 1928, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Hokitika Guardian*, 13 March 1926, 2 and 28 April 1928, 2.

<sup>30</sup> West Coast Notes. *Press*, 23 June 1933, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Share Market Reviewed. *Press*, 4 December 1926, 12.

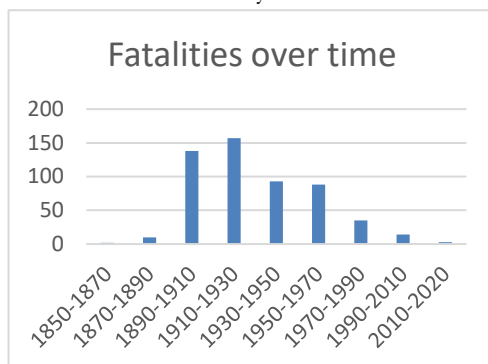
<sup>32</sup> Hokitika Notes. *Grey River Argus*, 10 September 1930, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Williams, D. (1936) Land Settlement and Settlement Finance. In Belshaw, H. et al., *Agricultural Organisation in New Zealand*. Institute of Pacific Relations, Melbourne, p126.

## A DANGEROUS OCCUPATION: FATALITIES IN THE WA TIMBER INDUSTRY, 1853 TO 2014

By Jack Bradshaw

As part of the redevelopment of the Western Australian State Timber Museum in Manjimup, newspapers and other sources were searched for information about fatalities in the timber industry. A comprehensive list was compiled by the late Bernice Holbrook. This data has since been analysed more closely to exclude those forest related accidents which were not strictly timber industry (e.g. farm clearing) but including sleeper cutters and forestry personnel. They were then categorised where possible into various activities that caused the deaths. During the period 1853 to 2014, the total number of documented fatalities was 532 though it is likely that there are more that have not yet been found.



Large scale sawmilling activities in WA did not begin until the 1870s when timber concessions were granted and several large sawmills were built. The relatively small number of fatalities in the 1870-1890 period suggest there may be some under reporting. However, it is still more or less in proportion to sawmilling activity which saw a ten-fold increase in the 1890-1910 period. The reductions in fatalities since 1990 is due more to the dramatic reduction in logging activity than to the work practices and safety measures in place at the time.

In 1926, the administration and regulation of safety came under the *Timber Industry Regulation Act 1926* having been transferred from the *Factories and Shops Act 1920*. It operated until 1996 when WorkSafe took over the role.

While it is not surprising to find that most fatalities occurred while falling trees, it still only accounted for 24% of all fatalities. Other causes were bush railway accidents (18%), mill accidents (17%) and landing accidents (17%). The remaining 24% were from a variety of occupations or which could not be clearly determined.

Falling trees in WA got off to a bad start with the first falling fatality occurring in 1829 on Garden Island even before Captain Stirling's party came ashore on the mainland.

The first of the 126 timber industry fallers to be killed was a ticket-of-leave man in 1853 near Bunbury, the same year that the first steam powered sawmill arrived in the colony. The tally continued to rise at an average rate of just under one per year, with as many as five being killed in 1909. Most were caused by falling limbs or trees struck by the felled tree. Power saws (swing saws) accounted for three deaths, all of the victims succumbing to horrendous injuries.



*The use of the extremely dangerous "power saw" was thankfully fairly short lived*

The life of a guard on the bush railway system was particularly hazardous and many were killed doing the everyday job of applying the brakes to the log rake, often in the dark, in wet weather and while the train was moving. People being hit while working close to the line, locomotives crashing into logs that had fallen over the line and runaway trains were the cause of more deaths, the most notable being the loss of 9 men in the Mornington crash of 1920. In all, 94 men were killed in the 110 years of the bush railways making it even more dangerous than falling.



*Trees falling over the line were a common hazard on bush lines*

The 93 fatalities within the mill were due to a variety of causes, from flying belts to falling timber stacks in the yard. Crushing by large flitches of wood and falling onto benches were other causes and timber slivers flung back along the bench were a common cause of serious injury and death.

A total of 92 men lost their lives while loading and unloading logs on bush and mill landings. Many hookmen were also crushed when rolling logs into the mill after they had been unloaded. While it still remains a dangerous job, safety was significantly improved by the introduction of machines that lifted the logs rather than rolling them. But undoubtedly the most unusual accident on a mill landing was when Henry Yelverton, the owner of WA's first steam sawmill near Busselton, had his leg crushed at a bush landing by a rolling log in 1880. Although eventually attended by a doctor he was unable to be moved to his house some distance away. The solution was to build a hut over him on the landing where he was nursed until he was sufficiently recovered to be moved.





*Loading logs was one of the most dangerous jobs in the industry*

Other causes of fatality were many and various.

A surprisingly large number (28) lost their lives when a tree fell on them as they drove past it or when it fell over their camp. A further 19 fatalities involved log trucks or road accidents and 13 fell from or were run over by drays or whims.



*Despite expectations, only two brakemen were killed when they fell from a whim*

Seven (Forests Department personnel) were killed while fighting bushfires, five were thrown or kicked by horses and four involved hauling logs with a steam hauler. As late as the 1870s, two sawyers were crushed by logs falling into a sawpit.

Three men had the misfortune to cut themselves with an axe while working remotely and bled to death before they could get to help.

The remainder (49) were killed in a variety of ways or the cause of death could not be clearly identified.

Not strictly members of the timber industry and not included above are the six sailors who drowned in Hamlin Bay while involved in loading timber. Five of these died in 1900 when three barques, the *Nor'wester*, the *Lovespring* and the *Katinka* broke their moorings and were driven on shore during a severe storm while waiting to load timber.

In a tribute to their memory, the names and circumstances of their death of those who were killed since 1918 are recorded in a visual display at the State Timber Museum in Manjimup.

## MANJIMUP HERITAGE PARK

*By Jack Bradshaw*

The recent redevelopment of the Manjimup Timber Park (now Heritage Park) and the State Timber Museum included the restoration and relocation of the various log-hauling relics that were distributed around the park. Following restoration, the items were assembled at a reconstructed log landing in appropriate positions. The items included a locomotive, three railway log wagons, a steam hauler, an 8-wheeled trolley, a whim, a tractor with logging shoe, a bob-tail arch and a grapple skidder.

### *The landing*

The log landing is typical of the type used in the industry from the 1850s to about the 1980s when wheeled loaders became common. It was built by the Parks and Wildlife Service under the supervision of an experienced landing builder to ensure its authenticity.

### *The locomotive*

Locomotive '109' is one of more than one hundred locomotives that were used in the south west timber industry between 1854 and 1964. A total of 6,600 km of 3'6" tramway was built by the timber industry in that time, including some horse tramways.

Locomotive types ranged from the original, Australian built 10 tonne *Ballaarat*, to the 70 tonne C class locos used by the Railways Department's Banksiadale sawmill in the 1960s. The 42 tonne G class were the most common.

This Y class (G class in WA) locomotive '109' began service with the SA Railways in 1890, and in 1921 was sold to the Kauri Timber Co. to haul logs to Barrabup and later to the Nannup mill. In 1956, it was transferred to Northcliffe where, in 1960, it was badly damaged in an accident with a runaway timber rake.

Either as punishment or in recognition of his skills, the driver was given the job of rebuilding it. The chassis was replaced with one purchased from the WA Government Railways and its tender was replaced with the tender from loco '7'. '109' was taken out of service in 1964 and donated to the park by Bunnings.

### *Log wagons*

Despite the thousands of these wagons which had been built, they are now very hard to find. The three 100 year old wagons on display were originally hauled behind *Snorting Lizzie*, a traction engine converted to rail, first to 2 wheel drive and later to chain-driven 4 wheel drive. It is located elsewhere in the park.

The rake has been loaded with a 10 tonne karri log.

### *Steam hauler*

The 400hp Willamette steam hauler (Millars' No. 8) was built in Oregon, USA in the 1920s and was initially used in Tasmania. It was purchased by Millars' Timber & Trading Co. and used at Mornington and Jardee until 1943. Most of the other steam haulers had horizontal boilers and were built at Millars' Yarloop workshops.

While this hauler had double winch drums, one to haul the log and the second "haul-back" drum to pull out the



haul rope in an endless loop, it was only ever used as a single drum hauler. The haulback system was used at Ellis Creek mill but was not common in WA. The hauler was anchored on a railway spur line while a heavy wire rope was pulled out to the felled log by a team of six to ten horses or bullocks, and later by a tractor. The hauler could pull logs for distances up to 1.5 kilometres.

### **8-wheeled trolley**

During the 1930 and '40s, trolleys had a minor resurgence. This trolley, one of only two in existence, was pulled by a tractor, had spoked wheels and no brakes. Diagonal wire ropes were attached to the front and rear bogies of the trolley allowing for front and rear end steering, making it more manoeuvrable in the forest. They could carry enormous loads and were mainly used in the jarrah forest.

### **Whim**

The whim was the most popular method of snigging used in WA from the 1890s to the 1930s. Teams of eight to 12 horses or bullocks could haul up to 20 tonnes of logs. In later years, whims were pulled by tractors.

The last whim and horse team was used in the jarrah forest at Wilga in 1952.

The whim on display here is a typical karri whim with a wheel diameter of 2.8m.

### **Bob-tail arch**

The bob-tail arch came into use from the 1940s when tractors were fitted with winches that were used to pull the log up to the arch and lift the nose of the log off the ground. They were used in both jarrah and karri logging. The larger rubber tyred arches were used in the karri forest.

The bob-tail arch (#436), was built by A.B. Campbell & Sons in Gloucester NSW, and was used from 1945 to 1960.

### **Tractor and logging shoe**

This 3-cylinder Caterpillar RD6, built between 1935 and 1937, is one of the earliest tractors used for log hauling in WA. Tractors of this type were used with whims, trolleys, logging shoes and steam haulers.

The logging shoe attached to this tractor was the type used in the timber industry for at least 70 years – longer than any other piece of equipment. They were used behind horses, bullocks and tractors in that time. They could be deployed in all conditions, but were particularly important in winter when the ground was boggy.

### **Skidder**

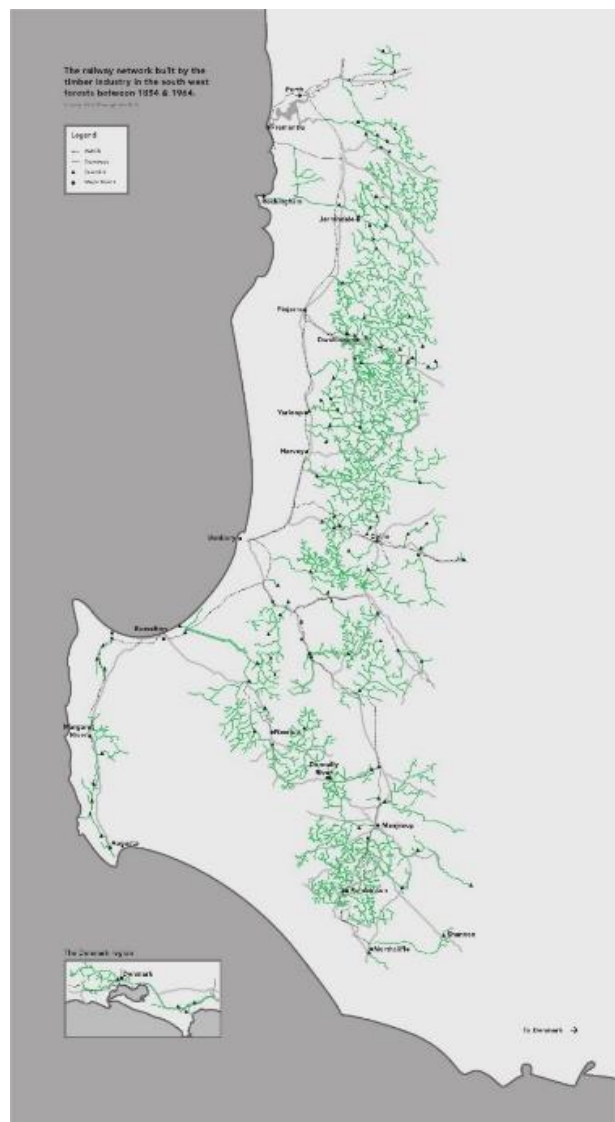
The grapple skidder which began to replace the rope skidder from the late 1960s marks a major development in log snigging. For the first time it became possible for the driver to pick up logs without the need for a swamper to attach the log to a rope, dramatically improving safety.

This John Deere 740 skidder, still in working order, was donated by Waugh's Forest Services.

Further details of the railway system and logging machinery in Western Australia can be found in:

Adrian Gunzburg & Jeff Austin 2008. *Rails through the bush: Timber and firewood tramways and railway contractors of Western Australia*. Rail Heritage WA. 2nd edition.

Jack Bradshaw, 2012. *Jinkers and Whims: A pictorial history of timber-getting*. Vivid Publishing.



*The railway network built by the timber industry in the south west forests between 1854 & 1964*

## SCHOOL ENDOWMENT PLANTATIONS

By Peter McHugh \*

An innovative School Endowment Plantation Scheme was initiated in 1922 as a joint venture between the Education Department and the Forests Commission Victoria.

Mr William Gay, the former Principal of the Victorian School of Forestry, resumed his role with the Education Department in 1922 and took responsibility for the Scheme under the guidance of Owen Jones, the new chairman of the Forests Commission and Frank Tate, Director of Education.

While some plantations were established on private land donated or leased for the purpose, most were established on Crown Lands or Reserved Forest made available to schools, without cost, by the Forests Commission.

Areas ranged from about 5 to 50 acres and were planted up at the rate of 1, 2, 3 or more acres per year, according to the planting strength of the school.

The plantations were vested in trustees, who then became responsible for their care and control. The trustees consisted of the Chairman of the School Committee or Council, the Head Teacher of the school, the District Inspector of Schools, and two additional members nominated by the School Committee and the Head Teacher and approved by the Minister of Public Instruction.

The Forests Commission assisted by providing technical support and a subsidy for fencing materials of 80%. Some specialist tools such as pruning saws were proved to schools by the commission.

The commission also supplied free of charge from its Macedon and Creswick nurseries all the trees required for planting, including *Pinus radiata*, *P. ponderosa*, *P. laricio*, Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), *Eucalyptus cladocalyx*, *E. botryoides*, *E. sideroxylon*, *E. leucoxylon*, *E. hemiphloia*, *E. ficifolia* and many poplars.

Planting was done by the school children under the guidance of teachers and the local forest officer. Heavier work such as fencing was often done by parents.

Metropolitan schools, where land was unobtainable, joined with rural schools to establish partnership plantations.

On 21 July 1925, about 350 school children from Prahran travelled by train to Frankston and then walked to a 10-acre plot of Crown land allocated for them to plant 2500 trees.

The exact location is unknown, but it was a brisk 30-minute walk from the railway station, so it was likely to have been part of the newly established State Pine Plantation.



COUNSELLOR J. C. PICKFORD, J.P.  
Mayor of Prahran.

The Mayor of Prahran, JC Pickford, had to argue hard to get the council to support the visionary plantation scheme for local schools, and to invest £30 of shire funds outside the municipality. The local tanneries wanted wattles to be planted instead. The planting day at Frankston was a major event and was attended by many dignitaries.

It was expected that the 10-acre plot would eventually yield as much as £2500 for the Prahran schools when it was harvested after 25 or 30 years. It's not known if the plot survived the fire at the Frankston Plantation in January 1955.

By 1936, three hundred and forty-eight (348) plantations had been established across Victoria with an area of 3550 acres.

Proceeds from the sale of harvested trees were put into the School Plantations Endowment Fund to be used for school purposes.

It was not only designed to provide a financial return to the school, but also to instil a sense of civic pride as well as an understanding of the value of land, conservation, together with developing a forest conscience by younger generations for benefit of the nation.

By 1961, there were 492 school endowment plantations in Victoria covering a total of some 4,300 acres and involving 546 schools.

And by 1966, the number had increased to more than 600 schools, planting 120,000 trees per year. The school plantations produced about 2 million super feet (6000 cubic metres) of mill logs and 800 cunits (>2000 cubic metres) of pulpwood; yielding some \$30,000 in profits for participating schools.

The benevolent forestry program also had a strong emphasis on community involvement, and when reviewed in 1966 was assessed as being a great success.

But from the early 1980s it seems the Land Conservation Council (LCC) wasn't a big fan of school plantations and believed those not needed or that were unsuitable for teaching purposes should be terminated when the pines were harvested.

This LCC attitude, on top of the massive school rationalisation and closures of the early 1990s, no doubt resulted in a number of orphaned plantations across rural Victoria.

The program continues today for some rural schools, although in a much-reduced form, and is partly supported by Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP).

\* This article was first published on the website, "Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage"  
<https://victoriasforestsandbushfireheritage.com>. It is reprinted with permission of the author (who is also the website convenor).





AFFORESTATION.—THE MAYORESS PLANTS A TREE.

*The Mayoress of Prahran, Mrs Pickford, plants a tree at Frankston on 2 July 1925.*

*Source: Stonnington Local History Archives*



AFFORESTATION.—THE MAYOR ADDRESSING THE BOYS.

*The Mayor of Prahran, Cr. J.C. Pickford, addressing the boys at Frankston on 21 July 1925.*

*Source: Stonnington Local History Archives*



AFFORESTATION.—MR. GAY, THE MAYORESS, AND OFFICERS OF THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT.

*The Mayoress of Prahran, Mrs Pickford, and Mr William Gay, (the former Principal of the Victorian School of Forestry who was responsible for the Forests Commission Victoria's (FCV's) school endowment program) with other officers of the FCV at Frankston in July 1925. Source: Stonnington Local History Archives.*



*Frankston Plantation 1925.*



AFFORESTATION.—SCHOOLBOYS AT WORK.

*Schoolboys at work at Frankston on 21 July 1925.*

*Source: Stonnington Local History Archives*



*Morwell High School planting day in the late 1950s. Even the Principal, Mr H.J. Slattery, got his hands dirty. APM sponsored the program in the Latrobe Valley. Photo: Greg Brinsmead.*

## References

*The Age* (Melbourne), 16 June 1925. "Afforestation: Mayor of Prahran's Scheme", p11.

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W.W. Gay, 1938. "The School Endowment Plantation Scheme of Victoria, Australia", *Empire Forestry Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (July 1938), pp66-69, Commonwealth Forestry Association.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42593064>

Stonnington History Centre, Stonnington Library and Information Service, City of Stonnington.

[www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Library/Visit-us/History-Centre](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Library/Visit-us/History-Centre)

## ALUMNI PORTRAIT OF MARY SUTHERLAND UNVEILED AT BANGOR UNIVERSITY, WALES

In July 2022, Bangor University in Wales unveiled the second in its series of newly commissioned portraits of alumni.

Mary Sutherland (1893-1955) was the world's first female Forestry graduate in 1916. She had a distinguished career in forestry in the UK and New Zealand and is one of the founding members of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry in 1927. A Mary Sutherland Memorial Redwood can be found in Whakarewarewa Forest.

Mary's portrait is by the contemporary Welsh artist, Ceredigion-based Meinir Mathias.

Meinir said "I feel very honoured that it is the first portrait of a woman by a female artist commissioned to hang in the Council Chamber alongside artists such as Kyffin and Whistler. I was also really pleased to have a close look at the wonderful and inspiring mural by Edward Povey."

Dr Becky Heaton unveiled the portrait during the day in which she received her honorary degree. Becky said, "Even 70 years after Mary Sutherland graduated, it's not always easy being a woman in forestry – as I well know! I hope it is getting easier but can only imagine how hard it would have been for Mary, she had no role models. I want to pay tribute to her and to two female foresters, Dr Pat Denne and Dr Christine Cahalan from Bangor who were my role models and inspired me. I hope that Mary's achievements continue to inspire female foresters today."

Professor Oliver Turnbull, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, said, "We are proud to pay tribute to Mary Sutherland and Sir Robert Edwards, who made hugely significant contributions in their fields and had lasting impact on the world. These paintings, created by talented artists, will form a visual reminder of their pioneering work."

Both alumni portraits hang in the Council Chamber.



*Dr Becky Heaton with the portrait of Mary Sutherland.*

\* This article is taken from the Bangor University website and is published at [www.bangor.ac.uk/news/07/second-of-two-new-alumni-portraits-unveiled](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/news/07/second-of-two-new-alumni-portraits-unveiled). The title and the opening paragraph have been slightly amended for this newsletter. The newsletter has previously covered Mary Sutherland – see issue no. 73 (Dec 2017 – x3 articles), no. 81 (Dec 2020 – a book review) and no. 82 (Apr 2021 – a photo of the Redwood Memorial Tree).

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS FORESTRY COMPANY

Ian Bevege has drawn attention to an undated original panoramic group photograph of the Royal Australian Engineers Forestry Company being sold by Michael Treloar Antiquarian Booksellers of Adelaide.



A large version of the photo (complete with frame and title) is available from

[www.treloars.com/pages/books/125870/royal-australian-engineers-forestry-company/an-original-panoramic-group-photograph-of-the-royal-australian-engineers-forestry-company](http://www.treloars.com/pages/books/125870/royal-australian-engineers-forestry-company/an-original-panoramic-group-photograph-of-the-royal-australian-engineers-forestry-company).

The description of the item on the Treloar's website advises "No specific details accompany this photograph, but we suggest it was taken in Australia before embarkation." Ian forwarded the photograph to Grahame McKenzie Smith who is seeking help in identifying the unit, the names of the people depicted, and when and where the photo was taken. If you can help, please send an e-mail to [fintan\\_olaighin@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fintan_olaighin@yahoo.com.au) and I'll forward it to Ian and Graham.

## ABC RADIO NATIONAL

### *Late Night Live, 23 May 2022*

Roland Ennos believes that we take trees for granted, and that in fact wood and trees have played a significant role in human evolution. From when we lived in trees to using wood to create tools, fire, houses, boats and paper, wood has proved the most versatile of materials. Ennos is professor of biological sciences at the University of Hull and author of *The Wood Age: How one material shaped the whole of human history* published by William Collins [www.harpercollins.com.au/9780008318833/the-wood-age](http://www.harpercollins.com.au/9780008318833/the-wood-age).

[www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/the-wood-age/13895204](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/the-wood-age/13895204)

### *The History Listen, 16 August 2022*

This story is set on Worimi and Biripi country in the year 1894. The avid colonial botanist Joseph Maiden is making a trip through the forests around the NSW towns of Stroud and Gloucester and he's enthralled by the natural world around him. He's recording every tree, leaf, and plant he encounters, writing in meticulous detail in his journal. Over a century after Maiden made his trip through these forests, his journal is taking on a whole new life. With the botanist's original notes in hand, environmental historian Jodi Frawley retraces Joseph Maiden's journey.

[www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-history-listen/maidens-eucalypts/13982500](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-history-listen/maidens-eucalypts/13982500)



## WIND-POWER FIREFIGHTING

by Michael Bleby

As a District Forester I got to know various local landowners. During my time at Mount Burr during the mid-1980s, one such person was Archie McArthur whose property was "Mount Hope".

Archie had many interests, and firefighting was certainly one of these. He had been an active member of what was known as the Bushfire Research Committee for South Australia, which advised the then Emergency Fire Service (later to become the Country Fire Service) on many practical matters concerning fire protection and suppression.

Every November, he and I had the job of judging the Fire Protection posters by students from our local primary schools at the annual Millicent Show. We would then yarn over lunch once we had decided on the winners.

I recall an unforgettable story that Archie told me on one such occasion, that even if it has suffered some embellishment over time, it would be worthy of recording somewhere in the state's firefighting archives.

Archie was a friend of one of my predecessors, one Arthur Sorby-Adams who was the District Forester at Mount Burr from 1938 to 1956, so I'm guessing that this story took place in the 1950s. Sorby had his own reputation for being quite a character into the bargain.

The story started with a conversation one day when Arch and Sorby were sitting together and Sorby pulled out and lit a cigarette. As he blew out the flame on the match one of them said, "if you can blow out a flame like that, why couldn't you blow out a grass fire?"

The idea might have seemed farfetched, but clearly it didn't go away, because after some time and through Archie's connection with the Bush Fire Research Committee, the concept started to develop.

Arch didn't tell me all about the lead up to what happened next. He alluded to having some success in convincing the "powers that be" that the idea would be worthy of some trials. Ultimately, he was able to secure some funding to progress the concept.

His description of their first attempt went something like this. Investigations took them north of Adelaide to the Parafield Airport, where they rigged up an aircraft engine on some sort of trailer with a propeller affixed. The idea was to tow this big fan along a running grass fire edge and see what it could do.

A suitable day came along in an appropriate Adelaide plains paddock with enough dry grass fuel. The local brigade would have been involved no doubt, and they gave it a go.

The first trial must have been sufficiently useful in what it achieved because some modifications were decided on, and it was agreed to have another go, another day.

I'm not sure if Archie told me what changes they made. It might have been to fit a different propeller, among other alterations to their approach.

There was however a second trial. This time with a few more senior observers who were interested in the project. The day came, and fingers crossed, they lit the test grass fire, towed the modified fan into position and commenced following the lighted edge. Suddenly all hell broke loose. The propeller parted company from its motor on the trailer, and spun away on its own trajectory just past the assembled on lookers and watching dignitaries. It was a near miss way too close for comfort. No one got hurt, no damage was done.

The story goes that they all just left the scene in silence, and not a word was ever said again about trying to find ways to blow out a bushfire! There may be far more to this story than I am aware of and there may even be some photographic evidence of the project somewhere in a file, but who knows?

After retiring from farming, Archie pursued probably his greatest hobby, the study of ants. He in fact left an unsurpassed legacy of naming and understanding the genus *Camponotus* and became a legend in the ant world during his latter years.

It was a privilege to have known him, but the story of the big fan belongs in the annals of our firefighting folk lore.



## FENNER SEMINAR – "MIHI CURA FUTURI": THE FUTURE OF FORESTS AND FORESTRY

The opening in 1927 of the Australian Forestry School in Canberra, and its motto "Mihi cura future" ("My concern is for the future"), responded to decades of concern about the unsustainable exploitation of Australia's forests.

Nearly a century later, corresponding concerns remain strong, and are accelerating in conjunction with our appreciation of the impacts of global heating. Learning about forests, and how we best sustain them and their values, will continue to challenge us profoundly.

On 15 September 2022, Professor Peter Kanowski from the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University, presented a seminar exploring the topic of forestry in Australia and examining the challenges we continue face in the future. A recording is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb7d-V1WBvU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qb7d-V1WBvU).

*This article was adapted from*  
<https://fennerschool.anu.edu.au/news-events/events/mibi-cura-futuri-future-forests-and-forestry>.



## GARE (AND BYLES) COLLECTIONS IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, CANBERRA

by Deirdre Slattery

A recent addition to the National Library's Special Collection (Manuscripts) presents exciting new research opportunities.

The papers of first Superintendent of Kosciuszko State Park (1959-71), Neville Clifford Gare, also contain several boxes of the work of his mentor, friend and foundation State Park Trustee, Baldur Unwin Byles (1944-71).

Together these make up 30 boxes or more than 9 metres of shelving. They offer a rare opportunity to research the work of two remarkable people working in a very different context from today's land managers.

Their work was so influential in laying the foundations of a great national park that it remains clearly evident in the structures and strength of the public commitment to Kosciuszko National Park today.

The papers offer untapped insights into the growth of ecological research into the complexities of Australia's rare and precious alpine landscape, and the philosophy and practicalities of early park management in Australia; into the behind-the-scenes politics of the famous grazing and Primitive Area disputes of the 1950s and '60s and into the role of Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority in the park's history.

The addition of the recent material (Class MS Acc21.055) completes a process that began when Gare himself filed several boxes in 1999, 2001 and 2005. After his death, the Gare family decided to continue the work by donating the remaining contents of Gare's office to the library. I took on the task of preparing the material and so can describe the collection highlights with some authority. These are:

Baldur Byles' sixteen "Reports on a Tour of Inspection of the Park" written from observations on his annual walking and riding trips through the park. Byles took his duties as Trustee very seriously and the reports offer detailed accounts of both the ecological and the infrastructure and management state of the Park for over twenty years.

Baldur Byles' briefings of W.K. Hancock for *Discovering Monaro* (1972): these strongly influenced Hancock's thinking for that classic environmental history.

The remarkable series of letters between Gare and Byles covering many aspects of early park philosophy and management, as well as insights into the role of geologist W.R. Browne and ecologist Alec Costin on the same issues.

Gare's Report on his six months study tour in the US and Canada.

Gare's extensive collection of photos and maps from his own time and earlier: many are personal, most are unique to this collection.

I am available to offer any further insights into the possibilities presented by these remarkable papers.  
[deirdre\\_slatt@aapt.net.au](mailto:deirdre_slatt@aapt.net.au).

## ROBERT ONFRAY'S FORESTRY AND SURREY HILLS BLOGS

By Fintán Ó Laighin

Robert Onfray continues to add articles to his very readable blog – [www.robersonfray.com](http://www.robersonfray.com). Since the April issue, the "Forestry" page has grown by six articles, the "Surrey Hills" page by five (mostly forestry-related) and five in the "Travel" section. Many of the blogs on the "Surrey Hills" section build on Robert's book, *Fires, Farms and Forests: A Human History of Surrey Hills, north-west Tasmania*. The new articles in the "Forestry" and "Surrey Hills" pages are listed below.

### Forestry

- July: [A Charred landscape](#)
- May: [The McGowan logic – sustainable native forest logging is not acceptable for the environment, but the widespread clearing of jarrah for bauxite is](#)
- June: [A case study in folly #1 – bushfire management in karri country](#)
- July: [Ignoring the legacy of active management to create a "wilderness"](#)
- July: [What does a forester do? \(Part 1\)](#)
- August: [A tale of the Goldfields Woodlands where ideology triumphs professionalism, experience and history](#)
- September: [Wooden gold](#)

### Surrey Hills

- May: [Airtruks to Squirrels – the evolution of aerial operations on Surrey Hills](#)
- June: [Last Light Lindridge](#)
- July: [How the Emu Bay port played a pivotal role in the development of the Van Diemen's Land Company](#)
- August: [My career with AFH \(written by Morris "Mort" Bloom\)](#)
- September: [Fishing at the Pulp Dam: some memories and notes from Bob French's fishing diaries](#)

## COMING UP – THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

While a date hasn't yet been set, the society's Annual General Meeting will be held in Canberra in mid to late November. The papers and meeting details will be distributed in the coming weeks.

Members are encouraged to nominate for the committee – it's not a particularly onerous task.

Our public officer, John Gray, has advised that he'll be stepping down after having been in the position since 2018 following John Dargavel's move to Melbourne, so that's one position that will need to be filled. The *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (ACT) requires the public officer to live in the ACT and be at least 18 years old. A public officer can be a committee member.

## A NEW SPECIES OF EUCALYPT

In July 2022, the Royal Botanic Garden in Sydney reported that a species of eucalypt found in the Hills District of north-west Sydney was a new species. It had been discovered in the 1990s, but it wasn't clear if it was a distinctive species or a population resulting from the hybridisation of two already described species. However, the authors of a paper published in *Annals of Botany* concluded the eucalypt, currently known as *Eucalyptus* sp. Cattai, should be formally described. The lead author is Dr Susan Rutherford from the Australian Institute of Botanical Science.

### More reading

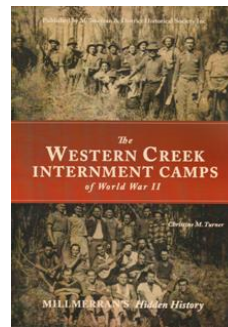
Rosemary Bolger, "Eucalypt found only in Sydney suburbs confirmed as new species", ABC News.  
[www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-21/new-eucalypt-species-sydney-botanic-gardens/101255680](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-21/new-eucalypt-species-sydney-botanic-gardens/101255680).

Stephanie Bedo, "Tree gets frisky in 'desperate' attempt for survival", The Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney.  
[www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/stories/2022/tree-gets-frisky-in-%e2%80%98desperate%e2%80%99-attempt-for-surviv](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/stories/2022/tree-gets-frisky-in-%e2%80%98desperate%e2%80%99-attempt-for-surviv)

Susan Rutherford, Trevor C. Wilson, Jia-Yee Samantha Yap, Enhua Lee, Graeme Errington, Maurizio Rossetto, 2022. "Evolutionary processes in an undescribed eucalypt: implications for the translocation of a critically endangered species". *Annals of Botany*.  
<https://academic.oup.com/aob/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/aob/mcac091/6634084>



## NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Christine M. Turner, 2022. *The Western Creek Internment Camps of World War II*. A4 card covers, 132pp plus map, illustrated. Published by Millmerran & District Historical Society Inc. ISBN 9780646856834. Available from the Millmerran Museum at [www.millmerranmuseum.com.au](http://www.millmerranmuseum.com.au). Price \$20 plus postage \$14.

Review by Ian Bevege.

The internment of so-called resident aliens and non-British subjects by the Australian authorities during World War II is a little-known aspect of official and community endeavour to maintain internal security during those fraught years. Over 8000 such people, including over 7000 local residents, were interned between 1942 and 1946 (Margaret Bevege 1993) including the 240 Italian men, mainly from farms from the Granite Belt of Stanthorpe and elsewhere in south-east Queensland, whose story is one focus in Christine Turner's book. These civilian internees are not to be confused with Prisoners of War who were shipped to Australia from overseas war theatres and included many nationalities including Italians. Internees and POW camps operated under quite different conditions; internees were managed by the Allied Works Council and the POWs under restraint by the Department of Defence. That so many were interned was a consequence of government policies and social attitudes of pre-war decades whereby Australians were British citizens (we did not become Australian citizens until Australia Day, 26 January 1949, following the coming into operation of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* which had been passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in late 1948) and non-British migrants, despite in many cases being second and third generation residents, were not perceived as being "true Australians".

The title of the book is something of a misnomer but the potential reader should not be put off by this as the book is a gem of regional history including forestry history. The author devotes Part One of her book to *Internment at Western Creek* (some 25 pages) while Part Two (about 100 pages) is more of a conventional social history of the Millmerran district including its forestry history. This forestry history is the link between the two parts because the Italian internees were camped on Western Creek state forest and an adjacent private station holding and carried out forestry work during 1942 on the State Forest under the supervision of Forestry Department staff. Christine has drawn heavily on material from Zoe Boccabella (2015) whose grandfather Annibale (Joe) was one of the internees plucked off a farm at Stanthorpe in March 1942 where, aged 18, he was picking beans and trucked to Millmerran where he became a forestry worker. Zoe has written the Foreword to the book.

The internees were held in two camps for 254 days; these camps were not on the record and were kept "secret" until of course the word got out as it was wont to do in a



rural community, after a bushfire broke out on the forest. One of the many jobs they did while working for the Forestry Department was the gathering of timber and its burning to make charcoal. They were well treated by staff. The internees were then moved to an official roadworks camp at Pikedale near Stanthorpe. As Pikedale was also the centre of a Forestry Department pine plantation (Passchendaele State Forest) one might speculate as to any connection between these two operations. What emerges from this account is the strong esprit de corps of the internees despite the primitive conditions under which they were living and working. Tracing and reconstructing their story and that of the physical camps has been akin to an archaeological dig with many remnants and artefacts of these "non-existent" camps now on the public record, including an extensive brochure published in 2004 jointly by the Queensland Environment Protection Agency and Parks and Wildlife Service. The author has reproduced this brochure in full together with many photographs of what remains of the camps.

Most readers of this AFHS newsletter probably have never heard of Millmerran, even less of Western Creek, so a bit of background. Millmerran is a small town servicing farming and grazing (and once forestry) communities on the southern fringes of the Darling Downs some 80 kilometres south-west of Toowoomba. Western Creek drains the upper catchment of the Weir River that ultimately joins the Macintyre River near Mungindi on the Queensland/New South Wales border. Western Creek State Forest lies to the west of the town and is on the eastern fringe of that very extensive belt of cypress pine/eucalypt hardwood forest that extends from the south and west of the Darling Downs up to the Great Dividing Range north of Chinchilla into the iconic Barakula State Forest and west to Inglewood and Roma (Yuleba).

Part Two of the book is appropriately titled *Historical Tour Millmerran to Western Creek State Forest* and is accompanied by a good mud map. This part covers a wide range of material starting appropriately with the history of the Bigambul people, the traditional owners of the Western Creek country who gained native title over Western Creek State Forest and adjacent areas in 2016. It moves to the history of the big holdings of Turallin, Glenferrie and Western Creek, and of the rabbit proof fence; I remember the latter well from an incident in January 1958; when driving along the fence on Western Creek a big buck kangaroo pacing us on the other side jumped the fence and landed in the back of our Land Rover amongst sundry bodies and bush tools, brightening up the day no end.

This part also includes the chapter on the history of sawmilling and Western Creek State Forest as a source of cypress and hardwood log timber. Milling of cypress pine in the Millmerran district was well established by the 1880s with numerous mills providing timber for house construction on the Darling Downs. As early as 1919 it was mooted that areas on the vast Western Creek grazing lease (infested with prickly pear at the time with the lease

due for expiry in 1927) had potential for cypress pine forestry. Western Creek State Forest of over 99,000 acres (41,000 hectares) was established in 1934 following a favourable report by Arthur Owens, then Forest Assistant at Dalby, who surveyed the area in 1931; Arthur was a graduate of the first class of 1926 of the Australian Forestry School Canberra and went on to become a senior officer of the Department of Forestry.

The chapter on Western Creek State Forest covers the history of reservation, early establishment of the forest station and some aspects of fire control. The contribution is acknowledged of Jim Hagan, the first forest ranger in charge of the State Forest from 1935 to his death in 1961; Jim was still the ranger during my sojourn there as a forestry cadet in 1958. Christine includes an entertaining account by Mark Cant of his early activities as a forest trainee in the summer of 1980-81, so typical of the experience of many cadets and trainees over the decades when Western Creek was a working forest. I think a notable omission from this chapter was an account of the bee-keeping activities on the forest as this industry was integral to the management of all the western hardwood reserves including Western Creek; on some reserves the annual fees from bee permits was greater than the royalties from log sales, and timber stand improvement operations involving ringbarking and felling took into account the importance of certain eucalypt species to the honey flow. The book does not go into the nitty gritty of forest operations or cypress pine silvics; readers seeking that level of information are referred the excellent paper written by Terry Johnston and Keith Jennings (1991).

Part Two concludes with an extensive list of fauna and flora of the area resulting from an extensive survey in 2011 of the upper Weir River catchment for the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee.

The book is well produced on high-quality coated paper that allows optimum reproduction of the many excellent coloured and historical photographs that illustrate the text. There are extensive footnotes that take the place of a bibliography. Much of the text is written around people, with extensive quotations; this makes for a much more "lived experience" for the reader and holds one's interest throughout.

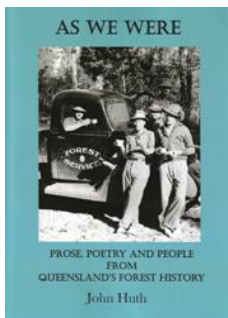
I highly recommend this regional history of a little-known area of south-east Queensland and its cypress forests and importantly as a record of the experiences of those "non-existent" internees who, despite their seemingly harsh treatment, returned eventually to their communities to contribute to Australia's development.

I must declare my interest. I worked sporadically on Western Creek State Forest first as a cadet and then as a research forester between 1958 and 1976 and retain a soft spot for Queensland's extensive cypress pine forests and the forestry that was once so integral to the region. The history of these forests and the forestry practised therein from the first reservation as Barakula State Forest in 1907 has yet to be written.



## References

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- Margaret Bevege, 1993. *Behind Barbed Wire. Internment in Australia during World War II*. University of Queensland Press, 314pp.
- Zoe Boccabella, 2015. *Joe's Fruit Shop and Milk Bar*. ABC Books, 384pp.



John Huth, 2022. *As We Were: Prose, Poetry and People from Queensland's Forest History*. A4 card covers, 195pp. Self-published, Wilston QLD 4051. ISBN 9780646860565. \$30 + \$12 postage. Available from the author at [johnhuth55@gmail.com](mailto:johnhuth55@gmail.com).

Review by Ian Bevege.

This book is a companion volume to John Huth's recent *As Things Were*, which I reviewed in the AFHS newsletter No. 85 April 2022. As such, its content and format are highly complementary to the earlier volume and continue to document the saga of Queensland forestry's social history. "The Forestry" as it was known (fondly and otherwise depending upon which fence you were perched) throughout the rural areas of the state, began effectively with the appointment of Philip Mac Mahon as Director of the Forestry Branch of the Lands Department in 1905 and the enactment of the 1906 *Act for the Reservation, Management and Protection of State Forests and National Parks*. This policy milestone of the state government was the culmination of pioneering preparatory work by George Leonard Board, appointed the first Inspector of Forests within the Department of Lands in 1900, with his miniscule staff of two forest rangers, Frederick William Hamilton Lade (north Queensland) and Gilbert Burnett (south Queensland), both of whom left their mark in the form of the forest reservations they actively pursued. Frederick Lade also discovered one of the north Queensland outliers of bunya pine (*Aracaria bidwillii*) on Mount Lewis in 1902 and the rare rainforest conifer *Prumnopitys ladei* which was named after him by Francis Manson Bailey in 1905.

John Huth, forest historian extraordinaire, has compiled a masterly anthology representative of incident, drama, reminiscence and humour written by blokes about blokes and their relationships with each other and with the forests in which they lived and worked. The cover illustration of workmen having smoko in the cypress forests of the 1940s epitomises the atmospherics of the era. Contributions have come from about fifty former Forestry Department staff whose working careers covered the gamut from forest workmen through overseers, rangers, foresters and clerks to Directors of Forests. Many more are "mentioned (honourably) in despatches". These men represent a small cross section of those who worked the forest over the decades, mostly

covering an even smaller time span within the 40 years of the 1950s through to the 1980s, a period that arguably reflects the apogee of institutional forestry activity in the state. From that small brave beginning by Board, Lade and Burnett, "The Forestry" had grown by 1932 to 262 people managing and working some 5.6 million acres of state forests, national parks and timber reserves, including a fledgling plantation estate of some 8,000 acres and over 80,000 acres of silviculturally treated native forest; by 1966 staff had burgeoned to 2127 (including 1693 forest workmen) responsible for 9.6 million acres of forest including over 120,000 acres of plantation and 780,000 acres of treated native forest. Metricate these stats if you will but I prefer my history to be in the old money.

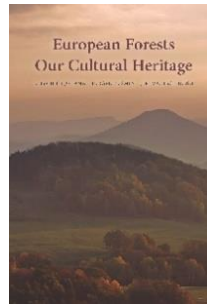
But what will be notable to modern day readers from these data and the writings in this book is the apparent lack of contributions from the "women of the forest". However, it should be remembered that the era being covered was very much one of an "outdoors man's world"; the role of women in the forestry workforce was very much confined to less physical occupations as clerk-typist, drafting assistant and laboratory attendant. These were the days before electronic computers when Remington mechanical typewriters, carbon paper (and no "white-out"), Monroe adding machines, Facit hand calculators, phone switchboards and primitive radios were very much stock in trade of every forestry office and the "office girls" working with such equipment provided a more than essential service and back-up to both administrative and field staff. The other "female branch" comprised the wives of the forest workers; their support role especially under frequently difficult and often primitive conditions in bush camps, raising and schooling their kids, was critical to the success of the forestry enterprise. Their huge contribution was unfortunately little appreciated by officialdom and has largely gone unsung. We catch some glimpses of these womenfolk in the photographs that illustrate this book but there are few references to them in the text. Their story however is well told by many of the women themselves in the edited compilation *The Voice of Women in Forestry: Their Stories – A Tribute to the Queensland Forestry Women*, self-published in 2015 by John Huth's fellow forest historian the late Peter Holzworth, so these two books make a nice pigeon pair.

Turning to the content of the book; as the title indicates this is a compilation of prose, poetry and people. *Prose from the forest* covers ninety short pieces from nineteen contemporary authors and includes more than one snake story to rival fish stories. There are rollicking yarns and more serious pieces but together they paint a picture of a simple no nonsense bush life as it was lived and worked by down to earth men under often spartan conditions that would not be tolerated (or allowed under OH&S) today. Talking of OH&S, Neil Halpin's description of creosoting the Benarkin and Taromeo fire towers from a bosun's chair has to be read to be believed. The section *Poetry from the Forest* is more reflective with twenty-eight contributions from a dozen bush poets and includes a couple of poems and two letters from that doyen of

Queensland forestry, Edward Harold Fulcher Swain. While hardly up to the mark of Henry Lawson or The Banjo, some of these poems are of that "take the mick" bush genre while others show how still waters can indeed run deep and that lack of an advanced formal education does not denote a lack of sensitivity to one's environment or empathy with one's fellow man. The final section *People from the Forest* provides vignettes of twenty men, some including their families, representative of the wider forestry family. Here we have pen pictures drawn from the earliest days to the recent past, including: pioneering Philip Mac Mahon; Frederick Weatherhead, inventor of the metal planting tube he patented in 1924; Victor (Peter) Grenning long-time Director of Forests (1932-1964) whose intellect and wide-ranging skills built an effective and professional department over those difficult decades; the self-effacing Syd Curtis who contributed so much to national parks management; the rambunctious but highly respected district forester Reg Doggrell; the Fraser family – an institution of Imbil and the Mary Valley; the list goes on. John Huth has done us a service in his careful juxtaposition of these stories of ordinary people who dedicated their working lives to the cause of forestry.

Production is of a high standard. Keith Gould, retired forester, has provided context with his Foreword; a clear map prepared by Owen Betts, one-time forestry draftsman, orients the reader to the various locales central to the action; and there is an excellent Contents page that serves as an index. The text is profusely illustrated with quality images drawn from multifarious sources, official and unofficial, on almost every one of the book's 195 pages. These images provide a stand-alone comprehensive social history and are highly complementary to the text; their value is heightened because in most instances names of individuals featured are recorded as are credits for the photos, an aspect sadly neglected in many publications of this nature. The four front and back cover photos are classics of their genre – workmen in sartorial splendour with their vehicles and the inevitable dogs. One can almost date these photos from the headgear (or lack of), boots (or lack of), and the gaggle of vehicles with their departmental crests. Another classic is the shot of George (Curley) Wemyss boiling his billy at Pechey in 1930, reproduced below.

Overall, I can only commend John Huth for compiling this book, which adds to the growing literature on the social history of forestry. This is a book about people for people, not a treatise on silvics or polemic on environmentalism. There is much here for everybody who has an interest in Queensland's forests and how through human endeavour they became to be the wonderful places and spaces they are today.



Elisabeth Johann, Jürgen Kusmin and Jiří Woitsch (eds.), 2021. *European Forests. Our Cultural Heritage*. 276pp. Pelhřimov, Prague. ISBN 9788074152344. Available for free download at <http://shop.eu.avcr.cz/cs/domu/193-european-forests-our-cultural-heritage.html>.



Luigi Piccioni, 2022. "Six 'Schools' at the Roots of Italian Environmental History", *Global Environment*, Vol. 15, No. 1, February 2022, pp148-155. White Horse Press. Available for free download at [www.whpress.co.uk/publications/2022/03/07/ge-vol-14-2-2021-2-2](http://www.whpress.co.uk/publications/2022/03/07/ge-vol-14-2-2021-2-2)

*Reviewed by John Dargavel*

I am awed by the extent to which European forest historians have been able to institutionalise cultural history as part of forest policy and practice. They have expanded beyond the conventional heritage base in the built environment and industrial artefacts to consider changes to the forest landscape in a much broader way. They have done so by holding international conferences over the last 20-25 years, often within the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) framework and have forged links to other bodies. Their 2018 conference was timed to be part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Its proceedings were published at the end of last year and is freely available on-line.

Their internationally co-operative way of working is apparent in this volume as the editors come from Austria, Estonia and the Czech Republic, and authors also from Finland, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. This way of working has enabled their ideas to wend their way through the tortuous processes of international bureaucracy, urged, pushed and shoved no doubt by champions such as Mauro Agnoletti from Italy and Elisabeth Johann from Austria. Various formal international declarations, conventions, principles and so forth since 2006 provide either specific recognition of forest culture or the institutional framework in which it sits.

I found the fifteen papers in this collection to be of varied interest as they range from prehistory to current heritage practice, and from using dendrochronology, "dendro-provenancing" to art interpretation. Two things in the collection interested me most: first was the need to recognise the intangible as well as the obviously tangible heritage, and second were examples of how forest cultural history was becoming part of sustainable forest management and tourism in practice. Three of the papers are noted here.

Austria's Forest Association and its Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism (formerly Ministry for Agriculture, Forest, Environment and Water Management) began to jointly establish the Austria-wide Forest-Culture Austria network in 2003. It now offers a Forest and Culture certificate course at the Forest Education Centre that is unique in Europe.

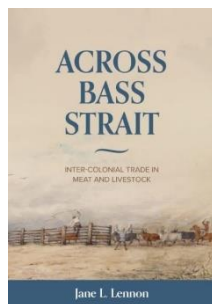
Estonia conducted a nationwide survey of forest cultural heritage without regard to land ownership and land use type. Its State Forest Management Centre is committed to preserving forestry-related cultural heritage and presenting it to the wider public through visitor centres that organise sustainable recreation. The centre in Lahemaa National Park links environmental education with forestry traditions, local history, and the people who lived and worked there.

The complexity of Poland's political history and its current government's antipathetic attitude to the EU has resulted in conflicting visions of its forest culture. As Tatyana Bakhmetyeva writes about the great forest of Bialowieza, where logging in the world heritage area is a contentious matter:

The forest has furnished the nation with cultural markers that contribute to its collective sense of self. ... Bialowieza is a site where competing visions of Polish national identity come together in a complex interplay of symbols, stories, and images, turning the forest into a contested ground that various groups use to negotiate Poland's place and role in the European Union and to test their power to shape the country's identity.

Europe's forest history may be geographically and ecologically remote from Australia's, but the concerns are close.

Also on my reading pile was an article which resonated with the theme of institutionalisation and which eerily echoed Australia's forest historiography. Luigi Piccioni traced Italy's in "Six 'Schools' at the Roots of Italian Environmental History" (*Global Environment* 15.1, 2022, pp148-155). He dates the rise of environmental history there to the end of the 1980s (cf. AFHS which started in 1988) and shows how it operated at first as an informal academic network primarily of historians with nodes in six cities (cf. our six states). He noted the fragility of "small, cohesive groups, poor in resources but strongly motivated" that needed to embrace the range of disciplines concerned with the present concerns with ecological transitions. He considered that the first network had "institutionally failed" and reported that an Italian Society of Environmental History had been formed to make the field broader, "more visible and authoritative".



Jane L. Lennon, 2022. *Across Bass Strait: Inter-colonial trade in meat and livestock*. 198pp. Anchor Books Australia. ISBN 9780648835035. \$34.95.

[www.anchorbooksaustralia.com.au](http://www.anchorbooksaustralia.com.au)

*From the publisher's notes.*

*Across Bass Strait* is a history of the connection which commenced in the 1840s between squatters, merchants and mariners to develop the livestock trade from the mainland to Van Diemen's Land.

The trade established nineteenth-century Gippsland as a prime beef producer exporting through Port Albert, a now-forgotten port, and this account is based on merchants' records and letters from two families who were major players in this trade.

This long distant connection is reflected in the transformation of the landscape, both on land and sea. The stories, underwritten by the need to provide meat, link distant shores which until now have been barely acknowledged in the national narrative, yet from the edges of the two coast lines, illustrate the layered environmental history of our continent.

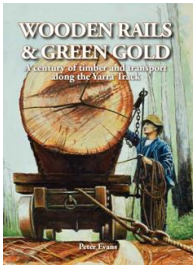
This little-known story deals with food miles to supply the fresh meat, wind power, seasonal conditions, competition and determined people, all themes still relevant today.

Dr Jane Lennon AM grew up in rural Victoria and has an affinity for the stormy southern shores. She has spent her working life delving into the history and conservation of heritage places and is the author of numerous books and articles on pastoral history, cultural landscapes and heritage. In December 2020, Jane was made an Honorary member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for her distinguished service to conservation in Australia and internationally.

*Editor's note:* Dr Lennon is an active contributor to the AFHS, presenting papers at our conferences, and holding positions on the committee, including terms as vice-president. *Across Bass Strait* was launched on 28 April 2022 at the Royal Historical Society Victoria gallery in Melbourne.







Peter Evans, 2022. *Wooden Rails & Green Gold: A century of timber and transport along the Yarra Track*. Hard cover, A4 size, 288pp, 335 photographs, 54 maps and diagrams, glossary, bibliography, references, and index. Published by the Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISBN 9780909340599. \$77

(\$57.75 for LRRSA members) + \$16.90 postage. Online orders <https://shop.lrrsa.org.au/product/wooden-rails-green-gold> or by mail: LRRSA Sales PO Box 21, Surrey Hills VIC 3127.

*From the publisher's notes. (A review is being prepared for inclusion in the next issue.)*

The Yarra Track crossed the Great Dividing Range in Victoria, from Healesville to the gold mining town of Woods Point. The first wheeled vehicle to reach Woods Point via the Track arrived on 1 November 1864.

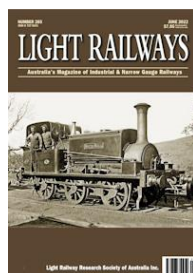
The first chapters of *Wooden Rails & Green Gold* give a detailed history of all the small townships which developed along the Track. There were many of these, including Fernshaw, Marysville, and Matlock. Detailed maps and historic photographs help to bring these places to life.

Subsequent chapters describe the development of the timber industry in the area. A large number of timber tramways were built to bring the timber from the forest to the Yarra Track.

The book includes many exquisite maps. One of these shows the alternative surveys for narrow and broad-gauge extensions of the VR's Healesville railway to Narbethong. No Narbethong railway was built due to the desire to protect the water catchment. The book explores the conflict which existed between the protectors of the water catchment and the timber and tourist industries.

The book is based on 35 years of patient trawling through archives and newspapers, supported by interviews with many of the sawmill residents, and intensive field research at sawmills, mine and tramway sites. It describes what went on in these forests and the difficulties faced by those who lived and worked there.

*Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways*, June 2022 (LR285) and August 2022 (LR286). Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISSN 0727 8101. [www.lrrsa.org.au](http://www.lrrsa.org.au) and [www.facebook.com/groups/LightRailwaysAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/groups/LightRailwaysAustralia).



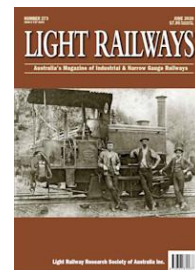
LR285 has the subject theme of light railways associated with coal mines. There is some forestry history among the pages – the opening article by Jim Longworth and Garry Allen, "Tramways of the minor coal mines in the Hunter Valley", includes some a brief description (p5) of wagon-building operations by a

company associated with two brothers – William and Thomas Longworth – who established a sawmill near an old colliery. A bit further on (p9), there is a 1933

advertisement inviting tenders for "the Supply and Delivery of Pit Timber for Ibon Coal Company". The timber sought by the company included props, slabs and railway sleepers. They didn't give much time – the advertisement appeared on 4 January with a closing date of 10 January. An article by Ross Wainwaring, "Lithgow's Narrow-Gauge Railway" (pp24-25), includes a photo of some loaded timber skips ready to go underground.

An article that is about forestry is a field report by Norman Houghton on the Wye River log tramway in Victoria (pp40-41). The area had been badly affected by a bushfire on Christmas Day 2015 and a local group to promote economic and tourism recovery was formed, with Norman as a member. One of the proposals was to establish walking trails along the old timber tramway routes, and Norman reports on his survey of a proposed route, including some history of the sawmill that the tramway serviced. Unfortunately, his report was consigned to a bottom drawer, and while a walking trail was built, it has nothing to do with the tramways of Wye River.

And finally, a paragraph in the "Heritage & Tourists News" section reports the return of a much-loved locomotive to Timbertown in Wauchope NSW after having been sold by the local council in 1999.



The cover of LR286 features an 1897 photo of a locomotive named "Kate", belonging to sawmillers MC Davies Co. Ltd, which operated in the karri forests near Karridale, WA. The locomotive is now on display in Margaret River – see [www.australiansteam.com/Kate.htm](http://www.australiansteam.com/Kate.htm).

There is also a small article on "Kate" in the "Heritage & Tourists News" section.

The "Looking Back" section (pp21-25) concerns a collection of photographs taken by Lindsay G. Cumming (1874-1979) and which is held by the State Library of Victoria. Apart from some introductory text, it mainly consists of photos, including one of a Fowler traction engine being used to haul timber, one of a locomotive belonging to the Rubicon Lumber & Tramway Co., a couple showing timber being transported along a 2½' gauge railway, and some workers sitting on a load of timber on a horse-drawn wagon – the caption suggests it was taken to mark "some patriotic occasion" as indicated by the display of the Union Flag. The section concludes with a single photo spread over two pages, showing a stationary train with load of timber on the Eildon Bridge near Thornton. A dog named Bluey is giving one of the wheels the onceover.

Norman Houghton contributes a field report on the Lal Lal industrial sidings in Victoria (pp37-39). The site dates from the early 1860s when a siding was installed for the Ballarat timber trade to supply boiler wood and mine props. A paragraph in the "Heritage & Tourists News" section has a short para and a bigger photo on a BEV battery-electric locomotive at the Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum in Victoria. The back cover remembers "The Beechie" (the Colac to Beech Forest line in Victoria) which closed in June 1962.