

# QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 24

## KAURI TIMBER COMPANY LTD COLLECTION

Timber Industry, Circular Head

### INTRODUCTION

### THE RECORDS

- A. Kauri Timber Company Ltd*
- B. Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd*
- C. Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company*
- D. E H Fenton Pty Ltd*
- E. Dunkley Brothers Pty Ltd*
- F. J S Lee and Sons*
- G. Drawings*
- H. Ephemera*

### OTHER SOURCES

## **INTRODUCTION**

This collection mainly includes records relating to the timber industry in the Circular Head area of North West Tasmania. The timber industry, one of the state's most important industries, began in the area in the 19th century. The first timber milled was mainly blackwood, but later hardwood was cut. An amendment to the Crown Lands Act, which allowed timber leases over Crown land, contributed to the expansion of the industry in the 1920s, but it was badly affected by the Depression of the early 1930s. A rationalisation in the 1970s saw the number of individual sawmills statewide decline dramatically. By 1980 the Kauri Timber Company was one of only three sawmilling enterprises remaining in Circular Head, the biggest sawmill timber producing area in the state.

Although called the 'Kauri Timber Company Ltd Collection', about half the collection comprises records of Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd, and covers the period 1940 to the early 1960s. The remainder of the collection includes some earlier records of the three companies which formed Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd: Dunkley Brothers Pty Ltd, E H Fenton Pty Ltd and Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company, one item from J S Lee and Sons, Smithton, and some from Kauri Timber Company's activities from the late 1960s.

A brief history of each company prefaces the listing of their records in this guide.

The collection was donated to Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 1993, following the company's takeover by J & T Gunn and the closure of the Stanley site.

## **A. KAURI TIMBER COMPANY LTD (1949-1993)**

One of the oldest timber companies in Australia, and one of the first public companies to be listed on the Melbourne Stock Exchange, Kauri Timber Company Ltd was established in 1888. It combined the activities of over 20 sawmillers of Kauri Pine into one group, importing and marketing the timber from New Zealand. By 1930, its business was concentrated in Australia. The Company began activity in the Circular Head area about 1949 when it bought Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd and J S Lee and Sons. At that time, it had four mills in operation at Smithton and Stanley and two in the bush. After the opening of the Chatlee complex at Smithton in 1972, Kauri Timber Company's milling activities were centred there, although it retained the Stanley site for kiln drying. By 1980, about 30% of production was sold as green scantling to local and Victorian markets, and about 70% was kiln-dried for export to the mainland and overseas. The East Asiatic Company, founded in Denmark in 1897, acquired 50% of the Kauri Timber Company in 1973, purchasing it outright in 1988. The Stanley and Smithton sites were subsequently taken over by the Launceston company J & T Gunn.

A.1	Minutes of meetings (production and wage standards)	1969
A.2	Receipt books	1969-1970
A.4	Circular Head factory returns 1967-1968; reports and and other papers	1967-1991
A.5	Log dump sheets	1965-1971
A.6	Stanley mill figures	1969-1973
A.7	Stanley mill contractors' record book	1968
A.8	Stanley mill contractors' record book	1970
A.9	Stanley mill stock order book	1975
A.10	(1) log carters' book 1970-1971; (2) G B Stein's work book 1979-1981; (3) rack book 1987; (4) stack sheets October 1970; (5) inspection reports 1989-1990	1970-1990
A.11	Railway consignment books	1971-1972
A.12	Weekly wage standards control sheets June 1969- February 1970 and summary schedule	1969-1970
A.13	Chatlee workmen's time book	1966-1970
A.14	G B Stein's time books	1966-1975

## **B.CIRCULAR HEAD AMALGAMATED TIMBERS PTY LTD (1940-c1972)**

This company was established in 1940 through the amalgamation of the Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company, E H Fenton Pty Ltd and Dunkley Brothers. It became a subsidiary of Kauri Timber Company Ltd in 1949, but continued operating under its own name until the early 1970s.

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|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| B.1  | <i>Memorandum of Association of Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company Pty Ltd 1933 and Articles of Association of Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd 1951 (2 copies); Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Superannuation Scheme Trust Deed and Schedule of Rules (includes contributors' signatures) Aug 1943</i> | 1933-1951 |
| B.2  | Land transfer certificates; pay roll tax certificate; agreements re sale of land; hire purchase; leases; commercial petrol pumps; extracts of birth (employees); bank documents                                                                                                                                                  | 1940-1953 |
| B.3  | Temporary licences to take possession of Crown land for Tramways; roadways; sawmills (includes maps) 1946-1947; Forestry Department exclusive forest permits; permit renewal certificates and related correspondence (includes maps) 1941-1950; notices re purchase or acquisition of property for land tax purposes 1946-1947   | 1941-1950 |
| B.4  | Minutes of meetings (directors and shareholders) 31 May 1941-14 February 1949                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1941-1949 |
| B.5  | Correspondence re book-keeping; shipping; annual accounts; timber stock; Dunkley's house; company tax; financial policy; shareholders; fire insurance; superannuation scheme; production; Cumming Bros etc                                                                                                                       | 1941-1949 |
| B.6  | Correspondence re insurance; J O Leale; timber supplies; Waddamana pipe lines; staff bonus; office irregularities; Stanley Mill fire; racking; Stanley site plan; Gunnensen Le Messurier Ltd                                                                                                                                     | 1950      |
| B.7  | Correspondence re J O Leale; fire damage; production; Waddamana pipe lines; staff bonus; motor vehicles; Stanley plant and equipment (includes drawings); Stanley mill fire; insurance; kiln-drying                                                                                                                              | 1951      |
| B.8  | Correspondence re superannuation scheme; accounts; plant; operational reports                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1952-1970 |
| B.9  | Reports re operations; kiln-drying costs; financial Position; assets; fire damage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1941-1951 |
| B.10 | Balance sheets and accounts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 1941-1942 |

B.11	Balance sheets and accounts	1943-1947
B.12	Balance sheets and accounts	1948-1952
B.13	Trading and profit and loss statements	1948-1961
B.14	Trial balance sheets	1942-1949
B.15	Timber seasoning accounts	1950-1957
B.16	Commercial Bank of Australia deposit statements (includes names of clients)	1958-1960
B.17	List of insurance policies 1949; land valuations 1957- 1961; miscellaneous working papers; bank books; receipts	1941-1968
B.18	Accounts register	1942-1945
B.24	Factory returns	1937-1966
B.25	Monthly production sheets, Smithton, July 1942- February 1963	1942-1963
B.26	Monthly production sheets, Stanley, December 1947- February 1963	1947-1963
B.27	Stock sheets, June 1948-December 1960	1948-1960
B.28	Kauri stock sheets, Smithton and Stanley, June 1952- June 1958	1952-1958
B.29	Miscellaneous working papers	1952-1962
B.30	Stock notebooks, November 1949- December 1958 (6 items)	1949-1958
B.31	Order book, January 1944-May 1954 (mainly APPM, Burnie)	1944-1954
B.32	Depreciation ledger, March 1934-June 1944 (includes Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company assets 1934-1940)	1934-1944
B.33	Depreciation ledger	1936-1947
B.34	(1) G B Stein's maintenance book December 1965- September 1972 (2) APPM pulp wood trucks log book October 1951-December 1968 (3) freight charges schedule	1951-1972
B.35	Motor truck operation returns, Mawbanna etc	1949-1957

B.36	Motor truck operation returns, Montagu etc, July 1949- June 1962	1949-1962
B.37	NSW Department of Railways wages calculator	1947
B.38	Wages analysis register, January 1940-Novemeber 1949	1940-1949
B.39	Superannuation scheme accounts book, July 1941-August 1965	1941-1965
B.40	Employment records re superannuation; medical benefits; income tax; bonus payments; workers compensation	1949-1969

### **C. CIRCULAR HEAD TIMBER AND KILN SEASONING COMPANY (1934-1940)**

Incorporated in late 1933, the directors of this company first met on 17 January 1934. By 1940 it had two sawmills at Mawbanna and a sawmill and kiln-drying plant at Stanley. The latter was possibly the first such plant to use (and refine) a process developed by CSIRO in the early 1930s. The Company also took production from other mills in the Circular Head area, including Dunkley Brothers (Myalla and Sunny Hills), Grey Brothers and E H Fenton (Smithton), F Fenton (Christmas Hills), F D Hays and Sons (Edith Creek) and J H MacKay (Trowutta). After declining amalgamation with E H Fenton Pty Ltd in September 1939, it agreed to it (with Dunkley Brothers) the following year.

C.1	Lease agreement with Marine Board re Foreshore Wharf, Stanley; agreement re L J Anderson sawmill, Mawbanna; agreements re lease and sale of W Etchell's sawmill, Mawbanna; lease of Crown land near Falls Creek; 'Pinnacle' dressed timber trademark registration certificate; Mawbanna commercial pump agreement	1933-1940
C.2	Minute book of meetings, 17 January 1934-23 September 1940	1934-1940
C.3	Minutes of meetings (duplicates), 17 January 1934- 20 December 1937	1934-1937
C.4	Correspondence re accounts; insurance; taxation; depreciation; amalgamation with E H Fenton Pty Ltd and Dunkley Bros; Salmon River Blackwood Mills Pty Ltd; F Jaeger	1935-1941
C.5	Reports re Stanley operations; production costs; kiln-drying Costs; war-time profits tax; assets	1934-1940
C.6	Balance sheets and accounts	1935-1940
C.7	Kiln-drying costs; income tax returns; share summaries; directors' dividends; list of shareholders	1934-1940

**D. E H FENTON PTY LTD (c1920-1940)**

Established as sawmillers and timber merchants about 1920, E H Fenton Pty Ltd owned sawmills at Smithton, Salmon River and Parrawe when it amalgamated in 1940 with Dunkley Brothers and Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company.

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|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| D.1 | Agreements and guarantees with Commissioner of Railways (updated 1941-1942 transferring responsibility to Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers) fire policy; A E Hanson and E H Fenton loans agreement addendum and promissory notes; memoranda of agreement with W T Hanson and W Doe re purchase of land at Parrawe | 1935-1942 |
| D.2 | Schedule of assets                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | c1940     |



### ***E.DUNKLEY BROTHERS PTY LTD*** (c1890-1940)

This family-owned business was established in Zeehan by 1891. Operating as contractors, sawmillers, timber and general merchants in the early 1900s, it purchased the Zeehan Tramway Company in 1919 primarily to transport timber to its Zeehan sawmill. The Zeehan Tramway Company was then in decline, but had built the vital rail link in the centre of the township and had running rights over other connecting lines to outlying mines. Dunkley Brothers opened their Stanley sawmill just prior to the end of the First World War. By 1940, when it amalgamated with Circular Head Timber and Kiln Seasoning Company and E H Fenton Pty Ltd, it was mainly active only in the Circular Head area. Its head office had been moved to Stanley in 1924, and its assets included sawmills at Sunny Hills, Waratah (2), Rosebery (Balfour Mill) and Myalla, other railway interests (Mt Farrell, Tullah), plant (Hobart Joinery Works, Trowutta), and property (Surrey Hills Estate) or Crown land leases also in the north west area.

E.1	Copy of F C A Schmidt's will 1903; agreements, correspondence and other papers re Zeehan Tramway Company; Dunkley tram extension; timber contractors; horse and bullock hire and purchase; timber transport; Surrey Hills Estate; Crown Land and other property leases; land titles; land tax; Knoles Plains tram licence; plant hire; Trowutta and Waratah tramways	1903-1940
E.2	Insurance policies 1925 and employer's indemnity policies 1923-1930	1923-1936
E.3	Correspondence re Zeehan Tramway Company shipment of Timber; Commercial Bank loan; Hampshire iron deposit tram route; Waratah property; land titles	1903-1940
E.4.1	Balance sheets and accounts	1924-1936
E.4.2	Balance sheets and accounts; schedule of assets; Waratah sawmill production cost schedule	1937-1940
E.5	Journal (financial)	1937-1941
E.6	Accounts ledger	1910-1941
E.7	First mortgage debentures, nos 1-29	1910
E.8	First mortgage debentures, nos 30-54	1910
E.9	First mortgage debentures nos, 55-80	1910
E.10	Specifications for locomotive side tank engine, boiler (includes drawings, photographs) See G.1 for other drawings relating to Dunkley Bros and the Zeehan Tramway Company	1904-1905

**F. *J S LEE AND SONS* (1885-1949)**

The pioneer firm of Circular Head sawmilling was J S Lee and Sons. Its Leesville site, on the Duck River opposite Smithton, was established in 1885. The company was probably the first to use winding gear instead of bullock teams for haulage. It was taken over by Kauri Timber Company Ltd in 1949.

F.1 Correspondence re F Jaeger and Sons, Smithton; equipment; 1951-1957  
L S Malone

## **G.Drawings**

- G.1.1 Kauri Timber Company Ltd: drawings (includes site plans; 1892-1993  
plant and equipment blueprints and drawings for Dunkley  
Brothers, Zeehan Tramway Company; E H Fenton Pty Ltd;  
Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers and Kauri Timber  
Company Ltd) *Oversized item*
- G.1.2 Kauri Timber Company Ltd: drawings (includes site plans) 1892-1993  
*Oversized item*

## **H.Ephemera**

- H.1 Kauri Timber Company Ltd: promotional folders; 1980-1993  
calendar 1993; Kauri Timber Company *Operating  
Manual*; grading rules; Circular Head and District  
emergency and essential services directory  
1993
- H.2 Kauri Timber Company Ltd: *Timber Workers Federal* 1940-1960  
*Awards* 1950-1956; T White and Sons wood working  
machinery manual; C Joyce 'The Air-Drying of Timber';  
W and G Dean (Melbourne) artists' supplies price list;  
Tasmanian Timber Association retail price list  
(North-Western, North and North-Eastern Divisions) 1960;  
Stanley Golf Club constitution and rules; forms; stationery;  
photographs

## **OTHER SOURCES**

QVMAG, Community History, CHS 39

QVMAG, Community History, 1991.OH.38

QVMAG, Community History, Documentation series, 1999.P.1140

QVMAG, Community History, Secondary file, 'Timber industry'

Launceston Reference Library, Local History Collection, news cutting files, 'Forests and forestry',  
'Timber'

Kerry Pink, *And wealth for toil: a history of North-West and Western Tasmania 1825-1900*,  
Burnie, 1990

Lou Rae, *A history of railways and tramways on Tasmania's West Coast*, Hobart, 1983

H Trethewie, (ed), *Back to Circular Head*, Hobart, 1952

*Advocate*, 26 February 1980

