

Rich history of forestry education highlights impact of changes

Circumspice. One hundred years of forestry education centred on Creswick, Victoria

Compiled by Rob Youl, Brian Fry and Ron Hartley.

Publisher: Forest Education Centenary Committee

\$A40 (+ postage)

(Available from robinyoul@gmail.com)

This book was produced as part of the 2010 celebrations on 100 years of forestry teaching at Creswick, near Ballarat. The book follows the changes that occurred at the Victorian School of Forestry, describing the reasons behind them, the people involved and to a lesser extent the impact of the professional foresters that came from the School, and later Melbourne University. The book is arranged roughly in chronological order. The title 'Circumspice' is used to describe how people at Creswick saw themselves. It means look round for opportunities, take risks, avoid conformity and embrace the promised career.

In the first 25 years when the school was designed to provide publicly-owned Victorian forests with people who could bring some order to the chaotic forest management then prevalent. In the early years it was a basic course stressing sciences such as botany, geology and chemistry with forestry being picked up in practical work. Students were supported by and worked for the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV). It was not until 1922 that the School had forestry graduate on staff. In 1929, towards the end of this period, the University of Melbourne partly recognised the teaching at Creswick. Gradually after that, Creswick was integrated more fully into the University. Later still became an important centre for research as well as teaching. For 70 years the FCV dominated the life at the School but in the end the Commission itself disappeared. In recent years only postgraduate forestry teaching has occurred at the University of Melbourne.

An important feature of the book is that it traces how forestry in Victoria has evolved and changed over time, and the forces that caused these changes. These changes had a major impact on the teaching of forestry. This aspect of the book is well done and is interesting to compare with what happened in New Zealand.

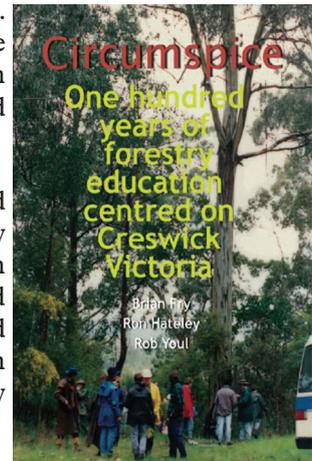
Another large feature of the book is the forestry people. Many may not be familiar to a New Zealand audience but most will know John Kininmonth, Alf Leslie, Roger Sands, Hugh Bigsby and Jo Sasse who have worked in New Zealand. As the prime readership of the book is past students and staff, the book is mixed with much anecdotal material as well as lists of graduates.

This is a paperback book on glossy paper and contains many photographs. Unfortunately the review copy fell apart as I read it so if it were bought by institutions would need

to be immediately rebound. Because many people have contributed to the publication there is overlap at times and some difference in styles.

In summary, I would recommend this book to New Zealand foresters who have an interest in forestry history and perhaps in teaching. It would be useful to have copies in major forestry libraries in New Zealand.

Don Mead
Golden Bay



Impenetrable thicket of citations

The Victorian bush: its "original and natural" condition.

By Ron Hartley

Publisher: Polybrachtea Press

\$A45 (+ postage)

(Available from robinyoul@gmail.com)

With much controversy regarding management of remnant forests, Ron Hartley has decided to throw some light on this dilemma by researching in libraries all over Australia for the "original and natural" Victorian bush. His 209-page book is more than half quotations from documents, the majority of which pre-date 1950 and are mainly of historical, rather than ecological/botanical interest.

He has 695 citations! It seems as if every document he discovered has found its way into his book, so in his attempt to throw light on the "original and natural" bush he has created an impenetrable thicket of interesting but mostly irrelevant quotations.

Regardless of outcomes, like Lot's wife he's looking back: "there are no answers her, just a warning that assessment of remnant vegetation should incorporate a thorough study of the earliest records available" (p 174). For me, the way forward is definitely not in the rear-vision mirror. This history book deserves to be confined to history.

Dick Nicholls
Golden Bay