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KARRIDALE ESTATE

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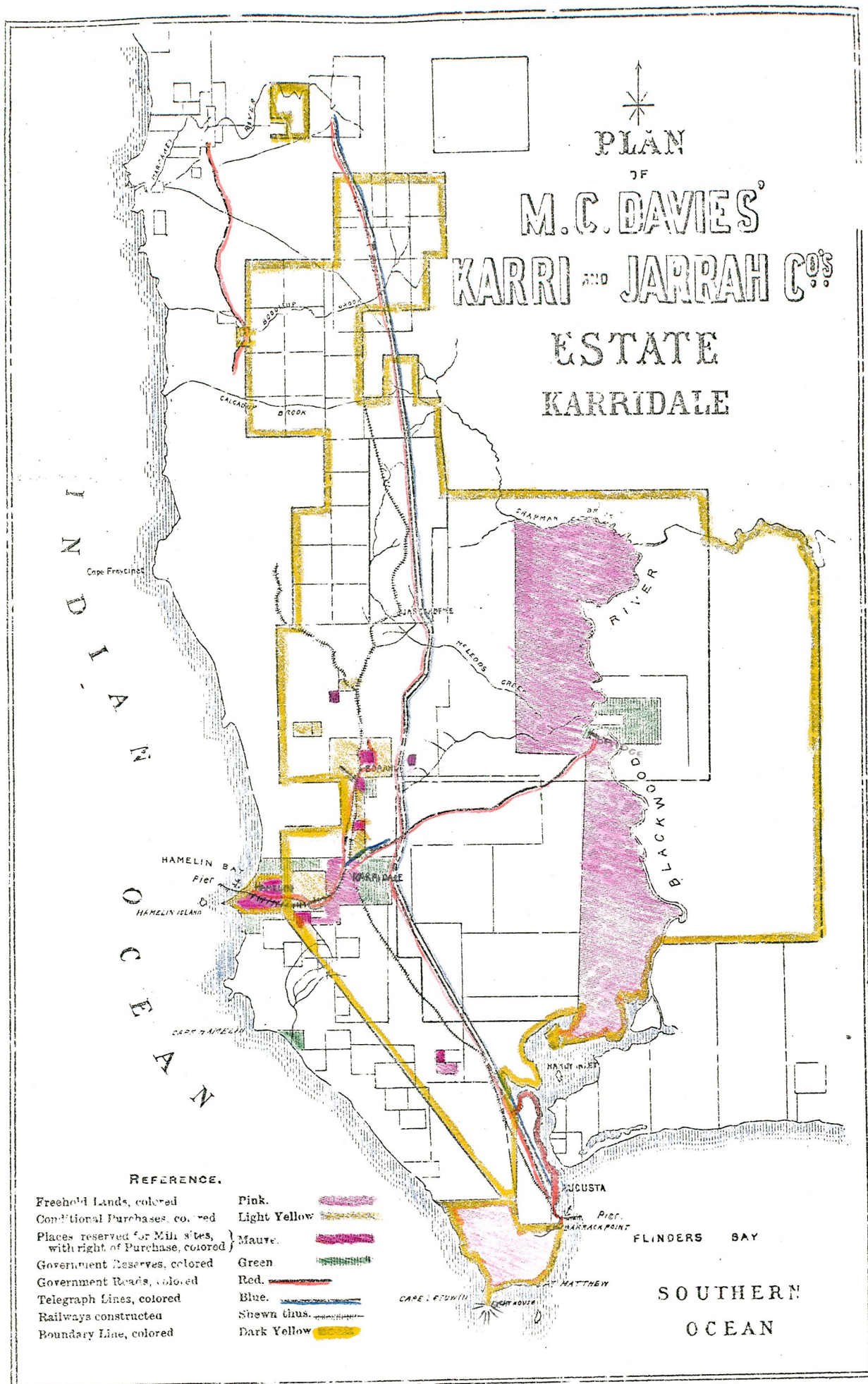
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KARRIDALE ESTATE: * ITS INCEPTION IN 1879



THOSE who have journeyed to and from Australia have had a fleeting glimpse of the sea-front of Karridale Estate, the property of M. C. Davies' Karri and Jarrah Company, Limited, for Cape Leeuwin, which is the south-western extremity of the estate, and of Australia, is the Land's End of the Continent, being the first point of the mainland sighted by the outward voyager and the last seen by him when homeward bound.

The Karridale Estate was acquired by Mr. M. C. Davies about twenty years ago, and was selected by him on account of its magnificent forests of Jarrah, Karri, and Redgum hardwoods, the convenience of its situation—in close proximity to two safe seaports, Hamelin Harbour and Flinders Bay—the possibilities attaching to its position on the deep waters of the splendid River Blackwood, its exceptionally abundant rainfall of forty inches per annum, its mild and equable climate, and its excellent soil.

At that time Jarrah was already famous as an enduring hardwood, but Karri was quite unknown in the world's timber markets. Abundant local evidence, how-

ver, was available as to the durability of the latter; Karri fence posts, and huts erected by settlers, nearly half-a-century earlier, were found to be in excellent preservation, and logs of the same timber, which had for over forty years lain on the beach, between wind and water, were in equally good condition. A section of one of these logs may be seen at the Museum in Kew Gardens.

These facts, together with the highly satisfactory tests conducted by the late Thomas Laslett, Timber Inspector to the British Admiralty, fully satisfied Mr. Davies as to the high qualities of Karri, and he had no hesitation in introducing and recommending it to those interested in hardwoods. He may thus be said to have been the pioneer of the Karri timber industry, and that his efforts were successful, and his estimate of its value justified, are abundantly proved by the large amount of capital now invested in developing the trade, and the numerous shipments of Karri which are annually exported to many parts of the world.

KARRIDALE IN 1899

Karridale Estate in 1879 was practically a *terra incognita*, an unoccupied forest wilderness—5-day it is a hive of industry, the direct support of a population of some eight hundred people, all of whom are comfortably housed and well provided with the necessaries of life, and many of its luxuries. Good roads throughout the estate and to neighbouring towns;

forty miles of well-laid and efficiently equipped railways; also schools, public halls, library, stores, mills, engineering and wood-working shops, foundries, farms, orchards, market gardens, cricket fields, and a racecourse have been established. At the seaports, deep water piers have been erected, heavy moorings laid, and a shipbuilding yard provided for the use and convenience, not only of the Company's fleet of steam tugs and lighters, but also for the large number of steam and sailing vessels, which are constantly under charter in connection with the trade. Communication with the outer world is maintained by telegraph, by regular overland mail coaches, and by coasting steamers. Telephonic connection has also been established between the various centres and railway stations on the estate. A church and rectory have been built, and a resident clergyman appointed for the spiritual welfare of the community, and a qualified medical man attends to its health. These indications of a flourishing settlement have been provided, either directly by, or obtained through, the exertions of the proprietary for the benefit of the concern, and all those engaged in its operations.

Apart from the fine forest scenery there are many beauty spots at or near Karridaie, Chief of these are the fine coast views from the ranges above Hamelin Harbor and Flinders Bay, the magnificent caves at Deepdene and Blue Rock Cliffs, and the lovely scenery on the Blackwood River. Excellent sea and river fishing are obtainable, and the game include kangaroo, opossum, emu, duck, teal, snipe and quail.

A Few Figures.

There are extensive sawmills at three points, viz., Karridale, Boranup, and Jarrahdene, and abundant material to keep them employed for many years is guaranteed by the fact that the Government Conservator of Forests recently estimated the amount of matured timber on the estate at upwards of 50,000,000 cubic feet. A very rapid natural afforestation is taking place on land previously cleared.

The freeholds and leaseholds of the Company total over 168,000 acres, and along the Blackwood River the estate has a water frontage of about sixteen miles.

Many of the trees are of large size. King Karri, the "show" tree in the Company's forest, is 242 feet high, and is over 30 feet in girth. The Redgum trees are also of exceptional size, but this timber is not yet known amongst the woods of commerce; that good use will yet be found for it there can be little doubt, as it is of great toughness and strength, and the Company's untouched forests of Redgum will sooner or later prove a valuable asset.

Sawmilling in Brief.

The trees are all felled by hand with axe and saw. A deep wedge-shaped incision, known as a "belly cut," is chopped by the axemen on the side to which the tree is to fall, then a horizontal cut is started from the opposite side by four sawyers with a cross-cut saw,

until the trunk is nearly severed to the "belly cut," whereupon, with a creaking groan and swift rushing sound, followed by a dull thud, and terrific crash, the tree topples to the ground. It is soon cross-cut into mill logs, slung to whims (pairs of wheels ten feet high, with arched steel axles six inches square), and drawn by teams of horses or bullocks to the nearest "landing" (loading siding) on the railroad; thence it is quickly transferred by winches and wire ropes to railway trucks. As soon as a train load is made up, a locomotive steams away with it to one of the mills, where the logs are rapidly rolled off, and very soon the humming teeth of steam saws are severing them into various lengths and sizes, which eventually emerge as planks, sleepers, paving blocks, etc. As they leave the last saw, they are slid down inclined shoots to railway trucks, in which they are loaded and taken off by another locomotive to the pier, where they are slung into a ship's hold.

Not as Simple as it Sounds.

All this sounds very simple and easy, and it may be difficult to realise that merely cutting up a tree into a number of pieces, and shipping the same, should need so extensive an establishment, but the Karridale Estate is to a great extent self-contained. The proprietary, in addition to employing some hundreds of men, attends also to all their needs and those of their families, providing houses, food, clothing, and their requirements generally. Provision has also to be made for making a portion and keeping in repair, the whole of the extensive

and costly buildings, railways, plant and machinery, which necessitates large workshops, and a staff of skilled workers in various trades. If the reader considers the thousand-and-one matters that must be involved in these varied functions, an idea may be formed of the amount of thought and energy that are necessary to ensure the smooth running of so comprehensive a business.

Hardwood & Softwood.

Of the magnificent qualities of Karri and Jarrah as hardwoods, a reference to the opinions of eminent and disinterested authorities, given after practical experience, afford ample proof on the point, and the increasing demand fully confirms the favorable testimony of the experts.

Objection has been made from time to time to the use of these timbers, on the ground of higher cost as compared with soft woods, but for purposes where the timber required must be either durable, strong, non-absorbent, sanitary, or unindammable, and in permanent situations, such as mine work, street paving, railway-sleepers, rolling stock, telegraph poles, dock, pier, and bridge decking, beams, braces, and girders, it can be proved beyond question that Karri and Jarrah are the cheapest in the long run. Experience and experiment show this to be a fact, and those who are sceptical can ascertain the truth for themselves by actual test, for which purpose this Company is agreeable to supply samples, to a reasonable extent, for bona fide trials.