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The Lives of Forty South Australian Foresters

John Dargavel

Introduction

Australian foresters have had their lives completely up-ended over the last thirty years; the institutions they served have disappeared under the waves of economic rationalism and environmentalism, their careers have been disrupted or ended, and their familiar networks of loyalties and friendships weakened. In the same period, the Australian Forest History Society has tried to ‘advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments’. Surely the foresters have one of the closest of such interactions? Although the Society has looked at the lives of some foresters *individually* in previous national conferences, I want to look at them *collectively* and use the case of forty of South Australia’s past foresters in this paper. It is part of a joint project by the National Centre for Biography at the Australian National University, the Australian Forest History Society and the Institute of Foresters of Australia. Its objective is to collect and publicise biographical information about past Australian foresters. The information is made freely available on the Centre’s web sites for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, *Obituaries Australia* and *People Australia* (National Centre for Biography n.d.).

Who should be included as a ‘South Australian forester’ has first to be defined. I include people who worked as foresters in the State irrespective of where they were born, but I exclude those who were born in South Australia but worked elsewhere. The most prestigious of these is Sir Roy Lister Robinson, Baron of Kielder Forest (1883–1952) who was born and educated in South Australia but went to Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship where he studied forestry and later became ‘the architect of state forestry’ in Britain and the ‘elder forestry statesman of the [British] Commonwealth’ (Evans 2004). I include Max Jacobs (1905–1979) who worked for the Commonwealth but had South Australia within his national remit when he was the Director-General of the Forestry and Timber Bureau. As a

‘forester’ I mean someone who managed forests and was called a ‘forester’, ‘conservator’ or equivalent.

Examining anybody’s life and writing their ‘biography’ is a strange and ancient business with its own arts and limitations. In the case of South Australian foresters, the limitations are severe because the published biographical material is thin and skewed towards the great and good. I have not located any personal archival information and have not so far examined oral history recordings. The best information comes from three entries written for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* about John Ednie Brown (1848–1899), Norman Jolly (1882–1954) and Geoffrey Rodger (1894–1982), and from a short biography of Jolly included in *The Foresters* by Athol Meyer (Meyer 1985). These three are among the ‘great men’ of Australian forestry who worked in South Australia but also in other States. Most of the information about the other foresters comes from obituaries published in *Australian Forestry*, the Institute of Foresters of Australia’s *Newsletter* and its *Forester* magazine. Obituaries were also found in digital copies of newspapers published before 1954 (when copyright expired) through the National Library of Australia’s Trove facility, and a few published since were found from other sources. A paper by Michael Roche was included to describe Hugh Corbin’s (1879–1950) life (Roche 2013). Ancillary information from genealogical data bases, student records and other sources was added.

Our knowledge of the lives of South Australian foresters is curtailed by silences. The forty about whom we have information are only a small proportion of the state’s past foresters. It was the writers who chose the people about whom they would write, presumably for some personal or professional connection. For example, Norm Lewis wrote about Andy Keeves’ (1927–2001) with whom he had worked for many years. Who were *not* chosen? Were they unremarkable, or forgotten, or best-forgotten, or was nobody interested in writing one at the time? Moreover, in the genre of obituaries, there is much left unsaid of the dead; certainly no ill of them appears in our collection; they appear as flatter figures than they surely were. Nevertheless, we can examine official reports and draw on the forest histories of Lewis, Carron and others to see the historical context in which they worked (Carron 1985, Lewis 1975). Beyond this, we can turn to broad social histories for two aspects that run through this paper. First is the change in education from the limited opportunities beyond six to eight years schooling available in the 1870s, to the system we know today. Second is the absence of women in Australian forestry until a few students enrolled in the late-1970s. There are none in the forty South Australian foresters discussed in this paper, and only one in 209 foresters in the National Centre for Biography’s collections.

Gardeners, botanists and the first eleven

Gardeners and botanists led the early days of modern forestry in many parts of the world, and particularly so in South Australia. Two key figures were the curator of Adelaide's Botanic Garden, Richard Schomburgk (1811–1899) and the politician, Friedrich Krichauff (1824–1904), both of whom had trained in the arboriculture of European royal and botanic gardens. They complemented the Surveyor-General, George Goyder's (1826–1898) interest in water, timber supply and the influence of trees on climate in a way that led to a scheme to encourage farmers to plant trees and then to a State planting program. A Forestry Board, set up in 1875 inherited at least two nurserymen but it needed foresters. It could afford to recruit one from overseas; others it would have to train. Schomburgk and Krichauff would have been well aware of the German and the French forestry schools that focused on managing natural forests, but they needed someone for plantations, and for that they wanted a Scottish forester. Fortunately they secured John Ednie Brown who had not only trained in Scottish estate plantations and established them in England, but had also investigated the trees of California—the home of the 'Remarkable Pine', *Pinus radiata* that would one day dominate the State's plantations. Brown must have been an energetic man, for as well as travelling the state, writing policy papers and running his small department, he wrote a *Practical Treatise on Tree Culture* for farmers, and he prepared *The Forest Flora of South Australia* with large format, engraved and coloured plates for the scientific and influential readership (Brown 1881, 1882), shown in Figure 1.

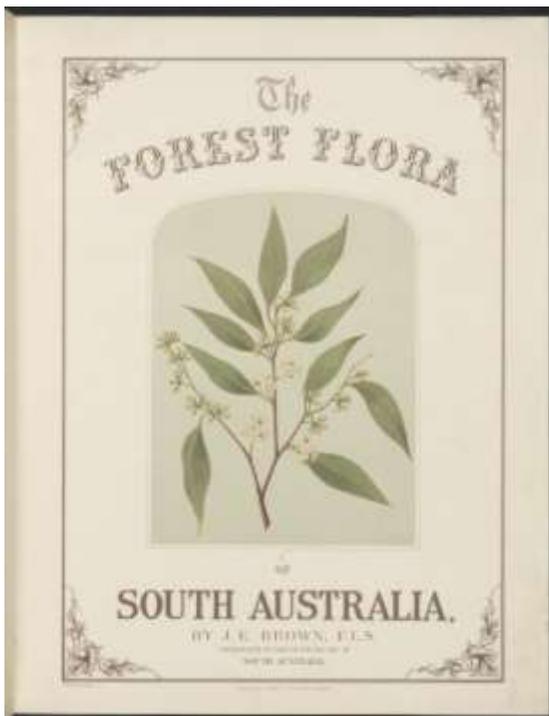


Figure 1: Title page of *The Forest Flora of South Australia*, 1882

Table 1: The first eleven

	Life Span	Training
Beale, Albert George	1870–1923	Woods and Forests Dept. cadet
Beale, Charles	1835–1929	English horticulture
Brown, John Ednie	1848–1899	Scottish estate plantations
Durward, William	1866–1932	Woods and Forests Dept. cadet
Field, Frederick Robert	1876–1940	Not known
Gill, Walter	1851–1929	SA Lands Dept, self-taught botanist
Melville, Frederick	1863–1928	Woods and Forests Dept. cadet
Melville, Frederick Dudley	1891–1918	Woods and Forests Dept. cadet
Perrin, George Samuel	1847–1900	Self-taught botanist
Reddan, William	1837-1923	Irish estate gardens
Stuckey, Edward Ernest	1870–1937	Roseworthy Agricultural College, Woods and Forests Dept. cadet

When Brown started on 1 August 1878, he had hardly any staff apart from Henry Dudley Melville (1825–1908), the Secretary to the Forestry Board. He soon found two people to train as foresters. One was Frederick Melville, the Secretary’s son who Brown started as a cadet in 1879 when he was sixteen. Brown gave him six months of reading and instruction before sending him off to the northern plantations at Wirrabara and Bundaleer (Figure 2).

Presumably, Brown continued to train him on his frequent visits and by expecting him to read in a range of subjects. Melville did well there, was made a forester when he was twenty-one and sent to the South-east. After five years as the forester at Mt Burr, he returned to the Wirrabara plantations where he started the Department’s first small sawmill in 1903 (South Australia 1886, Woods and Forests Dept 1891). He was promoted to Inspector and eventually became the Assistant Conservator in 1924. His son Frederick Dudley Melville followed his father and grandfather into the Woods and Forests Department, only to die in the First World War. The Melvilles’ careers, bound in ‘good and faithful’ public service and marked by occasional advance within the Department, show a pattern of life that many followed.



Figure 2: 'King Tree', Red gum (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) at Wirrabara with Frederick Melville, c.1915. Photo: Walter Gill?

The other person Brown recruited was George Perrin whose life showed a different pattern. He had years of experience and travelling in northern Australia behind him. He had collected a substantial herbarium, had contact with Ferdinand von Mueller (1825–1896) Victoria's Government botanist and at some point he was made a fellow of the Linnean Society (as was Brown) (Burns 2012, Hall 1978, Taylor 2002). Judging from the extensive treks he later made in Tasmania, he must have been an energetic and determined man. He was thirty-three when he started as the acting ranger at Mt Burr, but quickly proved himself and was made a forester the next year and then chief forester at Wirrabara in 1885, although he was 'chief' in name only.

The other states needed foresters to start or lead their nascent forest services, and sought to recruit them from South Australia. Perrin was the first to leave. In 1886 he was appointed as Tasmania's first Conservator of Forests, but that government's heart was not in forestry, and in 1888 he secured the position as Victoria's first Conservator. Brown appointed the thirty-five year old Walter Gill to be the chief forester at Wirrabara in his place. It was an ideal appointment; Gill was already a Lands Department officer, he had travelled widely across the state, he had a family background in nursery work, and he had a passion for botanical collecting wherever he went. He was also a keen photographer. When Brown left to become New South Wales' first Director-General of Forests in 1890, and later to

be Western Australia's Conservator, the pattern of preferment beyond South Australia was set. Gill became the Conservator until he retired. Gradually, he increased the number of people classified as foresters until he had ten by 1920.

Brown and Gill needed to find out which species would grow best, not only in plantations, but also in farms across the state. They had to be able to raise enough healthy seedlings of different species and for this they recruited anyone they could who had gardening or horticultural training. For example, Brown recruited Charles Beale who 'had studied practical botanical knowledge and had experience in flower culture and hot house culture' in London' and whose 'love for trees and plant life was the soul of his existence'. He took charge not only of the nursery at Mt Gambier but also of the Leg of Mutton Lake plantations and gardens. Another was the Irish-trained gardener, William Reddan who joined the Department when he was fifty, having worked in nurseries, vineyards and on his own farm. He was appointed as the forester at Narracorte and also caretaker of its famous caves.

Brown and Gill recruited cadets such as Albert Beale (1870–1923) and William Durward when they were sixteen. Like the first cadet, Frederick Melville, they were trained by working under senior men and gained experience in different forests. Edward Stuckey was a new type of cadet. After finishing his public schooling at fourteen, he had entered the Roseworthy Agricultural College in its first year and gained its Diploma in 1886 when he was sixteen. As well as agriculture, his course had included agricultural chemistry and book-keeping, both useful for forestry.

Strands that run forward in time and occur in other states can be seen in the lives of South Australia's first eleven. First, they were public servants with titles as cadets, foremen, nurserymen, foresters, chief foresters or conservators, and divided more by whether they were on the permanent salaried staff, or not, than whether they were managing forests. Lewis describes the career path of these early foremen-foresters being commonly, but not exclusively from cadet to forest foreman to forester (Lewis 1975). The definition of 'forester' is far less clear-cut than the official classifications might indicate. Second, only one was directly recruited from overseas, but immigrants with overseas training were prized. They disseminated their knowledge widely and trained local staff to be successful foresters. Third, most foresters had long careers in the same forest service; some with two or three generations such as the Melville family. By contrast, the fourth strand consists of the relatively few like Perrin and Brown (and the author in 1958) who left the South Australia to work elsewhere. Although some of the first eleven had overseas training, they had to develop techniques for new sites and new species, learning as they did so. But as Stuckey's life had shown, a more structured training was being introduced, one that would challenge the definition of a 'forester'.

The new cadre

By the end of the nineteenth century, eighteen European countries and the USA had established forestry schools in universities, or equivalent institutions, and by 1905 Britain had four, largely to serve its Empire. Clearly, their ‘scientific’ or ‘systematic’ forestry had become an academic discipline that was spreading around the world. South Australia would not lag behind. Although Victoria had followed an agricultural college model that took students with Leaving Certificates at about fifteen years of age when it established its School of Forestry at Creswick in 1910, South Australia would follow the Empire model and train its foresters in its own university (Roche and Dargavel 2008). It was a bold decision. The number of likely students was limited partly because there were few high schools from which students could matriculate and not all families would or could embrace the extra schooling; and partly because the Department could only afford to provide few university scholarships. However, the course was also available to students from the other states.

Table 2: The new cadre

	Life span	Training
Adams, Arthur John Sorby	1904–1969	University of Adelaide
Bednall, Brian Herbert	1904–1988	University of Adelaide
Jacobs, Maxwell Ralph Max	1905–1979	University of Adelaide
Pinches, Alfred Leslie	1891–1949	University of Adelaide
Rodger, Geoffrey James	1894–1982	University of Adelaide
<i>Academics</i>		
Corbin, Horace Hugh	1879–1950	Oxford University
Jolly, Norman William	1882–1954	Oxford University
<i>Consultants</i>		
Stoate, Theodore Norman	1895–1979	University of Adelaide
Swain, Edward Harold	1883–1970	NSW cadet

As the State’s first Rhodes’ scholar and the first Australian to qualify in a university forestry course, Jolly was a critical figure. His Oxford course under the formidable Professor William Schlich had fitted him for the Indian Forest Service, but he served there for less than two years before he returned to Australia. He tried his hand at teaching until Gill snapped him up in 1910 as the Instructor in Forestry. He only lasted for a year until Queensland made him its Director of Forests. Luckily, Hugh Corbin, an Englishman with a forestry degree from Edinburgh University and imperial experience was available. The University of Adelaide made forestry a BSc course and appointed Corbin to run it (until 1925 when it was superseded by the Commonwealth’s Australian Forestry School). The limitations on its enrolments, mentioned earlier were so severe that in its fifteen-year existence, the course graduated only about eighteen foresters. However, with the fifty-two trained in Creswick over the same period, they constituted the new cadre of formally trained

foresters. Seven of the Adelaide graduates became heads of forest services and others took leading positions. Collectively their careers spanned the period that saw two world wars, the depression and the development boom of the 1950s and 1960s. Their prominence made them subjects for biographical entries and obituaries.

Fourteen of the Adelaide graduates have entries in the National Centre of Biography's collections. Only Sorby Adams, Brian Bednall, Alfred Pinches and Geoffrey Rodger worked in South Australia for any significant part of their lives. Most of the others were sponsored by other states that then employed them. Baldur Byles and Alfred Shedley worked in South Australia too briefly to include. Harold Swain, who conducted a major appraisal of the plantations in 1933, and Norman Stoate, who investigated soil deficiencies in 1939-40, are included.

The dominant influence that shaped the lives of the Adelaide students was—like almost all Australian foresters until the early 1970s—they were virtually 'owned' by the Department: it selected them, paid for their scholarships, monitored their progress, placed them in forest work during vacations, and employed them, most under some form of bond, for all or the major part of their careers. Bednall and Pinches made their whole careers in the Woods and Forests Department, and it was only after he had served for twenty-one years that Adams left to work for an adjacent plantation development company. Rodger was an exception as he soon left for New South Wales and the Commonwealth forest services, only to return in 1935 as the Conservator.

We can also see the start of the strand of postgraduate education in a scheme that allowed WWI servicemen to study in Britain before they returned to Australia and were demobilised. Rodger widened his experience by an attachment in a British forest organisation, and Pinches studied in Oxford University. Did they see it as the chance of a lifetime, a dedication to forestry, a way to fill in time before they sailed, or a path to find normality after their war experiences? Our sources are silent on such questions.

The first Canberra cadre

After many years of arguing between the states, Charles Lane Poole (1885–1970) persuaded the Commonwealth to establish the Australian Forestry School in 1926, roughly on the model of the elite French forestry school. With heady optimism he planned to graduate fifteen students a year, but demanded that they complete two years of science before they enrolled. Although the Commonwealth paid for their forestry tuition, the number who arrived depended on how many each state would fund for four years, including their travel and subsistence in Canberra. The depression of the 1930s, inter-governmental difficulties and fractious personal relationships meant that only half the planned number arrived, and with none in 1936; the School barely survived (Carron 2000, Dargavel 2008). Jolly was the first

Principal, but in a reprise of his previous form, he left after a year. This time it was Lane Poole (1885–1970) who took over until he retired in 1944. During this difficult period, South Australia sent nineteen students of whom we have entries for seven.

Table 3: First Canberra cadre

	Life span	Training
Bateman, Wilfred Rhodes Bill	1907–1985	Australian Forestry School
Boomsma, Clifford David	1915–2004	Australian Forestry School
Fielding, John Mervyn Jack	1910–1995	Australian Forestry School
Healy, Vincent Michael Vin	1916–2003	Australian Forestry School
Kay, Sylvius Clarence	1915–1948	Australian Forestry School
Thomas, Jack	1910–2003	Australian Forestry School
Woods, Richard Vynne Dick	1923–2004	Australian Forestry School
<i>Incomer</i>		
Hall, Norman	1906–2005	University of Auckland

We can glimpse something of their student lives from the school’s archives (Australian National University Archives, n.d.) There were so few enrolled each year that in seven of the years there were less than ten students from both years there; they couldn’t field a cricket team without the staff, let alone a football team. As in similar institutions, sport was a part of student life, but in the Australian Forestry School it was pushed by Lane Poole in order to equip the students for a physically demanding life in the forest. Their prowess in tennis, athletics, swimming, cricket, and when possible football was recorded; silver cups were presented at end of year ceremonies, and the winners named in annual reports. They were certainly under the Principal’s eye and had to follow the dress code of sports coats and ties in class, and suits for functions. Apart from a few married students, they lived together in the school’s accommodation, they studied the same curriculum and they went on the same practical sessions and camps in the forests. It all made for a strong *esprit de corps* within their small community at Westridge (now Yarralumla), then separated from the rest of Canberra by grassy paddocks. Nevertheless, they overcame the distance enough to hold annual balls that were a feature of Canberra’s social calendar, but as Harry Luke (1909–2000), a New South Wales student was to recall:

In the Canberra of that day it was important that our partners were carefully vetted and selected from the appropriate strata of Canberra society. Attendance by the wives of lecturers seemed desirable to maintain propriety and restrict the use of [accommodation] cubicles for personalised entertainment (Luke 2000).

Returning to their home states during the long summer vacations, the students were allowed two weeks leave at Christmas before being sent out to experience work in the forests. Once they had been awarded the school’s Diploma in Forestry, they could graduate with a BSc from their state university and start their careers.

Boomsma, Healy, Kay, Thomas and Woods made their whole careers in the Woods and Forests Department, Thomas rising to be the Conservator in 1969, but Kay's life was cut short when his vehicle overturned. Their lives were punctuated by moving to different forests, usually when they were promoted. Healy for example worked at Mt Burr, Murtho during the war, Penola and Mt Gambier, before ending his career at the head office in Adelaide. They lived with their families in the often isolated forest settlements in the houses provided by the Department, but in Adelaide had to find their own. In contrast to their steady careers, Bateman left after a decade to become the Northern Territory's Forestry Officer and later the Assistant Director of ACT Forests.

Although the Australian Forestry School could teach how forests should be managed to sustain their yield, it could not demonstrate it; no Australian forest had been managed long enough. The forest enthusiast and philanthropist, Russell Grimwade (1879–1955) funded a fellowship to allow practising Australian foresters to study in the new Imperial Forestry Institute in Oxford for a year and tour the European forests. Stoate was the first to go 1931; Thomas and Woods followed later. The scheme was what we would now call professional development and awarded a diploma.

The Commonwealth started to fund specific training for research in 1928, but needed state approval to undertake field work. Only South Australia would agree, and a co-operative research station was started at Mt Burr in 1938 with Jack Fielding being recruited from the Queensland forest service as the first officer in charge. Not surprisingly, his research was directed to radiata pine. He started to investigate how better trees might be bred. The war interrupted his work, but afterwards, working from Canberra he not only pioneered breeding the species, but concurrently improved his qualifications with a fellowship in California, an MSc from the University of Melbourne and a DSc from the University of Queensland. In this he followed a similar pattern to Jacobs who studied in Oxford, Saxony and Yale. Fielding was the first in our collection to make a life as a full-time research scientist. For others, research could only be a part of their lives. Cliff Boomsma spent the first six years of his career in the Penola and Mt Burr plantations, before being moved to Adelaide to manage plantations in the Fleurieu Peninsula, and his passion for the indigenous eucalypts flourished. A master's degree in plant ecology and a string of publications followed. Norman Hall worked on resource assessment for the Woods and Forests Department and the Commonwealth, lectured in forest engineering and wood use, and only moved into research by compiling the authoritative *Forest Trees of Australia* and other books. Dick Woods (1923–2004) worked his way up the Woods and Forests Department to become the District Forester at Mt Gambier where he had the urgent problem of why the second rotation of trees was not growing as fast as the ones they replaced. He had been interested in fertilisation and started a long series of formal experiments to test his

ideas and eventually solved the problem in a way that was ‘twenty-five years ahead of his time’. Notably, he never held a position in a research institution.

The post-war Canberra cadre

The drive for post-war reconstruction and national development, the relative economic prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s, and the keen demands for wood pressed Australian forestry to expand and to diversify. In South Australia, new mills were built, the rate of establishing new plantations was increased, the older ones were thinned and mature ones felled. For all this, more foresters were needed; some were trained in the Australian Forestry School; others (like the author) were recruited from overseas. Jacobs took over from Lane Poole and saw the School through its post-war expansion during which it trained a further nineteen South Australian students of whom we have eight in the collection (Table 4). The School closed when the Australian National University opened its Department of Forestry in 1965. Only one of its students from South Australia, John Fabian (1945?–1978) who died prematurely in a road accident, is recorded in the collection.

Of the overseas recruits, two came from Britain, one from the USA and one Vince Hervert (1927–2008) came as a refugee from Czechoslovakia. Alex Hedley, a graduate of the Victorian School of Forestry is included in Table 4 because he worked as sawmilling controller for South Australian Perpetual Forests, 1938–1942.

Table 4: The post-war Canberra cadre

	Life Span	Training
Edgerley, Mark	1923–1988	Australian Forestry School
Fabian, John David	1946–1978	Australian National University
Keeves, Andrew	1927–2001	Australian Forestry School
Moore, Brian	1926–1960	Australian Forestry School
Smith, John Edward Nayler	1937–2011	Australian Forestry School
South, Peter Moncrief	1933–2000	Australian Forestry School
Vear, Kenneth William	1927–2007	Australian Forestry School
White, Anthony Hopper	1914–1997	Australian Forestry School
<i>Incomers</i>		
Bourke, Peter Michael	1944–1996	Oregon State University
Hare, John Forsyth Jack	1922–2010	University of Wales Bangor
Hedley, Alexander Joseph Alex	1908–2000	Victorian School of Forestry
Hervert, Vincent	1927–2008	Trutnov Technical School of Forestry, Czech Republic
Pearson, John Woolger	1928–1983	University of Wales Bangor

Six of the foresters in Table 4 followed their careers entirely within the Woods and Forests Department. Fabian and Moore died in their thirties, but Jack Hare, Andy Keeves, Ken Vear and Tony White had conventional careers of advancement until they retired. Keeves' life exemplifies the trend to specialisation as he spent his career dealing with inventory and long-term planning. Four of the foresters worked for the Department for only part of their careers. Mark Edgerley worked for it for eleven years before leaving to work in NSW and the ACT. Peter South spent two years on forest assessment in Tasmania after graduation, before returning and being attached to management consultants engaged on work studies in the Department's sawmills. He followed Edgerley to NSW, only to return a decade later as manager of the Department's Commercial Division and later as its Director.

Edgerley and South's lives show a significant departure from the pattern of earlier foresters, like Perrin and Brown, who left South Australia but stayed in public services. Edgerley and South left for the Heron's Creek Timber Mills, although both of them later returned to leading public service positions. The extensive plantations established by private investment scheme companies also needed foresters. Sorby Adams, mentioned earlier left the Department to work for South Australian Perpetual Forests and Peter Bourke made his whole career with them.

The type of forester who had founded South Australia's forestry had no place there in the 1950s. Lane Poole and probably Jolly had insisted that only people with forestry degrees or equivalents should be recognised as fully trained foresters. When Vince Hervert arrived as a refugee, his four years in the Trutnov technical forestry school was not recognised. After two years in South Australia he left for the NSW where there was no bar to him eventually becoming recognised as a 'professional forester' and building a successful career. Clearly, who is called a 'forester' is contingent on time and place.

Reflection

The records we have for these forty men note things about them as foresters—their training, appointments, activities and so forth—that enable some collective traits and trends to be seen. For example, the men who initiated South Australian forestry were imbued with the ideas of arboriculture on the landed estates of Europe, but the men who implemented it were trained on the job, much of it by self-education and the hard experience of trial and error. Although degree-level science courses in forestry were started in Adelaide and Canberra, very few South Australians attended them until after WWII when a degree became required for appointment.

Although most Australian foresters probably spent their whole careers in the same public service, fifteen of the forty considered in this paper worked in more than

one. I speculate that this seemingly disproportionate number is because they were more interesting to their biographers than their colleagues were. Nine of the forty also worked in private companies for part of their careers and one for all of his. Again I speculate that this apparently disproportionate number is due to the difference of their careers from the norm.

The limitations of the records prevent any traits to be seen that distinguish foresters from the general population. In the manner of obituaries, the surviving families are mentioned in twenty three of the entries; one had no next of kin. Some records note involvement in sport or local organisations, like the racing club, Rostrum and the RSL, and some note membership of the Masons and involvement in the Catholic Church. Worthy personal attributes are mentioned in half of the records. In the earliest period they refer to moral attributes like 'fidelity to duty' and 'an upright life', whereas later they refer more to interpersonal relations like 'reserved', 'gentle and good-humoured' or 'support to others in time of need'. Idiosyncratic or humorous anecdotes appear in a few of the more recent entries. Boomsma 'had a strange relationship with cars... like Toad of Toad Hall... he tore around the countryside and ran into the ditch'. Healy eschewed a note book in favour of writing on cigarette packets, and Bednall's 'larger than life' activities meant that, 'as a connoisseur of whisky and an accomplished pianist, organist and choirmaster, records of his exploits exist in obscure bars and churches throughout Australia and parts of the world'. Rather than obscure bars, a search in archives and oral histories might reveal sources of information not considered in this paper, and research on the lives of foresters in other states and territories may enable the lives of South Australian foresters to be seen in a comparative context.

Acknowledgements

The work reported in this paper is part of a joint project between the National Centre for Biography at the Australian National University, the Australian Forest History Society and the Institute of Foresters of Australia that was conducted by Geoff Dean (Institute of Foresters of Australia), Christine Fernon (National Centre for Biography), and the author. The enthusiasm of the Centre's Director, Professor Melanie Nolan inspired the project.

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