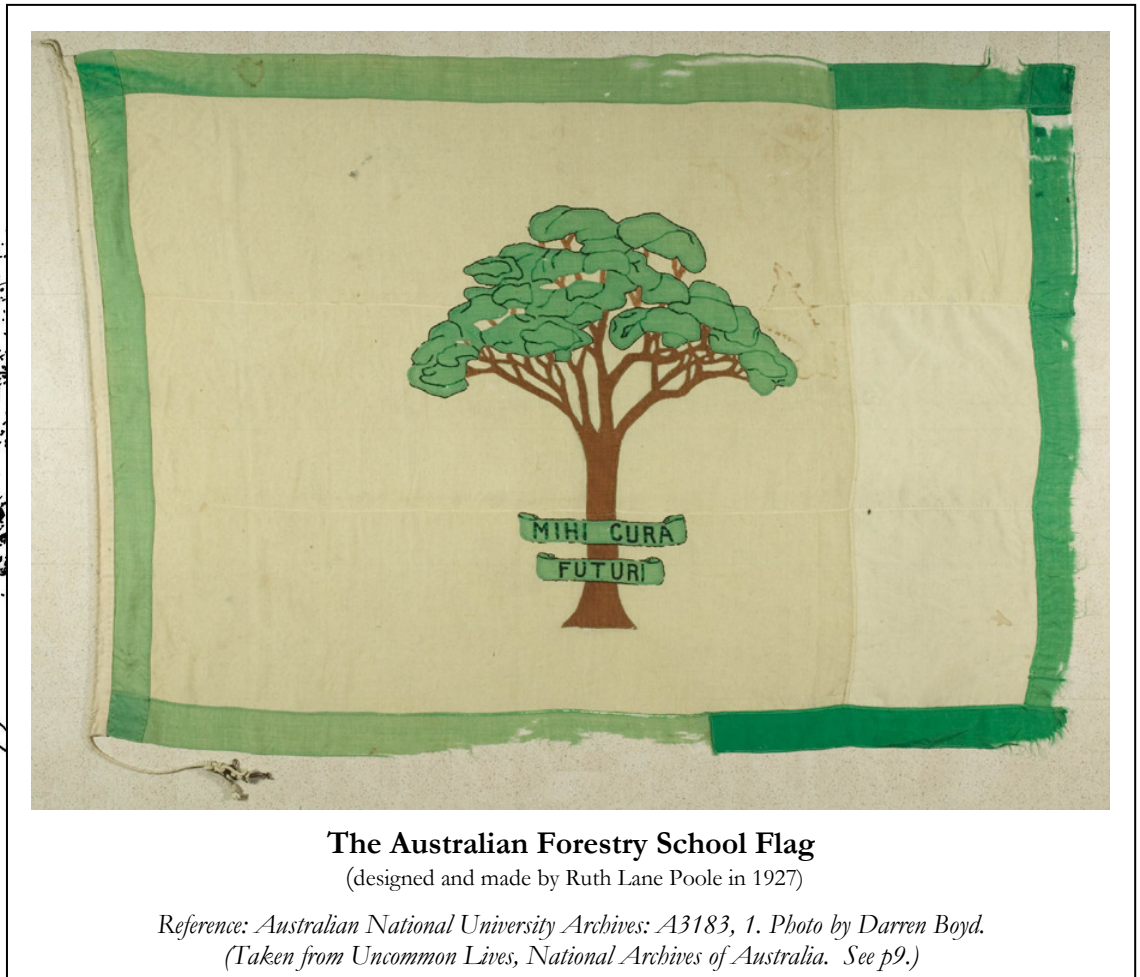


AUSTRALIAN
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"... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments."



The Australian Forestry School Flag

(designed and made by Ruth Lane Poole in 1927)

*Reference: Australian National University Archives: A3183, 1. Photo by Darren Boyd.
(Taken from Uncommon Lives, National Archives of Australia. See p9.)*

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REPORT OF THE 2008 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

from Kevin Frawley

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held in Canberra on 25th November 2008. The following committee members were elected for 2008-09:

President	Brett Stubbs
Vice-President	Jane Lennon
Secretary	Kevin Frawley
Treasurer	Fintán Ó Laighin
Committee	Paul Star, Stephen Legg, Peter Davies, Sue Feary and Tessa Bird

The meeting co-opted John Dargavel to be an advisor to the AFHS in the ACT.

Juliana Lazzari was re-appointed Public Officer. The Public Officer must be an ACT resident as the society is incorporated in the ACT.

Stephen Bailey acts as honorary auditor for the society, which saves a substantial sum compared with paying an accounting firm. In recognition of this, a small honorarium is given to Stephen. The meeting resolved that the Treasurer approach Stephen to be the auditor for 2008-09.

President's Report

The President, Brett Stubbs, circulated a written report and spoke to the report. (*Note: The full report is included after Kevin Frawley's summary.*) Particular reference was made to the following:

- *New Zealand conference 2007:* A selection of papers has been published in a special edition of *Environment and History*.
- *Lismore conference June 2010:* Organisation is underway for the 8th AFHS conference. The steering committee is Brett Stubbs, Jane Lennon, John Taylor and Alison Specht.
- *Newsletter publication:* The President thanked Sue Feary for her effort in co-ordinating and producing newsletters and reiterated her request for volunteers to produce editions of the newsletter.
- *Society website:* The President acknowledged the work of Michael Goasdoue in maintaining the site and presented usage data.
- *20th anniversary celebrations:* The President referred to the symposium at the Australian National University (ANU) in May 2008 and the special 50th edition of the newsletter.
- *Administration:* The President thanked those involved with the administration of the society.

The following matters arose in discussion of the President's report:

- a) *New Zealand conference 2007:* Some papers have been published in *Environment and History*, but it was questioned whether the other conference papers could be placed on the AFHS website (in pdf format). Brett Stubbs will follow this up.

- b) Related to the above, there was the suggestion of putting all the proceedings of the previous conferences on the website. Some of the proceedings are now out of print, and this would make the papers available as well as being a complete electronic record. Brett Stubbs is to follow up to ascertain cost. When some figures are available, this will be taken to the AFHS committee.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the audited financial accounts for the 2007-08 financial year. The following matters arose in discussion of the financial report:

- a) The Society had a budget surplus buoyed by returns from the 2007 conference. The Treasurer specifically acknowledged this in his report and the meeting recorded a Vote of Thanks to the New Zealand conference organisers.
- b) Production of another Occasional Paper could be undertaken (John Dargavel offered to edit).
- c) There was the possibility of funding some projects. It was noted, however, that the proposal to place the past conference proceedings on the society's website would be likely to use up a proportion of the funds.
- d) The Treasurer also thanked and acknowledged Stephen Bailey for agreeing to be the society's auditor on a voluntary basis.

The Treasurer is to follow up an outstanding ACT Heritage Grant for the preparation of a management plan for Blundells Flat in the ACT. This project is overdue and the Society still holds funds for the project.

The current annual subscription of \$25 (Australia) / \$15 student / A\$30 (overseas) is to be maintained.

Other Business

(a) Update on newsletter publication

Sue Feary is to continue the editor's role, but the need for guest editors remains.

(b) 2010 AFHS conference

Given the location of the next conference (Lismore 2010) the Australian Furniture History Society could be interested and there was the possibility of a joint session. John Dargavel suggested that the AFHS invite collaboration at the conference. Brett Stubbs agreed to make contact.





AGM - PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30TH JUNE 2008

from Brett Stubbs

The Society's activities during the financial year 2007-08 mainly concerned: (i) the finalisation of matters associated with the last conference in 2007; (ii) planning for the next conference in 2010; (iii) the regular activity of newsletter publication; (iv) the continued development and maintenance of the Society's website; (v) the celebration of the Society's twentieth anniversary; and (vi) general administration.

1. New Zealand Conference, Christchurch, 29th January-2nd February 2007

The Trans-Tasman Forest History Conference, the society's seventh conference, was held in New Zealand from 29th January to 2nd February 2007. As I mentioned in my last annual report, arrangements were made by the conference organising committee with the publishers of *Environment and History* for a selection of papers from the conference to be published as a special edition of that journal. The special edition appeared in November 2008. Much activity within the Society during the year under review was concerned with the preparation of seven articles for this publication. On behalf of the editorial committee which oversaw the process (Paul Star, Mike Roche and myself) I offer my special thanks to the numerous individuals who gave their services as referees, and to the editor and publishers of *Environment and History* who supported the idea.

2. Lismore Conference, June 2010

The organising committee for the eighth AFHS conference (Jane Lennon, John Taylor, Alison Specht, and myself) has continued to make preliminary arrangements for this event, to be held in Lismore, northern NSW, in 2010. Dates for the event have been set, and these were published in the Society's September newsletter, and simultaneously on the Society's website. The dates are Monday 7th to Friday 11th June 2010, followed by a study tour in north-eastern NSW and south-eastern Queensland.

3. Newsletter Publication

The system of having Guest Editors prepare newsletters, under the overall guidance and co-ordination of a "Series Editor", has been continued. Sue Feary again undertook the co-ordinating role. Three newsletters were published during the financial year (September 2007 - Kim Wells; January 2008 - Sue Feary; and June 2008 - Fintán Ó Laighin and Juliana Lazzari). I note that as well as undertaking the co-ordinating role, Sue Feary also compiled the January 2008 newsletter, an indication that the Guest Editor system is not working as well as it might. I therefore use this occasion to reiterate Sue's regular plea for volunteers to compile future newsletters.

I also take this opportunity to re-thank all those members who have compiled newsletters since the Guest Editor system was implemented in 2002. Until the end of the financial year under review, eighteen newsletters had been produced under this system. The Guest Editors have been: Peter Davies (3), Fintán Ó Laighin (3, including one in partnership), Brett Stubbs (2), Stephen Legg, Sybil Jack, Denise Gaughwin, Paul Star, Peter Evans, John Dargavel, John Taylor, Mike Roche, Kim Wells, Juliana Lazzari, and Sue Feary (in addition to her supervisory responsibility).

4. Society Website

The Society's website (www.foresthistory.org.au) was established and became active in June 2006 to facilitate organisation of the Christchurch conference. It will serve a similar function for the next conference, but its role has also become much wider. For example, it is now the repository for digital copies of all of the Society's newsletters, and new editions are uploaded to the site as they are published. I acknowledge the continued work of our webmaster, Michael Goasdoué, in maintaining the site. Usage of the website has increased steadily and very satisfactorily since June 2006. Of particular interest is the fact that about 30 percent of activity on the site during October 2008, a typical month, was by visitors from Australia, and a considerably greater 55 percent originated in the United States of America.

5. Twentieth Anniversary Celebrations

In May 2008, a symposium on forest and environmental history was convened to celebrate the Society's twentieth anniversary, and more specifically to celebrate twenty years of collaboration between the Society and the ANU's Department of Forestry and its successors. A detailed report of this event was published in our June newsletter. Also in the name of celebration, our 50th newsletter was a special edition, compiled by Sue Feary, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Society. This appeared after the end of the financial year, in September 2008, and included articles about the origins of the Society, written by founding members. Thanks are extended to all those who contributed to this special issue.

6. Administration

It will be clear from the foregoing that the successful continuation of the Society is due to the good work of many people. Some particular contributions have already been acknowledged, but in addition it must be recognised that much of the less glamorous general administration of the Society, is undertaken by Treasurer, Fintán Ó Laighin, and Secretary, Kevin Frawley. Their efforts, in their respective official roles, are also greatly valued.



THE OTWAYS, RABBIT PROOF FENCES, COLAC SAWMILLS AND "FORESTRY" AT BEECH FOREST

from Norm Houghton

Norm Houghton is a forest historian who has written extensively on the forests and timber industry of Victoria, in particular Gippsland and the Otways. The National Library of Australia has a recording of an interview with Norm conducted by Gregg Borschmann in January 1994 as part of the People's Forest Oral History Project. In the interview he:

"..... speaks of returning to Colac (southern Victoria) in 1972, where he grew up as a child; graduating in history from Monash University; his interest in railways and forests, particularly Victoria's Otway Ranges, being nurtured from an early age; how his interest in documenting why a railway had spurred him on to take the job of forest historian; writing a number of successful local history books with the common thread of forests and railways. Houghton speaks of how he documented and mapped more than 300 sawmills & 160 kilometres of timber tramlines built in the area since the 1850s of which none are operating today; to verify the documentary & oral evidence he spent every Sunday for 4 years in the bush; his conclusions, based on his field work experience, that there had been no real appreciation of the heritage value of forests by bulldozer drivers and current foresters, much of the archaeological remains of our non-Aboriginal forest culture had been destroyed; that the current generation of forest managers at the district level had very little knowledge of the history of their resource. He felt it would be crucial for them to gain the relevant knowledge and experience from the older generation of foresters when making policy decisions." (Summary from NLA catalogue,

[http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1438149?lookfor=author:Houghton,%20Norm,%201948-"](http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1438149?lookfor=author:Houghton,%20Norm,%201948-) &offset=2&max=9).

(As with all articles in the AFHS Newsletter, the views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Society.)

Otway Forest Clearings. The Otway Forest in its original form ran from near Wensleydale as far west as Timboon and took in around 500,000 ha (on an 1869 calculation). The government looked at this forest as simply Crown land that was potentially available for agriculture. No attempt was made to preserve the sawlog value until 1873 when the sawmilling and industrial lobby succeeded in having 78,000 ha set aside for forestry purposes. Strong pressure from the farming lobby in Geelong and Colac managed to reverse this in 1879.

The farmers then moved in unencumbered by forest reserves and over the next hundred years to 1990 managed to ringbark, burn, hack, slash and bulldoze 308,000 ha of the original 500,000 ha at an average yearly rate of more than 2600 ha. Despite this the nineteenth century sawmilling lobby persisted in its efforts to secure exclusive sawlog areas and managed from the 1890s to have some reservations made. These were mostly south and south east of Forrest and south of Mount Chapple at Wylangata.

However, the sawmill lobby's gains were small beer and they were fighting an uphill battle against government policy to settle forested land. The settlement lobby had

the numbers and this situation lasted until well into the twentieth century. Two instances stand out in this regard.

In the 1920s the Lands Department sought to acquire access to the Horden Vale forest with a view to turning it to farmlands despite there being scores of abandoned farming blocks in the West Otways. The Forests Commission refused to hand it over and the Forests Minister backed this up by declaring in 1930 that "*it would be a criminal shame and the creation of another forest graveyard to alienate an acre of the land sought*". The Lands Department was sent packing in this rare win. The Commission saw its mission to increase Otway forest reserves by "*reclotting with the timber of which it had been denuded*" and jealously guarded the thousands of hectares it had acquired from bankrupt and voluntary sale blocks.

The second instance was the Otway's last great clearing operation from 1956 to 1970 by the government agency responsible for forming the Heytesbury settlement centred on Simpson. 43,000 ha of forest vanished in this operation. Gellibrand sawmillers asked for the opportunity to cut through the forest ahead of the bulldozers dragging clearing chains and balls but were told it was none of their affair and the trees were pulled over, piled into windrows and burnt.

Throughout, there were concerns expressed publicly by Colac leaders about the denudation of the Otways for farming. In 1904 an observer mentioned that uncontrolled clearing could cause the Gellibrand and Barwon Rivers to dry up as had occurred in similar circumstances in Spain and Russia (where the Volga flows to the Caspian Sea were diminishing). The Colac Shire Valuer of many years and one intimately familiar with the Otways, George Sydenham, put the view in 1929 that nature intended the Otways to be for timber supplies and not for farming. He went on to say that the forest was more valuable than a gold mine or a coal seam because it reproduces itself every 25 years.

Policy underwent a change as time went on and the government that had surrendered its forest resources to farmers in the nineteenth century slowly reversed the trend in the twentieth. The need for water supply schemes for Colac, Camperdown, Terang, Warnambool and, eventually, Geelong led to the expulsion of farmers from the heads of Arkins Creek, the Gellibrand River and the West Barwon River in the period 1910 to 1960. Reforestation of these former farmlands was a patchy affair, with some being replanted and others becoming blackberry jungles. The old State Rivers and Water Supply Commission was the least inclined to plant trees whereas the Colac and Geelong water supply authorities tended to take a greener approach.

During the 1930s the Forests Commission acquired numerous farms, most of them ailing, in the Aire Valley at Beech Forest and planted several thousand hectares of softwoods. The softwood revolution continued at an expanding rate by the Commission and private interests through to the 1980s. A crisis in the dairy industry in the 1970s saw many farms sold to pine companies and



hundreds of hectares of cleared land was returned to tree cover. By the early 1980s there were 6000 ha of pines in the Otways and more plantings in subsequent times.

The net result of these reforestation measures was that by 1990 there were 192,000 ha of forested land in the Otways. Forested land in public ownership totalled 156,000 ha and of this some 93,000 ha, or 60 percent, was classed as a sawlog resource.

So the historical record shows that from nil forests reserves in 1872 the total of forested public land sat at 156,000 ha in 1990 which represents an average annual accretion rate of 1300 ha or 50 percent of the rate at which farmers were clearing. State forests in the Otways were finally locked up with the declaration in 2005 of the Great Otway National Park of 102,000 ha. For various reasons hardwood logging was banned on public land in the Otways from mid-2008.

It is ironic that State Foresters and local hardwood sawmillers have been excluded from a renewable resource that they created. In the meantime private resource companies have used their lands for growing soft and hardwoods to take up the foregone supplies from public lands, thereby ensuring the Otways continues to be a renewable tree nursery into the future.

Rustless Rabbit Proof Fences. At the height of the rabbit plague in the late nineteenth century a standard means of control was the rabbit proof fence made of wire netting buried into the ground to prevent the rabbits burrowing under. Wire netting was fine on most soils but to the west of Colac (in Victoria's Western District) in the marshy bogs at Pirron Yallock, Swan Marsh and Carpendeit and to the east at Murroon the netting rusted quickly and could not be used. The solution adopted in these parts was an all timber fence with slabs or palings sunk into the ground from the post and rail frame. The bigger runs such as Tirrengower and Corangamite whose outer boundaries ran to over 35 kms used enormous quantities of timber. The rabbit proof fence on Corangamite, for instance, consumed 14,080 posts, 28,160 rails and 197,000 slabs. The timber fences had a useful life of 40 years. One of the more thoughtful fence builders of the day later ruminated in the pages of the local press that a tree takes 100 years to grow and the wood is used for fencing that lasts less than half that time. He concluded that it does not make sense to do this.

Colac Sawmills. The Otway Forest to the south of Colac has supported over 320 sawmills since the 1840s. The first commercial sawmilling centre was Apollo Bay when it flourished from 1849 to the early 1860s, shipping large quantities of timber for construction works in Melbourne. The northern slopes of the forest on the Colac side were tackled from the 1850s by small time operators who provided supply to a limited local market and whose efforts were restricted by capital and the costs of cartage. There were no made roads in those days so it was uneconomic to cart for very long distances. These sawmills were established at Irrewillipe, Barongarook, Gerangamete and Deans Marsh.

It was not until the arrival of the railways from 1877 and branch line extensions to Forrest and Beech Forest in 1891 and 1902 respectively that sawmilling could be established on a permanent and economic basis. Much of the Otways had been alienated from the Crown for farming purposes, apart from an area south east of Forrest so the sawmillers originally worked on private blocks. Over succeeding decades the Forests Commission resumed scores of abandoned bush blocks and extended the State Forests so that Otway tree cover could become permanent.

Big mills were established at Barwon Downs and Forrest and these were deep in the bush and connected to the railway by timber tramways worked by horses and steam locomotives. Many mills were established along the Beech Forest railway but these tended to be smaller than the Forrest ones as they milled private blocks and had to move frequently. Tramways linked the mills with the railway at most of the stations from Barongarook to the terminus at Crowes and these were worked by horses for the most part, but four mills had tramway tractors. Mills at Irrewillipe, Barongarook East, Tanybryn and Benwerrin never had the advantage of a railway so these mills used road cartage.

The largest mill to operate in the Otways was a short lived affair at Wye River from 1919 to 1923, on 28 cubic metres per day. The more stable big mills were Knott's No. 1 at Ferguson, Henry No. 1 and Sanderson's in the West Barwon valley south of Forrest, all at 24 cubic metres per day. Some elaborate and expensive plants were erected at Apollo Bay from 1884 to 1908 but proved to be failures as the timber was "white anted" and "over mature".

The average medium mill size had a capacity of around 12 to 16 cubic metres per day. Steam engines worked the saws and a medium size mill employed around 10 to 15 hands in the mill, on the tramways and falling and snigging logs.

The outputs were primarily rough cut timbers for the housing and construction industries and case timbers for food packaging (butter, cheese and tallow). There was limited value adding at bush mills, with the only example being a weatherboard planing mill at Gellibrand in the 1920s. However Colac timber merchants value added in their yards prior to sale and a seasoning and planing/moulding plant was established by Hayden Bros at Barwon Downs in the 1930s for flooring, window and door frames and furniture woods. As well, much Otway rough cut was directed to seasoning plants in Geelong run by Henry, Western District Timber Co. and Fagg.

There were few "foreign" mills in the Otways in that most were funded by local and Geelong capital. A few exceptions were the stable of seven mills at Beech Forest owned by Melbourne timber broker GW Knott from 1908 to 1927, several mills at Crowes, Carlisle River and Olangolah run by the Angliss meat works (for tallow barrel timbers) and the mills at Lorne, Turtons and Forrest owned by John Sharp & Sons, 1908 to 1971.



After the Second World War there was temporary boom in sawmilling to cater for post war reconstruction. Gellibrand and Forrest were made sawmilling centres and the mills came out of the bush and settled at these localities. Gellibrand had ten mills, Forrest three and Beech Forest one. There was no labour supply at Gellibrand so most of the mill workers came from the surrounding district and from Colac by daily commuting. The school busses running out empty to pick up students carried much of this labour force, others rode in log trucks. By the early 1970s all of the Gellibrand mills had closed when mill companies were rationalised and the survivors began investing in new value adding plants in Colac or Birregurra. The logs were then trucked from the bush to Colac.

Prior to this period Colac had not been much of a sawmilling centre. Traditional practice was to mill at the log supply as it was easier and cheaper to cart sawn timber than logs, given the usual rule of thumb that 50 percent of round log volume was convertible to sawn and the rest turned to sawdust and misshaped off-cuts.

The first sawmill in Colac was set up in 1851 by Thomas Hill at Gambletown on the east bank of Barongarook Creek (somewhere near, and north of, the Wilson Street crossing). It operated until around 1859 when Hill left town. New mills at Barongarook, then Irrewillipe, commenced shortly after to supply Colac.

Peters Hardware opened in Colac in 1887 in Murray Street and installed sawing equipment in its timber yard, mainly for finishing semi sawn materials rather than converting round logs. The firm offered all manner of planed and moulded timber sections and, in time, maintained a stock as high as 1,000,000 super feet (4530 cubic metres). Branch stores were opened in Camperdown, Cobden, Lismore and Mortlake. The firm employed a team of qualified builders and did many construction jobs in Colac and surrounds. In 1953 the firm built a full size sawmill in Hearn Street to supply its hardwood needs and this met its needs until the company ceased trading in 1959. The timber yard at the rear of its Murray Street premises was redeveloped in 1963 as the Colac Ten Pin Bowling Centre.

As soon as the Beech Forest railway opened in 1902 the Faroe & Jensen company installed a mill in the railway yard to process logs from Barongarook. The business did not last long and went broke within a year or two.

Colac Timber Supplies (McGregor) established a timber yard and joinery works in Murray Street West in 1919, near the Armstrong Street corner. The hardwood was mostly sourced from the Otways where McGregors ran bush mills and they did this until 1943 when the firm erected a full size mill plant in Murray Street west near Parker Motors. This was a large concern on a big block and worked to 1949 when it caught fire and burnt to the ground, ten years to the day when McGregor's Gerangamete mill was destroyed by the Black Friday fires. Parr & Spencer later bought the site for its motor showroom.

Various Colac building companies such as Searle & Wallace and McBride, had saw and joinery plants in their yards to supply their contracts.

Don Kincaid put in a mill at the Queen Street railway crossing on the former Showgrounds paddock in 1942. Kincaid moved the mill to the Hearn Street corner in 1948 and it worked there to 1969. Other sawmilling companies to come into town from 1949 to 1955 were HP Sawmilling Co. and Strahan & Davies (later Calco) in Bruce Street, Amedroz at Elliminyt, Kings (later Spragues) and Facey, both near the brickworks at Tulloh. A little further out on the Gellibrand Road was the last of the hardwood mills to be set up in 1976, this one by Lloyd Brunt.

In 1955 the first of the new generation value adding timber plants was built in Bruce Street by Associated Kiln Driers (AKD), a consortium of seven local sawmillers comprising Messrs Hayden Bros, Bennett, Chamberlain, Ingles, Squires, Moore and Colless. The company was specifically formed to carry out kiln drying and moulding in Colac, to avoid local hardwood timbers being sent to Geelong and Melbourne for value adding. Milled timbers from the partners' plants at Gellibrand, Barwon Downs, Forrest and Deans Marsh were carted to Colac and air dried for six months. At the end of this period they were fed into a reconditioning chamber to return the moisture, placed in the kiln for drying over a few days, and then taken out for sawing, planing and moulding in the machine shop. The steam boiler for the kiln was fed by waste wood and off-cuts. The plant employed around 20 men and the annual output was initially around 6000 cubic metres. A sawmill was later added to process round logs.

When the Forests Commission's Aire Valley pine plantations at Beech Forest reached maturity in the 1960s, AKD won a tender to buy and process these logs and then entered into softwoods. In 1970 the company erected a new plant on the other side of the road specifically to handle Beech Forest softwoods. This plant had an initial capacity of 14,000 cubic metres annually. In time hardwood was dropped and all efforts directed at softwoods as the wave of the future.

AKD then went from strength to strength, developing markets in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane for a variety of planed, moulded and shaped products. Massive investment in computerisation of process and mechanical handling allowed output to be raised and unit costs kept down and all but eliminated human handling of logs and timber. Product lines included structural pine for house framing and truss manufacture, moulded pine for furniture, flooring, lining, dressed boards, pallets, treated pine for decking and fencing, pine bark and woodchips.

The plant was enlarged in 2005 with equipment to laminate timber and cut more detailed edges and further enhanced in 2006 with a timber preservation plant using the latest processes. An X-ray machine was installed in 2007 to detect and eliminate out of tolerance knots and other defects in finished boards.



Nothing is wasted. Sawdust and wood scraps are used to fire the kilns, the bark sold for mulch and compost and the short length docked sections from faulty boards fed into a finger jointing process to make long boards.

By 2008 the plant was processing 400,000 cubic metres annually in a streamlined process that saw a tree cut on Monday at Beech Forest, carted to Colac, debarked, cut into rough boards, graded and stacked, fed into the kiln, removed for further grading and fault picking, planed, stacked and wrapped into packs and roaded to a merchant's yard by the next Monday, all without one human hand touching it. In 2008 the company directly employed 200 staff in Colac plus 200 sub-contractors in carting, logging and other tasks and was using 2500 logs per day.

Another of the new generation plants was that of Victree, which established a processor east of Colac on the highway in 1968 to cut and air-dry Beech Forest softwoods. The plant was rebuilt in 1996 to maintain currency and was then employing 70 staff. The company fell into financial difficulties in 1999, was acquired by AKD to supplement its operations and currently operates under this banner.

The Calco company eventually supplemented its hardwood operations with softwood dealings when it opened a hardware outlet in Geelong in 1966 to market a range of pine building materials and products as well as green sawn and dried hardwood. Calco was, and remains, a partner in AKD and sources its softwood from this business. The company site in Bruce Street was further developed for hardwood milling, softwood product and a residual hardwood log dump for supply to paper and tissue makers.

New national markets developed for packaging such as pallets and vegetable boxes, using lower grade timbers. In 1976 CM Processors commenced in this line in temporary premises at the Showgrounds. The firm gradually developed, moved to Wallace Street for a while and, at the time of writing, operates from a state of art facility in Forest Street that employs 50 staff and has plant that can fabricate and paint over six pallets per minute. The firm supplies a national pallet hire company.

Other softwood processors to commence in the 1980s were the Shelton Timber Treatment Co., operating at the Riordan Quarry site at Colac East, and Flannagan at Barongarook.

In the hardwood sector, the Amedroz mill was taken over by Murnanes and relocated to the former CDC factory at Rossmoyne. Facey's closed in 1965 and King's in 1976. The hardwood millers operating into the 1980s were Calco, Murnane, Brunt, Bennett, Adams and Babington.

Lower grade and fire damaged hardwood timbers from the Otways have been used for various industrial applications and papermaking for decades. This trade was placed on a more systematic footing in the 1980s with the development of export markets for chipped timbers. Forest management plans were introduced by

State forestry agencies to allow for integrated logging, with sawlogs going to the mills and lower graded logs being taken to Geelong for chipping and export. Colac and Daylesford capital formed the Midway company in 1980 to handle this trade and in 1985 the first chipped timbers were exported. Soon after its foundation the Midway company became a wider consortium of various Victorian and NSW millers and branched into softwood chipping as well. At the time of writing Colac contractors and carters handle chip timbers from plantations and residue from milling and seasoning operations, although Otway timbers now form but a small segment of company business.

The conservation movement campaigned for many years against hardwood logging in the Otways claiming over-cutting, ecological damage and the industry's propensity to low value outputs as the basis. The timber industry was slow to respond and its rebuttal that it operated under regulation to Forests Commission sustained yield plans, tight codes of practice and it produced high value seasoned products went unheeded by politicians. The sawmillers used logic and fact, not emotion and sensationalism, and lost the argument. The hardwood plants then began closing one by one from the 1990s due to diminishing resource issues, partly on forest management grounds and partly to political action. The three mills at Forrest closed or merged from 1967 and a single mill run by Adams remained there to 2002 when it relocated to the closed Bennett plant at Birregurra.

In 2002 the State Government announced an end to Otway native hardwood logging from mid-2008. The remaining hardwood sawmillers were expelled from the bush over subsequent years and in Colac this resulted in the closure of the Calco hardwood plant. Adams and Murnane sourced hardwood from other areas and remain in business at the time of writing.

The major timber processors in Colac now operate on softwoods, of which there are adequate forward stands growing in the Otways, around Ballarat and at Rennick. These firms remain locally owned and managed.

The "Forestry" at Beech Forest: The management of the forests to the south of Colac was the responsibility of a Lands Department officer for much of the latter nineteenth century. For a brief period in the 1880s the Department of Agriculture had responsibility and appointed a Forester at Colac. The land settlement schemes of the 1880s alienated most of the West Otway lands, apart from some forest reserves at Wyelangta and Cape Otway, so there was only minimal need for official supervision.

This changed with the formation of the State Forests Department in 1908 when areas of permanent forest were defined around Beech Forest. In subsequent years the Department (later the Forests Commission) took steps to halt the further alienation of forested land for agriculture and worked to annex the bush for timber supply purposes. A District Office was established at Beech Forest and over the years it developed a large complement of staff and equipment to carry out its role. From the early 1920s a Forestry headquarters and



hardwood depot was built at the west end of Gardner Hill in and around Buchanan Street. Four dwellings for the District Forester and support staff were eventually provided here. A fire spotting tower was placed in the hardwood depot to allow all round observation from Beech Forest to Mount Cowley to Gellibrand to Crowes and to the coast.

The Forestry supervised hardwood logging in State reserves, branded and checked sawlogs, collected revenue from sawlogs, undertook silvicultural works and improvement thinnings and developed hardwood forest reserves from resumed farmlands. The latter had ample scope at Beech Forest owing to the high failure rate in agriculture and the willingness of farmers to sell to the Forestry.

In the 1930s local forestry suddenly expanded with the implementation of the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) softwood plan in the Aire Valley. Plantations were to be created here from abandoned and resumed farmlands as well as voluntarily offered blocks on the perimeter. A works office and depot for this project was established at the eastern end of Main Street and here was also constructed engineering infrastructure and a dwelling for the pine manager.

Many personnel were employed at this time to carry out various jobs. For example, in 1938 the Forestry staff establishment at Beech Forest comprised one forester, three foremen, one clerk, one cook, eight leading hands, 78 labourers, 26 casual labourers, 26 lad labourers and three experienced lad labourers. After the war the Forestry employed large permanent gangs on hardwood and softwood management. At any one time from the late 1940s to the 1960s there were 20 to 30 experienced personnel in each gang as plant and machinery operators. The usual tasks were clearing and road making using 15 or so bulldozers in each work unit plus graders, tip trucks, tankers and wheel tractors.

There were no roads into or through most forested areas under Forestry jurisdiction so they had to be constructed. Without roads there could be no timber harvesting and no follow up management of coupes. Main access roads were built to allow for the movement of logs and from these side roads and tracks were laid down for logging, fire breaks and fire fighting purposes. The larger sawmilling companies contributed as well and made roads and tracks on their own behalf with their own plants. Sawmills also contributed plant and personnel to fight bushfires when the need arose.

Other tasks involved in hardwood management were departmental logging, regeneration, fire prevention, fuel reduction burning, firebreak maintenance, dam building and rock crushing for road making materials. Softwood tasks were clearing, pruning, liberating (removing scrub from around young trees), fire prevention and firebreak maintenance. At most times the total complement in pine management was around 40 persons. The hardwood gangs were employed in the regeneration of both logged and degraded sites, the latter overrun with scrub, blackberries, weeds and non-commercial timbers.

By the late 1940s the FCV adopted a policy to remove from the Beech Forest district those sawmills using State Forest logs and concentrate them at Gellibrand. This shifted the management focus and in 1957 the District Office was moved to Gellibrand. The Beech Forest office then became an operational base for day to day activities, particularly for pines as the first large scale thinnings from the Aire Valley were about to commence. One Forest Officer was retained at Beech Forest to supervise logging and Forestry crews.

In time the pine output became greater than hardwood, the latter steadily diminishing as areas were cut out, particularly from the mid-1970s. Improvements in roads and log carrying vehicles plus reduction in sawmill numbers to a few major plants further moved the focus from Gellibrand to Colac. This trend resulted in a further reduction in Beech Forest based operations. The fire tower was demolished around 1975, the Forestry houses sold a little later and the plantations privatised from the 1980s. By this era the Forestry staff was trimmed to five permanents and a few casuals over summer and this complement was terminated in the early 2000s.

Some Forest Officers at Beech Forest have been Messrs Joe Firth, William Warren, J. Zimmer, McCrae, Eric Johnstone, Norm Donohue, Stuart Cameron, Ed Page, Andrew Beveridge, Jim Bates, David Harvey, Michael Clark, Ross Loveridge, Barry White and Andrew McLennan.

The District Forest Officers have included J. Brown, K. McKee, Alec Hedley, A. Tomey, R. Oldham, D. Beale, A. Leslie, T. Cleary, J. Fitzpatrick, T. Loughrey, Frank Smith, J. Barling, Bob Nigel, Ken Simpfendorfer, Russ Ritchie and Brian Williams.

SESQUICENTENNIAL OF RADIATA PINE IN NZ

Don Mead (via the New Zealand Institute of Forestry)

In 1859 the first radiata pine tree was planted at Mount Peel, Canterbury, by JBA Acland. This three-year-old seedling was purchased from Shepherd and Co., Darling nursery in Australia. When I last saw the tree it was still a healthy specimen and was about 50m tall. In the same year Acland also imported the first radiata pine seed into NZ. The forestry sector should celebrate these events. These small importations mark the beginning of the radiata pine plantation industry in New Zealand. A good way to do this would be to hold a symposium looking at how radiata pine became our premier plantation species and trace the changes that have occurred over this time. If the symposium were held in Canterbury, part of the symposium could include a field trip to Mount Peel, with the unveiling of a bronze plaque that marks the 150 years. Perhaps the Forest History Group could take a lead in organising a celebration. However the Institute, at the national and local level, should also be involved as should the Farm Forestry Association and other interested groups. I am sure others may have further ideas of how to mark this event. The important thing is to celebrate this milestone.



**AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY SCHOOL -
 MIHI CURA FUTURI**

from *Fintán Ó Laighin*

The cover of this edition features a photo of the flag of the Australian Forestry School which is thought to have been designed and made by Ruth Lane Poole in 1927. The photo is taken from John Dargavel's contribution to the "Uncommon Lives" project of the National Archives of Australia which was launched in November 2006.

The flag bears the Latin motto *Mibi cura futuri* and was placed over the door of the Forestry School in Canberra. John discusses the flag briefly in *The Zealous Conservator: A Life of Charles Lane Poole*, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. John reports that the motto was used by the school when it was based in Adelaide in 1926 and that it was devised by Charles Lane Poole and the first principal of the School, Norm Jolly.



Ruth's design for the flag was also used as the centrepiece of the logo for the Forestry and Timber Bureau (and perhaps its predecessor the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau). The logo includes the motto which

John translates as "I serve posterity" but which can also be rendered as "My care is for the future". Either translation is a particularly apt motto for a forestry school. In 1965 the school was reconstituted as the Department of Forestry at the Australian National University and the motto and the tree continued to be used (although possibly unofficially).



The motto isn't unique to the Australian Forestry School and the Forestry Bureau. It was also used by the former Saasveld Forestry College in George Town, South Africa (now part of the Forestry Department of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University). It is tempting to suggest a link with Charles Lane Poole

who was in South Africa from 1906 to 1910, but as Saasveld wasn't established till 1932, that trail perhaps leads nowhere. However, Saasveld has its origins in 1911 when a forestry college was established at Tokai near Cape Town, so maybe it isn't completely dead. 1911 is also the year when Adelaide University began teaching forestry. As Ray Specht wrote in the AFHS Newsletter (no. 41, August 2005) this was "a progenitor of the Australian Forestry School at Canberra. In fact, the Australian Forestry School began its life at the University of Adelaide in 1926 and operated there briefly until the new buildings in Canberra were completed in 1927." The aforementioned Norm Jolly was a graduate of Adelaide University, although ten years before the forestry course was established.

Regardless of whether or not there's a link between the colleges in Australia and South Africa, it's interesting that forestry institutions in two different parts of the world chanced upon the same motto.



On a separate note, *Mibi cura futuri* is also used by the Hunter College of the City University of New York which was established in the 1860s. The Hunter College website says that the phrase comes from Book XIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and has been the school's motto since its early days, and was proposed by its Vice-President of the time, Arthur Henry Dundon, who was also Hunter's Professor of English and Latin.

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Thanks to my colleagues at DAFF - Tony Hunn for bringing in his Forestry ANU cap, and Andrew Wilson for lending me his camera.

NEWS FROM CANADA - THE FOREST HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

After 27 years and 85 issues, John Parminter has retired as the editor of the Association's newsletter. John will continue his involvement in the Association as "keeper of the archives". The new editor is Barbara Coupé, a professional forester who is interested in both creative writing and forest history. The newsletter is issued quarterly and nos. 40 (Aug 1994) to 84 (Nov 2007) are available online at <http://fhabc.org> (with more to come).

The Association was formed in 1982 and its interests range from the history of people and machines to the evolution of forest resource management and associated social and political aspects. The Association encourages the collection, preservation, cataloguing, and use of historical material related to the conservation, management, and use of the forests of British Columbia.



DENDROCLIMATOLOGY - ITS POTENTIAL FOR DESCRIBING NATURAL CLIMATE VARIABILITY

from Matt Brookhouse

Dr Brookhouse graduated with a Forestry degree with Honours at the Australian National University (ANU) in 1997 after which he moved to Victoria and worked for six years for the Department of Sustainability and Environment. He graduated with a PhD in dendroclimatology at the ANU. His PhD examined the potential of eucalypt tree rings for the reconstruction of climatological and hydrological records. He is primarily engaged in a reconstruction of streamflow for Melbourne's Thompson catchment, and also lectures in ecological measurement and modelling at the ANU.

Climate variability significantly affects the functioning of Australian ecosystems and the availability of essential natural resources. Consequently, Australia's biota and human population are potentially vulnerable to changes in climate associated with increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Australia's southeast is particularly vulnerable due to the large demand for scarce water resources and the presence of climatically sensitive ecosystems in areas such as the Australian Alps. Whilst understanding the impacts of climate variability is fundamental to anticipating the impacts of climate change, the absence of long records of climate, river flow and ecosystem function constrain progress towards such an understanding in southeast Australia. Dendroclimatology, the science that uses tree rings to analyse and reconstruct climate records, has the potential to facilitate description of natural climate variability and its hydrological and ecological consequences.

Despite their promise, dendroclimatological studies are rare in Australia. Eucalypts, specifically, have received little attention despite the predominance of the genus across the continent. This apparent lack of interest has its origins in the earliest published reviews of dendrochronological potential in Australia that conclude that eucalypts hold little potential for dendroclimatology because of indistinct and false tree rings, numerous intra-annual bands, short life spans and growth suppression by insects. Moreover, of the eucalypt dendroclimatological studies available prior to 2006, none had identified a clear climate signal. The absence of climate signals in previous studies of eucalypts appears to confirm the unsuitability of eucalypts in general for dendroclimatology. However, my personal experience with several thousand tree ring samples in Victoria suggested that an explanation lay elsewhere.

Like all sciences, dendroclimatology utilises a set of fundamental principles. These principles - site selection and sample sensitivity, crossdating, uniformitarianism, replication and standardisation - are not merely scientific convention, but provide the basis for assessing and ensuring the quality of tree ring data. Crossdating is foremost among these principles. Via cross-matching ring-to-ring variability between trees, crossdating permits identification of tree ring anomalies, such as missing and false rings. Detecting and correcting such anomalies is

critical for ensuring accurate dating of each tree ring series. The process of crossdating relies upon the sensitivity of growth to environmental stimuli, and expression of the effects of these stimuli in tree ring widths.

It is surprising, then, to learn that crossdating is absent from most eucalypt tree ring studies. A factor that contributes to crossdating difficulties, especially in eucalypts, is the challenge of tree ring identification. Conventional tree ring boundaries, classically defined by dark bands of dense wood fibres, are often diffuse in eucalypts where inter-seasonal climate variation is subtle. Whilst distinct tree rings form at high elevation, the capacity of tree ring series from high-elevation eucalypts has been successfully demonstrated only recently. These demonstrations, combined with detailed examinations of variation both within and between trees in Victoria's mixed species forests have confirmed the relevance of established dendrochronological sampling and analysis protocols for eucalypts. Moreover, investigation of variability in tree ring series between sites, has revealed that eucalypt tree ring series may exhibit a high degree of climate sensitivity.

Tree ring series generated by *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, for example, show an increasing sensitivity to temperature with elevation. Furthermore, populations of the species at the alpine treeline exhibit a pronounced sensitivity to winter temperature (positive relationship) and precipitation (negative relationship). These results indicate that deep snow during winter reduces growth of *E. pauciflora* by promoting persistent snow cover during spring. Moreover, since snow melt plays an important role in soil moisture balance in the Australian Alps and flow in alpine rivers, tree ring width chronologies comprising data from subalpine stands of *E. pauciflora* hold clear potential for climatological and hydrological reconstructions. Due to their sensitivity to climate, these chronologies may also play an important role in the detection and attribution of climate change impacts and the frequency and intensity of past droughts. Greater replication and longer chronologies are underway to exploit this potential.

Importantly, the applications of current research on eucalypts extend beyond the genus and the alpine southeast. Australia supports an array of angiosperm and gymnosperm taxa for which dendrochronological investigation has barely begun. These taxa may hold significant potential for regional climatology. For example, all three genera of the family Araucariaceae - *Agathis*, *Araucaria* and *Wollemia* - occur in Australia. Although five species (*Araucaria cunninghamii*, *A. bidwillii*, *Agathis microstachya*, *A. atropurpurea* and *A. robusta*) have relatively wide latitudinal and altitudinal ranges and may exceed 1000 years in age, dendrochronological investigation of the family has been limited to a small number of studies in relatively low elevation locations. These studies report both difficulty in identifying annual tree rings and a low sensitivity to climate variability. Given the impact of elevation on eucalypt tree ring series, the clarity and climate sensitivity of tree ring series



from both *Agathis* and *Araucaria* may vary considerably throughout their elevation range. Moreover, the presence of species from both genera in the cloud forests of Queensland and the immense value of *Agathis australis* in New Zealand for the reconstruction of El Niño-Southern Oscillation, suggests that a dendroclimatological reconnaissance of family Araucariaceae may, like eucalypts, reveal potential for reconstruction of climate records in the north east of Australia and permit examination of the climatological sensitivity of tropical forest ecosystems that are vulnerable to climate change. These observations may also hold true for other Australian gymnosperm genera such as *Callitris* and *Podocarpus*.

STUDENT PRIZE FOR AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY 2009

Submissions are invited for the National Museum of Australia Student Prize for Australian Environmental History 2009. The National Museum of Australia and the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for History and Philosophy of Science jointly award an annual prize for the best student essay in the History of Australian Science or Australian Environmental History. The prizes are awarded in alternate years in May, with the history of science prize being offered in even-numbered years and the environmental history prize in odd-numbered years. The prize is a certificate and \$2500. The closing date for submissions is **27th February 2009**.

Note that the prize requires that applicants undertook the research for the essay as students, not that they are currently enrolled students. Judges are looking for contributions to Australian environmental history, but a comparative approach that includes environmental history from other places is acceptable.

For application details, see www.nma.gov.au/research/graduate_programs/student_prize_applications.

Thanks to the Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network for this contribution. See <http://jennerschool-associated.anu.edu.au/envirohlist>.

WORLD CONGRESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

The first *World Congress of Environmental History* is being held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 4th-8th August 2009. The congress will create an overarching picture of the historic relationship of people and the environment. Looking at our challenges from multiple perspectives, multiple spatial and temporal scales, and varied politics, economics, and disciplines is the only way to enlighten the complex challenges of creating a sustainable future. More info at <http://wceh2009.org>.

Thanks to the Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network for this contribution. See <http://jennerschool-associated.anu.edu.au/envirohlist>. Both the Network and the Australian Forest History Society are members of the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations (ICEHO) which is one of the hosts of the Conference.

TRANS-TASMAN FOREST HISTORY CONFERENCE (2007) - PUBLICATION OF A SELECTION OF PAPERS

The 7th AFHS conference (the Trans-Tasman Forest History Conference) was held in February 2007 and a selection of papers published in November 2008 by White Horse Press in a special volume of *Environment and History* (Vol. 14 No. 4) (see www.ericademon.co.uk/EH.html).

Vaughan Wood and Eric Pawson, *The Banks Peninsula Forests and Akaroa Cocksfoot: Explaining a New Zealand Forest Transition*.

Matthew Hatvany, *Environmental Failure, Success and Sustainable Development: The Hauraki Plains Wetlands Through Four Generations of New Zealanders*.

Brett J. Stubbs, *Forest Conservation and the Reciprocal Timber Trade between New Zealand and New South Wales, 1880s-1920s*.

Michael M. Roche and John Dargavel, *Imperial Ethos, Dominion's Reality: Forestry Education in New Zealand and Australia, 1910-1965*.

Benedict Taylor, *Trees of Gold and Men Made Good? Grand Visions and Early Experiments in Penal Forestry in New South Wales, 1913-1938*.

Paul Star, *Tree Planting in Canterbury, New Zealand, 1850-1910*.

James Beattie, *Colonial Geographies of Settlement: Vegetation, Towns, Disease and Well-Being in Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1830s-1930s*.

DEVELOPING TRANS-TASMAN PERSPECTIVES

from Mike Roche

In November 2008, Massey University in Palmerston North (New Zealand) hosted a one day mini-conference on historical geography. Titled "Developing Trans-Tasman Perspectives", it also produced some papers with a forest history thread. Dr Libby Robin from the Australian National University was the guest speaker and helped to set the scene for a good series of discussions with a talk on *The idea of "Australasia" and its Environmental Limits*.

The mini-conference included papers from four speakers who also presented at the Trans-Tasman Forest History Conference held in New Zealand in February 2007:

Michael Roche (Massey University), *Latter day imperial careering: LM Ellis a Canadian forester in Australia and New Zealand, 1920-1941*.

Eric Pawson (University of Canterbury), *Trans-Tasman Plant Mobilities*.

Vaughan Wood (University of Canterbury), *Common grasses, common wealth? The Trans-Tasman grass and clover trade*.

James Beattie (University of Waikato), *Exploring Trans-Tasman environmental connections, 1800-1920s*.



BALDUR BYLES: FORESTER AND CONSERVATIONIST

by Deirdre Slattery (deirdre_slatt@aapt.net.au)

In 2008, as a fellow of Manning Clark House, Canberra, I worked on the environmental history of Kosciuszko National Park. I hope to publish material from this research in 2009. The archives of the Basser Library of the Academy of Science, the National Archives of Australia and the National Library are rich in material about the colourful characters and heated debates on alpine grazing, growth of tourism resorts, the Snowy Scheme and management planning.

In the Park's early, stormy days as a State Park from 1944-66, a Sydney forester, Baldur Byles, was one of the most active, hardworking and enduring participants in events that shaped the Park as we now know it.

Byles' significant professional contribution was a strange one for a forester, as much of it was above the treeline. He had a successful early career in that profession, studying European forestry on a scholarship in the 1920s, and writing several detailed reports about the abuse of forests in parts of Europe, and the ecological consequences. Byles showed keen observation and understanding of the links between alpine catchments and the alpine ash and other forests below them in these and in his subsequent landmark study: Commonwealth Forestry Bureau Bulletin No. 13, *A Reconnaissance of the Mountainous Part of the River Murray Catchment in New South Wales*, for which he was employed and guided by Charles Lane Poole.

He became District Forester for the whole of the Riverina district of NSW in 1948. Here he fell foul of authority and was "sidelined" to the Head Office as a result. As John Dargavel's recent book shows, such internecine contests were frequent in forestry affairs of the time. This setback caused him to pour his remarkable energy and persistence into the State Park work. But it was his early training and experience in assessing land condition and his personal pleasure in working in the rugged outdoors that combined to give him a passionate commitment to the condition of the high mountain catchments.

Over his career, Byles developed from a practical forest manager to an ardent ecologist with a strong spiritual and philosophical belief in conservation. In the 1930s and 1940s, ecology was in its infancy and limited in informing debate, but Byles learned eagerly from the pioneering alpine work of Alec Costin of the CSIRO's Alpine Ecology Unit. He used his developing scientific knowledge to educate others on the State Park Trust, to criticise the performance of the Snowy Mountains Authority (SMA) on restoration works on its dam sites, aqueducts, camps and roads, to develop the first Master Plan for the park and to fuel with information the campaign of the growing nature conservation movement.

However, Byles also challenged the standard ideas of nature conservationists. Although nature conservation had been established as a valid argument for the appropriate use of public land, challenging the prevailing

resource extraction ethic, in conservation circles nature was still predominantly for human use and enjoyment. Byles sustained his traditional forestry training as an advocate for the wise use model in land management, as he always deplored waste and inefficiency. But he also held strong and unusual ideas about the intrinsic value and rights of nature.

Late in life, in a paper titled *Snow Gum - the Tree*, both aspects of Byles' understanding of nature are evident. Byles the forester is alert to standard expectations of a tree: the species does not seem to satisfy conventional utilitarian needs, being a "non-commercial timber". But Byles the conservationist has learned that to dismiss the tree as valueless for this reason would be a mistake: "the snow gum performs a very vital and important role in natural and human affairs". Drawing from personal and ecological observations, Byles describes not only the function of snow gums, but also their personality. They capture passing fog and mist, reduce wind velocity, protect understorey and soil, and even shelter campers, as well as which "from grey to green to silver they dance and shimmer" on the hillsides, bringing joy to anyone who cares to look. All of which only the snow gum can do!

Byles' ideas are still far from mainstream in their general acceptance, but they helped him to argue for a better managed park *and* for an aesthetic, spiritual appreciation of the mountains that sprang from his understanding of their ecological function and purpose. And we are better off for his work for both of these ideas.

RUSSELL GRIMWADE PRIZE - 80TH ANNIVERSARY from Fintán Ó Laighin

I've previously written on the Russell Grimwade Prize (AFHS newsletter no. 42, December 2005). The reason for writing again is because 2009 marks the 80th anniversary of the Prize's establishment. The *Canberra Times* of 13th February 1929 reports that the Prime Minister, Stanley Bruce, announced the Prize the previous day. The Deed of Trust lodged with the Victorian Supreme Court was "signed sealed and delivered by the said Wilfrid Russell Grimwade" on 27th March 1929. According to the Deed, Mr (later Sir Russell) Grimwade was "desirous of promoting the study of scientific forestry in Australia" and allocated £5000 to "form an endowment or fund for the maintenance of a prize for the encouragement of scientific forestry to be called *The Russell Grimwade Prize*".

The Prize itself was first awarded in 1930 and provided for postgraduate study at the Imperial Forestry Institute in Oxford and, as reported by the *Canberra Times*, the opportunity to visit "forests in Germany and France to study old established forestry methods". This is very redolent of the experience of Charles Lane Poole who was a close friend of Grimwade and was Inspector-General of Forests whom the Deed charges with administering the Prize.



At the time I wrote my previous article, the most recent winner was Andrew Lugg in 1994, but the Prize was subsequently awarded to Phil Townsend under amended conditions that allow study to be undertaken in Australia. The Prize is now administered by Forest and Wood Products Australia (www.fwpa.com.au) which is likely to be offering the Prize again later this year.

While the records I have access to may be incomplete, there seem to have been 30 different recipients. The list includes at least one who was unable to undertake study due to ill health (IG Morison in 1962), and one who deferred his study and who may not have taken up the award (LF Hammond in 1972). The list of Prize winners includes some illustrious figures in Australian forestry. While I only have initials for some, it seems unlikely that any recipients have been women, something that will perhaps change in the future as more women enter the profession.

1. 1930 TN (Theodore) Stoa
2. 1933 AO (Alfred) Lawrence
3. 1935 FM (Frederick) Bailey
4. 1938 WD (William) Muir
5. 1949 DWR (Donald) Stewart
6. 1950 J Thomas
7. 1956 WH (Walter) Eastman
8. 1957 NB (Norm) Lewis
9. 1958 GB (Geoffrey) Wood
10. 1959 Andrew Keeves
11. 1960 PJ (Peter) Hawkins
12. 1962 IG (Ian) Morison
13. 1962 KF (Kim) Wells
14. 1964 RM (Robert) Cowan
15. 1965 RG (Bob) Orr
16. 1967 DR (Donald) Douglas
17. 1968 AWF (Arthur) Webb
18. 1971 FE (Frank) Batini
19. 1972 LF (Lytton) Hammond
20. 1973 PA (Peter) Langley
21. 1973 NG (Noel) Ashcroft
22. 1975 RG (Ross) Bridges
23. 1977 DP Meehan
24. 1979 PJ (Peter) Francis
25. 1982 JK (Jerry) Vanclay
26. 1984 AG (Tony) Bartlett
27. 1987 MB (Michael) Powell
28. 1990 Scott Poynton
29. 1994 Andrew Lugg
30. 2006 Phil Townsend

Note 1: The 1929 issue of the Canberra Times was viewed at ndpbeta.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home, the National Library of Australia's on-line collection of historic Australian newspapers 1803-1954. The article on the Grimwade Prize is on p5.

Note 2: Any corrections or additions to the above list are welcome, particularly the first names of J Thomas (1950) and DP Meehan (1977). Thomas was from South Australia and Meehan was from Western Australia.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

We like to include info on activities that our members are doing, even if it's just a para or two. Contributions can be sent to the editor.

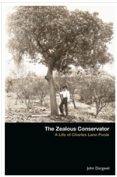
Peter Evans was awarded Life Membership of the Light Railway Research Society of Australia at its Annual General Meeting on 14th August 2008. Peter made outstanding contributions to the administration and activities of the Society, including as a member of its Council, for over 24 years. Peter recently retired from Council following his move from Melbourne to Alexandra in country Victoria. For more info on the Society, see www.lrrsa.org.au.

Sue Feary recently attended a workshop on traditional forest knowledge (TFK) where she gave a presentation on Australia and the western Pacific. She is participating in the writing of a book on the "State of the world's indigenous forest knowledge", an initiative of an international Task Force of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). The workshop was held in snowy but beautiful Vienna at the IUFRO headquarters and was attended by about fifteen delegates responsible for writing the various chapters. Sue reports that "As you can imagine, it was a wonderful mix of cultures and forest histories. After listening to presentations on TFK in Europe and Russia with their complex histories of interwoven cultures, I was quite glad to have an area comprising mostly water!" The book is due out in 2010 and will examine how TFK in different countries can contribute to making forest management more sustainable. Sue also said that "It was too cold to explore the famous Vienna woods, but I did catch a train to their outskirts, only to find them locked up behind a very high wall."



Juliana Lazzari has received a PhD scholarship from the Australian National University and will commence study at the Fenner School of Environment and Society in March 2009. Focussing on reptiles in the mallee region of the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia, the aim of the PhD is to test the effect of fragmentation and fire by examining the fire history and distribution of native species.

NEW PUBLICATIONS



John Dargavel 2008. *The Zealous Conservator: A Life of Charles Lane Poole*. University of Western Australia Press.
ISBN 978 1 921401 14 5. 252 pages.
RRP \$29.95. (For more information, see www.uwappress.uwa.edu.au/biography/.)

John Dargavel has done a remarkably good job of compiling the story of the professional life of one of Australia's pioneer foresters, Charles Lane Poole, largely from historic records. The result makes a very good read, giving great insights into the work and personal characteristics of this remarkable forester, who at the age of 19 had his left hand amputated and replaced with a steel hook. Reading through the story, one is somewhat humbled by the challenges that early foresters like Lane Poole endured and surprised that some of the challenges have a remarkably similar nature to those facing foresters today.

Born in Sussex in 1885, Charles was one of two English cadets, sponsored by the Colonial Office, to graduate from the French Forestry School at Nancy in 1906. He then spent more than four years in the Transvaal Forest Department and then another five years in Sierra Leone. For much of this time he worked on demarcation of the best of the remaining forests as well as establishing plantation trials. By modern standards times were tough. He often spent three months away from his post surveying forests and when he married in 1911 his wife Ruth remained in Dublin for the next five years and they corresponded regularly by letter.

The great majority of Lane Poole's working life was spent in Australia. When he arrived in Australia in 1916 and became Western Australia's Conservator of Forests, he was only the second university-trained forester working in Australia. There was so much to be done: it was not clear how much forest there was, no one knew how fast the trees grew or when they reached maturity, his staff could not identify the forest flora botanically, indeed much of it had never been classified, and wood science investigations had barely begun. He attacked all of these problems in his first year as the Conservator of Forests.

The book provides intriguing insights into the political dimensions of forestry in the early part of the twentieth century in Australia. Between 1916 and 1921, Charles put enormous personal energy into the development of Western Australia's first forestry legislation. The process was long and complex and was a battle between the forest scientist and powerful stakeholders, particularly the owners of Millars, then the largest sawmilling company in Western Australia, that stood to have their concessions converted to permits and their log prices increased to levels consistent to other timber permit holders. He had to do battle with the Premier of the State and in the end when he could not achieve the outcome that he believed was right for the forests he tendered his resignation. This is fascinating as one often

thinks the political challenges faced by today's foresters are of recent making.

Lane Poole spent the next two years working in the Australian Territories of Papua and New Guinea conducting forest assessments. The description of the challenges he faced when surveying the forests of Papua and New Guinea, including crossing flooded rivers, dealing with malaria infected mosquitoes and savage attacks from indigenous tribesmen, put today's remote sensing inventories into perspective.

Lane Poole always had a great interest in the education of foresters. When he attended the third Interstate Forestry Conference in Adelaide in 1916, he drafted a resolution that set out the need to train foresters at the university level and apprentices in a training school. In 1927, he became the acting principal of the Australian Forestry School when it opened in Canberra and remained in the post for 28 years. But this period was not without its controversies, as he had major conflicts with his staff and more significantly with Alfred Galbraith and Harold Swain, the respective heads of the Victorian and NSW forest departments, both of whom Lane Poole considered not to be properly trained foresters. These conflicts seriously impacted on student numbers and led to the partnership between the Creswick School of Forestry and the University of Melbourne. This conflict explains the tensions that existed until the late 1970s between Victorian and Canberra trained foresters.

Despite the conflicts he had with some politicians, Lane Poole was well connected with many politicians including Prime Minister Stanley Bruce. These connections enabled him to achieve some of his goals, such as the establishment of the Australian Forestry School, but weren't sufficient to allow him to achieve his ultimate desire of having the control of forests vested under the Commonwealth. He also failed to get agreement for the headwaters of the Hume Weir catchment managed by the Commonwealth. He also spent about 20 years as Inspector General of Forests trying unsuccessfully to forge the development of a national forest policy. He was, however, more successful in getting the Forestry and Timber Bureau established to conduct the forest research he knew was needed to guide the management of Australian forestry.

Lane Poole made very significant contributions to botanical knowledge in many of the places he worked, including Africa, Australia and Papua New Guinea. He collected forty-four type specimens during his survey work in Papua New Guinea. He also collected specimens when on tour in Western Australia and one of them *Eucalyptus lane-poolei* (Salmon White Gum) was subsequently named after him.

Dargavel goes to great length to give the reader an accurate portrayal of the personality of Charles Lane Poole, including his advocacy regardless of the personal consequences or political realities. Lane Poole was very strong minded and intolerant of others views, including those of other "less well trained" foresters working with him and in the various forestry agencies he interacted

with. This characteristic made it very difficult for him to achieve some of his goals as the principal of the Australian Forestry School and the Inspector General of Forests with the Commonwealth government in Australia. It also explains some of the tensions that existed in Australian forestry when I entered forestry in the early 1970s until the time when a national forest policy was agreed to in 1992.

Two other things of significant interest are described in the book. Lane Poole's wife Ruth had great skills in interior design and was given the job of designing the furniture and interior colours in both the Prime Minister's and Governor-General's residences which were under construction in the new national capital of Australia. Lane Poole developed a life long friendship with one of Australia's great philanthropists, Sir Russell Grimwade, who was an early member of the Australian Forest League - the forerunner of conservation organisations in Australia. Both Grimwade and Lane Poole believed strongly in the importance of Australian foresters gaining first hand experience of the long-standing forest management systems practised in Europe. Grimwade donated the funds to establish a prize that enabled Australian foresters to study at the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford, from which over the years nearly 30 Australian foresters have benefited.

Dargavel's story of Lane Poole's life is well worth the read, both from the historical perspective and from the insights it gives into successes and failures of a forestry leader.

Tony Bartlett

The above review has also been submitted to the Institute of Foresters of Australia for publication in Australian Forestry, and a slightly different version, intended for an international audience, to the Commonwealth Forestry Association for publication in The International Forestry Review.

The first part of the book deals with the tender side of Charles Lane Poole's life that makes the reader soften to him. His partner, Ruth, is an important touch to the "story" and this sets the scene for Charles's drive, determination and self confidence to undertake the work that would make him a forest conservator in some challenging locations no less, Sierra Leone, Australia and Papua and New Guinea. One gets a sense of getting to know Charles well but remaining unsure of how well when the contrast of a passionate conservator of plants sits at odds with his enthusiasm and penchant for shooting for sport and harsh treatment of his workers or "boys" as he refers to them.

John Dargavel writes in an enchanting way that tells the story of a "peer" (forester) who is clearly of another time. John has recognised and done justice to an important story that needed telling. He has skillfully provided explanations for many interesting events that would not have been a simple feat extracting information from such a wide range of sources.

Australian historians with broad interests in early Australian state rivalry or government relationships within and between parochial states, or those with a general interest in adventure, pre-modern "Kokoda" trail-type travel and local history, such as Ruth's role and involvement in decorating Government House in Canberra and the establishment of the Mount Franklin Ski Chalet near Canberra, will enjoy this book immensely. I certainly did.

My only criticism lies with the editing. John has been let down by the publisher with a number of typographical and grammatical errors - minor ones perhaps, but distracting nonetheless.

Juliana Lazari

The reviewer describes herself as a "general reader". She is not a forester or a historian but has a background in the management and use of natural resources, an interest in the conservation of biodiversity and is a member of the AFHS.

Bernard Slattery, Doug Ralph & Deirdre Slattery 2008. *Vagabond. The Story of Charles Sanger.* Castlemaine,

Victoria: Friends of the Box Ironbark Forests. ISBN 978 0 646 48982 7. 48 pages, B4. RRP \$15. (For more information, see www.fobif.org.au/vagabond.html.)



This is a small and attractive volume published by the Friends of the Box Ironbark Forests (Mount Alexander Region), a local conservation organisation formed in the late 1990s. It documents the story of a Fryerstown man, Charles Sanger, who lived alone in the forest for fifty years until his death in 1953. Despite his reputation as "the Fryers Bushranger", his main "crime" seems to be have been being regarded by police as a convenient suspect for any crimes committed in the area. As a result, despite spending some time in prison for minor offences, he attracted a lot of sympathy from the local community.

Apart from recounting the story of Sanger's life in the forest - which is a fabulous tale - *Vagabond* also includes some evocative descriptions of the forest. Chapter 4, for instance, draws on accounts from the turn of the century, including the 1897 Royal Commission and reports of foresters, surveyors and other officials - the forest was "thick with regenerating wattles, cassinia and eucalypts" (p12) and "a landscape of many minor gullies, confusingly spilling down from higher levels" (p13).

I like the way the narrative is interrupted occasionally with text boxes that contain asides. The brief description on p17 of "The Great Dividing Trail and Sanger Trail" is an appealing insertion and makes the country seem alive. It nicely complements the description of the area a few pages later on pp39-40.

Unlike many "local histories" which suffer from poor narrative and a disorganised presentation of facts, the authors have done an excellent job in documenting Sanger's life. The book is illustrated with photographs



and a couple of useful maps. While not footnoted, the authors include a brief discussion of their sources. They have drawn on an impressive array, from local and regional newspapers (as well as the *Police Gazette*), to court and other public records and oral recollections. Reports on the state of the forests were consulted and they have even looked at the social context by referring to Geoffrey Blainey and Eric Hobsbawn.

The final chapter refers to the interviews the authors conducted as part of their research. They conclude that "our interviewees were remarkable in the way that their accounts tallied with the documented facts: they were a good recommendation for the reliability of oral history".

Jim Longworth. "The Secret Life of Sleepers. New South Wales: Hardwood Sleepers to 1989" in *Australian Railway History*, March 2008 (Vol. 59 No. 845), pp91-104. Australian Railway Historical Society. ISSN 1449-6291. (For more information, see www.arhnsnw.com.au.)

This is an entertaining article to those with an interest in both forestry and railways. It is a wide-ranging account of the history of hardwood timber sleepers - a more interesting story than might be imagined. Dividing the period into five timespans - 1849-91, 1892-1907, 1908-28, 1929-68 and 1969-89 - Jim Longworth discusses how the science of track building, the techniques of sleeper cutting and the pressures on the forest changed during this time.

A reliable supply of timber has influenced where railways are constructed, sometimes to the detriment of the private backers. Construction of the first railway in NSW, from Sydney to Parramatta, started in 1849 at a midpoint between the two centres close to an area of forest around Homebush. While this might have been technically sound as it meant that as each section of line was built, timber for sleepers and bridges could be easily transported along the line, Jim suggests that had construction started in Sydney, the railway would have had a higher profile, making it easier to raise the necessary funds from public subscription.

The difficulty in ensuring a reliable supply of timber seems to have been an enduring problem, and the means of achieving it were varied. At times, railway companies were empowered to enter private land and take what they needed. At other times, the Public Works Department negotiated with the Forestry Commission to establish mobile sawmills specifically to cut sleepers.

The article is richly illustrated with tables, diagrams and photographs. Living in the Canberra region, I was particularly interested in the 1938 photo of the steam tram motor hauling a load of sleepers for constructing the Captains Flat Line.

Time & Place is the official newsletter of the Queensland Heritage Council. Issued quarterly, each edition has a key theme reflecting an aspect of Queensland's cultural heritage. Issue No. 18 (Winter 2008) focuses on "100

Years of National Parks". While not solely related to forests, this issue has a feature article on Queensland's first national park, Witches Falls, which was declared in 1908 and which is now part of Tamborine National Park. There are also brief snippets on the Cairns to Kuranda Railway (built between 1882 and 1891) which winds through World Heritage rainforest, and on the Pechey Forestry Aboretum established in 1927. Eagle-eyed readers might even notice a photograph of AFHS member (and now Vice-President) Jane Lennon in her role as a member of the Queensland Heritage Council.

All issues of *Time & Place* are available from the Environmental Protection Agency website at www.epa.qld.gov.au/cultural_heritage/queensland_heritage_council/time_and_place.

RECENT NEW ZEALAND PUBLICATIONS

from Mike Roche

Stewart, K. 2008. Heart of Kauri. *New Zealand Heritage*, 111: 12-15.

Stewart, K. 2008. *Kauri*, Viking, Auckland.

Ross, K. 2008. *Going bush: New Zealanders and nature in the twentieth century*, Auckland University Press, Auckland. 978 1 869 40424 6 (pbk).

NEXT ISSUE

Each issue of the AFHS newsletter is edited by a different member of the AFHS, with the overall production co-ordinated by Sue Feary. The next issue will be out in April 2009 and will be compiled by Peter Evans. All members of the AFHS are invited to submit articles. Contributions can be e-mailed to Sue at suefeary@hotmail.net.au or posted to the address on the front cover.

Membership of the Australian Forest History Society (AFHS) Inc is \$25 a year, or \$15 a year for students and for overseas addresses is \$30 (in Australian currency please). These prices do not include GST as the AFHS is not registered for paying or claiming GST. Membership expires on 30th June each year. Payment can be made by cheque or money order, or through Electronic Funds Transfer. Cheques or Money Orders made payable to the AFHS:	
Australian Forest History Society Inc. PO Box 5128 Kingston ACT 2604	
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