



AUSTRALIAN

Forest History

SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter No. 34
December 2002

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



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ISSN 1033-937 X

Australian Forest History Society Inc.

President's Report for the year to 30 June 2002

The year has been a successful and decisive one for the Society and we can look forward to the future with a new-found confidence. We can note that our endeavours in forest history contribute to the forthright advance of Australian environmental history generally.

The fifth of our national forest history conferences was held in Tasmania in February 2002. Forty-nine delegates and 16 partners attended and 30 papers were presented of which 28 will be published shortly in the proceedings. The conference was followed by a 2-day study tour of the Southern Forests area around Geeveston. We are most grateful to Denise Gaughwin for organising the Tasmanian venues and tour in a way which was both effective and enjoyable. The Tasmanian conference and tour maintained the friendly ambience that has characterised previous forest history conferences and which greatly assists communication between members of different disciplines and backgrounds.

At our previous AGM, I tabled a draft discussion paper on the future of the Society. Some comments were received, including those from Geoffrey Bolton and Steven Anderson (FHS, USA), and the paper was discussed at a General Meeting of the Society in Hobart on 19 February 2002. The consensus was that:

- ❑ the Society should be continued as an independent Australian body,
- ❑ members were willing to share the administrative tasks to maintain its viability,
- ❑ the conference and proceedings model should be continued,
- ❑ our independence from forest related funding bodies has served us well, and

- ❑ the Society should maintain its focus on forests rather than broaden to the whole field of environmental history.

Following the conference, the administration of the Society has been placed on a viable basis by sharing the duties around the Committee. In particular, we have welcomed Fintán O'Laighin to the Committee in the position of Treasurer, and are grateful to Stephen Legg and Peter Davies for producing issues of the Newsletter, and to Brett Stubbs and others who have undertaken to produce future issues.

Looking to the future, we are delighted that the forest history conferences are to continue and that Jenny Mills has undertaken to organise the next one in Western Australia. It will be held in Augusta from Sunday 12 to Friday 17 September 2004 and will include study visits to the nearby karri forests. Geoffrey Bolton and Mike Carver from Murdoch University have joined a Programme Committee that is developing a strong thematic approach. At the time of our conference, Western Australia will be marking the 175th anniversary of European settlement.

We also have a number of challenges in front of the in-coming Committee and the membership generally. They include making the Society better known, recruiting members, keeping the forest history web site up-to-date and increasing its content, electronic publication, and encouraging oral history and other projects.

The Society is most grateful for the continuing support and encouragement it has received at the Australian National University during the year from Professor Bob Wasson and staff of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, and from Professor Peter Kanowski and staff in the School of Resources, Environment and Society. Our Tasmanian study tour was assisted by the Forest and Heritage Centre at Geeveston and by the Southern Division of Forestry Tasmania.

SOCIETY ITEMS

Wanted: Web Co-ordinator

The Society's website is somewhat out of date. Do we have a member who would be willing to act as a volunteer web co-ordinator? Duties would include regularly checking the website, and liaising with our host to ensure that updated information is provided and installed. Such information would include newsletters as they are published.

Electronic Newsletter

The paper newsletter is NOT about to disappear, but we thought it about time that members were given the option of receiving their newsletters by email. Think of all those lovely colour photos! Electronic delivery will also reduce printing and mailing costs. If you would prefer to have your newsletter emailed (starting with no.35 early next year) please let us know.

Contributions to Newsletter

Your guest editor thanks those who kindly contributed items to this newsletter. He is certain that the editor of the next newsletter will be hoping to receive further interesting contributions, including book reviews (perhaps of new books which are mentioned only briefly in this edition), and research and travel reports.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Anitra Nelson (playwright) joined with Lynne Ellis (RMIT Kaleide theatre director) to present a play reading of 'Servant of the Revolution' at the C.U.B. Malthouse, Melbourne, in September. The play is a family drama based on the imagined tensions surrounding a little spoken of affair between the famous communist revolutionary Karl Marx and Lenchen, his wife's servant. Anitra wrote the play as a spin-off from her doctoral thesis on Marx's concept of money.

John Dargavel recently spent a month in the Northern Territory, researching the history of the paperbark forests there. John's report appears on p. 7.

John Banks travelled overseas recently for the threefold purpose of attending the urban forestry conference in Copenhagen, undertaking a UK study tour, and seeing urban forestry developments in Singapore. Read his report on pp. 8-10.

Brett Stubbs is writing a thematic history of Copmanhurst Shire in the Clarence River district of northern NSW. Compilation of this history is part of the Community Based Heritage Study recently commenced for the shire, and carried out in conjunction with the NSW Heritage Office.

Copmanhurst Shire, which adjoins and is north-west of the City of Grafton, is substantially forested, containing such state forests as Banyabba, Mount Marsh, Fortis Creek, Mount Belmore, Ewingar, and Washpool, among others. 'Forest industry' and 'forest conservation' are themes likely to feature largely in the history being prepared.

Brett Stubbs returned at the end of November from the Gulf of Carpentaria where he had participated in the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland's Gulf Scientific Studies expedition. This expedition, which involved around 30 scientists, was timed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the visit to the eastern Gulf coast and Sweers Island of Matthew Flinders in the *Investigator*. Brett offers this trip as an excuse for being a little late with this newsletter.

Margaret Kowald left her job at the Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland, in November to take up the position of Head, Cultures and Histories Program, at the Queensland Museum.

In Memory of Geoffrey David Pople

by **Dick Curtin**

It is just over a year since **Geoff Pople** passed away in Sydney on 15 November 2001 at the age of 69, after some years of ill health. Geoff, like me, was a relative newcomer to the ranks of the Australian Forest History Society, and our attendance at the Perfumed Pineries Conference at Coonabarabran in November 2000 was a most enjoyable experience for us both. Of course Geoff was well known to many of the members of AFHS because of his long and influential association with forestry, particularly in New South Wales. Geoff became a cadet with the NSW Forestry Commission in 1949, attended Sydney University and the Australian Forestry School, and was awarded the Schlich Medal for Silviculture on graduation in 1954. He was stationed at many localities in NSW during his career, including Bellangry, Oberon, Bombala, Muswellbrook, Coffs Harbour and Casino. Geoff spent two years of travel and study in the United States in the late 1950s. He was transferred to Sydney in 1978 and retired as Chief of the Management and Planning Division in 1990 after more than 40 years of service.

Geoff was very active in the Institute of Foresters; he was National Secretary from 1979 to 1983 and was made a Fellow in 1985. Geoff was a regular traveller to interstate and branch meetings of the IFA and always contributed to the proceedings. He loved bushwalking and also travelled widely to less accessible parts of the world such as Patagonia and Tashkent. This was never easy for Geoff. His arthritis meant that he had to rise early and spend an hour performing warm up exercises before breakfast. Of course he was rather determined too.

Geoff is survived by his wife Olga (they met in Oberon in 1956), their children Chris and Lynette, and their families. He made a great contribution to forestry and we all miss him.

PUBLICATIONS NOTED

Paul Star 2002. 'Native forest and the rise of preservation in New Zealand', *Environment and History* 8(3), pp. 275-294.

News of Forest History no. 31, July 2002. This issue contains four papers presented at the forest history panel session of the 2001 ASEH conference in Durham, USA. The panel was concerned with 'Socio-economic and forest ecosystem change in Europe (19th-20th century)' and has papers on Southern Europe, Switzerland and Sweden.

British Columbia Forest History Newsletter, no. 67, August 2002. This is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. The editor is John Parminter (jvparminter@telus.net).

Forest Practices News, vol. 5(1), September 2002. This magazine, from the Tasmanian Forest Practices Board, has an article by **Robert Onfray** entitled 'A land reborn—Lorinna over the bridge' (pp.14-15) which was the subject of a presentation at our Hobart conference in February. There is also an article by Andrew Wilson on the conference itself (p.16).

NEW BOOKS

Richard Aitken and Michael Looker (eds) 2002. *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, xxix+697 pp., ISBN 0 19 553644 4, RRP \$120.

This latest *Companion* is a fitting sister for the *Oxford Companion to Australian History* on the shelf for one's most useful reference books. The *Companion to Australian Gardens* ranges widely and includes many entries relevant to environmental and forest history. One of the most useful features is the index to over 2500 people included as biographical entries or mentioned elsewhere. Australian forest historians will find entries for some familiar names—such as John Ednie Brown, Norman Jolly, Charles Lane Poole and Harold Swain—and some familiar topics like state

forest nurseries and plantations. But it is in providing convenient references to a host of botanists, landscape architects and conservationists, that the *Companion* will find most use. And of course, there are unexpected delights to be found by browsing: I found entries for the forest ecologists and botanists, Wilfred De Beuzeville (1884-1954) and Christopher Mudd (1852-1920), and entries for several arboreta.

Several members of the Australian Forest History Society have contributed entries: **Angela Taylor, Libby Robin, Peter Macfie, Jane Lennon, Elery Hamilton-Smith, Tom Griffiths, John Gray, Linden Gillbank, Kevin Frawley and John Dargavel.** (JD)

Gregory A. Barton 2002. *Empire Forestry and the Origins of Environmentalism*. Cambridge University Press, xiii+192 pp., ISBN 0 521 81417 0.

Traces the birth of environmental practice in the forests of British India, and follows its spread to Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, and then outside the empire to the United States.

David M. J. S. Bowman and Simone L. Farrer (eds) 2002. 'Measuring and Imagining: exploring centuries of Australian landscape change', *Australian Journal of Botany* 50(4).

This special 50th anniversary issue of the *Australian Journal of Botany* contains 13 papers which collectively demonstrate the importance of historical knowledge in managing dynamic landscapes, particularly in the face of accelerating global environmental change. The issue provides a summary of current approaches to historical ecology, and of current debates about Australian landscape change. More information, including an order form, is included separately with this newsletter.

Donald W. Floyd 2002. *Forest Sustainability: the history, the challenge, the promise*. Durham N.C.: The Forest History Society, x+83 pp., ISBN 0 89030 061 5.

Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill 2001. *Ecological Pioneers: a social history of Australian ecological thought and action*. Cambridge University Press, viii+338 pp., ISBN 0 521 00956 1.

Traces the emergence of ecological understanding in Australia by focussing on the work of significant individuals in various fields such as arts, sciences, politics and public life.

Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking (eds) 2002. *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, xvii+342 pp., ISBN 0 19 558421 X.

One of the most rapid and extensive environmental transformations in human history is that which followed the Maori and then the European colonisations of New Zealand. Among many other things, this collection of essays describes and analyses change across a range of New Zealand environments, from forests to grasslands to swamps. AFHS members **Paul Star** and **Michael Roche** have contributed chapters.

Australia's Italian Heritage Located in Double Duke State Forest

by Jane Gardiner, Heritage Adviser, Alstonville 2477 (jgardine@scu.edu.au)

The NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Refshauge announced on 14 August that 'one of the most important landmarks in Australia's Italian history', the New Italy settlement near Woodburn, had been listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

The story associated with this settlement is one which shows the tenacity, forbearance and technical skills of a unique group of Australian pioneer settlers, who arrived in Australia in 1881 after a failed expedition to New Ireland. Sir Henry Parkes, the Colonial Secretary at the time, decided that the Italian

immigrants could stay in Australia, but not together; they were to be dispersed throughout the colony to learn the language, find work, and make lives for themselves.

In 1882 Rocco Caminotti, a man of Italian origin, met some of the settlers. Knowing of their wish to remain together, he told them of land still being offered for selection in northern NSW. Caminotti and Antonio Pezzuti, a member of the expedition, subsequently visited the region and in April 1882 selected land close to a creek on the South Woodburn-Chatsworth Island coach route, not far from Swan Bay on the Richmond River. Between 1882 and 1888 about thirty Italian families moved to the area taking up fifty-three selections, ranging in size from 40 to 120 acres.

During the early years of the settlement a diversity of forestry, agricultural and horticultural pursuits were attempted including: timber milling, sleeper cutting, the growing of fruit trees such as lemons, apples, loquats and peaches; the cultivation of maize, oats, barley, sugarcane and tobacco; the growing of grapes and the making of wine; and the production of vegetable crops such as sweet potato.

The settlement developed a heart in 1885 when a school was built. For over 40 years the school remained the secular hub of the community and was the location of the 50th reunion to celebrate the Italians' arrival in Australia. By the turn of the century New Italy had a church, several halls, and a store which also served as a post office.

The migrants attempted to develop other industries at New Italy, the most unusual being a sericulture (silk) venture. When this and other ventures like dairying proved difficult, and Giacomo Rosolen sold his sawmill in 1918, many of the settlers started moving to other locations on the north coast and to Queensland. Between 1942 and 1955 much of the fabric of the settlement began to disintegrate. Thus in 1945 when a cyclone severely damaged the New Italy church by knocking it off its stumps, it was not replaced.



Today, evidence of the original settlement can still be found in the form of wells (photograph), footings, fences, tree plantings and other artefacts scattered throughout the area. On many sites the original sclerophyll scrub is encroaching on the archaeological fabric and this is particularly evident in the Double Duke State Forest where a well and house are now situated within an active harvest area. This gives an added dimension to the problems of managing this important heritage site.

Forest history in the Northern Territory

John Dargavel spent a month in the Northern Territory recently, researching the history of the paperbark forests there (see cover photograph), with the help of a NT History Grant from the NT Archives Service. Here is John's report:

This was a most rewarding visit, particularly as I had never been to the 'Top End' of the Territory before. Deborah Rose, a colleague at ANU, gave me a great start by introducing me to Linda Ford, Nancy Daiyi and Margaret Deveraux of the Mak Mak Marranunggu people. They have a wonderful book, *Country of the heart*, coming out from Aboriginal Studies Press later this year. Ricki and I spent a most rewarding day with them on their land, south-west of Darwin, adjacent to Litchfield National Park. Not only did I learn about their paperbark forests and many other things about their deep attachment to their land, but we returned with a delicious magpie goose.

Part of my work was to try to link the history of changing Aboriginal Reserve boundaries with the history of grazing licences over parts of the land. Luckily the Archives Service put me in touch with the Government's Native Title Unit. They have digitised their historic maps and have them on an excellent GIS system that enables one to call up every relevant map by entering the co-ordinates of the area of interest. This is linked to a records system that provides further information; in my case to the references I needed to access files in both the NT Archives and the National Archives in Darwin and Canberra.

David Bowman, in the Northern Territory University, provided a wealth of scientific information and invaluable introductions to others with vegetation survey information and sawmilling experience. Other visits to forests, and work in the Territory Library, added to the paperbark project.

Nothing has been published that I know of about forestry in the Northern Territory since Nicola Hanssen and David Wigston's 1988

paper in the proceedings of our first conference, and a companion piece by David Wigston in *Northern Perspectives* in 1990. It is a history that would be well worth exploring further. I spent a morning discussing it with three people who had worked on the forestry projects: Peter Brocklehurst, Bill Goodwin and R.D. 'Beau' Robertson. The projects were started by the Commonwealth in 1957, but were shut down in 1978. They involved research, establishing *Callitris* and pine plantations, some native forest management, and sawmilling. During their day they employed 100-150 Aboriginal people. The plantations have mostly survived and are coming to utilisable size. An oral history collection would be invaluable but needs to be collected before organisational memory is lost. Small sawmills operated at one time or another in the Territory, some run by the mission stations and others by individuals. (JD)

Heritage or Weeds?

Mention was made in Newsletter no.24 (February 2000) of a First World War memorial planting of camphor laurel trees at Rappville in north-eastern NSW. Camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) is a troublesome species which is spreading uncontrollably in north-eastern NSW and south-eastern Queensland, and it has recently been declared a noxious weed under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 (NSW) throughout several shires in the Richmond River catchment. Local government authorities in that region therefore have the difficult problem of deciding whether to preserve such heritage trees or to remove (and possibly replace) them.

Another First World War memorial planting of camphor laurels has recently come to light, in Ballina, but this seems to be threatened more by ignorance than by noxious weed control. This memorial, which comprised 68 trees in the form of a cross, was planted on ANZAC Day in 1926. The long arm of the cross extended along both sides of Crane Street, Ballina, for two blocks, and probably comprised 44 trees. It appears that all except

two of these were camphor laurels. The short arm of the cross, along Cherry Street, probably comprised 24 camphor laurels.

A recent inspection of this planting revealed that all of the Cherry Street trees have been removed, probably to allow for street widening. Thirty-seven remain of the probable original number of 42 camphor laurels along Crane Street; most of the missing five appear to have been removed to provide sealed street-side parking space. At the eastern end of the avenue stands a lone Kaffir plum (*Harpephyllum caffrum*), the possible remnant of a pair of this South African species planted at the eastern extremity of the main avenue.

It is hoped that further research will reveal details of the fate of the missing trees, and perhaps the significance of planting Kaffir plum in an otherwise monospecific avenue. (BS)

Boer War Memorials

The planting of memorial avenues to honour the war dead was a common practice in Australia after the First World War. But what about the Boer War? A single tree (an oak) was planted in Lilydale, Victoria, on 13 June 1900 to commemorate the defence of Mafeking, and this, to the best of my knowledge, still stands. John Dargavel ('Avenues of Honour' in *Australia's Everchanging Forests IV*) mentioned a Boer War avenue in Horsham, Victoria. Does anyone know of any other Boer War avenues, especially in New South Wales? (BS)

Help please?

George Main (Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, ACT, 0200, ph. 02. 6125 8137) is researching the environmental history of the wheat-sheep belt of southern NSW. He is seeking information on Joseph Dwyer, an avid botanist and the first Catholic bishop of Wagga Wagga. Early in the twentieth century Dwyer apparently lobbied governments and

worked to generate public awareness about the long term effects of ringbarking and land clearing. George would love to hear from any person with knowledge of material that might contain submissions, letters, or any other pieces of writing by Dwyer.

More help please?

Jim Longworth and Ian McNeil have been researching the sawmill owned by Alexander Croll located in the village of Bungwahl, between Seal Rocks and Smiths Lake on the North Coast of New South Wales. The mill was established c.1872 and operated under various owners until 1997, surely some sort of an Australian record. Croll constructed a tramway from the mill to the southern shore of Mayers Point on Myall Lake in 1896. This was the second timber tramway to the point, following that of Hudson Bros. Mayers Point is better known for the extensive timber tramways of Allen Taylor Pty Ltd.

To date, Jim and Ian have been unable to find basic information about the construction of Croll's tramway, its mode of operation, or the rolling stock employed. If any reader can assist with this matter, please contact Jim at 2 The Boulevarde, Cheltenham, NSW 2118 (jimlongw@hotmail.com). (From *Light Railways*, October 2002)

Overseas Travel Report

by John Banks

I travelled overseas recently for one month to attend the urban forestry conference in Copenhagen, to undertake a UK study tour, and to meet staff and see at first hand urban forestry developments in Singapore.

In Copenhagen I gave a paper, jointly authored with Cris Brack, and presented a poster to the 'Forestry Servicing Urbanised Societies' conference which grew out of the recognition of global urban demands for access to green spaces both in and around centres of population, i.e. urban and community forests. Foresters have a key roll in this arena. Also at the conference the new

international journal *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* was launched.

On the field day we visited community forest research at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' Alnarp landscape laboratory in southern Sweden which was established 10 years ago, and the West Forest bordering Copenhagen which has been progressively developed since 1965. The tour was completed with a visit to the Jaegersbourg Deer Park just north of Copenhagen which has over 2 million visitors a year. Here comparisons may be made with Canberra and future uses of Namadgi National Park.

My UK study tour included urban forests, forest rehabilitation, arboreta and botanical gardens, and University campuses at Bangor and Liverpool. Arboreta visited included Nymans, Stourhead, West Deane and Westonbirt (UK's national arboretum); Botanical Gardens included the Eden Project in Cornwall, Welsh National Botanical Gardens at Carmarthen, and National Trust gardens at Bedmont, Llawerchaeron and Plas Newydd. These have all provided ideas for developments here, e.g. the ANU campus and the Lindsay Pryor National Arboretum.

Forests visited included Newborough Pines, a plantation established to stabilise sand dunes on the south coast of Anglesey (near Bangor). Here an interesting comparison can be made with *P. radiata* stands on the NZ west coast and the revegetation of sandmining areas in NSW of which I have had a long involvement. I also inspected naturally regenerated forest stands along the Severn River gorge between Coalbrook and Ironbridge; and the 450 acre remnant of Sherwood Forest whose structure bears a remarkable similarity to snow gum/mountain gum stands in the Brindabella Range!

I had discussions in Denmark with Lee Dudley and Chris Waterfield about the Mersey Forest and Red Rose Forest projects, two of twelve Community Forests in England set up in the early 1990s to provide green belts close to urban areas to beautify often

severely degraded landscapes and provide recreation areas. I also met Chris Barnes, well known Environmental adviser, writer and broadcaster (in the vein of David Bellamy), and Nerys Jones, CEO to the National Urban Forestry Unit based at Wolverhampton. We visited projects around Wolverhampton (the Black Country). Of particular interest was the 'Trees of Time and Place', a nationwide tree program involving 3000 schools, and the 'Learning through Landscapes' programs for town park rejuvenation and nature conservation along railway easements and disused canals. Both are funded from UK Lotto. Great idea. Could Australia do the same?

On a day of unbelievably brilliant sunshine, Prof. Gaardboe took me on a tour of the Liverpool docks—Albert Dock and Pier Head—to see the results of urban renewal and landscaping. Here some canals have been infilled and landscaped, with surrounding warehouses converted into modern apartments. I also visited Letchworth, one of England's first Garden Cities, which has lent landscape ideas to both New Delhi and Canberra. At Finchampstead I walked through the NT Royal Estate forest with David Hartwell, a colleague formerly from Newcastle (NSW), to discuss forest dynamics and current land use issues in this mixed conifer-broadleaf forest, where walkers and horse riders have free access. Also of interest to our future city expansions is the Echo Development in London, which is applying the latest environmental strategies to new suburbs which will house half a million by 2006. Trees are an important feature in this development.

In Copenhagen I met up with Niels Bonde, dendrochronologist attached to the national museum. We had discussions on tree ring research developments in Denmark. At the Forestry School in Bangor I met Dr Pat Denne, a dendrologist who has taken an interest in tree rings.

I spent two days in Singapore with the Parks Management Board. I met Kenneth Er, Senior Parks Manager and Schlich medallist from ANU Forestry, and S. K. Ganesan, also a BScFor(ANU) graduate, now Principal Manager Arboriculture, North and East Branch, and several other senior staff who were most helpful. I was pleased to see this city's urban forest at first hand. It has changed dramatically in the 30 years since I first visited Singapore. I attended the launch of Singapore's Heritage Tree program held in the Botanical Gardens (a set of postage stamps featuring trees was issued at the same time); gave a talk on Australia's urban forests (to some 60 staff); and discussed the potential for co-operation with the School of Resources, Environment and Society at ANU. Interest was expressed in sending staff to our Urban Forestry program and having ANU involved in urban tree research. The Singapore tree database contains records of 1.3 million trees, compared with 400,000 for Canberra! Interest was expressed in our DISMUT system for managing urban trees.

On Ringbarking

The following interesting item about ringbarking was uncovered recently by Dr Pennie Pemberton (Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University, Canberra). It is from the half-yearly report, 10 February 1874, of the Australian Agricultural Company, in connection with the future of the Port Stephens Estate and the loss of sheep.

‘Such a percentage of loss [over 50% in 1856] was unquestionably an extreme case, but as an effect of poor, sour pasture, it accords with the experience of all who have attempted sheep farming on the coast country of New South Wales, and the fact is that at the present

time there is not to our knowledge a sheep establishment on the coast side of the mountains between Jarvis Bay and Point Danger, except here and there on some of the western and northern tributaries of the River Hunter. As regards horned cattle, the result has been less unfavourable; a case in point being the not unsatisfactory out-turn of the Company's breeding herd which occupies the best parts of the Port Stephens Estate [i.e. Gloucester and the Bowman].

A discovery, however, of considerable importance in reference to pastures of this description has been made within the last few years and extensively applied with some success, and that is, that, by destroying the forest timber they are greatly improved. The process is very simple—the removal of a narrow ring of bark; this kills the trees, and the result is a bare forest, no longer shedding its bitter leaves on the ground or excluding the action of the sun and wind upon the pasture. Your late Director, Mr A Busby, informed his colleagues on his return from NSW in 1871, that he had observed cattle in the highest condition on pastures which, till this wholesale destruction of timber had been adopted, were deserted as valueless, and Mr Merewether has received our reluctant permission to disfigure the Port Stephens Estate by the same process. Fortunately the upland timber (not the mountain timber) is worthless, but the dreary aspect of a country so treated is a serious set-off to that advantage of improved pasture and thriving stock.’

Hoppus and true super feet

by John Dargavel

The conversion of measurements given in super feet to present-day metric units has a history all of its own. One would think it would be a simple matter of multiplying by a given factor, but there lurks a complication for the unwary, and a whole raft of them with American units.

Sawn timber: For sawn timber it is very easy. A super foot and the American board foot are both defined as a piece of wood one inch thick, 12 inches (a foot) wide and 12 inches long. It was sometimes called 'super feet true measure'. Given that 1 inch = 25.4 millimetres or 0.0254 metres, 1 super foot = 0.0023597 cubic metres. In order to make this easier to handle, the conversion is usually expressed as 100 super or board feet = 0.236 cubic metres.

Logs: The volume of logs was calculated differently in what is known in Britain and Australia (and New Zealand?) as 'super feet hoppus measure', named for the publisher of books of tables. It is based on the 'quarter-girth system' of measurement which involves taking the girth (i.e. circumference) of a log at its mid-point, dividing that by 4, then squaring the result before multiplying by the length of the log. This had two great advantages for log buyers: (i) it avoided having to multiply by the number for pi ($\pi = 3.1416$), and (ii) it provided an answer that was less than the true volume by 21 percent ($1 - 1/4$) which, it was often argued, allowed for the waste in sawing.

When Australia converted to the metric system, the sawmillers argued for having a hoppus cubic metre. Luckily, they failed, and all metric measures are true. The conversion from logs measured on the quarter-girth system is different from that for sawn timber. It is usually expressed as 100 super feet hoppus = 0.305 cubic metres.

The conversion of log measurements is confounded by various local systems that have been applied to allow for defects of various sorts and I believe that plantation wood in some places may have been measured by true measure while the hardwood was being measured in hoppus measure.

American measurement systems for logs are more complicated and vary in different parts of the country. Some wily buyers use one system for the small logs and another for the

big logs to gain an extra margin over unwary sellers.

Other measures: All sorts of other measures have been used, such as loads (50 cubic feet true in Western Australia), cunits of pulpwood (100 cubic feet true in Victoria), and tons of firewood estimated from stacked volume. Members might like to contribute details of these and other vagaries of the industry.

Odds and Ends from ANU

The old ANU Forestry Department collection has now been transferred to the University's main collection, sent to other good homes, or otherwise disposed of. Some odds and ends were left with me.

For our Society's archives are the series of five 'Ad hoc Communication: Research in the history of forestry and the forest products industry' that were issued from ANU between April 1980 and June 1982. This series is the antecedent to our current Newsletter. The following are available for anyone interested:

M.R. Jacobs 1959. 'The need for forestry research in Australia and its cost', paper to 10th Australian Forestry Conference, Tumut, 21-28 May 1959.

C.E. Lane-Poole 1927, 'Mihi Cura Futuri', *The Sylvanite*, Dec 1927, pp.10-12.

E.H.F. Swain n.d. (1970?), *The Story of ESTIS* (now known as *Austis*) with Foreword by B.U. Byles. Forestry Commission of NSW.

M.R. Allen 1998. *Forest history projects for State Forests of NSW: Case studies of three cypress pine forests in the Lachlan and Brogan River Catchments, Forbes Forestry District on Back Yamma, Euglo South and Strahorn State Forests.*

(John Dargavel)

Forthcoming meetings

13-15 Jan 2003: IUFRO Unit 6.07.03 'History and forest biodiversity', Leuven, Belgium. Contact: Watkins@nottingham.ac.uk

6-9 Oct 2003: OECD Workshop 'Biological Resources and Migration', Marburg, Germany. Contact: werner@mail.uni-marburg.de

Northern Hemisphere Spring 2004: IUFRO Forest History Unit 6.07.00, Vienna, Austria. Contact: Dr Elisabeth Johann elis.johann@utanet.at

3-9 July 2005: International Committee for Historical Sciences Congress, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

8-13 Aug 2005: IUFRO World Congress 'Forests in the Balance: Linking Tradition and Technology', Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Australian Forest History Society Inc.

ABN 56 477 824 185

Membership for Year to 30th June 2003

Please mail this slip with your cheque or money order for \$25 or \$15 for students (overseas \$30 in **Australian currency please**) made payable to:

Australian Forest History Society Inc.
c/- PO Box E123
Kingston ACT 2604

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