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# Australian Forest History Society

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Newsletter No. 71  
June 2017

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

## Condor Hut, near Condor Creek, ACT



*The hut was used as a forestry camp in the early 1930s and in the later 1940s for immigrants.  
It is surrounded by Radiata pines planted in 1933.*

*Taken from "Beyond the Cotter" by Allan J. Mortlock and Klaus Hueneker  
(ANU Press 1979). Republished online as part of the ANU's open access policy.  
<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/114920/2/b12328984.pdf>.*

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**NEXT ISSUE**

The newsletter is published three times a year, usually in April \*, August and December.

**Input is always welcome.**

Contributions can be sent to  
[Fintan.OLaighin@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:Fintan.OLaighin@agriculture.gov.au).

\* A bit late with this issue - apologies.

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

Our schedule is for three newsletters a year, and we aim for April, August and December, but sometimes we run late (the bane of many volunteer-run organisations). Apart from the obvious matter that it's now June, the reason I mention this is because compilation of this issue started almost immediately after the previous one was published in December 2016, with the first contribution arriving within days. As a result, I have dated a couple of the articles - John Dargavel's account of his trawl through the 2016 journals and Jack Bradshaw's one on mill closures in Western Australia and the consequent loss of an important part of our forest history. It is still intended to have three issues this calendar year.

AFHS president Sue Feary has asked me to pass on the sad news that this year's proposed excursion to New Zealand has been cancelled due to insufficient interest. A bit disappointing, but thanks to both Sue and Ewan McGregor for their work in pulling together the outline. See issue no. 68 (April 2016) and no. 69 (September 2016) for more info on what was being proposed.

The start of this issue has an "ACT feel" about it, not by design, but just how it happened to eventuate. There are two articles related to what's now called the Forestry Precinct in Yarralumla (see p3) and a feature article on plantation forestry in the Lower Cotter Catchment (pp4-7). Our cover photo of Condor Hut is indirectly related to this article but was sourced separately. Unfortunately, according to the Kosciuszko Huts Association, the hut was a casualty of the 2003 bushfire ([www.khuts.org/index.php/the-huts/act-huts/26-condor-creek-hut](http://www.khuts.org/index.php/the-huts/act-huts/26-condor-creek-hut)).

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**MEMORABILIA OF THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY SCHOOL**

*By John Dargavel*



This sketch of the Australian Forestry School building at Yarralumla was drawn by Charles Donald Hamilton (1916-2000), a lecturer at both the Australian Forestry School and the Australian National University. It is part of the memorabilia of the school that was transferred to the Department of Forestry at the Australian National University in 1965. It has now been lodged in the university's archives which has also accepted the school's sporting trophies.

Sport was an important element in the culture of the Australian Forestry School from its early days in Canberra. Physical hardiness was a necessary attribute for foresters in the 1920s and 1930s, and students were expected to join in the sporting events. Sport and lengthy periods of field studies built up a strong *esprit de corps*. The students helped build a tennis court as their first sporting facility. Their annual tennis party and an end-of-year ball became part of Canberra's social scene. A series of trophies were donated of which the Cooper's Hill Cup was the most important. It was donated by delegates to the 1928 Empire Forestry Conference who had been students at Britain's first forestry school at Cooper's Hill. It was awarded for the best all-round sportsman ranked on their prowess in athletics, swimming, tennis and cricket. The rapid expansion of the school after WWII and the arrival of students from Burma, New Zealand and PNG led to new cups being donated, such as the one for table tennis donated by CD Hamilton.



Cooper's Hill Cup for Sporting Achievement  
*Photo: Clive Hilliker*



Forestry Cup for Table Tennis  
*Photo: Clive Hilliker*

**YARRALUMLA FORESTRY PRECINCT INTERPRETATIVE SIGNAGE**

*By Fintán Ó Laighin*

The Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2017 was held over three weeks from mid-April and included among its dozens of events was the "opening" of five interpretative signs at the Yarralumla Forestry Precinct. The signs were launched by the ACT Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA. The signs were organised by the ACT Division of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) and were made possible with funding support from the ACT Government under the ACT Heritage Grants Program. The signs followed the 2016 open day at the precinct organised by the National Trust and the IFA as part of the 2016 festival.

The five signs cover the "Australian Forestry School", "Forestry House", "Museum Building", "Radiata Pine Cutting Trials" and "Westridge House". The thumbnails below don't do them justice, but they can be viewed online on the IFA website at [www.forestry.org.au/images/Events/IFA\\_Signage\\_900x600.pdf](http://www.forestry.org.au/images/Events/IFA_Signage_900x600.pdf).





## THE FORGOTTEN 77 YEARS: PLANTATION FORESTRY IN THE LOWER COTTER CATCHMENT OF THE ACT

By Graham McKenzie-Smith<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The bushfire of 18th January 2003 was indelibly scored into the memory of all Canberrans when it destroyed over 500 homes in the suburbs, killed four people and radically impacted most of the non-urban ACT. Among the areas changed forever were the extensive pine plantations at Uriarra and Pierces Creek in the catchment area of the Cotter Dam. After some 1200 ha of the plantation had been replanted, the ACT Government determined that pine plantations would be excluded from the area now known as the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) and that the area would be rehabilitated with an emphasis on water supply for Canberra.

After public consultation on a draft plan, in January 2007 the ACT Government released the *Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan*<sup>2</sup> to set the direction for the management of the area. In January 2017, the draft LCC management plan was released for public comment. Both the adopted strategic plan and the draft management plan include histories of the area which drew on published material and focus on the indigenous history, the early grazing period and the history of the area as a water supply. There is only passing reference to the 77 years when the area was a vital part of a sustainable timber industry which played an important part in the development of Canberra as we know it today. This paper aims to improve the understanding of the history of the area to assist its ultimate rehabilitation.

### The Lead Up to Pine Planting in the LCC

The early settlement of the area is covered elsewhere<sup>3</sup> and some 3000 ha of the catchment had been substantially cleared<sup>4</sup> for agriculture by the time that the area was acquired by the Commonwealth in 1913. The Cotter Dam was built in 1915 and severe overgrazing on the now leased catchment area, along with a rabbit plague, led to extensive erosion which caused significant siltation of the new dam with published concern that the dam would soon be unusable.

Charles Weston's Afforestation Branch of the Federal Capital Commission was responsible for the early landscape plantings around Canberra and from 1915 he planted pine on the slopes of Mount Stromlo. These demonstrated that pine had the capacity to limit erosion and improve the landscape and by 1926 some 550 acres

(222 ha) had been established. Through the 1920s several interstate conferences identified a potential future shortage of timber for building and the Commonwealth urged the states to start plantation programs. In 1925 the Commonwealth's Forestry Adviser (Charles Lane-Poole) recommended such a program for the ACT, and Cabinet approved a pine planting program of 500 acres/annum (200 ha) to produce an 8000 ha estate on a 40 year rotation, which could supply the timber needs of an ACT population of up to 100,000<sup>5</sup>. In 1926 Geoffrey Rodger<sup>6</sup> was appointed as the Territory's first Forester, assisted by Max Jacobs<sup>7</sup> as the Forest Assessor. They formed the new Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior with a focus on establishing a plantation resource for the future. By 1929 Cyril Cole had taken over as Forester (with a young Lindsay Pryor<sup>8</sup> as his assistant) but as future Commonwealth Advisors on Forestry, both Rodger and Jacobs maintained a keen eye on the work they had started.

### Phase 1 of the LCC Plantation Program (1926-38)

The degraded area around the Cotter Dam was an early area targeted for planting to arrest the erosion caused by many years of overgrazing. Jacobs undertook a detailed assessment of the area now known as the LCC, indicating the areas best suited as pine plantation, while identifying those areas to be retained or regenerated as native forest for protection of water quality from the catchment. A nursery was established on the foreshore of Cotter Dam and in 1926 the first area planted was 43 ha at the northern edge of the Bullock Paddock, followed in 1927 by a similar small area to the east. 1928 was a big year with 138 ha planted in Depot and Mount McDonald Blocks while 186 ha were planted in Kiosk Block on the Pierces Creek side of the dam.

Map 1 (see p5) shows the areas planted in Phase One of the LCC planting program. From 1930 the Forestry Branch was able to draw on funds allocated for unemployment relief to double the planting program to 400 ha/annum and with construction in the city reduced during the Depression, the work offered in the plantation prevented many Canberra families from starving. By 1934 all of the catchment on the Pierces Creek side had been planted and after Lightning Ridge and Pabral Blocks were planted in 1935 all of the LCC area south of the Brindabella Road was established. Planting at Uriarra then turned to the north and the small section of LCC in the Blue Range Block was planted by 1938. This completed most of the degraded areas and planting moved out of the catchment.

<sup>1</sup> Graham McKenzie-Smith is a former OIC at Uriarra Forest (1975-81) and CEO of ACT Forests (1991-99) and is working on a history of ACT Forests and its predecessors from 1916 to 2006.

<sup>2</sup> ACT Government, 2007. *Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan, January 2007*.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Higgins, 2009. *Rugged Beyond Imagination, Stories from an Australian mountain region*, National Museum of Australia Press.

<sup>4</sup> ANU, 1973. *A Resource and Management Survey of the Cotter River Catchment*, Resource and Environment Consultant Group, Department of Forestry, Australian National University, Canberra.

<sup>5</sup> ANU 1973 incorrectly stated that the plantation "was never intended to be a purely commercial operation" and this fiction has been repeated in many subsequent publications.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Rodger, later Conservator of Forests in South Australia and Director-General of the Forestry and Timber Bureau.

<sup>7</sup> Max Jacobs, later Principal of the Australian Forestry School and Director-General of the Forestry and Timber Bureau.

<sup>8</sup> Lindsay Pryor, later Professor of Botany at the Australian National University.

The early plantings around the Cotter Dam focussed on areas denuded of trees as a result of broad scale grazing and associated land clearing. By 1933 the plantation program had moved into areas which had been heavily grazed but the ringbarking had not been as extensive. The remaining dead trees were felled by hand and sent to the Firewood Yard at Black Mountain from where Forestry Branch supplied the government buildings with fuel for heating. Spacing in 1926 was 6' x 6' (3000 t/ha) but in 1928 this was increased to 12' x 12' (750 t/ha) with the early recognition that a market for small sized thinnings logs was unlikely.

During the planting season (winter) up to 100 extra men were working in the catchment with semi-permanent camps at Blue Range, Condor, Mountain View and Laurel Camp, as well as the single men's camps at the Uriarra and Pierces Creek settlements. Conditions might today seem harsh, but were standard for the time with a central galley, permanent cubicles for the full time men and sturdy tents with duckboard floors for the temporary workers. As the plantation program became established houses were built to attract married men and families to the forests with the first houses at Uriarra built in 1928. By 1937 there were enough children in the district to open Uriarra Primary School with an enrolment of 16. Weston had established his major arboretum at Yarralumla (Westbourne Woods, now part of Royal Canberra Golf Club) where he established plots of trees to assess their suitability for planting around Canberra. Rodger and Cole extended the arboretum program into the mountains and three new ones were planted at Pierces Creek in 1928, followed by others at Blundells Flat, Reids Pinch, Mountain View, Blue Range and Pabral. The location of Australian Forestry School (AFS) at Yarralumla also meant that the plantations of the LCC were used extensively for teaching and research.

### **The 1939 Bushfire and World War Two**

On 14th January 1939 a large bushfire swept in from the north west and although it was burning relatively slowly it took out the plantations along the northern boundary of the LCC, including all the plantations surrounding the Cotter Dam. The fire was generally stopped along the line of the Brindabella Road, the east-west break through the Bullock Paddock and the Murrumbidgee River. In total 1464 ha of the 1926 to 1938 plantation was burnt. The fire's southern boundary is shown on **Map 1**. By deferring planting at Kowen and Stromlo and sowing

extra seed in the nurseries, Cole was able to supervise 795 ha of planting in winter 1939 but poor survival meant that a lot of this area needed to be refilled in 1940. A further 121 ha was replanted in 1941 while most of the

older stands had sufficient natural regeneration which was supplemented by sowing seed imported from New Zealand. The arboreta at Blundells Flat and Reids Pinch were also replanted in 1939.

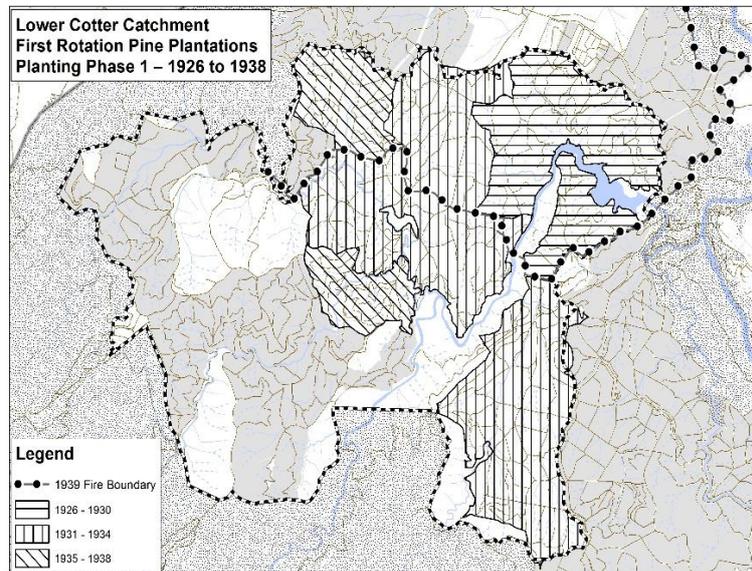
The planting program during the war years was curtailed by labour shortages but the crop tending program was assisted by the employment

of "enemy" aliens and prisoners of war. Blue Range camp became the home for a large group of Italians which included Attilio Padovan who went on to work for ACT Forests for over 40 years. They built a thriving community and although the last remaining building was destroyed in the fires of 2003, the remnants of their camp are important reminders of the forestry heritage of the LCC. Also at Blue Range were charcoal kilns, which provided the fuel for the gas powered vehicles used around Canberra during the war. Over at Laurel Camp, a group of German internees worked on the Pierces Creek side of the LCC.

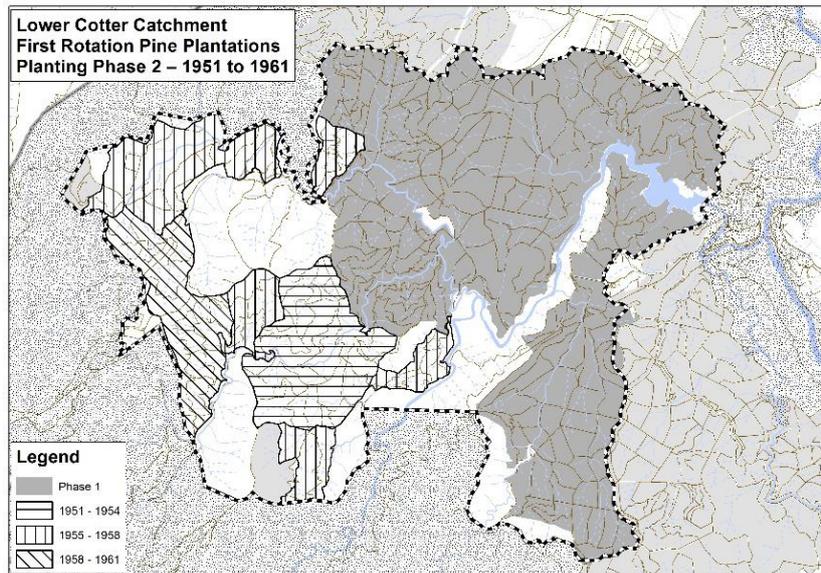
### **Phase 2 of the LCC Plantation Program (1951-61)**

The immediate post war period saw a building boom throughout Australia and an influx of refugees from Europe, a number of whom came to work in the plantations, reopening the single men's camps. The shortfall in the planting rate during the war led to an increase in establishment in this post war period and the re-opening of the LCC for pine planting. **Map 2** (see p6) shows the areas established between 1951 and 1961. Work started in Halls Block, then moved to Pago, Shannons, Blundells, Condor, Vanities, Upper Cotter, Lees Creek, Camages and Wombat.

The increased availability of heavy machinery allowed the program to move further into the hills where the ringbarking had been less intensive, however all areas had been subject to heavy over-grazing and rabbit induced erosion. Again logs were extracted from many of the areas to be sent to the Firewood Yard which kept the public buildings in Canberra heated. Since 1940 spacing had been reduced to 8' x 8' (1680 t/ha) with single line ripping where possible and pre-pitting on the steeper slopes. Riparian strips were retained along the major creeks and although some excessively steep areas (such as Upper Cotter) were planted, generally the steep slopes and north-west aspect sites were retained under native



vegetation. Some concerns were expressed at the time about increased turbidity in the Canberra water supply and the foresters worked with the newly formed Soil Conservation Service to minimise soil movement using structures such as silt traps. Rabbits remained a problem with each area having to be fenced while trappers culled the numbers within the fenced area. A major nursery was built at Lees Creek along with a single men's camp but as more houses were built at Uriarra (27 by 1961) and Pierces Creek (8) the numbers in the bush camps reduced.



### ***The Tending and Maintenance Phase***

As well as these plantings in the LCC, the Uriarra plantations were spreading to the north along Blue Range and into Neds, Pockets and Two Sticks Blocks then to Hyles and Sherwood. The LCC plantations entered their tending and maintenance phase. The plantations were generally only pruned to 6' (1.8 m) although some areas were high pruned as a trial. Rabbit control became less of a problem with the introduction of myxomatosis in the mid-1950s. Generally fertiliser was not routinely applied although some localised areas such as Wombat needed treatment with trace elements. Road maintenance was a continual issue along the extensive road network to minimise potential sedimentation in Cotter Dam. Fire was generally excluded from the LCC after 1939 (until 2003) except for some small outbreaks (usually lightning strikes) which were quickly controlled by locally stationed staff and the intensive well maintained firebreak system. The areas around and within the plantations were subject to an intensive hazard reduction regime which was co-ordinated by the ACT Bushfire Council.

From 1950 to 1963 ACT Forests was part of the Forestry and Timber Bureau (F&TB) which also controlled the AFS and the Forestry Research Institute (FRI). This ensured a high degree of co-operation between the organisations and this was reflected in the range of research and teaching activities in the LCC. In almost every second compartment was some sort of trial plot, either fertiliser, genetics or silviculture and the published results from these experiments were later used throughout Australia and New Zealand. A series of calibrated water catchments were also established in the Cotter below Bendora Dam, with some in the pine areas, and these helped to quell the ongoing debate about water quality in the plantations. This co-operation continued after 1963 when the F&TB moved to another

department and later when the AFS joined ANU and FRI transferred to CSIRO.

While the Cotter Dam remained Canberra's sole water supply, the LCC was a closed area with no grazing. The

rangers and foresters were vigilant in keeping the public to the main road. However the network of forestry roads attracted many and in 1965 the policy started to change with a paper from Ron Murray who had studied public use of forests in the USA. Potential sites were identified for

lookouts, picnic sites and walking trails. From 1966 the Forestry Branch was funded to develop these for public use while minimising the risk of accidental fires. When the Bendora Gravity Main took over the water supply role in 1968 there were many proposals to open Cotter Dam for recreation but access was not suitable. In the LCC picnic areas were progressively opened at places such as Laurel Camp, Quandary Crossing, Willow Flat, Vanities Crossing, Bracks Hole, Padovans Crossing, Blue Range, Condor Camp, Thompson's Corner, Condor Creek, Shannons, Blundells, Reids Pinch and Wombat Motel. Lookouts were developed at Cotter Dam, Pierces Trig, Mount McDonald, Sugarloaf and Mount Coree. Judicious clearing of trees opened vistas along some of the popular roads and full time rangers were employed at Uriarra and Pierces Creek. As well as being popular for weekend driving, the roads in the LCC became an integral part of various car rally circuits, including at the international level. Several orienteering circuits and cross country running courses are based in the plantations. By providing a range of such recreational experiences the pine plantation areas (including the LCC) took pressure off some of the more sensitive parts of the ACT reserve system.

Utilisation of Weston's early plantings at Stromlo commenced in 1930 but it was 1950 before the first tentative harvesting operations started in the LCC plantations. Initially the logs from the ACT plantations were sawn at the Department of Works sawmill at Kingston and a range of other small mills but as the plantations approached maturity, these mills were only taking a fraction of the potential yield. Logging was generally limited to thinnings and there was a tendency to do successive thinnings on the older and more accessible plantations. As a result by 1970 the older plantations in the LCC were generally well thinned while the post-1950 plantations were unthinned and overstocked.

### *The Mature Phase*

The maturing plantations in the LCC allowed a significant expansion of the timber processing industry. Integrated Forest Products (IFP) opened its plymill/sawmill at Hume in 1972, which as well as producing sawn timber for house building was the first plant in Australia to produce industrial grade plywood for formwork and similar heavy construction. At the time this was the largest manufacturing plant in the ACT and provided a major boost to blue collar employment in a town dominated by white collar public service jobs.

The new outlet for logs allowed the start of a clearfelling program for the older plantations as well as a delayed thinning program for the overstocked post-1950 plantations. The expanded harvest allowed local contractors to expand and new ones to become established. One such new contractor was Timberlift which brought with them from Scotland the first skyline logging equipment to harvest logs from steep areas without the intensive roading needed in the past. Clearfelling started with the older stands on the Pierces Creek side of the LCC and progressed generally with plantation age although landscape, log size distribution and the necessity for windfirm boundaries among other considerations.

Second rotation replanting commenced soon after with progressive development of techniques such as chopper rolling, keyline ripping, aerial weed control with microwave control of helicopter flight paths, the use of rooted cuttings and genetically improved planting stock as well as ground and aerial application of fertiliser and trace elements. Second rotation growth rates were generally in line with those of the first rotation and thinning of the second rotation plantations in the LCC commenced in 1992. Overall the 4200 ha of LCC plantations produced over 2 million tonnes of pine log between 1950 and 2003 which would have been converted into more than 600,000 cubic metres of sawn timber. Most of this was sold as far north as Brisbane but this was enough sawn timber to build almost 50,000 houses, equivalent to every house in Tuggeranong, Woden and Weston Creek.

When they were destroyed in the 2003 bushfire, the LCC plantations were approaching their second clearfall and were carrying a further 650,000 tonnes of pine logs. The LCC plantation assets represented around 60 per cent of the \$52 million insurance payout received by the ACT Government.

### *The Forgotten History*

The LCC pine plantations were planted as part of a deliberate government policy to create a plantation resource to provide building material for the national capital as part of a wider push to make Australia self-sufficient in timber. However all forests produce multiple benefits to the community. The LCC plantations stopped the siltation of the Cotter Dam resulting from many years of over-grazing and agriculture. The plantations protected the catchment which was Canberra's sole water supply source for 42 years and the

backup source for a further 35 years. They provided work for hundreds of men to sustain their families during the depression as well as permanent work for the Uriarra and Pierces Creek communities and many more employees and contractors for the full 77 years. They sustainably provided the feedstock for the ACT's largest manufacturing industry which produced the sawn timber that could have built the equivalent of all the houses in Weston Creek, Woden and Tuggeranong. The association with the AFS (then ANU) and FRI (then CSIRO) meant that the LCC plantations were important for the education of generations of foresters and for internationally recognised forestry research. As they were opened to the public, they provided a range of recreational and tourist experiences highly valued by the Canberra community and in so doing they relieved the pressure on more sensitive parts of the ACT reserve system.

As the new future unfolds for the LCC as a dedicated water supply and conservation area, its history as a sustainable plantation forestry area which was also managed for these same objectives for 77 years needs to be recognised and acknowledged as this rich history will help guide the managers of the future.

*Editor's note: As mentioned in footnote no. 1, Graham is writing a history of forestry in the ACT, including native forestry which is a much overlooked aspect of the sector in the territory. In 1994, when he was head of ACT Forests, he organised a number of oral history interviews which he says are being prepared for publication by the forestry section of the ACT Parks & Conservation Service. One interview was with Professor Lindsay Pryor and the transcript, titled "A Social and Economic History of Forestry within the ACT", is at [www.library.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/622477/ACT-Heritage-Library-HMSS-0384-Transcript-of-Interview-with-Lindsay-Pryor.pdf](http://www.library.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/622477/ACT-Heritage-Library-HMSS-0384-Transcript-of-Interview-with-Lindsay-Pryor.pdf).*

### **NEWS FROM WORLD WAR II**

We've had a number of items in recent issues about the forestry units in the Australian Army. Here's an article published in the *News* (Adelaide) on Friday 28th March 1941 (p5) (sourced from the National Library of Australia's Trove newspaper archive at [www.trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper)):

**S.A. Man To  
Lead Forestry Unit**

MELBOURNE, Friday.—The appointment of Maj. M. A. Rankin, of Adelaide, and Capt. A. W. Shillinglaw, of Melbourne, as commander and second in command respectively of Australia's third forestry company, was announced today by the Minister for the Army (Mr Spender).

Maj. Rankin has had long experience in the State forestry services of Queensland and South Australia, and Capt. Shillinglaw has served with the Victorian Forestry Commission for nearly 20 years.

## THE ELUSIVE RICHARD TYCO DALRYMPLE-HAY

By Ian Bevege

Fintán Ó Laighin provided us with a pen picture of Richard Dalrymple-Hay in AFHS Newsletter No. 70 (December 2016) <sup>1</sup>. In a footnote, Fintán commented on the dual spelling of Dalrymple-Hay, it sometimes appearing as hyphenated, sometimes not. In this particular instance, publication *sans hyphen* may be somewhat confusing as records show that this form had often been used by the family since the 1790s (see further below), while there is also *nomen* reversal as Hay Dalrymple.

Richard had a contemporary in fellow Scot and kinsman David Hay Dalrymple (1840-1912); David's parents were James Dalrymple and Georgina Hay nee Dalrymple (or Dalrymple-Hay) <sup>2</sup>. He trained as a pharmacist at the Bristol Medical School, migrating to Melbourne in 1862, moving to Mackay to establish a pharmacy in 1864. He was Mayor of Mackay 1869-74 (excepting 1872) entering state politics as MLA for Mackay in 1887, serving until 1904, in the ministry from 1896 <sup>3</sup>. When David Hay Dalrymple was Queensland's Minister for Lands in 1899, it was decided to set up a Forestry Branch within the Lands Department; this was duly established with Leonard George Board appointed Inspector of Forests on 1st August 1900 <sup>4</sup>. At the time Richard Dalrymple-Hay had been Officer-in-Charge of the Forest Branch within the NSW Department of Lands for three years <sup>5</sup> and it is tempting to speculate whether this had any influence on the Queensland minister's decision to establish the Forestry Branch in his state.

Houston Stewart Dalrymple-Hay (1833-73) married Louisa King at Warialda in 1859; their second son Richard Tyco Dalrymple-Hay was born in 1861 at Goondiwindi. Houston Stewart was the grandson of Colonel John Dalrymple who fought in the American War of Independence and married into the Scottish aristocracy when he married Susan Hay, daughter of Sir Thomas Hay of Park, Third Baronet. Subsequently John changed his name to Dalrymple-Hay by Royal Assent and was himself created First Baronet of Park Place Wigtownshire within the Scottish peerage on 17th April 1798 <sup>6</sup>. The Dalrymple-Hays, *cum et sans* hyphen, originate from this time. Houston Stewart Dalrymple-Hay, an ex-Royal Navy officer, became Harbour Master, Pilot and Sub-Collector of Customs in Mackay from 1870 until his untimely death there in 1873 <sup>7</sup>, leaving his widow Louisa with eight children

including Richard who was only 12 years old. Again one might speculate on whether Houston Stewart's move to Mackay was influenced by his kinsman David Hay Dalrymple already being well established in the town and to what extent David may have had a hand in the future of the boy Richard on the death of his father.

To add further grist to the mill, George Elphinstone Dalrymple (1826-76), notable north Queensland explorer, MLA for Kennedy, Commissioner for Crown Lands and Colonial Secretary <sup>8</sup> was contemporary with David Hay Dalrymple and Houston Stewart Dalrymple-Hay. Mount Dalrymple on the Eungella Range behind Mackay and the Dalrymple Gap in the Cardwell Range north of Ingham are named for George Dalrymple, but Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay near Mackay are named in honour of Houston Stewart Dalrymple-Hay.

Returning to Richard Tyco Dalrymple-Hay, we next find him at the age of 14 being educated at Eaglesfield College Darlinghurst in Sydney, becoming a temporary draftsman with the NSW Department of Lands in 1881 and a licensed surveyor in 1886 <sup>9</sup>. Tom Grant <sup>10</sup> further traces his career: "He became a draftsman and was appointed to the permanent staff on 1st July 1887, at an annual salary of \$500 (sic), later becoming [County of] Cumberland Ranger with the Head Office of the Department of Lands. He became Senior Clerk of the Forestry Branch on 1st February 1895, Clerk in Charge on 1st January 1901, Acting Chief Forester from 1st July 1904, until becoming Director of Forests on 1st January 1910." I refer readers to the article <sup>11</sup> in the December newsletter on forestry administration in NSW for a description of the ever changing NSW forestry scene at the time, taken from the NSW Archives. Richard Dalrymple-Hay went on to become Chief Commissioner, Forestry Commission of NSW from 1st November 1916, eventually retiring in 1926.

NSW Premier Sir Henry Parkes appointed John Ednie Brown, a Scottish trained forester as NSW's first Director General of Forests and head of the newly formed Forestry Department in 1890; however the appointment lapsed three years later during the Depression <sup>12</sup>. Brown's place was taken by WS Campbell, Chief Clerk of the now merged Departments of Agriculture and Forests until Richard Dalrymple-Hay stepped into Ednie Brown's shoes in 1895 in a reconstituted Department of Forests and set about bootstrapping forestry in NSW, a task he continued to

<sup>1</sup> Fintán Ó Laighin, 2016. The First Chief Commissioner - Richard Dalrymple Hay. *Australian Forest History Society Newsletter* no. 70, p5.

<sup>2</sup> Rosemary Howard Gill, 1981. David Hay Dalrymple (1840-1912). *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dalrymple-david-hay-5871/text9987>, accessed 20th Jan 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Mackay Historical Society, 2008. Mackay Mayors. [www.mackayhistory.org](http://www.mackayhistory.org), accessed 20th Jan 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Taylor, 1994. *Growing up in Queensland*. Allen & Unwin, 242pp.

<sup>5</sup> TC (Tom) Grant, 1989. *History of Forestry in New South Wales 1788-1988*. Private publication, TC Grant, Star Printery Erskineville, 320pp.

<sup>6</sup> The Peerage, nd. [www.thepeerage.com/p13277.htm#i132766](http://www.thepeerage.com/p13277.htm#i132766) et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Berenice Wright (ed), 2010. HAY, Houston Stewart Dalrymple. A Heritage Walk Mackay Cemetery 5th edition. [www.mackay.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/88601/Cemetery\\_Walk\\_Booklet\\_Ed5\\_web.pdf](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/88601/Cemetery_Walk_Booklet_Ed5_web.pdf), accessed 20th Jan 2017.

<sup>8</sup> GC (Geoffrey) Bolton, 1972. *A Thousand Miles Away. A history of North Queensland to 1920*. Australian National University Press, 366pp.

<sup>9</sup> TC (Tom) Grant, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> TC (Tom) Grant, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Anon, 2016. NSW State Archives - Forestry Administration in NSW. *Australian Forest History Society Newsletter* no. 70, pp6-7.

<sup>12</sup> TC (Tom) Grant, 1989.

fulfil for the next 30 years. Like so many of the early forest administrator/managers in Australia, he learnt his forestry on the job, although in his case he came with a professional background in surveying and drafting with the Department of Lands, which was the repository of the Forestry Branch until the formation of the Forestry Commission in 1916. As Chief Forester, he published in 1905 a technical bulletin on NSW timbers for railway construction<sup>13</sup>, aimed at the Government of India which was a major importer of railway sleepers at the time.

Ednie Brown had recommended the establishment of a School of Forestry but that initiative lapsed.

Dalrymple-Hay recognised and was very supportive of the need for formal training in forestry; his Forestry Branch Annual Report for 1905-06 reported the results of the Public Service Board examinations of 1906 as follows: "... the candidates were required to exhibit a fair degree of educational efficiency and a sound practical knowledge of timbers. In all 87 candidates underwent this test and 30 including 22 forest officers proved their qualification"<sup>14</sup>. Cadet Forester examinations had been held earlier and EHF (Harold) Swain had passed these in 1899; he also topped the District Foresters examination in 1906<sup>15</sup>. Presumably these were the examinations alluded to by Dalrymple-Hay in his Annual Report. Dalrymple-Hay continued to support the cause of forestry education throughout his career and was responsible for establishing the first Forest Training School at Narara in 1916. Theodore Norman Stoate, who had a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Adelaide, was instructor at Narara from 1919 to 1921 and was then seconded to Western Australia to establish a forest guards' school at Ludlow; he is notable for his research on pine nutrition and became Conservator of Forests for WA (1945-53)<sup>16</sup>.

Richard Dalrymple-Hay is not as well-known as a pioneer of Australian forestry as I think he should be. Like many of his generation, he rose to the challenge of the daunting task of institutionalising state forestry in Australia. These pioneers, with comparatively little formal forestry training, were called upon by the fledgling governments of the day to create state forest services based essentially on the Indian Forest Service model<sup>17</sup>. Dalrymple-Hay was responsible for strengthening state control and policy over forest resources against the ongoing traditional development ethos of the lands and agriculture bureaucracies and forest exploitation by the sawmilling industry. He oversaw the gradual evolution of licensing and royalty systems for timber harvesting as well as initiating plantation programs and forest and timber based research. His tenure was not above criticism; some of it, for example by Harold Swain<sup>18</sup>, I consider ill-judged given that Dalrymple-Hay, already established in the field, gave a young Swain his first job as a cadet and provided the training and wherewithal that

enabled Swain to develop professionally and move to greater things - as it happens also to become Commissioner of the NSW Forestry Commission (1935-48). I suspect that their vastly different personal backgrounds had something to do with this:

Dalrymple-Hay from a Scottish aristocratic clan, Swain the scion of an American Nantucket whaling family. No two people's perspectives can be the same as they cannot stand in the same shoes at the same time.

### DALRYMPLE-HAY - POSTSCRIPT

By Fintán Ó Laighin

In his article, Ian Bevege makes the point that "Richard Dalrymple-Hay is not as well-known as a pioneer of Australian forestry as ... he should be." I tend to support that observation; when I was researching the article for the December issue, I could only find one photograph of him, and that was as part of a group attending the 1917 Interstate Forestry Conference in Perth - Dalrymple-Hay is in the back row, sixth from the left:



[www.trove.nla.gov.au/work/206393536](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au/work/206393536)  
[www.slna.wa.gov.au/images/publicorders/012675d.jpg](http://www.slna.wa.gov.au/images/publicorders/012675d.jpg)

Nor did his death attract much attention, no obituary in the IFA journal, just a small article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10th Dec 1943, p7. His death notice appeared on p10 of the same issue:

**FORESTRY EXPERT'S  
DEATH**

Mr. Richard T. Dalrymple Hay, former Chief Forestry Commissioner for New South Wales, died yesterday, aged 82.

Mr Dalrymple Hay joined the Public Service in 1881, and in 1896 was placed in charge of a small branch of the Lands Department dealing with forestry. This was the beginning of afforestation in New South Wales, and Mr. Dalrymple Hay remained as the principal director until his retirement in 1926. He held the title of director from 1908 to 1916 when the Forestry Act was passed, and he became Chief Commissioner. He is survived by two sons and three daughters.

The funeral will leave St. Mark's, Darling Point, after service at 3 p.m. to-day for the Northern Suburbs Cemetery.

DALRYMPLE HAY.—December 9, 1943, at his residence, 45 Bay Street, Double Bay, Richard Tycho Dalrymple Hay, aged 82 years.

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

<sup>13</sup> R. Dalrymple-Hay, 1905. *Suitability of New South Wales Timbers for Railway Construction*. NSW Government Printer, 16pp.

<sup>14</sup> TC (Tom) Grant, 1989.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Foote (ed), 1971. E.H.F.S. Being a selection from the papers left by E.H.F. Swain on his death on 3rd July 1970, 74pp.

<sup>16</sup> Norman Hall, 1978. *Botanists of the Eucalypts*. CSIRO, 160pp.

<sup>17</sup> Roger Underwood, 2013. *Foresters of the Raj*. York Gum Publishing, 308pp.

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Foote (ed), 1971.

## 1860S NEW SOUTH WALES - OBSERVATIONS OF SURVEYOR RJ CAMPBELL

By Sybil Jack

*Editor's note: Sybil Jack is currently doing some research on the NSW survey office in the 19th century. She submitted a short article with some observations made by RJ Campbell, a licensed surveyor for Berrima and district in southern NSW. Her piece was intended as a filler, but led to some queries and some clarifications, and it is a bit longer than envisaged originally. It starts with a bit of context before moving onto Campbell's observations.*

In 1838, the permanent surveyors were largely replaced by contract surveyors because it was thought that contract surveyors, required to be wealthy enough to guarantee the cost of their employment since payment was in arrears, would be less expensive. It wasn't but the licensed surveyors continued as did the employment of a large number of temporary staff.

The situation was not overhauled until the establishment of self-government in the colony of NSW in 1851 which, in 1855, resulted in a Commission of Inquiry into the Surveyor-General's Department. This concluded that "The alleged inefficiency of the department seems also in a great measure attributable to the want of that mutual good feeling and cordial co-operation between the Surveyor-General and his officers, without which it is impossible under any system however excellent that the duties of the department can be efficiently administered." At least one duel resulted.

In 1859, a select committee was told that the division between licensed surveyors and staff was largely to blame. In August, the Secretary (the equivalent of a minister) for Lands and Public Works, John Robertson, reorganised the department, but the reorganisation was unacceptable to Governor Denison who found himself in opposition to the minister. The resulting further reorganisation remained unchanged for decades although it had not eliminated some of the original difficulties.

On 30th September 1859, the Department of Lands and Public Works was split into separate departments, with Robertson, as the first Secretary for Lands, responsible for the new Department of Lands. The department was responsible for the alienation and occupation of all Crown Lands. In 1861, Crown Land management was reformed with two Acts which included the introduction of Robertson's scheme of "free selection before survey". The *Crown Lands Alienation Act 1861* dealt with the sale of land and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act 1861* allowed for the leasing of Crown Land.

Previously land in settled districts had been sold by auction while vast areas of unsettled grazing lands were leased and licensed to mainly pastoralists. The new legislation made all leasehold land in the colony available for selection and sale. The legislation also abolished land distinctions used in the colony, such as settled and unsettled districts, and introduced new land divisions, such as town land, suburban land, first class settled districts and second class settled districts.

On 14th October 1863 under the *Real Property Act 1862*<sup>1</sup>, RJ Campbell was appointed a second class licensed

surveyor for Berrima and district as the government was clear that the new land laws would result in considerable demand for land purchases especially in areas comparatively near Sydney and already established. Campbell almost immediately produced a report on the lands around Berrima from Wollondilly to Warragamba River from Mulgoa to the confluence of Nattai River and Burragorang. He gives clear descriptions of the woods, writing that west of Mulgoa there were barren sandstone ranges covered with low scrub stunted gum, peppermint, bloodwood ... good box, stringybark, turpentine, and thick undergrowth of blackthorn.

He was less certain further afield saying "Westward of Burragorang ... I believe the country to be somewhat similar to the valleys of the Coolong, Cowmung and the tableland between to consist of good open forest grazing land in place, surrounded by barren stony ranges and intersected by precipitous gullies." He rages at the destruction that had already taken place. "I look with considerable alarm upon the wholesale destruction of timber of the most valuable kinds which continues among the ignorant class of small farmers who are possessing themselves of all our finest forests and brushes. Had it only been possible some years ago to prevent the stripping of stringy bark for roofing the miserable huts of the settlers, how vast a quantity of splendid timber might have been available at the present time.

He goes on to note that west and south of Berrima, the country changes at intervals ... barren scrub to open forest of apple and box ... excellent pasturage for sheep and cattle. At Mulgoa Forest, Stevens Forest, The Oaks, Picton and Pheasants Nest ironbark of a superior quality, [is] the prevailing timber and turpentine oak and stringybark; at Mittagong Bong Bong box, and blue gum and further south at Yarrawas and at Kangelow messmate gum and brush timber. At Burrawang there is light wood beech, sassafras, tallow acacia, myrtle.

Campbell did well being appointed a first class surveyor in the department on 1st April 1869 with an annual salary of £630. Meanwhile the local forests were being lauded by "traveller" as he encouraged people to go by train to Berrima: "Longfellow's beautiful lines aptly describe the scene. All around are fern-trees of wonderful beauty, and in every stage of growth. The beech and sassafras raise their lofty heads towards the sky ... It is a sylvan scene from which the author of 'Voices of the Night' might have derived new inspiration. The dim twilight - the pleasant coolness - the grateful tints - the wild vines - the graceful ferns - give to the place an indescribable charm. It is a favourite haunt of people who delight in picnics. They travel many miles during the summer months to spend a day in this beautiful gully, the temperature of which is, in the hottest weather, deliciously cool."

*Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* Jan 1863 p9; *SMH* 28 Sep 1868 p5; *Empire* 21 March 1863 p2; *Goulburn Herald and Chronicle* 3 Oct 1868 p2, 18 Oct 1865 p2; *Sydney Mail* 3 Oct 1863 p6; NSW Government 2013, Fact Sheet: History of Land and Property Information.

<sup>1</sup> One interesting point emerged from researching this article was that both New South Wales and Victoria each passed Real Property Acts in 1862, following South Australia (1858), Queensland and Tasmania (both 1861), suggesting that there was a "national" issue to be addressed (if colonies can be said to have "national" issues). Even earlier, Western Australia had passed the *Real Property Transfer Act 1832*.

## MILL CLOSURES IN WA'S SOUTHERN FORESTS

By Jack Bradshaw, March 2017

**Pemberton mill**, the largest of the karri sawmills in Western Australia, closed in December 2016 after 102 years of operation. The closure is part of the consolidation of all Auswest operations to Greenbushes, including Deanmill (see AFHS Newsletter No. 69, September 2016) and the Manjimup Production Centre.

Pemberton mill (originally known as Big Brook) was built in 1914 by the government owned State Sawmills to cut karri sleepers for the Trans Australia Railway. Following the completion of the railway, it turned to producing general purpose timber. The complex also included a separate case mill capable of cutting timber for 400,000 fruit cases a year, mainly for the export apple industry. However its premium products were long, large-section material for mine guides (mainly to South Africa), as well as for railway crossings, wharves and bridges - some of these as large as 40 x 40 cm and 18 m long heart-free. Long length roofing timber was a major product until the arrival of pine trusses.

The powellising plant, originally set up to powellise karri sleepers, could accommodate lengths up to 30 m. Powellised crossarms for the electricity distribution network were a major product for the local and export market through to the 1970s.

The railway from Manjimup to Pemberton was built and run by State Sawmills for a number of years before becoming part of the WAGR network. Pemberton's bush railway system extended for 10-20 km in every direction. It was the last mill to use tramways for log hauling, the last train running in 1964.

During its life the mill was burnt down twice and rebuilt and refurbished several times by its various owners: State Sawmills, State Building Supplies, Hawker Siddeley Building Supplies, Bunnings, SOTICO, Gunns and finally Auswest from 2011. In the 1950s and 1960s it produced its own electricity from its waste wood and sawdust, supplementing the belt driven steam power for the mill and lighting the night shift, before the mill was fully converted to electric power from the grid.

Twenty two houses in the Pemberton Timber Mill Workers' Cottages Precinct ([www.inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/p/11381](http://www.inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/p/11381)) were listed on the State Heritage register in 2003.

Bush operations will continue in the karri forest but add another 80 km to the log haul to Greenbushes.

**The Manjimup Production Centre** was built by State Sawmills in about 1950 as a processing facility to dry, dress and prepare for market its value added timber from its three large sawmills in the area. A major expansion occurred in the 1970s when it was acquired by Bunnings, at one time processing timber from 12 major sawmills from as far afield as Walpole and Yarloop. At its peak it employed 150 people and processed 50,000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber each year. House frames, trusses, finger jointed flooring and furniture components were major products from the 1970s until about 2000.

**End of an era.** The closure of these operations means that there are now no major sawmills or processing facilities remaining in Western Australia's southern forests. Beginning in 1911, the southern forests became the hub of the state's sawmilling industry from the 1950s when as many as ten major sawmills were in operation. The industry began to decline from about 2000 and today the only remaining facility is a chipmill near Manjimup, processing karri thinnings.

## AUSSIE BUSH TUCKER - RARELY KNOWN VARIETIES

By Peter Holzworth

The following food item descriptions are from two sources: (1) Matt Preston [MP], Queensland chef and food critic on TV's *My Kitchen Rules*, from the *Courier Mail*, 31st January 2017; and (2) Peter Holzworth [PH], occasional writer for the AFHS newsletter.

### *Boab Tree (or Baobab)*



The white pith from the fruit of the Boab Tree (*Adansonia gregorii*) is drawing attention as a supplement to its other attractions.

The pith can be mashed with water to make a lemon "sherbert" sort of cordial or used to thicken soups. It claims high levels of vitamin C and calcium and with more magnesium than avocados, and has high sources of antioxidants [MP].

The tree in the photo is called the "Prison Tree" and was used as such by the police many years ago.

Remember, as a kid at the movies, enjoying "sherbert" that came in a triangular packet with a liquorice straw to suck it from? [PH].

### *Kakadu Plum (or Gubinge)*



An indigenous Australian tree (*Terminalia ferdinandia*), better known as the Kakadu Plum. The fruit is very high in vitamin C and has been credited with having anti-viral and antibacterial properties, potentially helping ward off colds. The tree is 10 m tall with creamy flowers. The fruit tastes like lemon or apple and makes a great "slushie" drink.

The tree grows in northern Australia and the fruit can be bought in shops as powder and puree. The oil is fragrant and is used as a skin care product [MP & PH].

### *Davidson Plum*



Davidson Plum (*Davidsonia pruriens*) is a smallish tree from northern NSW. Curiously, this species is the only one in the genus and family. It produces plum-like fruits that are astringent and mouth-puckering when eaten raw. When cooked with sugar, the fruits are quite palatable [PH].



## A YEAR IN THE JOURNALS

By John Dargavel, January 2017

I thought I would mark the New Year by looking back over the journals that piled up during the last year and reflect on what had intrigued me. First, I must confess that I am neither a diligent nor systematic reader; rather, I like to have a journal with me to read in a cafe or a waiting room, or by my chair for odd moments. Reading journals thus is like listening to a talk on the car radio when I arrive before it has ended, but it's the byways that talks and papers take me down that I relish; sometimes they are even useful for what I am doing. Next, I must confess that I like to have a well printed book or journal in my hand, even a printed version of a downloaded paper; the virtues of a Kindle do not appeal.

Here, I look at four journals that have the relationship of people with the natural world as their main concern, as it is this that the Australian Forest History Society is about for forests. The youngest is the two-year old *International Review of Environmental History*, published in Canberra by ANU Press. James Beattie, the editor in New Zealand and Brett Bennett, the associate editor in Australia, are its driving forces and should be extolled for starting a journal in the southern hemisphere. It is well designed and produced to a high standard, with illustrations in colour. It comes out once a year. It is the most accessible of the four because its papers can be read online, or freely downloaded, or a whole issue can be bought for \$30. The 2016 issue with 172 pages has five papers, including a forest history one by Stephen Legg on "Political agitation for forest conservation: Victoria, 1860-1960". What grabbed my attention was a paper by Janette-Susan Bailey about a 1943 film *Australia is Developing a Dust Bowl*. Dust is surely the most ubiquitous of things and my New Year's resolution is to see the film in the National Film and Sound Archive.

The next youngest journal is *Global Environment*. It was started in Italy in 2008 by Mario Agnoletti, a forestry and landscape historian, and Gabriella Corona, an environmental historian. Its bold contemporary design and colour printing was a bright surprise when it first appeared and I strongly supported its intent to be open to social and possibly political strands in environmental history. I have become a member of its editorial board. It appears as a substantial issue twice a year and is now published by White Horse Press in the UK for £50 a year. There were twenty papers and articles in 2016 focused on cities in the first issue, and on socialist and post-socialist countries in the second. Donald Worster's paper on how people and places are connected in history was of universal interest, but if there was little of forest history interest in the year's crop, they carried me happily across Siberian steppes to Cuba's dairy farms, and to Tianjin's public lavatories.

*Environment and History* is the next journal in my chronology. Richard Grove, well-known to many members of the AFHS, was the founding editor in 1995. He intended to provide an outlet for environmental history writing beyond the dominant European-

American scope of the time. Editing subsequently passed to a collective endeavour and now to Karen Jones, an environmental and cultural historian in the UK. The journal became connected to the European Society for Environmental History, formed in 2001. Its four issues a year are published by White Horse Press for £60 a year. I always find lots to interest me in *Environment and History*, and 2016 was no exception. Among its twenty-one papers there was forestry in Zimbabwe, Natal and Zululand, grazing in Swedish forests and Australian Aboriginal adaptation to changing sea levels, as well as pleasant distractions - for me - about crocodiles in the Nile, tigers in Singapore, and wolves in Norway. Fifteen books were also reviewed during the year.

I have put *Environmental History* as the last journal in my chronology because although it appeared with its annoyingly similar title a year after *Environment and History*, it has a much longer lineage. The *Journal of Forest History* was started in the USA by the Forest History Society in 1956, but amended its name to *Forest and Conservation History* in 1992. It was an attractive, well-illustrated very readable, magazine-style publication focused on American forest and timber industry topics, with occasional foreigners, such as one on nineteenth century Tasmanian timber shenanigans. It ended in 1995 when the Forest History Society joined forces with the American Society for Environmental History to publish *Environmental History* as a quarterly academic journal. Oxford Journals now puts it out for them. It costs \$US75 a year to join the Forest History Society and receive it. Lisa M. Brady, an American environmental historian, is the editor. Each issue has four papers, a photo-essay, an extensive book review section, and abstracts of new books, theses and archives. I scan the book review section - nearly ninety books were reviewed in 2016 when I read an interesting paper on privatising New Zealand's plantations, another on floods in colonial Australia, and I was diverted by a history of whale meat in Japan. I rarely take *Environmental History* with me to read elsewhere.

My old-fashioned predilection for reading a journal in my hand has left my study crammed with old journals. Once they could be donated to libraries trying to build up their collections; now most readers want access online, so my second New Year resolution is to face up to farewelling some of these old companions at the recycling centre.

## ANU CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY - FIRE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

AFHS member, Daniel May, a postgraduate student at the Australian National University's Centre for Environmental History, has published an article on the centre's "Stories from the Field" website.

Titled "Fire in the Environment", Daniel provides some reflections on living with fire, inspired by his observations of the ANU Fenner School course of the same name.

The article is at <https://ceh.environmentalhistory-au-nz.org/stories-from-the-field/fire-in-the-environment>.

**QLD FOREST RESEARCH CUSTODIAN OF UNIQUE SAMPLES: WOOD ID IS A DYING PROFESSION, BUT WORK CONTINUES AT SALISBURY**

*By Jim Bowden and Gary Hopewell<sup>1</sup>*

It is estimated that there are one million specimens held in xylaria globally, of which 11% are stored in various collections in Australia.

Many xylaria (collections of wood samples) are supported by glass microscope slides with microtomed, stained permanent sections of wood.

These two resources are indispensable reference tools in the fields of timber identification and wood anatomy.

Results from their use provide essential data for forensic scientists, foresters, wood technologists, historians, antique dealers, builders, importers, furniture makers, musical instrument makers, archaeologists, heritage architects, customs officers, hobbyists and climate researchers.

Australia's wood science, wood anatomy and timber identification capacity has steadily declined during recent decades, so it is impossible to estimate the value of the collection curated by the DAF<sup>2</sup> Salisbury Forest Research Facility in Brisbane which has amassed more than 12,000 wood specimens and 4700 slides since its establishment in 1922.

The slides were produced from 1934 to 1977 with the most prolific period of work undertaken over the 20 years 1940-1960. Due to changes in the expectations of work productivity in public service agencies after this period, the skills and expertise for microtome use and the time-consuming preparation of high quality slides have disappeared.

However, the collection at Salisbury is used on a weekly basis by the remaining wood anatomists.

This amazing collection of wood samples, under the diligent care of senior research scientist Gary Hopewell, owes its start to Edward Harold Fulcher Swain (1883-1970), who is acknowledged as the founder of modern forestry economics in Queensland.

Swain was the first cadet forester in the NSW Forestry Branch in 1899. He studied forestry in Montana, USA, in 1915 and on his return became a district forest Inspector in Queensland.

Between 1918 and 1924, Swain was Director of Forests in Queensland.

Using wood samples left on his desk by outgoing director Norman William Jolly (1882-1954), Swain devised a system of anatomically classifying wood and established the Forest Products Laboratory, the first of its kind in Australia.



Glass microscope slides of wood species at the DAF Salisbury facility hold the interest of Cristina Latorre, researcher at the wood value laboratory, and Rhianna Robinson, technician, mechanical properties laboratory.

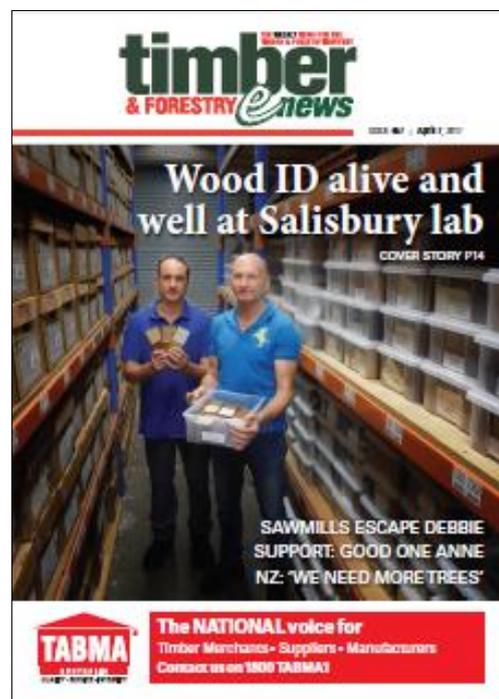
"Wood identification is a dying profession, yet offers a valuable tool to a wide range of scientific disciplines and fields of humanities," Mr Hopewell said.

Among these he included anthropology, archaeology, palaeobotany, art history (frames, antiques,

sculptures), forensics, quarantine and cargo integrity.

The world's largest collection of 105,000 wood samples is at the National Herbarium of the Netherlands, amalgamated over three collections in 1913, 1946, 1955.

The second largest collection of 103,000 samples is at the US Forest Products laboratory in Wisconsin (1896, 1905, 1911), while the oldest with 14,000 samples and 1000 slides is at the St Petersburg Botanical Museum in Russia, founded in 1823.



*On the cover ... Gary Hopewell, senior research scientist, and Bill Leggate, principal scientist (forest products innovation), examine collections at the wood samples archive in Brisbane.*

<sup>1</sup> This article was first published in *Timber & Forestry eNews* on 7th April 2017 - <http://files.constantcontact.com/a9de3250301/5132cc57-2e41-4dde-b419-f3d0c8298b5c.pdf> and is used with permission of the publisher, Dennis Macready, and co-author Jim Bowden. The AFHS newsletter has previously published articles on wood collections, most recently in issue no. 56 (December 2010), no. 58 (December 2011), no. 68 (April 2016), and more distantly, in no. 28 (March 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

**WORLD FORESTRY DAY, 21ST MARCH**

By Fintán Ó Laighin

The 46th World Forestry Day was on 21st March 2017, having first been celebrated in 1972. It is often said to have arisen from a resolution made by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in November 1971 at its 16th session. However, the resolutions from this session ([www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/conference/resolutions/1971/en](http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/conference/resolutions/1971/en)) do not refer to World Forestry Day. The closest is Resolution 10 which establishes the FAO Committee on Forestry.

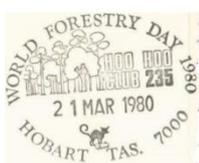
The idea of a World Forestry Day, however, was discussed during this 16th session, even if it wasn't the subject of a formal resolution. The meeting record ([www.fao.org/docrep/C3592E/C3592E00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/C3592E/C3592E00.htm)) states that:

"181. At the Twenty-Third General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture, held recently in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (Spain), a proposal was approved for the establishment of a World Forestry Day, for which the cooperation of all concerned international organizations was requested. This proposal was intended to publicize in the entire world the very significant role which forests play for humanity through their direct and indirect beneficial effects. It was felt that such an event would also make an important contribution toward solving the problems of conservation of natural resources. The Conference recommended that FAO should support the establishment of a World Forestry Day, and cooperate in an appropriate manner to this end with Member Nations."

Some sources, citing a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in November 2012 ([www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/200](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/200)), say that World Forestry Day has been replaced by the International Day of Forests which was first celebrated in 2013. As with the reputed FAO decision, a myth has developed around this. The UNGA decision certainly proclaims the International Day of Forests, but does not say that it would replace World Forestry Day. Rather, its only reference to World Forestry Day notes:

"that the States members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Organization, held from 6 to 25 November 1971, supported the establishment of World Forestry Day on 21 March of each year".

Presumably the inclusion of the reference to World Forestry Day in the record of the 1971 FAO meeting is what's meant by "supported".



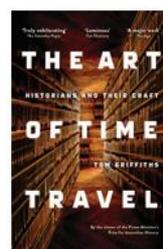
A number of countries have released special commemorative stamps to mark World Forestry Day, including Zambia in 1976 and 1981, and Malawi in 1993. Australia does not seem to have made such a release,

but a special postmark was issued in Hobart in 1980.

The special postmark refers to "Hoo Hoo Club 235" which is the Hobart chapter of a body founded in January 1892 in Arkansas USA and which has operated in Australia since April 1962. It is formally called the "International Order of Hoo-Hoo", sometimes the "International Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo" (which means "linked together" and could explain its logo) and is a fraternal and service organisation whose members are involved in the forests products industry.



**ERNEST SCOTT PRIZE AWARDED TO TOM GRIFFITHS**



On 20th April 2017, the University of Melbourne announced that Tom Griffiths as the winner of the 2017 Ernest Scott Prize for his book *The Art of Time Travel: Historians and Their Craft* (Black Inc. 2016).

The prize is awarded annually for the most distinguished contribution to the history of Australia or New Zealand, or the history of colonisation. The prize is supported by the university's History Program in the Faculty of Arts' School of Historical and Philosophical Studies.

This year's judges, Professor Fiona Paisley (Griffith University) and Professor Judith Bennett (University of Otago), found the book to be a "wonderful meditation for historians ... a beautifully written homage to the craft of writing history as a discipline and a passion ... a journey that tells us much about Australian historians and their craft".

[www.arts.unimelb.edu.au/news/2017-ernest-scott-prize-winner-announced](http://www.arts.unimelb.edu.au/news/2017-ernest-scott-prize-winner-announced)

NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



Roger Underwood, 2016. *Diamond Tree: Celebrating a masterpiece of bush engineering*. York Gum Publishing. No ISBN. 38pp.

Roger Underwood, 2016. *The Weir and the Woods: A story about Perth's Hills Forest*. York Gum Publishing. No ISBN. 21pp.

Review by Fintán Ó Laighin.

The prolific Roger Underwood has continued his series of forest histories with two small volumes published during 2016.

The first of these is on the Diamond Tree in Western Australia, specifically 10 km south of Manjimup on the South Western Highway. The book was produced in honour of the tree's 75th anniversary

as a fire lookout tower and is dedicated to the tree "in celebration of its contribution to bushfire control and tourism in the karri forest".

Built in 1941, it is one of nine lookout towers that were constructed on treetops between 1937 and 1952 in the south-western forests and is one of only two that remain. The other is the better known Gloucester Tree tower at Pemberton, built in 1947. (There is also the Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree, but although it is made to look like a fire lookout tree, it is a ceremonial tower constructed in 1988.)

Roger has produced an entertaining and informative volume which draws on books, government reports, newspaper and magazine articles, and Roger's personal experience of being a "towerman" in the 1960s. An interesting inclusion in the bibliography is a 1994 book titled *Aiming High: Diamond Tree and Me*, written by Doreen Owen who worked as lookout in the 1950s. A photo of "towerman" Doreen appears on p25.

The book is well structured, beginning with the backstory of fire lookouts in Western Australia's forests, an account of the process for selecting the trees, followed by specific chapters on the construction of the Diamond Tree tower, its use and its subsequent role as a tourist icon following its decommissioning as a fire lookout tower in 1973 with the advent of spotter aircraft (noting that it is still used occasionally for its original purpose).

Supplementing the text are photographs from every decade, including a wonderful photo of Jack Watson on the back cover scaling the Diamond Tree to assess its suitability as a lookout.

The second of these booklets is a history of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme which commenced in 1896 and finished in 1903, but told from the perspective of a forester. It arose from a presentation that Roger made to a Weld Club History Luncheon some years ago. The paper was presented and consigned to the filing cabinet, but was taken out when the Institute of Foresters of Australia organised a forum on the

management of forested water catchments. As Roger writes in the preface, "it remains interesting history (and) also resonates with issues that are still current and controversial today".

Again, Roger's interest is sparked from personal experience, having worked in the Forests Department's Mundaring district in the 1960s during which time he lived at Mundaring Weir (built from 1898-1902).

In a series of short sections, Roger discusses the pressure on the forest from the need to feed the water pumping stations, the "Great Ringbarking" of the 1910s, the introduction of "catchment management" in 1909, and the establishment of the Forests Department in 1919. The booklet has sections on both the woodcutters and the foresters, and the effects that World War II had on these types of work. Until 1942, they had been classified as reserved occupations which meant that workers were exempt from military call-up, but this changed due to fears of an impending invasion of Australia.

The Hills Forest is now part of Beelu National Park and the old Forests Department office is a forest discovery centre. Roger reports that the "idea in converting the State forests to National Park was to 'save' them"; Roger notes the irony in this view which ignores that were it not for the foresters, these forests would have been cleared long before.

Both booklets are available from Roger Underwood for \$20, including postage. He says that "If anyone buys one, (he'll) chuck the other one in for nothing." He can be contacted at [yorkgum@westnet.com.au](mailto:yorkgum@westnet.com.au).

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Elizabeth Orr, 2017. *Keeping New Zealand Green: Our forests - and their future*. Steele Roberts, Wellington. ISBN: 9780947493462. NZ\$44.49.

From the publisher's notes.

A history of the New Zealand Forest Service, and a plea for the action needed to preserve our flora and fauna from extinction.

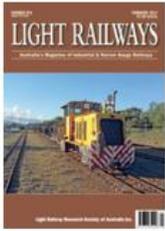
This book reflects Elizabeth's determination to present a balanced history of the NZ Forest Service, whose contribution towards preserving our native forests has, she contends, been seriously misunderstood.

But Elizabeth is the daughter of Pat Entrican, Director of Forestry 1939-1961, a controversial figure usually associated with the great Kaingaroa forest and the pulp and paper enterprise created to utilise its pines. Elizabeth also tells stories about the Kawerau mills, the biggest industrial plant built in NZ up to that time.

So did Entrican and his fellow directors really care about the fate of our indigenous forests? *Keeping New Zealand Green* presents the evidence for a new assessment of the Forest Service, and makes a plea for the action now needed to preserve our fauna and its habitats from threatened extinction.

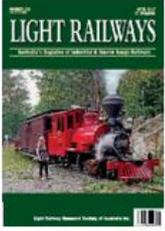
<http://steeleroberts.co.nz/product/keeping-new-zealand-green-our-forests-and-their-future>

Thanks to Mike Roche for bringing this book to our attention.



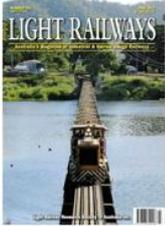
*Light Railways: Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways*, February 2017, April 2017 and June 2017. Light Railway Research Society of Australia. ISSN 0 727 8101. [www.lrrsa.org.au](http://www.lrrsa.org.au).

Review by Fintán Ó Laighin.



Three editions of *Light Railways* have appeared since our last issue, all of which contain pieces of relevance to forest history.

The February issue has an article by AFHS member Ian Barnes on "The Use of Vertical Aerial Imagery in Light Railway Field Research" (pp22-24) and which includes photos of the Bawley Point tramway in south-eastern NSW to illustrate his points. There is also a field report by Kevin Fowler on "Sixty Sawmilling and Tramway activities around Gilwell Park, Gembrook, Vic" (pp34-36) which builds on a heritage study that revealed evidence of timber tramway operations dating from the 1920s.



The April issue starts with the first part of a feature article by Jim Stokes on "The later years of the Marrawah Tramway" in north-western Tasmania (pp3-15). It includes sections on the JS Lee and Sons sawmills, the Irishtown-Smithton branch line (including Gray's Timber Yard) and the Marrawah Timber Company's tramline. There is also a short field report (p43) by Kevin Sewell on some abandoned timber tramways in Coffs Harbour NSW, once part of the British Australian Timber Company.

The June issue is dominated by a feature article on the Augourie Quarry Railway in Queensland (pp3-25) and doesn't include any articles specifically on timber tramways. However, two letters from readers raise matters of interest - Ian Cutter seeks help identifying a mystery object found on a timber tramway near Narbethong in central Victoria, while AFHS member Peter Evans has a short piece of correspondence on the Alexandra Timber Tramway in north-eastern Victoria.

### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

*Thanks to the Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network newsletter for advice on some of these conferences.*



The **Australian Historical Association** conference will be held at the University of Newcastle from 3rd to 7th July 2017. The conference theme is "Entangled Histories", to reflect the increasing move away from narrowly defined "national" histories towards an understanding of history as an interlinked whole where identities and places are the products of mobilities and connections. Presentations will consider the value of entangled frameworks for analysis from all historical periods, themes and research areas.

The conference program is at [www.conferenceonline.com/site\\_templet/images/group9/site59/AHA%20Program-Final-20171.pdf](http://www.conferenceonline.com/site_templet/images/group9/site59/AHA%20Program-Final-20171.pdf) and includes the Australian and New Zealand Environmental History Network Conference. There are a few speakers with a connection to the AFHS - Terry Kass, Tom Griffiths, Libby Robin and Daniel May. And for those of you who remember Roger Underwood's article on Zane Grey in the September 2016 issue of the newsletter, there is a presentation from Claire Brennan titled "The Old West fishes Australian Waters: Zane Grey's 1935-6 tour". The website is at [www.aha2017.com.au](http://www.aha2017.com.au).

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The 2017 **Australian Garden History Society** conference will be held in Melbourne from 27th to 29th October, with the theme of "Marvellous Melbourne - the Challenge of Change". The program is still being finalised but the brochure is available at [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AGHS-Melbourne-Conference\\_October-2017-HR.pdf](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AGHS-Melbourne-Conference_October-2017-HR.pdf). The website is at [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au).

The following year's conference will be held in Mittagong, southern NSW, from 26th to 29th October 2018 and a call for papers has already been released - [www.environmentalhistory-au-nz.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/AGHS-submission.pdf](http://www.environmentalhistory-au-nz.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/AGHS-submission.pdf).

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The **American Society for Environmental History** will be holding its 2018 conference in Riverside CA from 14th to 18th March, hosted by the University of California-Riverside and Claremont Colleges. The theme of the conference will be "Environment, Power & Justice". The website is at [http://aseh.net/conference-workshops/2018-conference-riverside-ca/2018-conference-riverside-ca?force\\_web](http://aseh.net/conference-workshops/2018-conference-riverside-ca/2018-conference-riverside-ca?force_web).

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The 17th **International Conference of Historical Geographers** will be held at the University of Warsaw in cooperation with the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, from 15th to 20th July 2018.

Papers and posters are welcome on any aspect of historical geography, including empirical, theoretical and historiographical aspects of the field and related disciplines, including the history of cartography, history of science and environmental history. The website is at <http://ichg2018.uw.edu.pl>.