

JANUARY 9 Vol 2 No 2

RECORD PICK AT MANJIMUP

Forest workers in Manjumup's 12ha pine orchard have just collected a record harvest of 800 bags in an annual operation which supplies top quality Radiata seed for the whole of Western Australia.

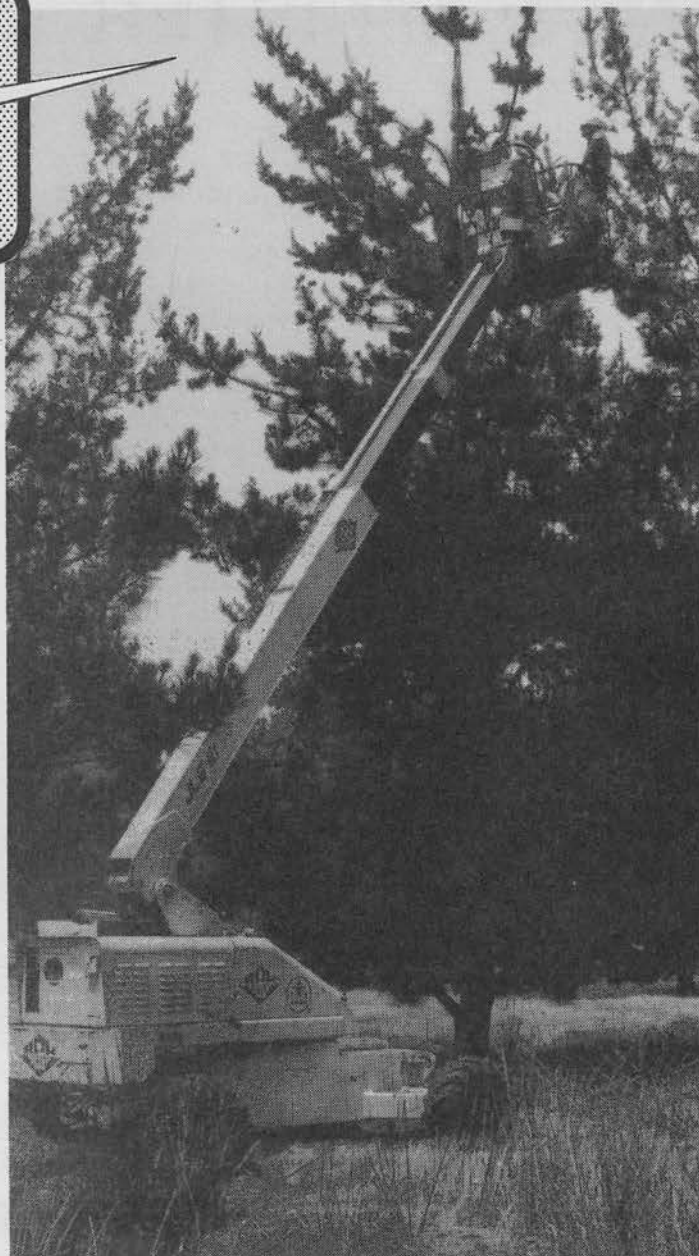
Ken Farr, Brian Miles and Allan Prosser work together as a team during the collection which usually lasts from September to November.

The cones are picked from especially grown trees which were originally selected for their straight trunks, small branches and good health.

Each man takes a turn assisting the operation on the ground, while the other two are aloft on the hydraulic platform collecting the cones from the tree crowns.

The cones are bagged on the platform and the day's tally (about 15 bags) is later delivered for processing in the Department's seed extractor. Each bag produces about 1 kilo of seed.

By growing a seed orchard on 'farm' soil the Forest Department is able to speed up its pine improvement programme. Eventually the best trees grown from this orchard's seeds will be re-selected for seed, and a new orchard of super trees will be established.



▲ Brian Miles and Allan Prosser at the top of the tree.

The 'ideal' radiata pine produces about 25% more timber on the same ground space and only half the previous number of trees need to be planted. Both these factors have special significance in areas like the South West where the competition for good soil is intense.



NEW MINISTER

Parliamentary approval for the new Department of Conservation and Land Management also cleared the way for a reorganization of Ministers.

The Minister for the Environment, Ron Davies will now be responsible for the new Department when it starts operating early in the new year, and has relieved Brian Burke of the Forests portfolio in the meantime.

Born in North Perth in 1926, Ron worked as a clerk with the Railways after leaving school. After discharge from the R.A.A.F., he returned to the W.A.G.R. and soon became actively associated with the labor movement. He was elected a Branch Secretary of the Railway Officers' Union, served on the Union's governing body, and in 1951, became Assistant General Secretary, a post he held until he entered Parliament in 1961.

He was also General Treasurer of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Labor Party from 1955 until 1972.

Ron was elected to the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) of the Western Australian Parliament at a by-election in 1961, and has held the seat of Victoria Park ever since.

From 1962 to 1968 he was Secretary of the State Parliamentary Labor Party and from 1968 to 1971 was Opposition Whip.

When the A.L.P. was elected to office in 1971, he became a Minister in the Tonkin Labor Government, holding various portfolios including Health, Fisheries and Fauna, Consumer Protection and Environmental Protection.

After 1974 State Election, Ron became the Labor Opposition's spokesman on Health and Community Welfare, and was later appointed spokesman on Urban Development and Town Planning, and the Arts.



The Honourable Ron Davies, M.L.A.

Ron has travelled extensively overseas to study working conditions, the trade union movement, and health, community welfare and environmental issues.



Bob has gone

Many Western Australian Foresters will be sad to hear that Bob Donovan died on Saturday 8 December.

Bob joined the Forests Department as Assistant Forester "D" Grade at Merredin on 13 May 1929, after 6 years previous experience in the timber industry in various jobs (some as a wages employee with the Forests Department).

He worked for the Department on sandalwood inspection in the Merredin/Bullfinch area until 31 March 1930, when he was transferred to bush work in the Dwellingup area.

He also relieved at Dryandra, before being appointed to Kalgoorlie in 1941 as Assistant Forester. He remained at Kalgoorlie as Forester, District Forester and Senior Forester.

Bob was O.I.C. Kalgoorlie from 1954 until his retirement on 26 March 1971.



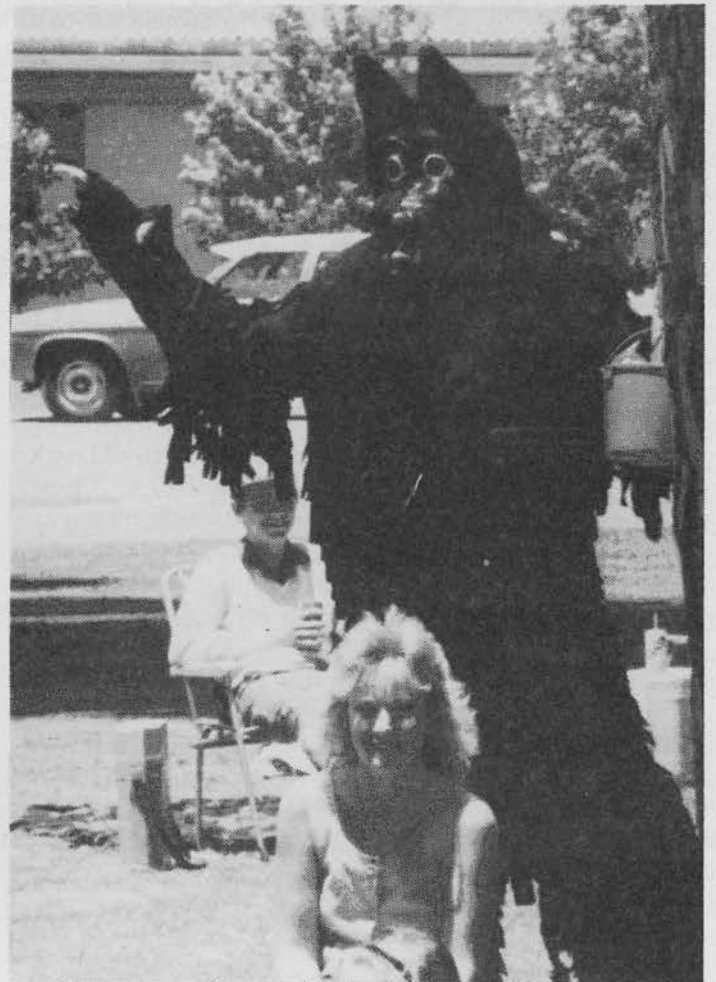


▲ Father Christmas handing out parcels from the back of a horse drawn milk wagon borrowed for the occasion.

CHRISTMAS AT COMO

Como Social Club organized an enjoyable family Christmas get together last month - These photographs are just some of the memories

Another treat for the children was an open air production of the 'Three Little Pigs'. In this scene the Big Bad Wolf reverted to form and was eyeing up Vanessa Jones. ►



ON FIRE PATROL

Ever wondered why we have nicknames?

Believe me, when I jumped into a Walpole gang truck one day with overseer Alan Hatfield, Alan Clarke and Alan Johnson, it was quite refreshing to be introduced to 'Ferret'.

Ferret (Clarke) and the other two were taking care of a quiet burn of logging slash in the Wye block, under the watchful eye of George Doust. Peter (Gears) Brenton and Mel Smeathers were in the other heavy duty.

All the pre-burn preparation had been completed days before and Alan Johnson and the Ferret criss-crossed the block with burning torches to start the fire.

Once it was underway the heavy duties patrolled the edges to check for hop-over fires, and the only other excitement was dodging the snakes as they came charging out of the bush. They had no intention of finishing up with the snags on the spit at the end of the day's fire patrol.

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Further North, at Manjimup, I later saw a more sophisticated operation - an aerial burn being co-ordinated by Alan (No.4) Hordacre.

The boundaries of the Thornton Block had been safely edged with fire the day before and the overall burning plan finally involved parallel 'bombing' runs some 300m apart. The bush included mixed jarrah and marri with pole stands and small pockets of karri.

Alan's ground support crew consisted of two gang trucks, two heavy duties and a mobile radio beacon (manned by Bill Hamilton) to guide the aircraft through the smokey air.



In the Britten Norman Islander were Jeff Andrews (pilot), Brian Moss (navigator) and Peter Marshall (the bombardier).

The radio command post was set up by Alan at the base of the old Alco Fire Tower.

At 10.15 am everybody was in place while the aircraft circled the 1325ha block on a familiarization flight. The fire flights started at 10.30 am.

By 11.30 am the area was completely covered with starter fires - the air crew went home - and it was left to the ground crews to patrol the edges. At 5.00 pm the ground fires had linked up and around 6.00 pm the whole operation was complete - the gentle destruction of some 12 year's accumulated ground litter without any panic.

Where does it go?

The American Management Association has measured how professionals invest their time. They learned that 53% of the professional's time is spent in face-to-face meetings, 25% goes into reading and writing, 16% is spent on the telephone and about 6% on other subjects such as thinking and planning.

"Bush Telegraph" is the staff journal of the Forests Department in Western Australia. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department and articles published should not be taken as statements by the Department or the West Australian Government.

All enquiries and comments should be directed to Ian Kay, the editor, phone Como HQ ext. 327.



▲ Alan Johnson (L) and Alan (Ferret) Clarke lighting up the bush. Alan Hatfield has a 5 foot dugite that got too close for comfort. ▶



The Islander flies over, while Alan Hordacre assembles his troops. John Neal (on Alan's left) is from the Fire Research Unit at Manjimup, and was on hand to gain field experience. ▼



Letters to the Editor



TO THE EDITOR

Your December 1984 Volume 2 No. 1 edition of the Bush Telegraph reported on the Departmental L.T.A. frequency rate by printing a chart showing Divisions and their corresponding rates. I found your report factual but objectionable and unnecessary. I make the following comments.

1. Collie Division works hard to implement the F.D. safety policy.
2. L.T.A. frequency rates do not reflect the complete safety picture. eg. Comparative levels of personal suffering and financial hardship are not reflected in L.T.A. rates.
3. I am reminded (along with other Divisions) monthly, via official reports from State Headquarters, of our performance in the "L.T.A. Stakes". By all means use your publication to praise those who deserve it, but I do not need the Bush Telegraph to further point out unpalatable information which was fresh off State Headquarters press the previous week.

Alan Scott
COLLIE
12.12.84.

RESPONSE TO ALAN SCOTT'S
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I would like to thank Alan Scott for his comments. I totally agree with him on the first two points: Collie Division works hard to implement the F.D. Safety Policy, and L.T.A. frequency rates do not reflect the complete picture.

The L.T.A frequency rate (number of accidents per one million hours worked), however, is used in most Western countries as a unit to measure the incidence of industrial injuries and to compare the safety

performance between different organisations or groups of workers. The publication of the L.T.A. frequency rates in the "Bush Telegraph" certainly is not intended to reflect discredit upon the safety effort of the Collie Division.

Collie Division, in fact, has a proud safety record. It was the first Division in the Forests Department to record 400,000 accident free hours in 1974. But, like most other Divisions, over the years Collie has had it's share of ups and downs. An interesting aspect of injury accidents in the Collie Division is the relatively low number of medical treatment accidents. Whereas the departmental average is 1 L.T.A. for every 5 M.T.A.'s, the Collie ratio is approx. 1:1. Thus, on an all-injury basis, the Collie Division certainly is not in last place.

Publication of the divisional accident records in the "Bush Telegraph" is intended to provide safety information to a larger number of departmental personnel than that reached by readers of the monthly statistical returns. It is also hoped that it may give an impetus to improve on our safety performance which is still far ahead of most other organisations and departments.

ARTHUR KESNERS
SAFETY OFFICER.

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Dear Sir,

I (retired) at the end of this year (84) and wish to thank the officers of your department for the many courtesies received during my career with the Education Department.

My first teaching appointment was in 1951 to Willowdale and there began an association with the Forests Department which I have valued over the years.

Thanks to you all.

Yours sincerely,

A. David Seiber.

SANDALWOOD RESEARCH

Modern technology may be able to help the sandalwood tree grow in the desert. The Australian Sandalwood Company, which exports the sandalwood to the Far East, has funded research at W.A.I.T. and Murdoch University with the aim of improving sandalwood survival, growth rate and quality.

The Forests Department has also recently concluded a ten year field research programme on the tree's regeneration and management. Sandalwood has unusual problems in establishment and management because, like the W.A. Christmas Tree, it is a root parasite depending on attachment to the roots of host plants for survival.

Originally growing over a large part of the Western Australian Wheatbelt, sandalwood trees are now only found in the more arid areas of the Murchison and Eastern Goldfields districts.

Forest researchers have found that it is relatively easy to regenerate sandalwood in the wheatbelt, where a tree matures in about 50 years. Regeneration is not possible however, where the rabbit population is high or where there is grazing by sheep, cattle or goats. With careful care and management, it is possible that growing sandalwood could be a profitable sideline on wheatbelt farms.

Regeneration of sandalwood in the arid zone is much more difficult. Success depends on careful location of sandalwood seeds on water gaining sites the correct distance away from the host plant, and on the good fortune of above average rainfall in the first two years after sowing. It may be necessary to try several times to achieve success at any particular place, and exclusion of grazing is necessary for several years.

Murdoch researchers are trying to find out how the young sandalwood attach themselves to host plants and are also examining the use of tissue culture to, hopefully, enable the mass production of high yielding strains of the tree. Unfortunately, sandalwood only yields up its secrets reluctantly and is proving difficult to clone.

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PAPER WAR

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• Publications Branch have just had a note from the Government's Library Board reminding us of our obligations to supply five copies of everything we print - and this includes press statements (underlined).

• When the Department sends out a Statement to the press it often goes to twenty different papers. If every paper printed the statement (and they also have to supply five copies) the same statement will be recorded for posterity 105 times -

• Do you think they will get the message?

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DAD & DAVE

Dave went from away out west to a Gold Coast holiday and, for the first time, saw girls wearing bikinis.

The sight upset him from his first glimpse onwards, and he returned home still bothered by the sight of the bikini-clad young women.

"Yes," said Dave when he got back home. "I suppose I enjoyed my holiday alright: but one thing I just couldn't understand is, Dad, why do they ring-bark all the sheilas!"



BRUCE TO BOW OUT

Bruce Beggs, the first Director-General of the new Department of Premier and Cabinet, has decided on early retirement - effective in July 1985.

He was Conservator of Forests for almost 11 years before his appointment as Director-General in 1983.

Bruce has decided it is time for a change after 33 years in the Public Service, and he intends to make an extended tour of Europe with his wife Betty.

Brought up in Dwellingup and Donnybrook, while his father was the District Forest Officer, Bruce has had a long association with forestry in Western Australia.

He went on forest camps while at college, and is one of a small surviving group of foresters (Bev Campbell, Phil Shedley and Barney White) who started their professional careers at the end of World War II.

After graduating from the Australian Forestry School in 1950, Bruce was employed by the Department in the tuart mill at Ludlow.

In 1953 he was appointed as an ADFO at Dwellingup and spent some seven years in the area, being responsible, as DFO, for the organization of the early logging contracts.

Later Bruce was transferred to Manjimup, he became Superintendent of the Southern Region and was eventually appointed Chief of Division at Head Office, before his appointment as Conservator in 1972.

On his return from Europe, Bruce plans to do consultancy work and hopes to make further use of his extensive forestry experience.

LANE-POOLE AWARD

The 1984 Lane-Poole Award has been announced, and Graham Hutchinson (Communications) is the recipient.

Graham has been with the Forests Department 19 years and is the officer in charge of the radio communications branch, based at Como.

The award will enable Graham to visit Eastern States Forest Services in February/March (1985) to investigate communications systems, look for new ideas, and keep pace with technological changes in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

It is expected that Graham's new knowledge will have immediate benefits for the new Department of Conservation and Land Management.

● ● ● SCOOP ● ● ●

Bush Telegraph was scooped on this one - the Warren-Blackwood Times announced some weeks ago that Tammie Reid (Como) and Ian Rotheram are engaged. Congratulations!

