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# Australian Forest History Society

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Newsletter No. 90  
December 2023

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

Australian Forestry School, Canberra



*Detail from the commemorative plaque designed by  
Clive Hilliker and made by Robin Cromer.*

*Photo by Juliana Lazzari.*

*See "Commemorating the Australian  
Forestry School in Canberra", p7.*

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**MEMBERSHIP**

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

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

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**NEXT ISSUE**

The newsletter is normally published three times a year, with the occasional special issue. The next issue should be out in April 2024.

**Input is always welcome.**

Contributions can be sent to [contact@foresthistor.org.au](mailto:contact@foresthistor.org.au).

Contributions may be edited.

**IN THIS ISSUE**

New Postal Address ..... 2  
 Brown Paper Wrapping ..... 2  
 Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre ..... 3  
 Log Branding Hammers ..... 5  
 2023 Annual General Meeting and  
 the 2024 Committee ..... 6  
 Robert Onfray's Blogs ..... 6  
 Commemorating the Australian Forestry School in  
 Canberra ..... 7  
 Vale John E. Gray OAM, 7 May 1930-11 Nov 2023 .. 8  
 Vale Graydon Henning, 9 Feb 1936-23 Oct 2023 ..... 9  
 Vale Derek McIntosh ..... 9  
 A 10 Ton D4D Bulldozer, Juneec Paddocks,  
 Tasmania, 1975 ..... 10  
 Exhibition: *Home Grown: The natural materials of  
 Parliament House, Canberra* ..... 10  
 ABC Radio Programs – Forest History ..... 10  
 New Books and Publications ..... 11

**NEW POSTAL ADDRESS**

The volume of mail to our post office box has dwindled to a trickle and, as reported at the recent AGM, the committee has agreed that it should be closed. Mail sent to the old box number will be redirected to another box at Kingston leased by one of our members – PO Box 6113. Please update your records.

**BROWN PAPER WRAPPING**

With recent moves to restrict the use of plastic packaging, here's an advertisement published in *The News* (Adelaide) on Thursday 27 Nov 1952 (p24). The image is courtesy of Trove, National Library of Australia.

[trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/11189090](http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/11189090)





## TOOLANGI FOREST DISCOVERY CENTRE

By Peter McHugh

*This article is supplied by the author for publication in the AFHS newsletter. It is published (with additional photos) on Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage website at [victoriasforestsandbushfireheritage.com/2023/03/19/toolangi-forest-discovery-centre](http://victoriasforestsandbushfireheritage.com/2023/03/19/toolangi-forest-discovery-centre).*

The magnificent Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre (TFDC) was opened by the Victorian Minister for Natural Resources, Geoff Coleman, nearly 30 years ago, on 14 February 1994, but its origins can be traced back many decades earlier.

During the late 1960s, the Forests Commission Victoria (FCV) started to dip its toe into the world of public information and schools' education.

Recreation and conservation on state forest was receiving greater focus and a key moment for the commission came in August 1970, then under the new chairmanship of Dr Frank Moulds, with the creation of the Forest Recreation Branch.

This initiative was a first for any Australian forest service, but its brief soon widened and by 1971 it became the Forest Environment and Recreation (FEAR) Branch under the stewardship of Athol Hodgson, and later Stuart Calder. This move was accompanied with the appointment of some specialist ranger and planning positions in the field.

During the 1970s, local FCV district staff were encouraged to bring school groups into the bush and organise other ad hoc tours. Toolangi developed into an innovative forest education hub under the enthusiastic direction of Rod Incoll, the District Forester, with strong support from the Divisional Forester at Healesville, Ken Harrop.

By the early 1980s, Rod Incoll had convinced the Forests Commission that a modern office and depot complex was needed at Toolangi. The new building included, in part, the FCV's first purpose-built community education centre.

After the election of the Cain Labor Government in 1982, and the release of the ground breaking Timber Industry Strategy (TIS) later in 1986, the idea of a dedicated forest education centre began to take hold.

In 1990, an education project to produce school curriculum materials was formalised. The group had strong representation from the Education Department and school teachers.

The materials were deliberately designed to challenge students to think about the complexities, controversies and contradictions of forest and bushfire management, endangered species conservation, timber harvesting and timber sustainability, ecotourism and forest ecosystems. The project also produced the video *Forests of Ash* in 1993.

Meanwhile, several sites for a new education centre were considered, including Barmah, Marysville, Macedon, Toolangi, the Dandenong Ranges and the Grampians.

There were some concerns expressed about the TFDC location on the Healesville-Kinglake Road as being "off the beaten track", and therefore generating limited

passing traffic. However, the site had other big advantages of being within two hours of Melbourne schools and sited in an active "working forest" with a rich harvesting and sawmilling history. Toolangi also had proven credentials as being able to deliver education programs.

The TDFC was designed by Victorian Government architect Peter Pass to match its surroundings using many local timbers. It was deliberately nestled into the messmate bush near the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) offices and the cathedral-like building has a roof shape resembling overlapping gum leaves lying gently on the forest floor. The building was funded with a \$1.5m grant from the Federal Government and another \$200k "chipped-in" from the State. This amounted to a major capital works project in an era when average wages were about \$29,000 per year and a house and land package in Melbourne was only \$114,000.

The ongoing operating costs for teaching staff and building maintenance were to be met by DCNR.

The visionary TFDC project was led by DCNR forester Kevin Wareing as the Head of Forest Commerce Branch, while on-site construction was managed over two of Toolangi's notoriously wet and cold winters by forester John Cunningham. The exhibition design was by Rosemary Simons with many others in support.

Once it became operational, the responsibility shifted to Forest Management Branch in Melbourne, headed by David Holmes. A Forest Environment team, led by Mike Leonard, worked closely with the staff at Toolangi and the North East Region of DCNR to implement the education programs.

Qualified sessional teachers were recruited to run the education programs and it proved a huge success with between 10,000 to 12,000 students each year and many repeat visitors.

A highlight in 1996 was the International Sculpture Festival and the establishment of a trail leading from the centre through the bush.

But sudden funding cuts at the end of 1998 caused the closure of the main TFDC building, although the education programs continued to operate from an adjacent "Tin Shed" (aka the Discovery Tree) under a three-year contract with the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.

At the conclusion of the TAFE arrangement, the forest education programs came back under the department's umbrella using up to 10-12 sessional teachers.

During this period, the main TDFC building was sometimes open on weekends and public holidays, depending on available funding.

In about 2000, the proprietors of the Toolangi General Store approached the department to convert part of the building to a coffee shop, the Crosscut Kiosk. The existing staff tearoom was extended and some of the displays were removed to make space for tables. However, the proposal didn't ultimately succeed, and the Toolangi Tavern was built instead, next to the site of the general store.



In 2003, the Natural Resources Conservation League (NRCL) closed its nursery in Springvale and needed a new home. It leased space at Toolangi, but in 2007 moved to the Waterwheel Centre in Warburton.

There had been grave fears for the wooden building during the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires when part of the adjoining departmental offices and forest were destroyed.

Some forest education programs continued until June 2012, when the department announced that forest education was no longer "core business".

By the beginning of 2013, one of Australia's oldest registered environmental charities, the Gould League, had also been trained to run existing programs at the Discovery Tree, which continue to this day.

Between 2015 and 2018, there was an unsuccessful effort by a community group to establish a Committee of Management under the *Crown Lands (Reserves) Act 1978* and revive the main TFDC as a tourist information centre, gallery and Ecology Cafe.

But critical maintenance of the iconic wooden building had been neglected, and the structure slowly deteriorated, while the costs of repair and restoration to modern building and fire protection standards began to climb into the millions.

Sadly, by August 2018, the TDFC once again fell silent.

A second Committee of Management was appointed and, in 2021, began a planning scheme amendment with Murrindindi Shire, as well as writing a business case for the TFDC to be more broadly used by the community and for commercial purposes. The land and building remain permanent Crown Land in public ownership.

In the meantime, the TDFC remains closed leaving a huge void in much needed, hands-on, balanced and factual education materials about forests and bushfires for students and the general public.

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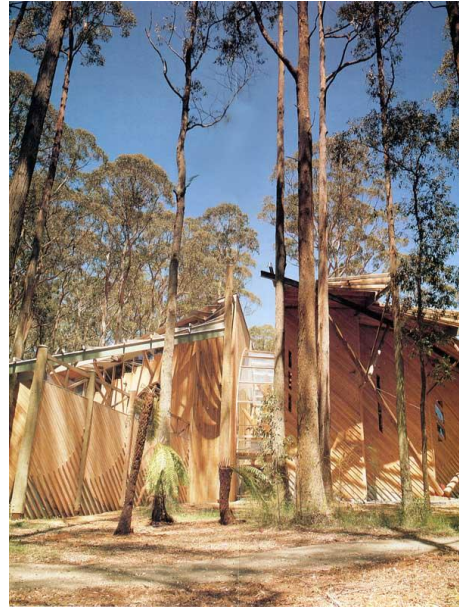
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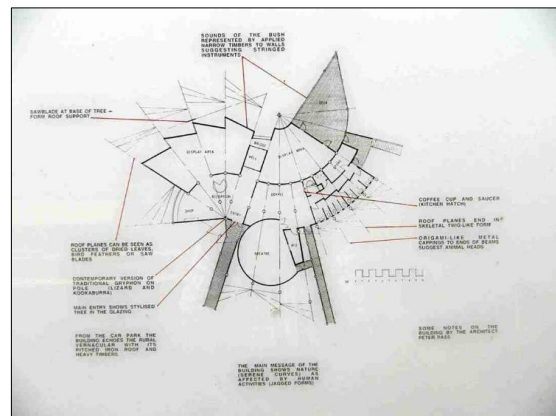
*Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre, c. 1994*  
 Photo: John Cunningham

Source: Forests Commission Retired Personnel Association



*Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre, c. mid-1990s*  
 Photo: Mike Leonard

Source: Forests Commission Retired Personnel Association



The roof was designed to resemble overlapping gum leaves.

Source: The Toolangi & Castella Local History Project.  
[toolangicastellahistory.org.au/toolangi-forest-discovery-centre](http://toolangicastellahistory.org.au/toolangi-forest-discovery-centre)

## LOG BRANDING HAMMERS

By Peter McHugh

*This article is supplied by the author for publication in the AFHS newsletter. It is published on Victoria's Forests & Bushfire Heritage website at [victoriasforestsandbushfireheritage.com/2023/12/05/branding-hammers](http://victoriasforestsandbushfireheritage.com/2023/12/05/branding-hammers).*

Metal branding hammers were the most common way to control the sale and movement of hardwood timber produce like logs, railway sleepers, fence posts, and poles from Victorian state forests. Royalty was also paid on this basis.

The hammer had a crown stamp on one end with a unique number in the middle which identified its owner, and a crow's foot or broad arrow on the other.

The broad arrow was a symbol traditionally used in Britain and its colonies to mark government property.

Forest regulations state that an authorised officer may use the crown mark to identify produce which has been sold and may be removed from the forest, whereas the broad arrow can be used to brand and mark trees which are not to be felled, or to indicate forest produce which has been seized.

Hammers were traditionally only ever issued to forest officers and were an important and closely guarded tool-of-trade. They were not transferred between staff and lending hammers was not permitted.

But it was an onerous task for staff to hammer and tally hundreds of logs, or thousands of fence posts each week, so in about 1990 a system was introduced whereby hammers were allocated to logging contractors to grade logs and tally them instead. But there was still spot checking by authorised officers.

A register was kept, and contractors paid a substantial deposit to make sure they didn't lose them, but they occasionally turn up by fossickers with metal detectors.

While branding hammers are still used in some smaller locations, plastic tags and barcodes are now more common.



Dave Hocking's branding hammer - #606



From the collection of Anglesea and District Historical Society.

Source:  
[victoriancollections.net.au/items/5985427121ea67199c214653](http://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5985427121ea67199c214653)

In some busy locations a checking station was used to inspect, measure, grade and brand logs coming out of the forest on their way to a sawmill.

Checking stations were generally located where roads converged out of the forests, like Mansfield, Orbost and Licola.

Tom Townsend worked for the Forests Commission at Licola in the 1950s measuring logs coming from Connors Plain. The first checking station was next to the

Forests Commission office and residence, but I think there may have been another location for the checking station over the decades.

On average, 60 timber trucks, each carrying a 12-tonne load passed through Licola every working day on their way to Heyfield, some 12 miles away. Another 8 loads made their way direct to Wilbur Saxton's mill in the settlement.



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE LIE behind the lightning swift appraisal that Forests Commission Checking Officer Tom Townsend gives each timber truck passing through Licola. Before a load can clear the Checking Station it must receive Mr. Townsend's official approval.

*The Age (Melbourne),  
 9 May 1953, p2.*

*Extracted from an article titled "Trees from the Mountains Feed the Mills. Forest Wealth for Timber Town".*

Source:  
[trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/206443537](http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/206443537)



Licola Checking Station.

Source: Forests Commission Retired Personnel Association.





## 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND THE 2024 COMMITTEE

The society's Annual General Meeting was held in Canberra on Tuesday 28 November 2023. The following committee was elected:

<b>President:</b>	Juliana Lazzari
<b>Vice-President:</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>Secretary and public officer:</b>	Kevin Frawley
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Fintán Ó Laighin
<b>Committee:</b>	Peter Evans Stuart Pearson

### *President's Report*

By *Juliana Lazzari*

It has been a quiet year once again although the society has continued our main activity of producing the newsletter, with three issues published since our AGM in 2022 – in December 2022, and in April and August 2023, with the next issue being prepared. Contributions from members are encouraged and very welcome.

There are still no plans to hold a conference, although any proposals will be welcomed by the committee.

Our website is ticking along with many thanks to Robert Onfray who has been highly responsive and effective at uploading our newsletters, and writing summaries of their contents, which he usually does within hours of being asked to do so. Robert has been helping to look after the website since Jan Oosthoek handed over with instructions earlier this year. However, we are still looking for a volunteer to manage and/or co-manage the website.

This year saw the deaths of at least three of our members, Derek McIntosh in March, Graydon Henning in October and John Gray in November. All had been active members of the society, including John as the society's public officer from 2018-19 to 2021-22. There may have been other members who have died, but these are the only ones of whom I am aware.

We are a small society and rely on our members to contribute to our activities. We have a diminishing number of active people, so we encourage our members to be involved. When I agreed to be president at the 2020 AGM, it was primarily because we didn't want the position left unfilled as it was in 2019, and was also with the expectation that someone who was possibly more active in all things forests and forestry would take over, so I put that out there.

### *Treasurer's Report*

By *Fintán Ó Laighin*

For the second year running, the society has made a profit – almost \$623 – largely driven by the 2022 decision to distribute newsletters by e-mail rather than post. This has saved a considerable amount on printing and postage, as well as a great deal of effort. 2022-23 was our first full year of going digital – in the previous financial year, only one of the three newsletters was primarily sent by e-mail. Until last year, the society only made a profit in years when we held a conference, but even those profits became increasingly modest.

The profit is slightly less than last year when we made \$1326, but a large part of that amount was a donation of \$1001 from Derek McIntosh in May 2022. As the president mentions in her report, Derek died in March this year. I would also like to restate my appreciation of his donation, and also extend my condolences to his family, including his wife Di who advised me of his death.

The decline in income from membership subscriptions, from \$1355 in 2021-22 to \$975 in 2022-23, is not as dramatic as it appears and is largely due to members having renewed on or before 30 June 2022. Our membership remains relatively stable – 46 at 30 June 2023 compared with 52 at 30 June 2022. This is well within the normal fluctuation. On 30 June 2021, for example, we only had 31 members.

One impending change will be the closure of the society's post office box in Kingston when the current lease expires at the end of March 2024. We hardly get any mail now and it can be weeks between letters arriving; the cost of almost \$150 a year is increasingly hard to justify. We will set up a mail redirection for a few months or so.

Finally, I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Graeme Wood for reviewing our accounts. I think this is the third year he has done so. Each year, the committee offers him a bottle of wine as an appreciation of his work, but he is yet to take us up on it.

### **ROBERT ONFRAY'S BLOGS**

Robert Onfray continues his accounts on three different topics each month – stories about Surrey Hills (Tasmania), travelling around Australia, and on forestry/land management issues. While the AFHS newsletter tends to focus on the Surrey Hills and forestry blogs, his travel articles are also worth checking out. His website is at [www.robertonfray.com](http://www.robertonfray.com) and includes details of how to subscribe to his e-mail list.

The following articles have been published since our August 2023 issue.

#### *Surrey Hills*

**September:** [The hills of Surrey Hills](#)

**October:** [How the Hampshire Hills became a sea of yellow](#)

**November:** [From Bischoff Tinlanders to Parrawe Rovers – a potted history of the Waratah District Football Association](#)

#### *Forestry/Land Management*

**September:** [Celebrating Wattle Day](#)

**October:** [Wake up Australia – renewable energy won't save the planet if it costs the earth](#)

**November:** [Three days of hell in the valley](#)

**December:** [Killing koalas to "save" polar bears](#)

Robert's 2021 book, *Fires, Farms and Forests: A Human History of Surrey Hills, north-west Tasmania*, can be ordered from his website for a cost of \$55 plus postage.

## COMMEMORATING THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY SCHOOL IN CANBERRA

By *Fintán Ó Laighin (with assistance from Kim Wells)*

On Monday 4 December 2023, the president of Forestry Australia, Dr Michelle Freeman, unveiled a plaque at the heritage-listed Australian Forestry School building in Yarralumla (Canberra), commemorating its role as the national centre for forestry education from 1927 to 1965. Some 580 foresters from 14 countries graduated with professional qualifications from the school.

The crowd at the unveiling included a number of former graduates – Ross Florence (1951-52), Martin Benson (1956-57), Brian Turner (1957-58), Kim Wells (1957-58), Robin Cromer (1960-61) and Rod Holesgrove (1965-66), as well as Paula Reid OAM who is the last remaining staff member. Mrs Reid worked in the school library from 1950 until the school's closure, and at the ANU Department of Forestry library from 1965 to 1994.

In his opening address, Professor Peter Kanowski (Australian National University) recognised that CSIRO had maintained and respected the heritage of the site since it assumed responsibility in 1975. He also noted that the establishment of the school – in Adelaide in 1926 and in Canberra from 1927 – had been the culmination of two decades of debate on forestry education, with the University of Adelaide establishing a course in 1911 and the University of Melbourne in 1913.

The original proposal to establish the school had been agreed by the heads of Australia's government forestry agencies in January 1921 but for various reasons this proposal fell through. The heads had agreed that the school be established at Laurel Hill in Bago State Forest, near Batlow.

Some brief reminiscences were provided by Brian Turner, Paula Reid and Kim Wells, and there was also a short speech from Michael Shepherd of the Shepherd Centre, the beneficiary of the Gunyar A.C.T. Properties Trust which owns the site and which will be redeveloping the area while maintaining the integrity of the heritage listed buildings.

In unveiling the plaque, Dr Freeman remarked that studying forestry was more than an education, it was also something that informed a person's identity.

Developing the plaque was an initiative of Kim Wells supported by Brian Turner and others, including the ACT Branch of Forestry Australia. The project was overseen by a 4-member team comprising Kim and Brian, along with Robin Cromer and Clive Hilliker. A number of foresters, firstly Roger Underwood in WA, contributed to the wording, with design and layout by Clive (professionally associated with Department of Forestry at ANU for many years). The execution in wood was done by Robin Cromer using timbers from across Australia, including messmate and Queensland silver ash.

Kim also said that background to the plaque project was a remark by Roger Underwood who, on a visit to the school, noted that there was nothing that explained the

history of the site. Since then, a series of five interpretative signs have been placed around the Yarralumla Forestry Precinct.

The plaque was funded by donations from AFS foresters; general support for the project was provided by developer Oakstand and the lessee, Gunyar Pty Ltd.

The site, including the adjacent buildings of the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau/Forestry and Timber Bureau, is to be redeveloped. CSIRO sold the site to Gunyar in June 2002 with a 20-year lease that allowed CSIRO to retain control of the property until 2022. Representatives of Gunyar, Oakstand and the Shepherd Foundation attended the launch of the plaque.

The plaque is located just inside the entranceway and can be seen through the glass door windows.

### References and further reading

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*Kim Wells, Martin Benson, Brian Turner, Ross Florence, Paula Reid, Robin Cromer and Rod Holesgrove. Photo by Juliana Lazzari.*



*Photo by Brian Turner.*

**VALE JOHN E. GRAY OAM,  
 7 MAY 1930-11 NOV 2023**

By Ken Taylor

*This article was originally published by Landscape Australia at [landscapeaustralia.com/articles/vale-john-e-gray-oam-19302023](https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/vale-john-e-gray-oam-19302023). It is reprinted with the permission of the author. The Landscape Australia site includes a photo of Professor Taylor and Dr Gray taken from The Canberra Times.*

*Dr Gray was a long-term member of the AFHS and was our public officer from 2018 to 2022.*

It was with a deep sense of loss and sadness that we received the news of the death of John Gray at the age of 93 on 11 November. However, it gives us pause to consider the lasting results of his work evident in the Canberra landscape.

On leaving Barker College, Sydney, John became a cadet forester with the Forestry Commission of NSW in 1948. The cadetship included two years at Sydney University and two at the Australian Forestry School in Yarralumla. In 1961, he moved to Canberra, where he took up the position of parks manager at the Parks and Gardens branch of the Department of the Interior (which, at that time, was in charge of administration of the Capital Territory). In the light of his later work on the city's landscape, this turned out to be a propitious, if not momentous, decision.

John's work at the Department brought him into contact with the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) and its landscape architecture section, headed by Richard (Dick) Clough. He undertook Canberra's landscape construction on behalf of the NCDC, including early work for the planning and design of Lake Burley Griffin. It was this experience that led him to recognize the fundamental role of landscape structure planting in the city's morphology, and the significant contributions of Thomas Charles Weston and Lindsay Pryor. It also introduced him to landscape architecture and its potential for the city's planning and design.

With this in mind, John went to the University of California, Berkeley to undertake a master's degree in landscape architecture. On his return, after teaching at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now University of Canberra) as a senior lecturer in natural resources, he joined the NCDC. He was the principal landscape architect from 1974 to 1988, working again with Clough and then succeeding him as director of landscape architecture. During this time, John began to truly appreciate the immense contribution made by Thomas Weston to the early days of Canberra (1913 to 1926). He captured Weston's vision, which had largely been ignored both professionally and academically, with his scholarly research and investigations into Weston and his achievements. The culmination was his 1999 doctoral thesis, "T. C. G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturalist and arboriculturist."<sup>1</sup> He shared his knowledge through part-time teaching in landscape architecture at the University of Canberra, an input that was greatly enjoyed and respected by the students. John's work on Weston

was summarized in *The Canberra Times* (29 May 2006) under the heading "A tree-lined vision."

John's thesis is an outstanding example of a readable but deeply scholarly work based on rigorous thought, disciplined research and dedicated work. Through it, he brought Weston into the limelight he so clearly deserves. It is joined by John's other publications on Canberra and its landscape, several of which have been recognized by awards. Behind these achievements stands his unwavering commitment to his beloved Canberra, whose landscape we continue to admire and enjoy. His overall achievements were appropriately recognized in 2001 by the award of Medal of the Order of Australia.

In spite of the accolades and recognition he received, John, whilst justifiably proud, was always modest about his work and research. Such modesty belied his rigorous and thorough approaches. What remains most inspiring is how he enjoyed his work. His infectious sense of humour and unmistakable throaty chuckle will always be remembered.

Vale John, a man for all seasons.

**Footnote**

1. John Edmund Gray, "T. C. G. Weston (1866-1935), Horticulturalist and Arboriculturist: A critical review of his contribution to the establishment of the landscape foundations of Australia's National Capital," doctoral thesis, University of Canberra, 1999; [doi.org/10.26191/amv3-3j40](https://doi.org/10.26191/amv3-3j40).

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*Source: Tobin Brothers Canberra*

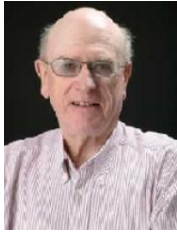
*A video recording of Dr Gray's funeral is available at [tobinscanberrafunerals.com.au/upcoming-funerals/past-funerals/:xjkr](https://tobinscanberrafunerals.com.au/upcoming-funerals/past-funerals/:xjkr).*

**Editor's note:** *Dr Gray was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in Queen's Birthday 2001 Honours List. The citation states that it was "(f)or service to landscape architecture in the Australian Capital Territory, and to the community".* [honours.pmc.gov.au/honours/awards/869675](https://honours.pmc.gov.au/honours/awards/869675)



**VALE GRAYDON HENNING,**  
**9 FEB 1936-23 OCT 2023**

*Compiled by Fintán Ó Laighin*



Graydon Henning, an economic historian from the University of New England (UNE) in northern NSW, died on 23 October 2023, aged 87.

Graydon was a long-time member of the AFHS. In September 2008, AFHS founder and then president John

Dargavel recalled Graydon being part of a network of forest historians in the early 1980s that eventually convened the first national forest history conference and established the AFHS. Graydon had a particular interest in the lumber trade of the Pacific Northwest from 1890-1914, as well as maritime transport, business, and mining history from 1870-1914.

He taught economic history at UNE for 30 years and was named an honorary fellow. During this time he worked as the editor of the Australian Association for Maritime History's journal *The Great Circle* from 1989 to 1998, and was both a founding member and an honorary life member of the association.

He served a 5-year term as president of the International Commission for Maritime History, from 2005 to 2010. Prior to accepting the post, he had served as the vice-president of the commission, and had been a member of the editorial board for the *International Journal of Maritime History*.

His passion for maritime history began when a general interest in transport led him, as a post-graduate student, to the shipping treasures of the University of Melbourne Archives and the Noel Butlin Archives at the Australian National University. This was after his discovery that "apparently everyone else in Australia interested in transport was working on railways".

Graydon's funeral was held on 30 October 2023 at the Tamworth City Uniting Church. A video recording is available at [youtube.com/watch?v=bPwGwKRVdPo](https://youtube.com/watch?v=bPwGwKRVdPo).

**References and further information**

John Dargavel, September 2008. "Origins of the Society" (p3), "20 Years of the Australian Forest History Society: Some Ancient History" (p4) and "AFHS Early History Reminiscences" (p8). *Australian Forest History Society Newsletter* no. 50. [foresthistor.org.au/newsletter/afhsnewsletter50.pdf](http://foresthistor.org.au/newsletter/afhsnewsletter50.pdf)

Jim Scanlan, July 2005. "UNE economic historian heads International Commission". University of New England. [web.archive.org/web/20051117225401/http://www.une.edu.au/news/archives/000311.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20051117225401/http://www.une.edu.au/news/archives/000311.html)

University of New England. "Staff Profile – Mr Graydon Henning". [une.edu.au/staff-profiles/business/gHENNING](http://une.edu.au/staff-profiles/business/gHENNING)

Wikipedia. "Graydon Henning". [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graydon\\_Henning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graydon_Henning)



**VALE DEREK MCINTOSH**

*Compiled by Fintán Ó Laighin*

Derek McIntosh, founder of Australia's National Register of Big Trees and member of the AFHS, died in March 2023 after a period of ill health. He was born in South Africa and emigrated to Australia in 1981.

The root cause of his interest in trees was his father's love of the trees that they grew up with in South Africa. His father was a member of the Dendrology Society, and was financially very generous to all who shared this interest and were promoting the knowledge of trees.

One of the great projects at that time, c. 1955, was the palm-sized National Tree List that listed all the indigenous trees with a unique number. Numbers were attached to selected trees throughout the Kruger National Park, and in all rest camps. For the first time ever, the general public were able to identify and compare trees.

Following in his father's footsteps, Derek spent many thousands of dollars donating tree name tags to game lodges, parks etc, throughout Africa. Sharing the knowledge and enjoyment of trees with the general public was a fundamental goal ever since. A key component of this work was having accessible trees that can be easily found.

Living in the USA during the late 1970s, he discovered the National Register of Big Trees maintained by American Forests since 1940, a register of their champion trees. Being the nominator of the champion tree of a species is a great honour. Inspired by this, he established the Australian Register.

**References and further information**

American Forests. Official Register of Champion Trees. [americanforests.org/champion-trees/champion-trees-registry](https://americanforests.org/champion-trees/champion-trees-registry)

International Dendrology Society, 2011. "Australia's tree champions: Three years ago Derek McIntosh established the Australian National Register of Big Trees". IDS Yearbook. [dendrology.org/publications/dendrology/australias-tree-champions](https://dendrology.org/publications/dendrology/australias-tree-champions)

National Register of Big Trees: Australia's Champion Trees. [nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au](https://nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au)

Wikipedia, "National Register of Champion Trees". [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Register\\_of\\_Champion\\_Trees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Champion_Trees)



## A 10 TON D4D BULLDOZER, JUNEE PADDOCKS, TASMANIA, 1975

Andrew Wilson has provided the following photograph which appeared on one of his news feeds.



*A 10 ton D4D bulldozer in 1975 nestled in the stump of a giant Eucalyptus regnans in Junee Paddocks [Tasmania], an area cleared for pasture, probably in the early 1900s, with the logs going to a sawmill at Tyenna (K. Creak, pers.comm.). The Australian Newsprint Mills Forest Concession Area, a little to the west of this site, contained similar trees which supplied sawlogs to local sawmills and resource for the Boyer Newsprint Mill for many decades after operations began there in 1941.*

The photograph is on the "Big Tree Seekers" Facebook page at [facebook.com/photo/?fbid=134337382372763](https://facebook.com/photo/?fbid=134337382372763). It is unsourced although seems to be taken from a book. A comment on Facebook notes that "The blade of the dozer is 12ft wide which should give you an indication of the overall diameter."

## EXHIBITION: HOME GROWN: THE NATURAL MATERIALS OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA

Explore the connection between the Australian environment and the refined architecture and craftsmanship of Australian Parliament House. This free exhibition features a series of photographs by Jillian Gibb and Anthony Green.

In 1983, the Parliament House Construction Authority commissioned 24 artists to produce a photographic record between 1984 and 1986 of the building's construction. In their commissions, Gibb and Green captured the natural forms of the land, the hills and forests, which were the sources of the stone and timber for Parliament House. Under the hands of many skilled craftspeople, these materials shaped the new building.

This exhibition is a rare opportunity to see the exquisite gelatin silver prints documenting the sources of the stone and timber that went into making Parliament House.

After you take in the exhibition, explore the natural materials used throughout the building.

If you can't make it in person, you can explore parts of the exhibition online.

[aph.gov.au/Visit/Parliament/Art/Stories\\_and\\_Histories/The\\_natural\\_materials\\_of\\_Parliament\\_House](https://aph.gov.au/Visit/Parliament/Art/Stories_and_Histories/The_natural_materials_of_Parliament_House)

**Dates:** 22 August 2023 to 6 May 2024

**Cost:** Free

**Venue:** Australian Parliament House, Canberra, Level 1

## ABC RADIO PROGRAMS – FOREST HISTORY

### *Australia Wide, 7 Sep 2023*

In the bushland of WA's Great Southern region, one of the world's oldest horticultural practices is still visible. Marri trees have been shaped and cut by generations of traditional owners, in a practice that ensured the survival of their people by creating a water source. These trees are truly ancient, with some estimated to be more than two hundred – or even three hundred – years old.

**Guests/Audio:** Lauren Smith (ABC Great Southern), Lynette Knapp (elder and Meriningar woman), Stephen Hopper (UWA professor, biodiversity expert).

**Editor's note:** *The audio at*

[abc.net.au/listen/programs/australia-wide/australia-wide/102747800](https://abc.net.au/listen/programs/australia-wide/australia-wide/102747800) *isn't divided into segments, but it was in the last five or so minutes. An accompanying article is at* [abc.net.au/news/2023-09-07/how-traditional-owners-used-marri-trees-to-gather-water-wa/102799998](https://abc.net.au/news/2023-09-07/how-traditional-owners-used-marri-trees-to-gather-water-wa/102799998).

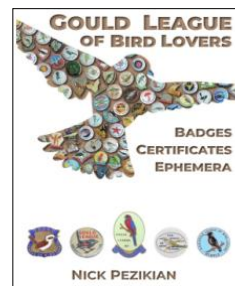
### **Late Night Live, 4 Oct 2023: How "greenwashing" concealed the destruction of California's redwoods**

California's iconic redwood forests attract millions of visitors each year, but just four per cent of the ancient forests remain standing today. From the 1850s, the forest was logged to near oblivion, concealed by one of the most egregious "greenwashing" campaigns in US history.

**Guest:** Greg King, author, *The Ghost Forest: Racists, Radicals and Real Estate in the California Redwoods*.

[abc.net.au/listen/programs/latenightlive/redwoods-greenwashing/102932760](https://abc.net.au/listen/programs/latenightlive/redwoods-greenwashing/102932760)

## NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Nick Pezikian, 2023. *Gould League of Bird Lovers: Badges, Certificates and Ephemera*. Victory Badges, Willoughby NSW. 150pp, illustrated (800 images). ISBN: 9780975607251 \$60 + postage. [victorybadges.com](https://victorybadges.com) and [facebook.com/photo/?fbid=956253879334021](https://facebook.com/photo/?fbid=956253879334021).

*From the publisher's notes.*

For over one hundred years the Gould League has played a major role in educating school children on the protection and conservation of bird life and then more broadly to all native flora and fauna.

*Gould League of Bird Lovers: Badges, Certificates and Ephemera* is the definitive reference book for collectables issued by all Australian state branches of the Gould League. The catalogue is both informative & beautifully presented making it the ideal guide for collectors, historians & nature lovers.

This book will provide a nostalgic journey for the millions of "bird lovers" in country towns and cities across Australia who signed up as members, took the Pledge, wore the badge with pride, cherished the colourful certificates, entered competitions and collected pennants, posters and stickers.

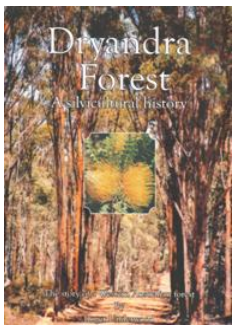


"I could not put it down! I loved it all from learning how each Chapter came about to seeing the wonderful certificates and badges produced. It was a heartfelt nostalgic walk down memory lane and a great reminder of the incredible work done by generations of environmental educators."

*Anne-Maree McInerney*  
 General Manager, Gould League of Victoria

"This catalogue is a wonderfully detailed and well-researched document which provides an excellent background for anyone interested in collecting this fascinating selection of memorabilia of the States' Gould Leagues and their activities."

*Mandy Bamford*  
 President, Western Australian Gould League



Roger Underwood, 2023.  
*Dryandra Forest: A silvicultural history. The story of a Western Australian Forest.* York Gum Publishing, Perth WA. 136pp, illustrated. ISBN: 9780994227157 \$30 incl. postage in Australia. Available from the author at [yorkgum41@outlook.com](mailto:yorkgum41@outlook.com).

Review by Ian Bevege.

This book is the latest from the pen of Roger Underwood, West Australian forester and forest historian. The sub-title is a play on words – this is as much a cultural history of a unique part of the Australian bush as it is about the silvics of a specific forest – the dry wandoo/mallet woodlands of what is now predominantly the western wheatbelt. The scope of this history is best described by the author in his introductory chapter:

"My focus is the changes in demand for, and in attitudes towards the Dryandra forest over the last 150 years. It is an up-then-down, and then up-again story. Disdained by the first settlers, Dryandra forest progressively provided the resource for a major export industry [ie brown mallet bark for tannin]; an important water supply catchment; the site for Australia's first [native] hardwood tree plantation; a resource for timber milling and manufacture; a field education centre; a native tree nursery; a holiday village in the bush; a recreation and heritage area; a beautiful landscape; and an important wildlife sanctuary. For almost 100 years, it has been a "working forest", but the nature of that work has changed. The principal outcomes of management today, for example, are no longer hardwood timber production, but conservation and recreation. Who knows what they will be in another 100 years?"

To me this multiplicity of uses of Dryandra forest through time and space epitomises more the traditional definition of "forest" as a land use concept rather than its more recent narrower technical appellation as an ecological variant of "tall closed woodland". For example, mediaeval forest in Britain was *terra regis* and

managed for and by the Crown for venison (game) and vert (vegetation including timber).<sup>1</sup> I think Roger Underwood is also using the term "Dryandra forest" here in this traditional sense; even while from 1925 under an active production forestry management regime by WA Forests Department primarily as a source of tan bark and timber, and as a site for mallet plantation establishment, multi-purpose management fitted more closely the traditional definition of "forest". In this regard, I feel it is a pity that this natural area encompassing some 30,000 hectares of forest fragments, which is now subject to mixed tenures of national park and state forest under a narrower multi-purpose regime centred on conservation and recreation, is now officially known as the Dryandra Woodland National Park.

The wide scope of the forest's history is ably encompassed over some eleven chapters but the autecology, silvics and fire management of the forest comprises over half of the text. While this concentrates on the major species brown mallet *Eucalyptus astringens* this is not to the exclusion of other significant species such as wandoo *E. wandoo*. Indeed to me the interest and may I say charm of this forest, which I have yet to visit, lies in its historical management as much as in the richness of its vegetation – hundreds of species including in the tree strata some seventeen eucalypts, *Nuytsia*, *Banksia*, *Allocasuarina*, *Acacia*, *Xanthorrhoea*, *Santalum*, alongside thirteen species of *Dryandra* (from which the forest gets its name); and not forgetting a key understorey species, *Gastrolobium microcarpum*, the notorious poison bush, which effectively made the forest a no-go area for early settlers' stock and paradoxically resulted in the forest not being cleared wholesale for agriculture, the fate of so much of the wheat belt.

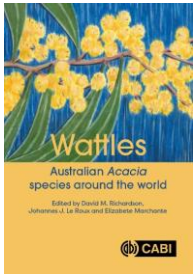
The mallet story of bark and timber exploitation, plantation establishment and fire management is covered in five chapters. Aspects treated in the remaining chapters include the forest environment, its early history, wildlife and current multi-purpose management.

This is a small gem of a book and deserves a wide readership among those concerned with the ever-changing nature of forest management in Australia under conflicted social economic and political pressures. Dryandra forest has its counterparts in all states; unsurprisingly, local administrations respond to the pressures in very different ways with variable outcomes. Western Australia seems to have reached a workable compromise for Dryandra, for now.

Production is of a high standard; the book is copiously illustrated, mainly with the author's own photographs, which are enhanced by the use of a high quality bright paper for printing.

#### Reference:

1. Ben Cowell 2000. "Parks, Plebs and the Picturesque: Sherwood Forest as a Contested Landscape in Later Georgian England, 1770-1830". In M. Agnoletti & S. Anderson, *Forest History, International Studies on Socio-economic and forest Ecosystem change*. CABI Publishing & IUFRO, 418pp.



David M. Richardson, Johannes J. Le Roux and Elizabete Marchante (eds) 2023. *Wattles: Australian Acacia Species Around the World*. CABI, Egham, UK (formerly Commonwealth Institute of Entomology). 584pp. ISBN 9781800622173.  
[cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/book/10.1079/9781800622197.0000](https://cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/book/10.1079/9781800622197.0000)

*From the publisher's notes.*

The book provides a comprehensive overview of current knowledge about "wattles", a large clade of over 1000 species of trees and shrubs in the genus *Acacia*, most of which are native to Australia. It examines the biology, ecology, evolution, and biogeography of wattles in their native ranges, including the evolutionary forces that have driven past speciation and adaptation to diverse environments, the conservation status, uses and human perceptions of these species. It considers the different histories of the introductions and proliferation of wattles as alien species in different parts of the world since c. 1850 (the Anthropocene), situated within relevant political, socio-economic and scientific contexts, together with an analysis of how awareness of their impacts as invasive species has changed over time. Differences in the dynamics and trends associated with the introduction, naturalization and invasion of wattles in different parts of the world are reviewed. The book also synthesizes the global distribution of wattles using diverse data sources, alongside trends, patterns and projections of global uses of wattles. It discusses the genetics, biotic interactions, and ecological, economic and social impacts of invasive wattles.

Jane Carruthers and Libby Robin 2023. "The Anthropocene Acacia: A History", in David M. Richardson, Johannes J. Le Roux and Elizabete Marchante (eds) 2023. *Wattles: Australian Acacia Species Around the World*. CABI, Egham, UK.  
[cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1079/9781800622197.0008](https://cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1079/9781800622197.0008)

*Abstract*

The countless introductions and rapid proliferation of some Australian *Acacia* species ('wattles') across different parts of the world has greatly accelerated in the Anthropocene. One of the four major impacts of the Anthropocene is that of burgeoning neobiota. This chapter traces the transfers of wattles, particularly from Australia to South Africa, and demonstrates how this genus has contributed to Anthropocene effects, altering or transforming natural ecosystems beyond their native habitats.

Changing awareness of the impacts of invasive alien species has shifted ecological thinking, linking it more strongly with historical and globalizing processes of communication and intergovernmental collaborative structures. Using South Africa and Australia as case studies of broader phenomena, the chapter expands upon earlier work to offer a fresh historical perspective on the transfers of wattles from Australia to other parts

of the world. The sciences of the Anthropocene illuminate paradigms and concepts that have affected the local and global changes in planetary ecosystems. Wattle transfers are a prime driver for counting invasion biology among the emerging sciences of the Anthropocene.

Our approach draws on the history of ideas and the history of science, which complement the methods of other chapters in this book that investigate in detail many different and specific aspects of wattles. This chapter provides an overarching historical context for the book.

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*Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways*, October 2023 (LR293) and December 2023 (LR294). Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISSN: 0727 8101. [www.lrrsa.org.au](http://www.lrrsa.org.au) and [facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064543968038](https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064543968038).



LR293 does not have much on timber railways, although does include a letter from Rev. Thomas F. Morgan in response to Norman Houghton's article in LR291, "Ebb and Flow – Beech Forest Rail Traffic Patterns 1928 to 1954". Rev. Morgan shares some memories of his time as the Church of England minister in Beech Forest from March 1955 to August 1961 – for seven winters as he points out.



The cover photo of LR294 features locomotive 11885 made by John Fowler & Co of Leeds in 1909. The photo was taken by AFHS member Peter Evans in May 2023 at the Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum in north-eastern Victoria ([alexandratramway.org.au](http://alexandratramway.org.au)). The "Heritage & Tourist News" section

of the magazine includes a report of the tramway's inaugural Heritage Machinery Festival held in October.

Also in the heritage section is a photo of the Sons of Gwalia gold mine locomotive *Midland*, built by the WAGR's Midland Workshops in 1934. The locomotive hauled timber for mine use and is now on display at the Gwalia Museum near Leonora in the Goldfields-Esperance region of Western Australia ([www.gwalia.org.au](http://www.gwalia.org.au)).

An article on the "Tweed River Entrance Works' Tramways" includes a reference to the arrival of the timber getters in the mid-1840s, and is complemented by a reference to Ian McNeil's article published in LR226 in 2012, "The Langley Vale Tramway. The story of William Langley and his timber empire. Part 1 – The Langley Brothers era: 1897-1912".

The letters page has one from Adrian Gunzburg, co-author with Jeff Austin of *Rails through the Bush*, in response to the article on the Goodwood Timber Company tramway published in LR292.

**Editor's note:** All back issues of *Light Railways* are available from the LRRSA's website, either as free downloads (nos. 1 to 275) or for \$7.95 or \$8.95 each (nos. 276 to 292).