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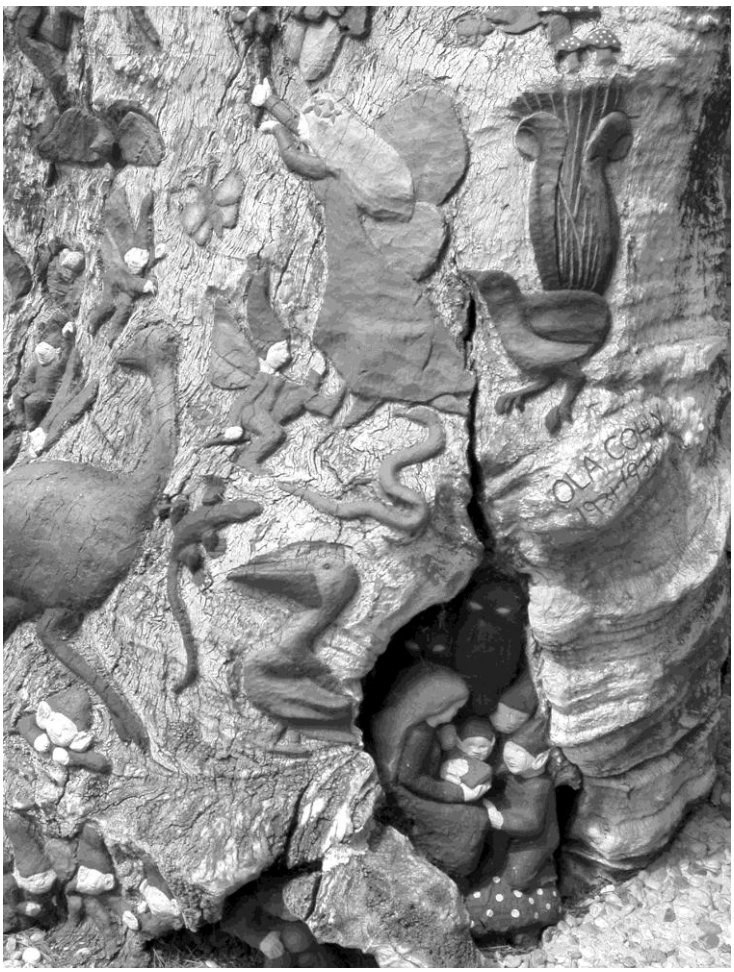
"... to advance historical understanding of human interactions with Australian forest and woodland environments."



The Fairies' Tree in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens is the creation of artist Ola Cohn, who carved the 300-year-old red gum stump during the 1930s.

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REPORT OF THE 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

By Kevin Frawley

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Canberra on 17th November 2010. The President, Brett Stubbs, was unable to attend the meeting so it was chaired by the Secretary, Kevin Frawley, with minute taking by John Dargavel. The minutes of the 2009 AGM were confirmed. One matter carried over from the last financial year was investigation into obtaining copyright permission from the Dutch publishers (Millpress) of the proceedings of the 2004 conference (Augusta) in order to place the conference proceedings on the AFHS website.

A written report prepared by the President, Brett Stubbs, was circulated and adopted by the meeting and is printed elsewhere in this newsletter. Particular reference was made in the report to the following:

- *Lismore Conference June 2010.*
- *Newsletter production.*
- *Website.*
- *Administration.*

The Treasurer, Fintán Ó Laighin, presented a report on the audited financial accounts for the year which was adopted. The Society is in a healthy financial situation. The Society still holds an amount under an *ACT Heritage Grant (Blundells Flat Management Plan)*. It was agreed that it is desirable to finalise this project. The meeting resolved to keep the annual subscription at its current level.

The Society is fortunate in having Stephen Bailey as auditor for the annual accounts. A vote of thanks to the auditor was carried and it was resolved that the Treasurer approach Mr Bailey to be auditor for the Society for 2010-11.

The following office bearers were elected for 2010-11:

President	Brett Stubbs
Vice-President	Jane Lennon
Secretary	Kevin Frawley
Treasurer	Fintán Ó Laighin
Committee	Robert Onfray, Brett Bennett, Greg Barton, James Beattie, Peter Davies

Juliana Lazzari was appointed Public Officer. Sue Feary is to continue as co-ordinating editor for the Society's newsletter. Following the AGM a short committee meeting was held in which Stephen Legg, Sue Feary and Juliana Lazzari were co-opted to the committee.

In other business the attention of the incoming committee was drawn to three matters: the proceedings of the 2004 conference (as noted above); the idea of compiling a list of forest history related theses in Australia; and newsletter production (see below).

After the meeting, a number of those attending enjoyed the hospitality of Ricki and John Dargavel, continuing a tradition of eating some of the "enemies of the forest".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 2010 - PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

By Brett Stubbs

The Society's activities during the financial year 2009-10 mainly concerned (i) planning and running the Lismore Conference; (ii) the regular activity of newsletter publication; (iii) the continued development and maintenance of the Society's website; and (iv) general administration.

1. Lismore Conference, 7th-11th June 2010

The Society's eighth conference was held in Lismore, New South Wales, over four days in June 2010. It commenced with a reception on Monday evening 7th June, then comprised four days of paper sessions (with thirty-two presentations) and two short field trips. A conference dinner was held on 10th June. The conference was followed immediately by a three day study tour in north-eastern New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland, based for two nights at Binna Burra Mountain Lodge in Lamington National Park.

Papers from the conference are being compiled into a book, with the conference organising committee (Jane Lennon, John Taylor, Alison Specht and myself) also performing the role of editorial committee. The preparation of this volume is proceeding, and the committee requests any delegates who have not yet provided copies of their papers for publication to do so as a matter of urgency. It is also planned to publish papers individually in digital (pdf) form on the Society's website.

The conference was held at Invercauld House, a facility of Southern Cross University, and I acknowledge the staff of Invercauld House (particularly Terry Wells) and the University's catering staff (particularly Simon Ennew) for their contributions to its smooth running. I am also grateful to the staff of Binna Burra Mountain Lodge (particularly Noeline Abbey) for their contributions to the running of the post-conference tour. The role of Simes Brothers Bus Services of Lismore (particularly Paul Simes) is also acknowledged in respect of the provision of transport for the post-conference tour and the two conference field trips. I also take this opportunity to thank Lexie Hurford who facilitated our visit to Hurfords Timber Mill near Lismore during the course of the conference.

The conference ended without a plan for the holding of the next one, the first time for many years that this has occurred. Some discussion of the matter took place, with the Murray River region of southern New South Wales and northern Victoria, and the North Island of New Zealand being suggested as eligible sites, but no-one to date has offered to take the matter in hand. The Committee will welcome proposals for the running of the Society's next conference, perhaps in 2013 or 2014.

2. Newsletter Publication

The system of having Guest Editors prepare newsletters, under the overall guidance and co-ordination of a "Series Editor", has been continued in theory. In practice,

however, the difficulty of recruiting guest editors continues to result in Sue Feary undertaking much more just than the co-ordinating role. Three newsletters were published during the financial year (October 2009 - Sue Feary; January 2010 - John Dargavel; and May 2010 - Jane Lennon). The May 2010 edition was used in particular to publicise the Society's forthcoming conference, and accordingly was given a north-eastern New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland flavour.

No newsletter has appeared since the end of the financial year, providing further evidence that the guest editor system is not working as well as it might, and I take this opportunity to reiterate Sue's regular plea for volunteers to compile future newsletters.

3. 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, but its role has now become much wider. For example, it is now the repository for digital copies of all of the Society's newsletters, and has links to the digital versions of the proceedings of past conferences. I acknowledge the continued work of our webmaster, Michael Goasdoue, in maintaining the site.

Usage of the website has increased steadily and very satisfactorily since June 2006, as the following statistics will indicate. During 2007, the first full year of operation, the site received 3457 visits. In 2008 there were 5719 visits, and in 2009 there were 8181. During 2010 to the end of October there were 7160 visits. Altogether, since June 2006 to the present time more than 25,000 visits to the site have been recorded. The greatest monthly number of unique visitors (709) occurred in March 2010. Presently, about 40-50 percent of activity on the site is by Australian users. The USA is typically the next biggest source of activity at around 10-20 percent. New Zealand usage is highly variable, but generally less than 10 percent.

4. Administration

The successful continuation of the Society is, as always, due to the work of many people. Some particular contributions have already been acknowledged, but in addition it must be recognised that much of the more mundane general administration of the Society is undertaken by Treasurer, Fintán Ó Laighin, and Secretary, Kevin Frawley. Their efforts in these roles are greatly valued.

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

By Sue Feary

Three Society newsletters were produced in 2010. They continue to be ably put together by Society members on a voluntary basis with John Dargavel, Jane Lennon and Peter Davies as guest editors for the January, May and December issues respectively.

The newsletter pays an important role as the public "face" of the Society and in bringing together interesting information on forest history. However, it is always a challenge to find members with the time to devote to newsletter production and it may be timely to consider other means by which the newsletter can continue to be produced. In the meantime, guest editors are sought for two of the three issues for 2011. I will edit one issue for 2011.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Society warmly welcomes the following members to the Committee:

Brett Bennett is a lecturer in modern history at the University of Western Sydney and an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow from 2011-14. He received his PhD in History from the University of Texas at Austin in December 2010. His dissertation, "Locality and Empire: Networks of Forestry in Australia, India, and South Africa 1843-1948," argues that local environmental and social conditions strongly shaped the foundation of forestry science, culture, and education in these regions. He has received dissertation funding from the Social Science Research Council (USA), the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Science Foundation (USA), the Forest History Society (USA), the J.B. Harley Fellowship, and the University of Texas at Austin.

Brett has had articles accepted or published on the history of forestry in Australia, India, South Africa, and Thailand in numerous international peer-reviewed history journals, including the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Environment and History*, the *International Review of Social History*, the *Journal of the History of Biology* and *Itinerario*. Currently, he is writing a global history of forestry for MIT's Histories for a Sustainable Future series. Bennett is also co-authoring a book with Gregory Barton on the history of the belief that humans can induce climate change. He continues to actively reach out to the Australian public on issues related to national and international forestry, including an editorial in the Canberra Times on the plight of the old Australian Forestry School buildings and a radio interview on ABC Radio's The Science Show discussing the past, present, and future of Australian species of trees around the world. He can be contacted at utxaustinbennett@yahoo.com.

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James Beattie is delighted to be a member of the Committee, having attended his first conference in 2004, and is looking forward to working with his colleagues on new projects. He has written several works on aspects of forest history, including with Dr Paul Star. His monograph, exploring the connections between forest conservation, health and landscape art in colonial South Asia and Australasia will be published in April 2011 by Palgrave Macmillan: *Empire and Environmental Anxiety, 1800-1920: Health, Aesthetics and Conservation in South Asia and Australasia*. He is Senior Lecturer, History, University of Waikato, New Zealand. He can be contacted at jbeattie@waikato.ac.nz.

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Gregory Barton is a historian of imperial and environmental history. He is a research fellow at the Australian National University and editor of the journal, *Britain and the World*. He can be contacted at gregory.barton@anu.edu.au.

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Robert Onfray is a forester of 23 years who has worked in a range of environments including tropical, sub-tropical and warm and cool temperate rainforests, various wet and dry sclerophyll forests, woodlands (both coastal and highland), coastal heathlands and grasslands in Queensland, New South Wales and currently Tasmania. He calls himself an environmental detective where he uses his skills to "read" the forest structure and piece the clues together to determine its history.

Whilst being more a practitioner than a researcher, he is currently working on two different forest history projects. One is the environmental and cultural history of a fascinating and beautiful montane plateau area in northwest Tasmania called Surrey Hills with its mosaic of rainforest, forest, woodland, grassland and moorland on a uniform substrate. The other is a history of the struggles to achieve proper order in Tasmania's productive native forests and how the opponents to logging since the early 1970s have failed to understand the history of past utilisation and the consequences of wanton exploitation without professional management. There is a lack of recognition that within the space of two human generations, the majority of these forests are once again productive for human utilisation on a sustainable basis - something human civilisation has never been able to achieve anywhere previously. He can be contacted at rlo@bigpond.net.au.

[More on other Society committee members in future issues - Ed.]

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:

Australian Forest History Society Inc.
PO Box 5128
KINGSTON ACT 2604

Electronic Funds Transfer can be paid into:

Commonwealth Savings Bank
BSB 062-911
Account No.: 1010 1753

(Please also return this form if you pay by EFT.)

Name & Address	
E-mail	

	Please mark the box if you would like a receipt - otherwise an acknowledgment will be sent by e-mail.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

By John Taylor

The last session of the Society's conference in June 2010 discussed where the Society could go in the future. There was a feeling that it was slowing down and suffering from a general lack of interest in forests and especially their cultural and social aspects.

The aim of the discussion was to ensure that the Society remains relevant as "a forum for advancing the historical understanding of human interaction with Australian forest and woodland environments".

Members at the conference discussed the external environment and agreed that forestry's importance in the public and academic domains seems to be fading. Many State forests have become national parks, and more foresters now work for private companies. Attitudes of the public to forests have shifted and are now less sympathetic to timber production than in the past.

Undergraduate forestry courses are struggling to find students. Academics report that there is little interest in forest history amongst postgraduate students, who are more interested in forestry in south-east Asia and the Pacific, and in climate change and water policy. Can the Society broaden its aims to include these issues?

It was agreed that there was interest in environmental history, but the opportunities are limited because there are already societies active in this field. But the discussion came back several times to environmental history as the "badge" under which to sell forest history.

The loss of records as the old forestry departments are dismembered was lamented and members thought that the Society should do something about it. But in the past the Society has not been involved in advocacy and political rough and tumble and has stuck to its role as a forum for advancing the historical understanding of the relationship between forests and people. Is the loss of records serious enough, a direct threat to this understanding, to justify some action?

The American Forest History Society has money from industry which enables it to work on issues relevant to its membership. One option is for our Society to approach the Gottstein Trust, seeking funding to undertake a project on, say, the history of the cultural and forest interactions of fire, or water, or climate change.

While all the foregoing is rather gloomy, on the other hand the Society does have successful and well attended conferences, a core of committed members in Australia and New Zealand, and a statement of purpose which is sufficiently broad to include many endeavours. The issue, as noted by several postgraduates who spoke at Lismore, is that young people working in relevant fields in universities don't know of the Society's existence.

In discussing membership it was suggested that we should try to recruit more people from New Zealand. Also, we should try to understand whether what we are offering - four newsletters per year and a conference every three years - is attractive to our market and worth $25 ($15 for students).

One comment was that having the newsletter available on the website removes one motivation to becoming a member of the Society.

The Society could perhaps help to stop the loss of existing members if renewal notices were sent out on a regular basis.

Obviously the Society is limited by its lack of staff and having to depend on office bearers and committee members to get things done. Invariably these people are busy and are balancing many calls on their time. But perhaps the newly elected committee could determine a few directions for the Society for the next five years, and pursue projects and members accordingly.

Post script

The conference evaluation forms showed that the members who attended were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the conference. The responses to the question on papers people would like to hear at future conferences included inland hardwoods and red gum, biographies, woodlands, fire, forests and water, environmental history, personal histories, plantations, private forests, timber workers and national park landscapes.

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP

The Society offered a scholarship to an enrolled tertiary student to attend our 8th National Conference on Australian Forest History held in Lismore, NSW, in June 2010. The scholarship provided the full cost of conference registration, accommodation at the conference venue and up to $500 in travel expenses. It was awarded to Polly Camber who is a student at the University of Otago in New Zealand. She has written the following note of thanks:

"Thank you kindly for the opportunity to attend and present at the Eighth National Conference in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia. I greatly appreciated the chance to learn and network with you all, which has enriched my experience as a doctoral candidate and added new depth to my own practical understanding of working forests. I recently returned from a large environmental conference in Canada, in which I felt fortunate to have gained experience from the Australian Forest History Society's conference and thereby better represent a small portion of the ongoing forest history research in Australasia. The Society's Conference gave me a more grounded understanding of forest history in Australia and New Zealand and hope I may be able to attend another conference sometime in the future."

VALE

We are sad to learn of the recent death of Ernest Ungar, husband of Dr Sybil Jack, who died on 23rd August 2010. Ernest regularly accompanied Sybil to our conferences. The Australian Forest History Society would like to pass its condolences to Sybil.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Congratulations to one of our Kiwi members, **Mike Roche**, who has been awarded a grant from the Maxwell Ralph Jacobs fund to support his research into the life of HH Corbin, the first lecturer in forestry in Australia. It is a particularly appropriate award as Corbin went on to head a forestry school in New Zealand.

The fund was initiated by Institute of Foresters of Australia in collaboration with the Australian Academy of Science and the then New Zealand Institute of Foresters. It commemorates the life and work of Jacobs (1905-79) who became Principal of the Australian Forestry School at a time when it trained many New Zealand foresters.

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John Dargavel: I spent a delightful week in May visiting Elisabeth Johann in Carinthia and walking in the forest there. Members may remember Elisabeth and her sister Ingrid who came to our conference in Tasmania. The good news is that Elisabeth agreed to collaborate with me in writing a book on the history of forest science. I never get as much done as I hope, but have sent a draft of the first five (of fifteen short) chapters off to her. At the time of writing, I am waiting anxiously for her comments!

The centenary of forestry education in Australia was marked by celebrations at Creswick and by the two-day "Future of Forestry and Forest Science" conference in the University of Melbourne. I gave a paper on "Contested forestries, contested educations" to provide a historical background. I argued that we need to think of "forestries" in the plural. I tried to illustrate the case in the life of Alfred Oscar Platt Lawrence (1904-86) one of the six foresters who graduated from both the Victorian School of Forestry and the Australian Forestry School. He had a distinguished career and became Commissioner in 1949 and Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Forests Commission (1956-68) during a period of significant change in forestry education. I have submitted the paper to *Australian Forestry* and am also waiting anxiously for comments about this one!

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Susan Lawrence and **Peter Davies** of La Trobe University in Melbourne have recently been awarded Australian Research Council funding to study the archaeological and historical legacy of colonial water management in the Central Victorian goldfields. The forest landscapes of the region are littered not only with the remains of early gold mining, but also with hundreds of small dams, water races and other features used to capture, store and distribute water. Detailed mapping and analysis of these local, small scale responses to water variability will provide further evidence for how colonial Australians gradually came to terms with the natural environment. Their new book, *An Archaeology of Australia Since 1788*, has recently been published by Springer.

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AN INTERESTING CHAPTER FROM INDIAN FORESTRY *By Roger Underwood*

(This article appeared in The Forester *53 (2), June 2010 and is reproduced with permission of the author.)*

In addition to *The Indian Forester*, the late and lamented Forests Department of Western Australia used to take a journal called *Indian Forest Records*. The earliest copies of this journal are still held in the library today, bound into a bookshelf of hard-cover volumes, and it is my custom to dip into them whenever I am in the library. On an impulse the other day, I selected Volume IV, dated 1913.

I had no sooner opened and pleasurably sniffed the crisp old pages of this venerable journal than my eye lit upon an article entitled "Useful Exotics in Indian Forestry", by the unfortunately named R.S. Hole, a forester at the Imperial Forestry Research Institute at Dehra Dun. Mr Hole (as I hope he was addressed by his colleagues) demonstrated an appreciation of forestry well ahead of his time, indeed nearly 50 years ahead of the understanding of these issues by some modern Australian foresters.

Take for example this cautionary note:

> *"It is well to remember that several serious drawbacks usually attend the cultivation of exotics. In the first place, the reports circulated regarding the dimensions attained and products yielded ..... are frequently untrustworthy, and it is as a rule impossible to personally verify these satisfactorily by local inquiries.*
>
> *From 1862-1889 statements were frequently circulated that the gum tree (Eucalyptus) attained a height of 400-500 feet, and even more. Careful measurements in Australia about 1888, however, showed that not a single tree could be found which exceeds 326 feet 1 inch."*

I love that 1 inch. It was appropriate in a journal like this, in those times, to be a stickler for detail.

Mr Hole goes on in his excellent and comprehensive article to describe several instances of trees of great value in their home land, but which turned out to be worthless as exotics. In nearly every case, he observed, there were two reasons for this: the use of inferior seed or inappropriate provenances; and the planting of sites unsuitable for the species in question.

What's this! Haven't we heard something just like this to excuse the failure of some commercial pulpwood plantations established in Western Australia and Queensland in recent years?

However, Australians can take no credit for being at the forefront in this aspect of plantation forestry. In India during the 1850s and beyond, Mr Hole points out, *Eucalyptus globulus* is "*frequently planted in localities totally unsuited to it*."

He then sets down what seem to me to be two rather basic, but eminently sensible principles governing the use of exotic species in plantation forestry: firstly the site to be afforested must be carefully studied and its characteristics described in detail; secondly, only species known to thrive in those conditions should be used.

Well I never! Having myself observed *E. globulus* planted in Western Australia on deep, gutless sands in a region which received only 450 mm annual rainfall, in the expectation of a commercial yield at age 10, using other people's money, I can only assume that Mr Hole's excellent principles were never adequately circulated.

Volume IV of *Indian Forest Records* also contains a fascinating paper on the development of blue gum (*E. globulus)* plantations in the Nilgiri Hills, written by R. Troup. This is a name very familiar to foresters of an earlier era who, like me, cut their teeth on his magnum opus *Silvicultural Systems: The Techniques of Raising, Tending and Regeneration of Forest Crops,* one of the all-time great forestry texts.

Troup's paper in *IFR* was a report on his inspection (in 1912) of the extensive blue gum plantations established in the Nilgiri region of India in the 1830s to overcome a "fuelwood famine". The objective was successfully achieved, the new plantations providing abundant fuel at lower cost, and establishing an important local industry. Troup devotes detailed attention to nursery techniques, establishment, harvesting, coppice management and silviculture, including the ideal planting spacing. Here the famous forester D.E. Hutchins enters the scene. This is the same Hutchins who had such an impact on Australian forestry a year or two later when he undertook a comprehensive tour and produced a report that led, among other things to the appointment of Charles Lane Poole as Conservator of Forests in Western Australia, and the development of our first Forest Act.

Troup describes Hutchins as "an advocate for wider spacing", recommending that blue gum be planted at 9 feet by 9 feet, rather than the traditional spacing of 6 feet by 6 feet. Hutchins demonstrated that by going to 9 x 9, costs could be halved but the volume achieved at age 10 would be the same. The 9 foot x 9 foot spacing, incidentally, produces roughly 1100 trees to the hectare, similar to the stocking used in the higher rainfall areas for blue gum plantations in Australia today, although I am reluctant to give Hutchins the credit for this.

Troup's paper also includes detailed inventory data from his own measurements, and he even produces a set of age/height and age/girth curves and a yield table for blue gum plantations on two different site types. The yield table indicates an average gross yield of 2500 cubic feet per acre (roughly 150 cubic metres per hectare) at age 10, which we would regard today as being at the bottom end of acceptable productivity for a commercial blue gum plantation. However, let's not forget that today's foresters are using genetically improved seed of the most desirable provenance, and planting only on the most suitable sites ..... aren't they?

Australian forester Evan Shield with a fine specimen of Eucalyptus globulus *in the Nilgiri Hills of India, in 2009.*

MR J. WOLSTENHOLME'S STEAM SAW MILLS

The following detailed account of a then modern sawmilling enterprise at West Maitland, New South Wales, appeared in the Maitland Mercury on 10th July 1869.

Among the many important branches of industry which have taken root, and are flourishing in our district, the timber trade is certainly not the least valuable, and it is one which must necessarily increase with the increase of population, and the consequent demand for a larger number of habitations. In no trade, perhaps, has a greater revolution been effected in the use of machinery than in the timber trade; many things which in former years could be made only by skilled workmen, who had acquired their skill by a long apprenticeship and by years of practice, can now be turned out by a machine which gets through as much in one day as a workman would in a fortnight, with the further advantage that the work is done with a precision and exactness that the human hand could not possibly attain. We have lately had an opportunity of inspecting several of these ingenious labour-saving contrivances at the Steam Saw Mills belonging to Mr J. Wolstenholme, of High Street, West Maitland, and were greatly interested in what we saw. Several of these machines are the only ones of their kind in the district, and therefore it is probable that our readers may not be indisposed to peruse a brief description of them and their doings, as they appeared to a non-mechanical eye.

Passing through the yards, amidst enormous logs and piles of timber of all descriptions - hardwood, cedar, pine, &c., we entered the building, where we were first introduced to the hardest working servant upon the establishment - the drudge, whose business it is to set every other machine in motion - who pumps up water to supply his own insatiable thirst; who grinds corn, saws logs, cuts planks, rips out battens, makes tongues and grooves, mortices and tenons, turns broom handles, and sharpens his own tools. This useful servant is neither more nor less than a 14-horse power high pressure beam engine, fitted with all the modern appliances in the shape of gauges, safety-valves, &c. The engine supplies itself with water from a well directly underneath, and turns an elaborate system of shafting, by means of which the motive power is "laid on," so to speak, all over the premises, and can be applied at any part where desired. The first machine, in point of importance, that the visitor sees is a vertical saw frame, by which as many as ten pit-saws are set in motion at once. These saws are placed in a frame, and can be fixed at any distance apart, so as to cut timber of any thickness required; the frame, working by what we believe is called a "crank motion", moves up and down after the usual fashion of pit-saws, with this difference only - instead of the saws advancing through the timber, as is the case in hand-sawing, in this machine the saws remain on the same spot, while the log, being placed on what we might compare to a sort of railway, gradually advances, little by little, so that a monstrous log, three feet square, by eighteen or twenty feet long, is sliced up into ten nice level boards in about an hour, the work being done far better than could be accomplished by the steadiest of hand-sawyers. Supposing now that our planks require to be divided into narrower portions, we find in Mr Wolstenholme's shop, standing next, a machine perfectly willing to undertake the task. This is an iron circular-saw bench, which can be fitted with a saw of whatever size may be required for the work in hand; a self-feeding motion is attached to this bench, so that the labour of supplying it is materially diminished. Near this spot is a powerful fly press, as it is termed, or what we should have called a punching machine, in which the principles of the lever and the screw are so ingeniously combined, that by turning a long handle with a weight at each end, a sort of steel tooth descends into a saw placed underneath for the purpose, and bites a piece out as easily as a boy would bite a piece of gingerbread. The object of this machine is to increase the depth of the teeth of the saws when worn away by frequent sharpening; a simple but effective contrivance applied to it at pleasure enables the workmen to cut circular saws perfectly true. The saw-bench we have spoken of is capable of working an apparatus for tonguing and grooving slabs, boring ironbark, &c.; but the saw alone was at work on the occasion of our visit.

The next machine to which our attention was called is decidedly the most important on the establishment, and has recently been imported by Mr Wolstenholme from England. It is almost impossible to describe this marvel of ingenuity without going into a mass of technical detail that would be unintelligible to the bulk of our readers, but they can perhaps form some idea of it from its performances, which amount to this: It takes in a rough plank, seizes hold of it, passes it along, planes both sides of it perfectly true, and cuts a tongue on the one edge, and a corresponding groove on the other; should, however, the tongue and groove not be required, it is all the same to this useful machine, for it is equally willing to plane the edges smooth, or to bevel them, just as may be desired. The work is performed by means of cutters, or plane irons, which revolve at the enormous speed of about two thousand revolutions a minute, while the plank operated upon is drawn gradually forward by an elaborate system of ribbed cylinders and friction rollers. The machine can work a plank of any size up to twelve inches wide, and turns out about 600 feet per hour, complete on all four sides, if required. The makers of this beautiful machine were Messrs Powis, James, and Co. of London.

Near the foregoing we noticed another and smaller circular-saw bench, used principally by the carpenters in the shop, for ripping out the stuff required for doors, sashes, and other light work. Next in order we observed one of Rogers' American planing and moulding machines, which is somewhat after the principle of the large machine just described, and acts by the rapid revolution of cutters as in the former instance. By changing the cutters any kind of moulding, skirting, or architrave can be produced, from a simple bead to an elaborate architectural device. An immense amount of work for sashes and doors is turned out by this machine. Another American machine stands close by - Fay's Tenoning Machine - by which tenons are cut with great nicety and very quickly. A fellow machine to this cuts the

corresponding mortices, but unlike the others is not worked by steam. The chisel or cutter, being properly adjusted, is worked by means of a treadle, and whether the wood be hard or soft a very short time suffices to cut a mortice, clean and perfectly true. On seeing both these machines at work we could not but be struck with the immense saving of time effected by them over the old system of cutting tenons and mortices by hand.

At the same end of the shop we saw a powerful lathe, worked by the steam engine, by which all kinds of turned work can be produced, likely to be required by carpenters or cabinet makers. A grindstone to sharpen the rougher kind of tools stands near, and is fitted with a slide rest, in order that the tools may be ground perfectly true. For whetting the plane irons, and finer class of tools, there is a large circular hone, consisting of slabs of the Water of Ayr stone, cemented on to a disc of iron, which, like the grindstone, revolves by steam power. This stone appears to be something between slate and marble; it is of a beautifully fine grain, and imparts the keenest possible edge to the tools. It is lubricated, not with oil, as is the case with ordinary hones, but with water. There is fitted to it an arrangement for grinding true the edges of the tools, and at the same time to prevent the hone from being unequally worn.

Proceeding to the upper floor of the workshop, we found a novel and ingenious machine, of American construction, by which broom handles are manufactured at the rate of some six dozen an hour; this is driven by steam power, as is also a circular saw bench on the same floor, used for cutting up pine for soap and candle boxes, of which a large number are manufactured here, as well as cases for colonial wine, tobacco boxes, &c.

The establishment of Mr Wolstenholme ordinarily keeps about twenty men employed on the premises, although in the event of a large contract being in hand, where time is an object, the number is very largely increased. Besides these a great many sawyers are constantly employed in the bush, felling cedar and hardwood, for the mill. The average consumption of timber at this mill, we were informed, is about 900,000 feet per year, one half of which is hardwood, and the remainder pine, cedar, &c. This timber is the production of various districts; there is hardwood from our own locality, cedar from the Richmond, pine from America, and kauri from New Zealand. Large quantities of this are sold in the form of doors, sashes, and other joiners' work, but much is also sent away in the form of boards and joists, a considerable quantity being consumed in the far interior.

In connection with the establishment is a flour mill, which comprises the usual arrangements for smutting, cleaning, grinding, and dressing, and is capable of turning out a fair amount of work; and in this department, as well as in the timber mills, every contrivance possible for saving labour has been adopted. We were very much interested with our visit, and with the ingenuity displayed in the construction of the various machines, an inspection of which could not fail to give pleasure, especially to any person of a mechanical turn of mind.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF FORESTRY EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

15th and 16th October 2010, Creswick Campus, University of Melbourne

Celebrations of the centenary of Forestry Education in Australia were recently held at the Creswick Forestry School (University of Melbourne). This event exceeded all expectations and saw almost 1000 visitors on campus joining the celebrations, as well as over 400 attendees at a reunion dinner on Saturday evening. Not even the cold wet weather could dampen anyone's spirits. The event was a great success and will have alumni and the forest science community talking for years to come.

The event was the result of much planning and preparations by the Forestry Education Centenary Committee as well as the Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science (DFES) and highlights the fantastic teamwork and community spirit at the Campus.

The weekend of celebrations included numerous activities, beginning on Friday morning, and going through until Sunday. Highlights included:

- Launch of DFES Honorary Ron Hateley's Book - *The Victorian Bush: its original and natural condition*.
- Launch of the Wombat Forest Flux Research Site www.forestscience.unimelb.edu.au/wombatflux.
- "The Grand Opening" speeches on the steps of Tremearne House - which housed the first forestry education classes in 1910.
- The *Illuminated by Fire* show, sponsored by Regional Arts Victoria, providing an introduction to our research and teaching efforts on climate change, carbon accounting, bushfires and sustainable forestry.
- Opening of a new student facility and completion of stage 2 of the VSU funded works.
- Launch of a special centenary publication - *Circumspice, one hundred years of forestry education centred on Creswick, Victoria*.
- The first tree planting to launch the Arboretum Walk by Leigh Leslie, daughter of Alf Leslie - one of Australia's most well-known and respected professional foresters.
- Historical exhibition of a collection of memorabilia, equipment and photographs.
- Reunion Dinner held Saturday evening with over 400 guests - making it one of the University's largest reunion events and highlighting the many and varied outcomes for forest science and in particular Creswick graduates.

Graduates and previous staff/lecturers and associates over the weekend represented forestry education from 1910 to the present day - including Jill Harding, grand-daughter of Alfred James Ewart, the University's first Chair of Botany, a key figure in the establishment of the Forestry School at Creswick in 1910 and Chairman of the Forestry Examination Board for more than 29 years.

Further details, program and comments are available at: www.forestscience.unimelb.edu.au/centenary/october.

MILL POINT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, LAKE COOTHARABA, QUEENSLAND

By Karen Murphy

Commenced in 2004, the Mill Point Archaeological Project is drawing to a close with its two major research projects nearing completion. Following from the last report in May 2005 (AFHS Newsletter No. 40), the major archaeological field investigations were undertaken throughout 2006. The work focussed upon the settlement area of the Cootharaba sawmill, which operated from 1869 until 1892 in the softwood forests north of Noosa in southeast Queensland.

Archaeologists and students from the University of Queensland spent a total of 10 weeks excavating throughout the year. A series of 1m x 1m test pits excavated in February 2006 revealed a concentration of bricks and other artefacts. This area was further excavated in June-July 2006 revealing a substantial feature of bricks and the remains of timber stumps, as well as a wide range of domestic artefacts including fragmented glass bottles, ceramic tableware, cutlery, clay smoking pipe fragments, slate pencils, tiny glass beads, buttons, fragments of ceramic dolls, marbles and an earring. The feature represents the collapsed remains of the fireplace attached to the rear of one of the mill worker's houses. The houses were provided by the mill owners to the workers and their families. The settlement's population is estimated to have been up to 150 persons, with more than half of those being women and children. This is reflected in the types of artefacts recovered at the excavated residential site with beads from women's clothing, women's jewellery and children's toys all being found.

The 2006 fieldwork formed part of the work for two PhD research projects undertaken through the University of Queensland. The first, a project by Karen Murphy, focussed on examination of the 19th century community of Cootharaba - how it was formed, how it operated, how the people interacted within their community and with the broader regions - through an investigation of the archaeological and documentary evidence. The second PhD project, run by Steve Nichols, used the fieldwork and the overall Mill Point Archaeological Project as a case study to examine public and community attitudes towards archaeology in Australia, and ways in which to engage the community in archaeology and heritage projects.

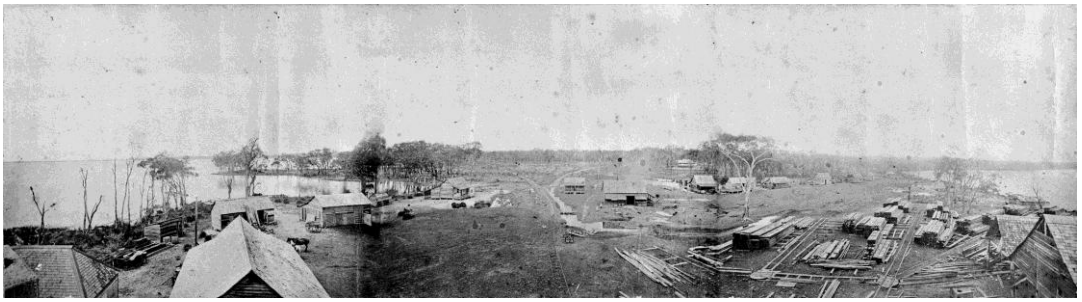
Further archaeological survey was undertaken at the site in 2007, this time focussing on finding the site of the mill settlement school. Volunteers bashed their way through highly overgrown areas along the lakeshore to the south of the settlement, the area described in historical newspaper accounts as the location of the schoolhouse. The school was provided by the mill owners and also housed a reading room with regular regional newspapers and over 2000 books. A cleared area, slightly raised above the surrounding melaleuca swamps, revealed a number of surface artefacts including fragments of writing slate and white ceramic believed to be part of an ink well. Further detailed examination will be required to definitely confirm this site as being the location of the school.

Survey was also undertaken around the site of a later 20th century farmhouse, with only the brick chimney, tank stand and brick-lined well remaining standing. It is believed that this site may also be where the mill proprietor may have had his residence during the operation of the 19th century sawmill. A wide range of domestic artefacts were recorded on the ground surface, including ceramics and glass dating to the early to mid 20th century. Excavation of rubbish deposits in this area may reveal evidence of the earlier occupation of the site.

Chimney from the 20th century farmhouse, constructed from mill period bricks (Photo: MPAP).

Work subsequent to the major fieldwork seasons has focussed on processing of artefacts in the archaeology labs at the University of Queensland, including recording, photography and cataloguing of artefacts. Analysis of the archaeological evidence and historical documents related to the Cootharaba Mill were also continued following the field seasons.

While much research has been undertaken, Mill Point is a rich site and there are still many avenues about the story of Cootharaba to be investigated. These include examining the occupation of the area around the 20th century farmhouse for evidence from the mill period, detailed examination of the industrial area of the sawmill and the schoolhouse area, and investigating the Aboriginal occupation of the area.



Cootharaba Sawmill Settlement ca. 1880s (Photo: Queensland Women's Historical Society).

NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHY ABSTRACTS

Several papers from the joint New Zealand Geographical Society and Institute of Australian Geographers Conference held in Christchurch in July 2010 had a strong forest history focus.

Paul Star: "New Zealand's biota barons"

Abstract: The wholesale transfer of exotic biota, notably to New Zealand in the nineteenth century, has been scrutinized by scientists since GM Thomson (1922) and by geographers and historians since AH Clark (1949) and AW Crosby (1986). Attention now also focuses on the movement of some indigenous biota in the opposite direction, and on the global interflow of plant material in particular, including eucalypts and prickly pears, as in the work of William Beinart and others (2004) who put "plant transfers into historical perspective". Recently, Eric Pawson (2008) has stressed the role of commercial firms, as much as public agencies, in "biotic exchange". The present article examines the role of specific individuals in the process, some operating in both public and private capacities. It identifies these individuals as "biota barons", among whom a real baron, the botanist Ferdinand von Mueller of Melbourne, may serve as archetype. The emphasis here, however, is on New Zealand examples and steers away from exclusive concentration on those involved in "plant movement" and "botanical transculturation". Individuals examined include George and Henry Matthews (who brought European plant species to nineteenth century Dunedin and developed the market for New Zealand plants in Europe), but also their contemporaries Richard and Charles Bills (who brought British birds to South Island under contract to acclimatisation societies, other birds to and from Australia, and various New Zealand species to Britain).

Kirstie Ross: "Forestry extension work in New Zealand schools, 1920s-1930s"

Abstract: While two Schools of Forestry were established by the University of New Zealand in the 1920s to train professional foresters, the New Zealand State Forest Service turned its attention to forestry education for beginners. In 1924 it embarked on a "special campaign to stimulate the interest of teachers and school children in the national problem of forest preservation and growth". This campaign included the annual distribution of tree seed gratis to schools. However, in 1934, the provision of seed was discontinued amidst claims of wastage. By then enough seed for nine million trees had been distributed - surely enough to establish viable plantations. The Service soon withdrew its support from Arbor Day, another activity undertaken by schools to promote forestry. One official thought it was an ineffective and outmoded activity, observing in 1936 that "the benefits accruing from Arbor Day either by education or forestry are nil. It has been discarded by all progressive forestry countries - and the cold facts are that celebration of Arbor Day stamps a country as being elementary rather than advanced in its forestry practice". Such attitudes illustrate the emergence of specialist, scientific conceptions of forestry from popular, somewhat sentimentalised ones. By examining the State Forest Service's extension work in schools, and concerns about the effectiveness of this work that arose in the 1930s, this paper highlights the modernisation of environmental ideas occurring in New Zealand, as well as the historical and cultural contingency of "nature".

Michael Roche: "That stumbling block in Australia": A preliminary reassessment of Hugh Corbin's forestry career in Australia and New Zealand 1912-1950'

Abstract: Hugh Corbin's appointment as Professor of Forestry at Auckland University College in 1925 was greeted with dismay by some of the NZ State Forest Service. Corbin was another "imperial careering" forester who worked in India, Australia (1912-25) and New Zealand (1925-50). Lecturer in Forestry at the University of Adelaide and Professor of Forestry at Auckland, he was an advocate of *Pinus radiata* as a versatile timber species. Retrenched from Auckland University College in 1931 he became technical director for Timberlands Woodpulp Ltd (subsequently renamed Whakatane Board Mills) and was centrally involved in company afforestation and processing in the 1930s and 1940s. Corbin's career contrasts with that of other professional foresters in New Zealand at the time, such as Owen Jones and McIntosh Ellis, offers some interesting windows onto economy and environment in the 1930s, and he was arguably more successful than some of his more high profile New Zealand contemporaries.

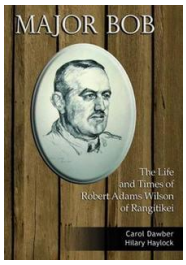
WOOD COLLECTIONS AT ANU

By John Dargavel

The future of wood science and the future of the wood collections that provide the science infrastructure for it is uncertain. CSIRO has closed its wood science laboratory at Clayton in Victoria and wood science was taught at ANU for the last time this year (2010). ANU has three collections: the "wood library" and samples from the Australian Forestry School; a duplicate of part of the national collection donated by Eric Dadswell; and a small collection of PNG timbers dating from the Second World War. The Fenner School of Environment and Society at ANU has commissioned a heritage consultant to assess the collections as a first step to finding a way to store and conserve them.

The Wood Library in the Forestry Building at ANU. It was inherited from the Australian Forestry School.

BOOK REVIEW
By Michael Roche



Major Bob, the Life and Times of Robert Adams Wilson of Rangitikei by Carol Dawber and Hilary Haylock, River Press, Dunedin, 2010.
ISBN 978-0-9582779-4-5.

Major Bob provides an overdue detailed biographical treatment of Robert Adams Wilson (1876-1964). It shares a subtitle, "the life and times" with the biography of his father: *The Life and Times of Sir James Wilson of Bulls*. Wilson senior was a pioneering Scots settler in the Rangitikei, an MP (1881-93) and a powerful force in the farming industry, an influential advocate for state forestry in New Zealand, and author of *Early Rangitkei, a history of the district*. One of five children, Robert Wilson was brought up amongst some of the land owning elite of New Zealand and indeed his wife was from the Cracroft Wilson family of Canterbury. He was born, as Dawber and Haylock note, into a family with "skills, ambitions and expectations".

Having traversed Wilson's childhood and education, where an early interest in natural history was evident, fostered by a voyage as a 15 year old on the government steamer to Fiordland, Stewart Island and the remote Auckland islands, the biography then outlines his initial involvement in the timber industry (believing the quoted price of 8/6d per 100 feet from a local firm was too high). His Rangatau Timber Company was founded in 1907. Sited adjacent to the Tongariro National Park in the central North Island this area benefited from the completion of the North Island main Trunk Railway line in 1908. By this time Wilson had cheaply leased cutting rights from surrounding settlers. Thereafter, in a strategy of vertical integration he purchased a retail timber business with branches in Marton and Wellington. This marked the foundation of Marton Sash Door and Timber Company (MSD). In parallel Wilson had begun to farm an unpromising coastal farm on the "sand country" where, in the manner of his father, he experimented with different farming techniques and tree planting. In 1913 with friends he made a difficult traversed the Ruahine Rangers attempting to follow the trail of pioneer botanist William Colenso. The polo and deer stalking ceased in 1916 when Wilson, unable to get a territorial commission in New Zealand because of his age, voyaged to England where assisted by a letter of recommendation from the Governor of New Zealand, Lord Liverpool, he was commissioned into the Royal Garrison Artillery.

After War service in France, Wilson returned to New Zealand in 1919 where he set about returning his business affairs to order. He had rapidly risen to the rank of Major and was decorated with a DSO; henceforth locally he was referred to as "Major Bob" in order to distinguish himself from the other Wilsons in the district. He recruited several men from his artillery company to the MSD, on one occasion during a bombardment when the possibility of contemplating any response to "what are you doing after the war?" seemed superfluous. His marriage in 1924 was tragically short his wife dying in child birth in 1926. Thereafter, Wilson devoted considerable energy to deer stalking expeditions in the South Island, where he acted as an "unofficial ambassador to the deerstalking gentry" of the UK. He also for many years organised, with military precision, duck shooting on his sand country farm. Simultaneously with old friends Edgar Stead and Geoff Buddle he went on a series of bird watching expeditions to various parts of New Zealand including some of the remote small islands. He was conscious of following in the footsteps of other observers of New Zealand birdlife Sir Walter Buller and Herbert Guthrie-Smith of Tutira. In 1939 he made a trip to Hen Island as part of a party including the eminent scientist Dr [later Sir] Charles Fleming that conducted a bird census. Wilson Bay on Taranga Island was named in recognition of his work in 1971.

MSD continued to expand, though not without setbacks, the factory burned down in 1933. Wilson had joined the board of the Taupo Totara Timber Company in 1931, becoming chairman in 1947. This later firm owned one of the larger mills cutting indigenous forest at this time. MSD was innovative in its adoption of sawing equipment, in its experiments with timber preservation and in terms of anticipating that in the future exotic plantation grown timbers would replace indigenous timbers in the sawmills.

In "retirement" Wilson took up the pen. He had written articles on earlier occasions on a variety of topics, many with a natural history flavour as well as anniversary account of the golden jubilee of MSD and of the Taupo Totara Timber Company. His later efforts were more substantial and included an account of his war service, a short history of Bulls township and of his deer stalking expeditions. A history of the New Zealand timber industry remained uncompleted at the time of his death although he had published some material along the way including an article about the financial disaster that was the Tongariro Timber Company. Perhaps the most important of his books was his *Bird Islands of New Zealand* (1959) yet in other ways his *Fifty Years Farming on Sand Country* (1959) is too readily overlooked when in is in the style of Guthrie-Smith's *Tutira: the Story of a New Zealand Sheep Station* (1921). The latter has attracted attention from and praise from some eminent US environmental historians. Wilson's work while different in intent and scope to Guthrie-Smith was in part influenced by it but deserves some reconsideration in its own right.

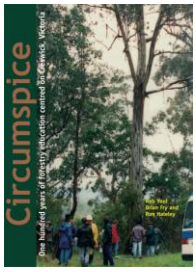
Biography poses special challenges, and when the subject is your father, as in Hilary Haylock's case, this is must be especially so. This is a full account of a life rich in experiences and not without personal trials. It provides a sound factual narrative and avoids speculation. On this latter point though I might here be allowed a little more latitude, for there are two things I find fascinating about Wilson's timber business and natural history interests, especially bird watching. First, Wilson is one of a number of returned servicemen who devote a considerable amount of time and energy to recording the indigenous bird life of New Zealand, other include Wilson's friends

Edgar Stead and Major Geoff Buddle and the driving force behind the Forest and Bird protection society in the 1920s was Captain Val Sanderson. A speculation at this point is that perhaps something of the experience of war gave these men some deeper satisfaction in studying nature, particularly birdlife, in the New Zealand context. Second is the manner in which felling the forest was reconciled with bird watching where the former activity reduced the habitat for some species. Wilson is not alone in this regard, but greater understanding of his activities helps throw the gulf in attitudes between the amateur natural historians of the mid 20th century New Zealand and those of the environmentalists of the 1960s into sharp relief.

This book touches on a number of aspects of New Zealand's forest history.

NEW BOOKS

By Rob Youl



Circumspice : one hundred years of forestry education centred on Creswick, Victoria compiled by Rob Youl, Brian Fry, Ron Hateley, Forest Education Centenary Committee, South Melbourne, 2010.
ISBN 978-0-9775240-6-8.

Circumspice marks 100 years of forestry education in Victoria, which started in October 1910 when several very young cadet foresters began a residential course at Creswick - amongst them was Reg Lindsay of *that* famous Creswick family, later killed on the Somme. In all there were seventy years under the aegis of the Forests Commission Victoria, with the last thirty years fully integrated with Melbourne University, which itself had complemented the Creswick system since the days of Professor Alfred Ewart in the 1920s and 1930s, run a BSc Forestry course since 1943 and been very involved in landmark forestry research. The list of graduates numbers well over 1500. ($40 + S&H from www.forestscience.unimelb.edu.au/centenary.)

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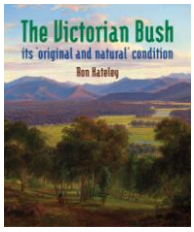

The Victorian Bush: its original and natural condition by Ron Hateley, Polybractea Press, South Melbourne, 2010.
ISBN 978-0-9775240-7-5.

Ron Hateley's book, *The Victorian Bush,* should also fascinate forest historians. The author, a much loved forest ecology lecturer at Creswick for well over three decades, spent years examining original sources to try to piece together details of Victoria's vegetation during the early to mid 1800s when the state was explored and first settled: reports, diaries, logs and journals of mariners, travellers, settlers and prospectors. His conclusions challenge several well established views, especially on fire and Aborigines. ($45 + S&H from www.polybracteapress.com.au.)

Both books are entertainingly written, pleasingly designed printed on Spicers paper and attracting favourable comment.

WOLLEMI SURVIVOR

By Roger Heady

In 1994, about 40 trees of a previously unknown type were found in a remote gully in Wollemi National Park, NSW. A new species in a new genus (in the Araucariaceae family) it was given the name *Wollemia nobilis*. The world-wide publicity given to "Wollemi pine" as it became to be known, presented a threat to its existence in that its ability to withstand pathogens introduced by man is unknown. To counteract the threat, the location of the site still remains a closely guarded secret, and trees are now propagated for release commercially. It is hoped that by making trees readily available on the commercial market, the risk of unauthorised and illegal visits to the site will be lessened. My poem tells the story .....

The fossil record gives indication
of your once widespread population.
In the Cretaceous you stood tall
surviving even the dinosaurs' fall.
But then your habitat became cold and dank,
reduced, and in the ice-age shrank
to almost nothing. Your numbers depleted
and to a Wollemi gully you retreated.

There in a misty haven, deep in Wollemi
veiled, cloistered, unseen to eye
you skulked. Unwilling to cede
your Eden, and with a need
to stay unchanged, consistent
you endured, invariable and persistent.
For millennia, danger you eluded
Methuselah in a paradise secluded.

But an end came to your seclusion
When a bushwalker's chance intrusion
Brought publicity and instant fame
Wollemi pine became a household name.
Press headlines declared you to be
the tree find of the century.
The sole species in a genus new
Forty living specimens - so few.

But in their need to see the "dinosaur tree"
An admiring public's curiosity
Would bring chaos to your fragile realm
And your habitat, ecosystem, overwhelm
Trampled seedlings, compacted soil
And vandalism your home would spoil
And introduce pathogens not previously seen
To your secluded quarantine.

So your destiny must now be controlled
by Man. A well-meaning and bold
plan to plant and propagate
seedlings and clones to populate
a million gardens. To spread your flora
through a human-controlled diaspora.
To assist you - a benevolent plan
to survive your ultimate nemesis - Man.

Poem by Roger Heady 2003, read at the Society's Lismore conference, June 2010.