IN THIS ISSUE:

In my opinion: IFA on TWWHA
Plantation productivity event
Gottstein Trust report
Peter Fagg remembers...
From the CEO

The 3-day plantation productivity event in Mt Gambier in May was a great challenge to organise but well worth the effort. The feedback was excellent and encourages us to run more professional development activities. Events also provide an excellent opportunity for me to get out and about and meet members. There is more about the event in this newsletter and symposium presentations will be made available for those who could not attend.

Some new initiatives have been keeping us busy including the establishment of a Forest Environment Trust, the creation of a careers portal similar to that found on the Society of American Foresters website, and Freedom of Information applications to find more about the decision making processes underpinning last year’s extension of the Tasmanian World Heritage Area.

In early May member Mark Parsons and I presented on behalf of the IFA to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee Inquiry into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Our presentation was based on the paper submitted to the inquiry earlier which can be found on the IFA website.

Our focus is now on planning for the 2015 conference and finalising the Forestworks resources project.

Alison Carmichael, CEO

Forest Environment Fund

Over the last few months we have been working hard to establish a registered environmental trust. As part of our application we were asked to submit a Statement of Intention, the text of which is provided below to give members an idea of the scope of the Trust once operational. It is our expectation that the Trust will have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

The Forest Environment Trust will raise funds through its public fund and distribute these funds in the cause of sustainable use, development and management of forests and forest resources, particularly to address areas where there are no other sources of funding. In the first few years of the Trust we plan the following activities and will monitor progress:

- Support the conservation and sustainable use, development and management of forest resources locally, regionally, nationally and internationally including the ecosystem services that are associated with the forest resources at these scales
- Support the ecological sustainable development of forest resources including assisting indigenous and local communities to develop these resources
- Consult broadly about priorities for action
- Develop a strategic plan and call for projects that help to achieve the plan
- Focus on and support research into the sustainable use, conservation, development and management of forests
- Ensure that research outcomes are converted to action through publications, tools, seminars and training events
- Support training, research, promotion, knowledge base, education, technology and knowledge transfer, particularly through development of sustainable forestry
- Engage with the general public both for fundraising activities and raising awareness about the value of sustainable use, conservation, development and management of forests.

The following activities illustrate the types of projects that could be supported by the Trust:

- Research into sustainable forestry – conservation, sustainable use, sustainable management and sustainable development
- Inventory and building knowledge bases on forest resources - native forests and their ecosystem services and biodiversity and forest-related values (environment, social and economic).
- Supporting training, professional and technical, in conservation, sustainable use, sustainable management and sustainable development of forest values
- Support tertiary and public education regarding forest management and forest values including primary, secondary and educational material for adults, general public and professionals.
- Enabling professional training, development and international delegation visits associated with sustainable forestry and forest management
- Facilitating forest-related research networks, including national groups and IUFRO research networks
- Promoting and facilitating research in sustainable forestry, sustainable use, conservation, sustainable development and management of forests
- Promote and facilitate international cooperation and knowledge/technology transfer, capacity building in forests
- Support and facilitate Indigenous management planning for biodiversity and carbon ecosystem service markets.
Why Tasmania matters?

IN MY OPINION

Not surprisingly a number of members have contacted me recently questioning why the Coalition government is trying to wind back 74,000 ha of the World Heritage Estate in Tasmania and why the IFA supports this position. Please remember it is only a portion of the whole 172,000 ha of the 2013 extension which many professional forest managers believe is more appropriately managed under the multiple use forest estate and remain available for future uses including harvesting.

The IFA reluctantly supported the Tasmanian IVG process, now more commonly known as the Forest Peace Deal, which led to the Forest Agreement Act 2012 on the basis that we were to be consulted on the final outcomes of the review. We were also very concerned that neither the Parks and Wildlife Service nor Forestry Tasmania, the two most important natural forest managers in Tasmania were part of the negotiations.

This in my view was a political process where the outcome was pre-determined but some semblance of a process was needed to justify it. It had very little to do with quality forest assessment and triple bottom line forest planning. Many of the specialist reports undertaken for the assessment process admitted they had limitations. Call me a cynic but in my mind the peace process will never last. When I heard the former Senator Bob Brown claim in a media interview that he wants all of Tasmania’s natural forests reserved from harvesting it was obvious that the protests were not over.

I want to stress that the IFA wholeheartedly supports the concept of identifying and appropriately managing the outstanding universal values of World Heritage properties and our national reserve system. Tenure, however does not protect anything, only sound professional management of our 125 million hectares of forests will ensure they are sustainably managed for generations to come. Management requires funding and I have been disappointed to discover that annual funding of National Parks in some states is less than $50 per hectare and continues to decline on a per hectare basis. Any commercial forest manager would instantly recognise that this amount is totally inadequate. As a comparison, it costs on average $100 per hectare per year to manage a single species plantation in easy terrain and this figure does not include any capital investment. It is no wonder our National Park managers are struggling to keep roads open, pest plants and animals under control, and take on any active management projects. Unless funding is at least tripled, adding more area to our National Park estate is just condemning those forests to impoverishment and benign neglect.

As Peter Holmgren stated so eloquently at our conference last year the lines on maps serve to divide us rather than uniting us in a landscape approach to forest and general land use planning. There has to be a better way than tenure driven forest planning, particularly given we have 21 million hectares of forest in nature conservation reserves¹, 26 million hectares of forest in the national reserve system² and only 5.5 million hectares³ of the public natural forest estate available for harvesting.

The IFA has written (again) to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to express its concern about the extension and our main points of concern are:

1. The process leading up to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement did not follow our current Commonwealth and State legislation for forest planning.
2. The nominated extension to the World Heritage Area was in excess of 10% of the original area which should trigger far more detailed series of assessments.
3. There was no assessment for perverse outcomes, particularly in terms of social impact assessment. World Heritage nominations should not contribute to unemployment or declining social standards which is understandable in developing countries but equally applies to developed countries. Remember Jack Westoby told us Forests are about People – what about the lives of the estimated 2,000 people who have lost their jobs in Tasmania, what happens to them, what future careers do they have?
4. The decline in multiple use forest area will have an impact on the State’s ability to harvest its forest in a sustainable manner. The supply of specialty wood products to the world renowned Tasmanian woodcraft artisans will cease.
5. The area of multiple use forest has been restricted to such an extent that Forestry Tasmania’s management flexibility has been dramatically reduced. They are likely to be faced with difficult decisions between harvesting sensitive forest areas (that have not been mapped) or be in default of their supply arrangements. A cynic could suggest this was done on purpose so that Forestry Tasmania would be found in breach of the Forest Practices Code at some point in the future.

Will we get anywhere? Who knows! We will in all likelihood be outgunned by very large, wealthy anti-forestry ENGO’s who will play lots of emotional, political and quasi-scientific cards to a largely uninformed public, and government organisations who would like to move on.

But in the end someone must make a stand for not only sound forest management, planning and funding but also the people who rely on these forests and have lost their jobs.

So in summary why does Tasmania matter?

In my opinion it matters because what happens here could ultimately happen in other states. The pressure is already building in Victoria. It matters because Australia has invested heavily over the last 20 years in developing national and internationally accepted scientific frameworks and decision making processes for forest planning which were ignored or subverted in Tasmania. And finally Tasmania matters because members said the Institute should be vocal about issues concerning good forest management and that we should protest where policy and decisions are not in the best interests of the future of Australia’s forests.

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¹ Australia’s State of the Forest Report 2013: Table 1.24
² Australia’s State of the Forest Report 2013: Table 1.24
³ Australia’s State of the Forest Report 2013: Table 2.3
IFA BUSINESS

IFA Board communique to members May 2014

The following message was distributed by email to members in late May. It is reproduced here for those who may have missed it.

This communique is an update to help keep members informed about deliberations and decision-making at recent Board meetings. Like many other not-for-profit member-based organisations, the IFA is facing the “double whammy” of declining numbers (at the rate of 5% per annum) and an ageing membership.

Costs are increasing as membership fee income is decreasing. The impact of this decline is even greater for the IFA as a substantial proportion of members pay no fees or reduced fees. As membership fees make up over 80% of our income we can no longer continue to provide the same services in the same way.

This decline is occurring at a time when the sector most needs an effective professional body. The challenge we face is to ‘do more with less’, and so, as we look forward to celebrating IFA’s 80th anniversary next year, the Board and management are committed to ensuring that the organisation is well-positioned to ensure it remains viable and effective for another 80 years.

One of the ways for the Institute to remain viable and effective is to increase membership numbers and encourage a higher proportion of Registered Forestry Professionals. We will also become the “go to” organisation for all aspects of forest management, and to diversify our income to include revenue from events, training and information products. In this way, member fees become just one part of the mix.

We have been observing what other organisations are doing to successfully increase membership, both domestically and overseas. Not surprisingly, it all comes down to making changes in our structure and business model – particularly in the types of services delivered and how they are delivered.

Members will have already noticed some positive changes over the last two years, with a fresh website and new look publications. We are currently focusing on delivering a range of professional development events such as the valuation seminar we held in Melbourne late last year and last week’s 3-day plantation symposium in Mt Gambier. In the pipeline is digital access to all our information products, and a careers and employment portal.

Not all the changes will be welcomed by everyone. For example, recently the Board was asked to reconsider the decision to only publish The Forester on the website. After much discussion the Board decided to stay with their original decision in the knowledge that we hold active email addresses of 95% of members and that most other similar organisations have also made the change to digital communications to save substantial resources that are better used elsewhere in the organisation. Note that if more members voluntarily select ‘electronic only’ access to Australian Forestry we can free up even more funds to pursue new activities. In future we plan to further develop all our publications so they contain reference links, and are searchable and storable.

Over the next few months members will notice a change in our administration arrangements. At the end of the financial year we will say farewell to Anne Katalinic and Ed Chalmers and contract our administration to a business specialising in supporting not-for-profit organisations like ours. Alison Carmichael will remain in Canberra, with more time to spend on business development and strategic issues, which the Board is keen for her to do.

We acknowledge that vigilance is needed through the change process so as to not lose what worked well in the past, and to keep the very best of this body of work. We also recognise that the effective functioning of the Institute has always been reliant on the voluntary efforts of IFA members, many of whom have supported the Institute for decades.

To move forward together we invite members to continue to actively engage, particularly through your Division, as this is the most effective mechanism to hear about the changes afoot and be able to contribute your comments and your ideas.

Forestry Scholarship Fund update

This year we received no applications for undergraduate scholarships but the good news is there were 6 successful applications for Master’s scholarships, all from the University of Melbourne. Recipients were: Helen Bull, Christopher Morton, Paul Bentley, Gavin Livingstone, Jorge Mandonado and Thomas Dodemaide. Congratulations all.

Isis Lim received the Jacobs Medal for outstanding field studies in Forestry at ANU from ACT Divisional Chair Stuart Davey
Incorporating conference, workshops, tours and networking activities.

The conference program will have something for everyone including:

- Forests in international development
- Indigenous land management
- Commercial forestry – aligning customers and supply chain
- Forest fire management
- Integrating forests and agriculture
- Forested catchments and water management
- Wood products and the built environment
- Urban forests
- Innovation in forest management
- Climate resilient landscapes
One of the key messages that arose from the Plantation Productivity Symposium was that Australia can lift its plantation productivity considerably if we are prepared to fund the coordinated and systematic research needed to get us there.

Over eighty of the country’s best forest researchers and managers attended the symposium in Mt Gambier in May to discuss how and why plantation productivity can and should be improved.

During the field tour participants saw an 11 year old ForestrySA plantation that has an average growth rate of 50m3/ha/yr which over double the current average! This is a phenomenal achievement and one we would only expect to find in places like Brazil.

IFA President Rob de Fegely said in his summing up that if we could permanently lift the mean annual production of our softwood plantations from their current level from around 16 to 17 m3/ha/year to over 30 it would improve the economics of plantation businesses significantly and remove any need for sawntimber imports.

Keynote speaker at the Symposium, Dr Sadanandan Nambiar AO, was not surprised by the result, saying “we do not need to go overseas to find solutions to our plantation productivity research problems. We have all the skills we need here in Australia.

Dr Nambiar is confident that implementing research will pay dividends if plantation investors ensured they had the right harvesting and silvicultural systems in place so as to protect soil health, which he says is crucial to improving productivity.
Recently the IFA ran a three-day symposium in Mt Gambier about improving the productivity of existing plantations. Ninety people attended this event from all over Australia, providing an excellent opportunity to formally launch the Forestworks sponsored resource writing project that supports delivery of the new Advanced Diploma of Forest Industry Sustainability. CEO Alison Carmichael is the manager of the project and she gave a presentation to the group about where the Advanced Diploma fits into the national training framework.

Mark Parsons, IFA member and writer of two of the resources, attended the symposium to meet with attendees and discuss the project. “The project was very well received”, said Mark. “It was the first time that many of the people had heard about the Advanced Diploma and they were very interested in the idea of a course in sustainability, and that it did not just focus on the environment, but also on economic and social factors. They were particularly pleased to learn that the IFA is taking a lead role and using the expertise of members both to support members and to help develop education materials for the forestry and wood products industries”.

Mark was available during breaks to talk to event attendees about the project and also took the time to meet with other people in the Green Triangle region, travelling to Tarpeena to talk to Deb Kuhl, Training Manager at Timberlink and Jan Newport, Senior Project Officer with Climate Change Planning, Natural Resources South East.

Writers have taken a “consult as your go” approach to resource development, regularly sending out material for comment to reviewers. During June the well-developed drafts will be taken to industry by independent reviewers for final feedback. The completed resources will be available at the end of June.

Mark Parsons (L), resource writer, with IFA member Keith Atkinson discussing the Forestworks project whilst in Mt Gambier.

This project has been funded by Forestworks with support from the Australian Government Department of Industry.

You can find out more about the project on the IFA website at: http://forestry.org.au/ifa-events/resource-development-project-apr-jun-2014 or contact Alison Carmichael on 0141 287 079 or alison.carmichael@forestry.org.au.

Mark Parsons (L), resource writer, with IFA member Keith Atkinson discussing the Forestworks project whilst in Mt Gambier.

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Forestry quiz

A quiz was compiled by Mike Bleby as a fun activity for the IFA Symposium Dinner held in Mt Gambier in May 2014. The winner was Paul Smale. The following is based on the evening’s questions.

Q1 In the early 1900’s a significant problem emerged in *Pinus radiata* plantations in SA caused by a trace element deficiency. What was the element?
   A Copper
   B Zinc
   C Boron

Q2 How many pine cones of *Radiata Pine* – on average – are required to yield one kilogram of seed?
   A 100
   B 200
   C 300

Q3 Dr Max Jacobs was Principal of the Australian Forestry School from 1944 to 1959. His initials were M. R. Jacobs. What was his middle name?
   A Ralf
   B Robert
   C Roger

Q4 The first world IUFRO Conference was held in 1892. In recent times it has been held every 5 years. In 2010 it was Seoul; in 2005 it was Brisbane; in 1990 it was Montreal. In which country was it held in the year 2000?
   A Malaysia
   B Finland
   C Switzerland

Q5 Charles Edward Lane Poole is a famous forestry name of the 20th Century. He was Conservator of Forests in WA. He played a role in establishing the Australian Forestry School and he became Inspector General of Forests. Less well known is that he had an artificial body part. What was it?
   A Eye
   B Leg
   C Arm

Q6 The international standard for the position for tree diameter measurement known as breast height is not the same in all countries. In Australia it is 1.3m whereas in New Zealand it is 1.4m. Which country below is the same as NZ?
   A Canada
   B UK
   C South Africa

Q7 In South Australia’s early plantation history, the Government formed the Woods and Forests Department. In what year did this take place?
   A 1882
   B 1875
   C 1880

Q8 SA’s first Rhodes Scholar was forester Norman William Jolly. He had a distinguished forestry career in Oxford, Burma, Forestry at Adelaide University, Forestry Commissioner in NSW, and consultant to SA Woods & Forests Department. He also spent a period of time in another Australian State. Which State was it?
   A WA
   B QLD
   C TAS

Q9 According to the information supplied to attendees of the 1928 British Empire Forestry Conference which was held in WA – what was the annual value of Sandalwood exported from that State at that time?
   A £100,000
   B £200,000
   C £300,000

Q10 W. F. Blakely described himself as a Botanist and a Eucalyptologist. In 1934 he published his key to the Eucalypts based on the characteristics of floral anthers. He described 500 species and a number of varieties. How many varieties did he describe?
   A 118
   B 128
   C 138

See page 16 for answers to the forestry quiz.
MEMBER ARTICLES

A successful model for establishing plantations on private land and providing ongoing support to private growers

Cameron MacDonald

I was fortunate to receive a Gottstein Fellowship in 2012 and spent two weeks in Ireland, England and Finland looking at how these countries have developed a significant fibre resource on private land and an engaged landowner network to maintain this resource.

Even though I was aware of the market distortions created by the European Union and more specifically the Common Agriculture Policy, I naively latched on to the fact that Ireland had established 200,000 ha of private plantations since 1993 as a possible solution to Australia’s inability to fund investment in long rotation plantations. Whilst I quickly learnt that politically Europe is a totally different proposition relative to Australia, there are still concepts and approaches that we can learn from.

There were two elements to my study tour being:

1. Exploring how the UK and Ireland had facilitated new investment in plantations; and
2. Understanding how Finland has provided management support to forest growers

A MODEL FOR PROVIDING INVESTMENT IN NEW PLANTATIONS

Both Ireland and England entered the 20th century with very little forest cover; <1% and 5% respectively, essentially caused by deforestation to facilitate agricultural expansion. There have been various grant schemes established by both governments to encourage planting on private land over the last 90 years, particularly in the UK where more than 1.3 m ha of woodland have been established in parcels averaging 13 ha, of which 75% are broad-leaved species.

Central to the provision of these grants has been funding from the European Union (EU) of up to 70% of the cost of the various schemes, linked to two complementary policy objectives to (1) reduce the over production of food in the EU by diverting up to 15% of marginal farmland into alternative land use, primarily to grow trees; and (2) increasing forest cover in countries that had experienced significant deforestation such as Ireland and the UK.

The structure of grants and the rules governing selection of sites and management of the stands have taken various forms with mixed success in terms of take up by farmers. The key determinant to an increased take up by farmers has been the move to annual payments to the landowners.

The Irish and UK governments have been clever in how the payments have been structured with various requirements used to protect the government’s investment including:

• Approximately 40% of the grant is allocated to pay consultants to submit the grant application and to forest management contractors to do the work, avoiding landowners seeking to take short-cuts. This has also supported the key element of the business case in Ireland for ongoing government funding as a means to provide employment opportunities in depressed regional communities.
• A portion of the grant is held in reserve until age four until the performance of the stand is assessed by a Registered Forestry Consultant or the Forestry Service to ensure the stand has meant a minimum performance standard.
• The proposed site must pass a strict assessment of the productivity and growth potential to ensure the benefit of the investment is maximised in terms of saleable product.
• Perhaps most importantly the land is permanently classified as being for timber production and a condition of the felling licence is that the landowner has to re-establish the next stand at their own expense.

The level of grant is structured to reflect the cost of establishment of the particular species, ranging from $4,200/ha for Sitka Spruce up to $7,300/ha for Oak.

Other grants are available to growers for roading and thinning paid on a $/linear metre and $/ha basis respectively.

The author is with Michael Power (from the Irish forest grower Coillte) inspecting a road being constructed in a 10 year old stand of Sitka Spruce established on private property.
The introduction of the annual premiums was the game changer in terms of getting farmers on board. Having personally discussed the option of growing trees with landowners over many years, particularly in promoting joint schemes where the landowner only received cash when timber products were harvested, this concept resonated with me. Psychologically it is difficult for farmers to accept putting land aside based on the promise of future returns many years out, compared with the immediate returns from cropping and grazing. NPV and IRR may be the language of forestry investment managers but by necessity farmers are very much focused on cash in hand.

The premium scheme is essentially meant to compensate the landowner for loss of agricultural income. There is a distinction made between farmers and absentee landowners, with the premium for farmers being paid for 20 years and only 15 years to non-farmers and at a lower rate. The distinction is necessary given the amount of land within travelling distance of London that could be described as being “weekenders” for the wealthy where the need for a premium to encourage planting trees is not necessary.

For the main species being Sitka Spruce, the level of premiums ranges from $540/ha per annum for farmers down to $260/ha per annum for absentee landowners.

The grants, premiums and profits from sale of produce are currently tax free in Ireland and the UK. The Irish government is considering putting a cap on the tax-free amount of $180,000 per annum which would be exceeded if a farmer were to clearfall more than 6ha in any one year.

When one looks at the following chart of Ireland’s afforestation rate, the shape of the curve bears a striking resemblance to what has occurred in Australia over the last 100 years i.e. a long period of State investment followed by a recent spike in private investment.

The clear difference is the source of funding (the Irish government and EU has funded it all) and the sustainability of the investment (the greater focus on site selection in Ireland and the requirement that the land should be permanently set aside for forestry) should ensure that saleable products are harvested across the entire estate on an ongoing basis.

In the early 2000’s when the EU-funded grants program was tapering off and the Irish government was losing its appetite to sustain the program, some of the key players such as the Irish Farmers Association, Irish Tree Growers Association and the Irish Forestry and Forest Products Association engaged respected economist Peter Bacon to develop the business case for the government to continue funding the establishment program necessary to hit the targets established on the industry strategic plan that was developed in 1996 with the goal of developing an estate that would provide the critical mass to support world-scale processing facilities. Bacon subsequently published a report entitled “Forestry: A Growth Industry in Ireland June 2003” which outlined the key benefits for a government-funded expansion of the plantation estate which included regional employment, expanding a renewable resource for the benefit of future generations, creation of a carbon sink, and the amenity and leisure values provided by such an estate.

The challenge with any economic analysis of this kind is the confidence in the robustness of the metrics, particularly given that many are based on a future state that might not be reached. However, in this case I think the more pertinent facts are that Bacon was recognised for his independence and standing as an economist of note such that his report had credibility. In reading the document one cannot be critical of the depth of the analysis and thought that has gone into the structure of the review.

In short the analysis has stood the test of time and is still the basis for ongoing financial support by the Government. This is borne out by the fact that in 2007 and with the looming global financial crisis, the Irish government, with the support of Green party, has continued to fund new plantings on private land to the tune of $150m per annum in order to achieve the targets of the forestry blueprint to achieve a critical resource area.

So in terms of how such a scheme would be received by the public if implemented in Australia? The broad support of key stakeholders (which the MIS schemes never had) is a key start. It is obvious that in Ireland the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) is a very powerful force in Irish politics. Obviously the economic environment is different and the case for supporting regional employment greater than in Australia. However, as a blueprint for securing sustainable investment in long rotation plantations, I am not aware of any more successful than this in recent times.

Providing ongoing support to forest growers

Finland has established a sound structure for the provision of advice to private growers through Forest Management Associations (FMA) (www.mhy.fi) that were established early last century under the Forest Management Association Act. Under this Act if your forest area is greater than a certain size (dependent on location and therefore productivity), you pay a levy based on 2 components;

- A basic fee set at 70% of the average stumpage price per m3 and
- A per ha fee which is set by the individual FMA and again is a % of the stumpage price (between 1.5-11%).

By way of example, for a 30ha holding in southern Finland the landowner will pay approximately $150 per year. In total 310,000 owners contribute $40m per annum across the country. The tax authority collects the fee and passes it on to the FMA.
The FMA’s work in close cooperation with the forest owner in 3 key areas:

1. Forest management services (harvesting, roading and regeneration)
2. Training and planning services, including organising group certification
3. Assistance with timber sales

Approximately 80% of the forest management activities in private forests are carried out by FMA’s and 70% of preliminary planning for timber sales. FMA’s maintain a database of prices received by growers, with current stumpage returns of $80/m³ for sawlog and $25/m³ for pulplog dependent on species. Having transparency of market prices is clearly beneficial to growers.

A forest owner (left) and staff from the local FMA at a thinning operation in a 30 year old birch stand.

Grower Associations in Finland and Ireland

In Finland, market and political support for growers is provided by MTK, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, with nearly 155,000 members across the country. MTK promotes sustainable family forestry with the objectives of the organisation being to:

• Look after the private forest owners’ interests in timber trade
• Influence forest policy legislation
• Protect the interests of the FMA’s and develop cooperation between forest owners

In addition to the cooperatives in Finland, I was able to assess the grower associations that are active in Ireland. Of the 19,500 private forest owners in Ireland, 84% are farmers. There are currently two organisations that represent grower interests which are Irish Farmers Association and Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA).

I was fortunate to attend an ITGA field day and there is a real upbeat mood for the grower associations in Ireland and why wouldn’t there be? They are part of an industry that is growing rapidly so their membership base is burgeoning, not declining. This is also includes a growing contractor base that contribute financially to the ITGA.

It makes you appreciate the benefits of critical mass which is a clear objective of the Irish government’s strategic vision for forestry. From my brief time in Ireland the vision is clearly being realised.

Below are attendees at this field day with young stands of well performing Sitka Spruce in the background.

CONCLUSIONS – WHAT CAN POTENTIALLY BE APPLIED IN AUSTRALIA?

1. Direct government investment in growing trees

Whilst there appears to be a limited appetite for government funding of plantation investment in Australia, the industry should look at the business case approach outlined in the Bacon report but at targeted fibre supply catchments to ensure that there is sufficient volume in the future to build world scale processing facilities.

The obvious candidates are:

• the Gippsland region around Australian Paper’s Maryvale mill
• the Hume region in southern NSW/Northern Victoria where significant processing capacity is in place; and
• the Green Triangle region in SW Victoria/SE South Australia

The boundaries of each catchment would be defined by the current view on what is a viable haulage distance to the current processing facilities.

2. Grower support services

It is difficult to see how the FMA model could be applied in Australia given the small scale and geographic spread of the private forest estate. Organisations in some states replicate what FMA’s do e.g. Private Forests Tasmania, but do not have the mandate to provide customer-focused services to private landholders and are under current funding pressure as cash-strapped state governments look to reduce their service offering.

One is more positive when you look at the MTK model in Finland, and therefore by extension whether private growers interests that are currently represented by Australian Forest Growers (AFG) would benefit from a more formal relationship with the National Farmers Federation who have the infrastructure in place to provide the service that MTK provides to growers in Finland.

The key issue is how you fund this and any associated support services. Ultimately you want to get to a user-pays footing but is this ever going to be achievable in Australia? From my perspective the reality is that unless you get more critical mass in terms of more private growers, developing support services such as they have in Finland will be challenging.

I would like to personally thank the Gottstein Trust for providing the financial support to undertake this study tour and for HVP Plantations for allowing me the time to undertake the travel.
The suggestion is often made that fire was used to effect large-scale clearances of woodland in Britain. But while nobody should minimise its seriousness as a threat to young coniferous plantations, the only conclusion possible from an examination of the facts, is that fire has never been more than an auxiliary. Among dry vegetation in spring, such as heather, gorse, or even bracken, amid which young trees have been planted, or among the trees themselves at the thicket stage, fires may spread very quickly. But expanses of such growth are features of present-day afforestation, not of primeval forests, in which small and uneven clearings occur. Nor can we safely draw analogies from North America, home of the world’s biggest and worst fires, because those occur under conditions of extreme dryness of the atmosphere, which are hardly ever experienced under our insular climate.

I write with exceptional experience of the risks of fire to woodland of different kinds, as from 1940 to 1945. I was concerned with fire-fighting arrangements over many thousands of acres of forest in the South of England. Besides the usual hazards, these [forests] were subject to unusual risks [during the War] from large-scale military training and aircraft, and in particular to occasional showers of German incendiary bombs; so, over this long period of varying weather conditions, it is safe to say that any kind of vegetation that could be set alight, was set alight, and had of course to be tackled by fire-fighters. Broadleaved woodland of any kind simply refused to burn at any time, although fires in coniferous plantations, and among heather or gorse, were serious and frequent ...

... young coniferous crops were destroyed completely, but among older [coniferous] trees the timber itself was hardly ever consumed, though charred and blackened at the butt. Most trees so damaged die, but generally a few thick-barked individuals survive; quite enough, in fact, to re-seed the burnt-over area if nature were left to itself. So, even in coniferous woods of mature age, we can dismiss the idea of some great holocaust making a clean sweep of trees over great stretches of the countryside.

I have always regarded the work of the fire and rescue brigades at the time of the Blitz with the greatest admiration. But now it seems I should also admire the unsung work of British foresters who “did their bit” in the control of forest fires during the war years. It is a story yet to be told, or at least it is one of which I had not previously heard. I wonder whether the forestry companies raised in Australia and sent to the UK during the war (of which my uncle Geoff Chandler was a member) became involved in the fire-fighting. Many of the forestry officers and timber workers who worked in the forestry companies would have brought first-hand bushfire experience with them.

Trees and fire – an interesting observation from World War II

Roger Underwood

In a recent article in The West Australian newspaper I suggested that people building new homes in bushfire-prone areas in south-western WA should consider planting northern hemisphere deciduous hardwood trees rather than native eucalypts like jarrah (Eucalyptus marginata) and marri (E. calophylla), or that perennial Western Australian favourite, the lemon-scented gum (E. citriodora). The eucalypts not only drop their leaves in the height of summer, but contain volatile and flammable oils in their foliage which explode when ignited. The deciduous hardwood trees on the other hand are relatively non-flammable, and have the additional advantage of lovely autumn colours and providing access to winter sun.

My message went down like the proverbial with promoters of native “waterwise” gardens, to whom exotic species have always been anathema and who, as far as I can see, rarely give attention to the bushfire consequences of their landscaping.

There is nothing new about my suggestion. Nor do we lack for good examples of the principle. One of the best local examples I know is an interest in bushfire safety.

Recent bushfires in the peri-urban suburbs of Perth have brought all this to mind. My newspaper article was in response to about nineteen phone calls from people who wanted to plant trees on their block, but did not want a bushfire hazard. They were confused by the conflict between people promoting native gardens and those with an interest in bushfire safety.

By coincidence, just at this time I was happily reading H.L Edlin’s wonderful book Trees, Woods and Men, a 1956 edition of which I picked up for a few dollars in a second-hand book shop in Fremantle. Edlin was an English forester in the 1930s and 40s, and his book, although dated and rather old-fashioned, is still a delightful account of forestry and forest history in Great Britain. I have found it full of fascinating personal observations and interesting illustrations.

There is almost nothing about bushfire management in Edlin’s book, as you would expect for a treatise on forestry in Britain. But one brief section caught my attention.

In discussing the historic role of fire in the clearance of the once-great forests that covered England, Edlin makes his point, and supports it, with a glimpse into his work as a forester during the Second World War:
All of this reminded me of a proposal put to me in the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. To minimise the bushfire problem in Victoria, it was suggested, the native eucalypt forests on national parks and State forests in and around Melbourne should be cleared and replanted with oak.

When hearing this I first smiled quietly, imagining the reaction of some to this proposal but then the forester in me kicked in. I had to tell the proponent that I could not agree with him. I love our native eucalypt forests and their role in Australian society, culture and industry, and I have spent the best part of my life trying to conserve and protect them. The bushfire threat that native forests present to humans living within or up against them is not the fault of the forests – it is a post-European-settlement artifact.

Moreover, it is a problem that could be fairly easily minimised, if forest managers were prepared (or were able) to reduce bushfire fuels on a regular basis with mild-intensity prescribed fire. This was the approach our Aboriginal forebears understood to perfection, but which has somehow become politically incorrect today.

But in addition to the national parks and State forests there are also the ‘backyard forests’ scattered through suburbia in Australia, especially in those greenfield residential areas springing up on former farmland. Here a different approach could be taken.

I inspected one of these on the outskirts of Perth recently and found to my astonishment that a condition of subdivision imposed by a government agency was that the developer must establish a thick belt of highly flammable eucalypts and melaleucas along the eastern edge of the new houses. It was a classic situation where deciduous hardwoods would have performed all the desired functions of a stand of trees (summer shade, windbreak, sound proofing, even habitat to some degree) but would not have turned into a ghastly fire hazard in a few years time.

Finally, two photographs from Edlin’s book made me smile. The first is entitled “planting Scots pine in Perthshire” and it reminded me instantly of radiata pine planting on the slopes up out of the Blackwood valley in WA many years ago, the planting gang on hands and knees.

The other captures an old-world scene, almost unknown to present day Australians, but well-recognisable to foresters over the age of about 70. The scene shows nurserymen, hand-weeding. Nothing much unusual about this, you might say, but the seedlings in the photograph were Sitka spruce.

I once knew Sitka spruce (Picea sitkensis) rather well. It grew naturally along the Olympic Peninsula in the Pacific North West, where for a while I worked in the mid-1960s, and then later I came to grips with it in plantations in Scotland. ‘Coming to grips’ with Sitka spruce was not an enjoyable experience. This species has the sharpest, most prickly and human-repelling foliage of any plant I have ever come up against, even worse than the jarrah forest’s Acacia pulchella (known to us all as Buggery Bush). I have to wonder about those nurserymen in the picture. They must have had extremely tough hands, as none of them appear to be wearing gloves.

Old books about forestry in Britain in the years in and around WWII are unlikely to grasp the attention of many modern days foresters. But I love the insights into forest history and the early forester’s profound and detailed knowledge of their trees and woodlands and their management requirements. It is a happy reminder of the days when forestry was a widely-admired and important profession.

Palmyra, February 2014

A memorable weekend

The weekend of 7–9 February 1975 was a memorable one for Forests Commission firefighters in the Orbost District of East Gippsland, Victoria. Over that weekend, and in that one district, no fewer than 14 bushfire outbreaks, all caused by lightning strikes with several in remote forest, were discovered and controlled. The total area burnt was only 10 hectares.

The months leading up to that weekend were average in terms of rainfall, although the days before Friday 7th had been warm, fine weather and the forests were very dry.

Following an oppressive day on the Friday and a forecast of hot and unstable conditions for the coming weekend, District Forester Garry Griffin directed that the forestry crews be stationed at strategic positions throughout the district. This would enable a quick first attack on any fire. Lightning was flashing and thunder rolling by early Friday afternoon, and at 2 pm the action started. The lookout towers reported a fire near the Bemm River Road, about 32 km east of Orbost, in silvertop-stringybark forest.

Thereafter, a rapid succession of fires were discovered and reported from the lookout towers, aerial patrols, district residents and sawmill employees. By the time the 14th fire was reported on the Saturday morning, every one of the 45 men in the Orbost and Bendoc forestry crews were committed, either in reconnaissance, fire-bombing, and dropping of supplies”.

Gary Griffin was later reported in the Snowy River Mail of 12 February 1975, as saying that “aircraft played an important part in reconnaissance, fire-bombing, and dropping of supplies”. However, he said the dedication and determination of the fire-fighting crews on the ground was the crucial factor.

When I reflect on it, I believe that the containment to only 10 hectares of 14 almost simultaneous fire outbreaks in the one district was testament mostly to the knowledge and experience of the local crews, followed by the skill of light aircraft pilots, and an aggressive first attack strategy. However, one other factor - widespread fuel reduction burning throughout the Orbost district – was also a critical factor. It was this ‘cool autumn burning’ program carried out during the previous 5-6 years which resulted in reduced fuel levels that allowed successful direct attack on most of the fires.

Peter Fagg’s story is the latest in the series in which Australian foresters recall memorable bushfire experiences. The full collection will later be published as an anthology, edited by Oliver Raymond and Roger Underwood. If you have a story to tell, Oliver and Roger would love to hear it. Send to yorkgum@westnet.com.au or oliverraymond@wideband.net.au

FORESTRY QUIZ ANSWERS:

| Q1 | B |
| Q2 | C |
| Q3 | A |
| Q4 | A |
| Q5 | C |
| Q6 | C |
| Q7 | A |
| Q8 | B |
| Q9 | B |
| Q10 | C |
It is good for us to be reminded from time to time of the essential foundations on which the art and science of forestry have been built. The sweep of new technology within a working lifetime may have masked this fact. Roger Underwood’s essay in Australian Forestry in March ought to have stirred up members’ concern for sufficient botany in forestry courses. The heated and dogged conflicts between some players on the stage of forestry education can also remind us of what strong-willed individuals can achieve.

Thanks to John Dargavel’s book we can better understand the imperatives which drove the pioneer of the national forestry movement in Australia, C E Lane-Poole, who did in his way in his day what he thought best, to build on the foundation of sound forest policy and to train forest staff. The School at Nancy had formed his attitudes and his service in Africa and Papua New Guinea fuelled his zeal for demarcation and control of the forest estate. Lane-Poole inspired and conspired the establishment of the national school of forestry, and was its acting Principal from 1927 until 1944.

John Ednie Brown added to his early experiences of Scottish nurseries and plantation estate work by forest inspections in the USA and Canada. His reports attracted praise and prizes. He was appointed to establish colonial forestry in South Australia, and was head-hunted to become Director-General of NSW forests in 1890. He also inspected the forests of Western Australia and reported on the marketable timber of that Colony. He returned to South Australia and became the first Conservator of the Department of Woods and Forests. He was also a fine botanical artist, and is also remembered for the series of lithographs of forest trees of South Australia, which adorn the walls of libraries, herbaria and sundry professional waiting rooms.

In Victoria the role of botany in the diploma course at its school of forestry was promoted for more than 25 years by the foundation professor of botany in the University of Melbourne. Alfred J Ewart (1872 to 1937) was the first chairman of the forest examiners in 1908, and continued in that role until 1937. His Handbook of Forest Trees for Victorian Foresters (1925) was still issued to students from stocks held by the Forests Commission well into the 1940s. The handbook covered tree ferns and ‘practically all shrubby forms which may exceed 10 or 15 feet in height’ as well as the native timber trees, and exotic softwood species.

It appears that Ewart nominated Edwin James Semmens to be head of the Creswick School, following Charles Carter’s move to the national school. Semmens was seconded from the Education Department. He had shone in zoology and was a keen field botanist. In 1935 he was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London. When his secondment expired after three years Semmens decided to carry on at the School of Forestry until retirement age, and he continued to teach forest entomology for some time after that.

Professor Ewart was a tireless ally of the Forestry School during the years of negotiation of closer ties with the University. The Annual Report of the Forests Commission 1937–38 recorded this tribute to him: ‘He was closely associated with the development of the Creswick Forestry School from its inception in 1910, and it is due in no small measure to his encouragement and valuable assistance that the School has attained its present high status. The Commission takes this opportunity of placing on record its appreciation of his service to Victorian forestry and his work as Chairman of the Board of Examiners.’

John Stewart Turner (1908–1991) succeeded Ewart as Professor of Botany at the University in 1938, when this young and unexpected appointee commenced his distinguished career in Australia. He was authorised in 1938 to be an examiner under the Forest Examination Board, and became a member of it in 1943. He was chairman of the Board of Forestry Education and mentor and protector of John Chinner and his small school of forestry within Faculty of Science in The University of Melbourne. The second and third year botany syllabuses encouraged forestry students to understand and to love plant science no end.

Professor Turner also mentored William Litster, BScFor (Hons) Edinburgh, the resident lecturer in botany and forest botany at the Creswick School. He was there from 1928 to the end of 1968, and Turner kept an eye on the currency of his teaching and field exercises.

Creswick diplomats who went on to university studies were expected to do well in two further years of botany, and most of them did that. But the palmy days were not to last. It is said that not long before he retired, in 1973, Turner came to think that the future of the forestry section under the umbrella of the Faculty of Science would become doubtful without his influence to support it, and advised the Reader-in-Charge, John Chinner, to explore the prospects of a future within the Faculty of Agriculture.

Forestry moved into that Faculty, where its fortunes reflected unwelcoming attitudes in the ranks of agriculture. At least one professor of agriculture scoffed at silviculture as a major study, even likening it to horticulture, which he reckoned could be read up during a long weekend, enough for an introductory course. Foresters under the Agriculture umbrella were required to study biochemistry and bovine physiology in classes with agriculture students. The latter held little interest, especially now that bullocks were no longer used for log-hauling. The Forestry undergraduates were also required to be at the farm-campus at Derrimut on the volcanic plain some 20 km west from Melbourne’s CBD for one academic year. During those years when forestry was submerged under agriculture, the lectures and practical classes in the School of Botany remained about the only bright spot.

Perceptions of kindred interests have gone the complete circle: Forestry research and teaching programs of the University of Melbourne in the School of Land and Environment are soon to be transferred to the Faculty of Science. The changes were approved by the University of Melbourne’s Senior Executive on 25 March 2014. The Faculty of Science will assume responsibility for the management of the Creswick campus, in its sylvan setting.

In 1980, when the Victorian School of Forestry became affiliated to the University, a return of Forestry to Science seemed out of the question, but 35 years or so is not all that long a wait in forestry.
EDUCATION

Meet MSLE’s representatives to the 42nd International Forestry Students’ Symposium!

This coming August, over 120 forestry students from all over the world will gather in Vancouver, Canada for the 42nd International Forestry Students’ Symposium (IFSS). Current Master of Forest Ecosystem Science students Jesse Mahoney and Krissie Piskorz will join lead DFES-IFSA representative Sarah Dickson-Hoyle in representing the University of Melbourne at this major international student event.

IFSS is the largest annual meeting of the International Forestry Students’ Association, of which the Department of Forest Ecosystem Science (DFES) is a member. Each year it is hosted by a different IFSA ‘Local Committee’ (student association) in their home country and university.

Sarah attended the 41st IFSS in Spain in 2013, where she was elected to an official Liaison Officer position. Unlike this year, during this last IFSS Sarah was the only Australian in a group of over 80 students from around 40 different countries:

“IfSS 2013 was such an amazing and eye opening experience for me. Still, it would have been so much better to have had fellow DFES students there, or to have known a past participant who could have guided me through the process. I wanted to make sure that Australia was strongly represented at IFSS 2014. Over the past few months I’ve been working with Jesse and Krissie, as well as ANU student Madeleine Hearnden, to help organise our applications and fundraising efforts. I’m so excited that all four of us were accepted to attend, and really hope this can be a catalyst for reviving our IFSA membership here in Australia.”

IFSS 2014 is jointly hosted by IFSA members at the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia, and Thompson Rivers University. Over two weeks, Sarah, Jesse and Krissie will join fellow IFSA students in exploring British Columbia’s forested landscapes, visiting forestry operations and forest management innovations, taking part in youth-professional networking nights, participating in the IFSA General Assembly, and seeing showcases of forestry education from the host universities.

Looking over the extensive itinerary, Jesse said “It’s so hard to decide what I’m looking forward to the most, as the list of activities we’re going to take part in is just huge! But I think getting outside and exploring the forests of British Colombia, and learning about their history, is what I’m most excited for”.

Krissie is similarly looking forward to the many excursions and field trips to native forests, and the opportunity to “hug some beautiful trees, learn about First Nations forestry principles and practices and, of course, meet fellow tree lovers from all over the world.”

Participants will also have the opportunity to present their research (in the form of oral and poster presentations) to fellow students, as well as to academics and professionals.

However, the informal knowledge and cross cultural exchange that occurs between students during IFSS is just as valuable as these academic sessions. Krissie is particularly excited about participating in this international exchange of ideas, and sharing her knowledge of the wonders of Australia’s forests (such as the tallest flowering plant in the world, Eucalyptus regnans).

Jesse, who has focused much of his studies on sustainable forest management and policy, also emphasised these benefits of getting involved with IFSA and IFSS:

“I think the ability to interact with others who share similar interests, but who operate in different cultural, economic and natural environments, is critical to building one’s knowledge. My studies have largely revolved around Australian forest ecosystems, but IFSA facilitates direct networking and information exchange with people from all over the world. Building a sustainable future isn’t just about what we do in our own backyard, it’s also about how we can work with and empower others to achieve their own sustainability objectives.”

The students are looking forward to coming back and sharing their IFSS experience with fellow DFES students and the wider University community, and hopefully inspiring more students to get involved with IFSA in the future - or, as Krissie put it, “even to just look at the trees surrounding them from a new perspective!”

So stay tuned!

Acknowledgement: Australian representation at IFSS 2014 has been made possible thanks to support from the Department of Forest Ecosystem Science, and generous sponsorship from the following companies: Australian Bluegum Plantations, New Forests, Hancock Victoria Plantations, WA Plantation Resources, Plantall Forestry Consultants, Powelltown Sawmills, Austwest Timber and Norske Skog.
Peter Kanowski returns to ANU from CIFOR

Peter Kanowski, ANU Professor of Forestry, has returned to ANU from the Center for International Forestry Research, where he spent two years as one of CIFOR's Deputy Director's General. IFA members who were at the 2013 Biennial Conference will recall CIFOR Director General Peter Holmgren's keynote presentation, outlining CIFOR's strategic directions, including emphasising a landscape approach in the context of sustainable development, and strengthening the science base for decision making through the Evidence Based Forestry Initiative. Each of those emphases have now been developed further – visit CIFOR’s website for an update, including on the recent Forests Asia Summit (cifor.org/forestsasia), the 2nd Global Landscapes Forum (landscapes.org), and the “Top 20 Questions for Forestry” survey (forestry evidence.com/t20q).

Peter has returned to ANU to the role of Master of University House (anu.edu.au/unihouse), an ANU institution that will be familiar to many IFA members. He looks forward to welcoming you there on your next visit to Canberra or the ANU campus.

The cost and funding of tertiary education was front page news during May despite the lack of detailed descriptions for proposed changes in the Budget. Forestry and Environmental Science studies may be in for a “double hit” as proposed deregulation increases costs to enrol generally and funding for “expensive” courses like agriculture and environmental science is reduced due to changes in the Government’s tiered funding arrangements. Students are protesting outside the Chancellery as I write.

We do not yet know how these proposed changes will affect enrolments in tertiary studies generally although there does appear to be an implicit assumption that demand is relatively inelastic - students are assumed to know that a tertiary qualification is the only entry point to the job market and therefore will borrow enough to acquire “a ticket” regardless of final cost. There may however be more competition between disciplines with trade-offs between costs and the potential to increase earnings to pay the debt in the shortest time. How will this new dynamic affect forest science and management degrees? There is no doubt that forest and environmental science degrees will be more expensive, but the question being asked by some of the students just starting along this pathway is whether there will be a corresponding increase in the benefits accruing to these degree holders. Will the joy of working in the great outdoors in a challenging and interesting environment where you can make a difference be enough to counter the increased burden of education debts at increased interest rates? It is not just students who are worried about the future of forests and foresters - ABC 666 Radio recently included a program with a theme of "good things come in trees" which included a segment on the complexity of forests, forestry and forester training. The conclusion there was that "deforestation happens when you remove the forester from the forest!"

Fortunately, enrolments in forest related courses in The Fenner School of Environment and Society have not unduly suffered this semester. For example, I was privileged to judge 20 posters created by teams of students enrolled in “Vegetation and Soils” - exceptional quality work explaining the co-evolution of these two aspects of the environment and the impact it might have on development and management. Similarly, the students completing “Managing Forested Landscapes” this semester proved to be very engaging, enthusiastic and came from as far away as Brazil. Next semester’s course “Ecological Assessment and Management” where we focus on the principles and practice of silviculture is already well subscribed and promises to be a lively and interactive course. Enrolments for the intensive course entitled “Measuring Forest Carbon” are now open. This course includes an intensive practical component (15-19 September) after the delivery of on-line and optional face-to-face resources and workshops where participants gain hands-on experience with all aspects of forest mensuration as well as advanced sampling and forest inventory.

Students out in the field on the ANU intensive course in February. Photos courtesy of Binduy Johnson, M. For student.

Students poster display session at ANU.
Edward (Ted) Gordon Mannion

1935–2014

Ted Mannion was born on 11 October 1935 in Brisbane and died on 9 April 2014 in Brisbane. He was educated at Holland Park State School & Church of England Grammar School; he was awarded a State Forestry Scholarship after the Senior exam in 1953 and attended UQ in 1954 & 1955. In 1956 he did National Service in the RAAF at Amberley and for the rest of the year worked in forestry survey camps. He attended the Australian Forestry School in 1957 and 1958.

After graduation, he took control of forest assessment survey camp based at Sunday Creek outside Jimna. After one year in survey camp he served in a number of centres viz. Brisbane, Warwick and Gympie. In 1961 he married Pat Glover whose father, before becoming a racehorse trainer, had a bullock team working timber.

In 1962, Ted and Pat took off to Yale University, USA where Ted completed a M.F degree. After serving a couple of years in Forest Research Branch, Ted was sent to Oxford University to study biometrics. On returning to Brisbane, Ted worked as a biometrician and then in various capacities until in 1982 he became the inaugural team leader on the Dongmen State Forest Farm Eucalypt Afforestation Project in southern China – he served there three years after which he returned to Australia to become District Forester, Atherton. It was in this capacity that Ted became known as ‘Top End Ted’. While based in Atherton, Ted became a member of the Cairns Hoo Hoo Club 261.

In 1988, Ted returned to the Dongmen project for a final two years till the end of the project. This project produced a number of eucalypt clones still in use in the bulk of the plantations in China today. Mainly as a result of this project, the area of eucalypt plantations has increased ten-fold, productivity has more than doubled and the rotation length has halved. In China, Ted was well known as ‘Lao Bai Ma’ (the old white horse).

After the end of the Dongmen project, Ted spent some time in Brisbane in Planning Division until his retirement from the Queensland Department of Forestry in October 1990. However, it was not long before he was off to the Philippines as team leader on an Asian Development Bank project for a couple of years. After that, he had another short stint back in the Philippines.

Ted and Pat were inveterate travellers, being rarely at home. It was on a trip to Vanuatu that Ted fell down some stairs and broke his leg, necessitating a medi-vac from Port Vila to Brisbane. The leg was pinned but Ted had difficulty with his lungs; after a couple of weeks in an induced coma and on life support, Ted left to join the great foresters in the sky.

Ted was a long term member of Brisbane Tattersalls club; he was a very gregarious person with a very diplomatic manner. He was a very keen punter but it is doubted that he ever seriously threatened any bookmaker’s livelihood. Ted is very well remembered by colleagues in Australia and China. There was a host of e-mails from China expressing condolences. One of his Chinese colleagues from Dongmen project days wrote ‘Many of us had the honour to work with Ted Mannion on the Dongmen project. His devotion and amicable temperament have left us good memories of those rough days. We all love and miss our close friend Lao Bai Ma’.

A service, attended by more than 100 relatives, colleagues and friends, was held at Hemmant Crematorium on 15 April to celebrate Ted’s life. Ted is survived by his wife Pat, daughters Heidi and Michelle and two grandsons Lachlan and Tate.
OBITUARY

Roy Alan Free
1928–2014

Roy was born on 13 February 1928 at Quambarook, Victoria. His father, Leslie Free, farmed at Lalbert before moving to Albury, New South Wales. Roy attended Albury Public School and Albury High School, where he was sports captain in 1945.

In 1946 Roy commenced a forestry traineeship in March at a salary of £110 per year. In 1950 Roy graduated as a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Sydney, and Diploma of Forestry with distinction from the Australian Forestry School. Following secondment after graduation he became a demonstrator and researcher at the AFS for the next academic year.

Roy was appointed a forester on probation at Batlow in March 1951, and was confirmed in the position shortly after. In August 1956 he was appointed Senior Forester Silviculture assisting the District Forester and in November of that year he assumed control of Batlow Subdistrict. At the end of July 1958 he became Senior Forester Tumut, and in March 1962 became District Forester at Tumut. At the same time he was also appointed Departmental Officer and a member of the Upper Murray Regional Development Committee of New South Wales Treasury. In February 1969 he was appointed District Forester in charge of pine plantations in the Sydney head office, and in January 1971 he became Chief Forest Inspector.

In December 1979 Roy became Deputy Chief of Forest Operations Division, and in October 1980 was appointed Assistant Commissioner for Forests. Roy served in that position until his retirement in September 1988. He was part of a dynamic team along with Commissioner Dr Wal Gentle and Assistant Commissioner Jack Stewart.

During his service life Roy served on a number of other departmental advisory and consulting bodies, was the government’s nominee on the board of Sawmillers Exports Proprietary Limited, and was a member of the New South Wales Bushfire Council and its coordinating committee. Following his retirement he was appointed by the Minister as Chair of the New South Wales Timber Advisory Council.

Throughout his career Roy was a leader among his peers, with many successful endeavours including:

- The implementation of the Hume Snowy Bushfire Prevention Scheme which actively enlisted the cooperation of all stakeholders in the coordination of bushfire prevention and control within the region. It became the model for similar organisations throughout the eastern part of New South Wales.
- The successful formulation and implementation of occupational health and safety programs within the Forestry Commission with a dramatic improvement in lost time injury statistics throughout the workforce. These efforts reduced the Accident Frequency Rate to less than 10, which was unheard of in forestry at the time. The value of this work continues to this day.
- Served for 16 years on the committee of the Forestry Field Officers Association, a vocational branch within the New South Wales Public Service Association committed to improving the industrial welfare of members.

During Roy’s 19 years at Tumut he was responsible for the development of many operational and administration practices which set the professional standards underpinning today’s plantation management. He took a keen interest in plantation nurseries and strongly supported technical advances in his positions at head office.

As Chief Forest Inspector Roy was responsible for directing recruitment and development of professional and technical staff within the commission. Many a career succeeded or perished as a consequence of his legendary mentoring sessions that were held over a few beers.

Roy told many a good story about his time around Tumut and Batlow. One such story concerns the construction of the wooden chapel at the now defunct afforestation prison farm at Laurel Hill. With Roy’s ingenuity, assistance from Kopsen’s sawmill, prison officers, and inmates, a handsome A-frame building was constructed. When the camp closed down years later the chapel was moved to Tumbarumba where, with additions, it is now the Shire Library. Roy was behind the scenes there as well!

Roy was a Life Member and Fellow of the Institute and maintained an active interest in its affairs. He was Chairman of the IFA NSW Division, and National President from 1979 to 1981. The N.W Jolly Medal for 2001 was awarded to him. This is the Institute’s highest honour, for outstanding service to the profession of forestry in Australia.

Roy is missed by his friends and colleagues, but sadly many of the younger foresters around Tumut will have never heard of the peerless master forester who created the resource and investment in the region that now supports their livelihoods.

Roy is survived by Gwen, his wife of 63 years and children Alan, Rae and Brian. Brian still lives in Tumut.

Compiled by Peter Crowe, assisted by Bob Newman