



GIANT

Ancient & Historic Trees

GEELONG GALLERY

Front cover:

John Gollings, *The Ada Tree*, 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
Geelong Gallery

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of the exhibition

Giant – ancient and historic trees

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GIANT

Ancient & Historic Trees

SILVA,
Or a DISCOURSE of
FOREST-TREES,
AND THE
PROPAGATION of TIMBER
In His MAJESTY'S DOMINIONS.

As it was Deliver'd in the *ROYAL SOCIETY* the xvth of *October*, MDCLXII, upon occasion of certain *Quæries* propounded to that *Illustrious Assembly*, by the *Honourable* the *Principal Officers* and *Commissioners* of the *Navy*.

In **TWO BOOKS.**

Together with an *Historical Account* of the *Sacredness* and *Use* of *Standing Groves*.

TERRA,
A *Philosophical ESSAY* of *EARTH*, being a *Lecture* in *Course*.
To which is annexed

POMONA:
OR, AN
Appendix concerning *Fruit-Trees*, in relation to *CYDER*;
The *Making*, and several *Ways* of *Ordering* it.
Published by *Express Order* of the *ROYAL SOCIETY*.

ALSO
ACETARIA:
Or, a *DISCOURSE* of *SALLETS*.
WITH
KALENDARIVM HORTENSE;
OR THE
GARD'NERS ALMANACK;
Directing what he is to do *Monthly* throughout the *Year*.

All which several *Treatises* are in this *FOURTH EDITION* much *Enlarg'd* and *Improv'd*,
By the *AUTHOR*.

JOHN EVELYN, Esq; Fellow of the *ROYAL SOCIETY*.

*— Tibi res arripua laudo & oris
Reverent, tanta anxia reculente fatus. Virg.*

LONDON:
Printed for *Robert Scott* in *Little-Britain*; *Richard Chiswell* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*; *George Sawbridge* in *Little-Britain*; and *Benj. Tooke* in *Fleetstreet*. **MDCCVL**

FIG 1
John Evelyn (1620-1706),
Silva, or a discourse of forest trees,
4th ed., 1706, title page

GIANT

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GEOFFREY EDWARDS

GEE LONG GALLERY

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FOREWORD

In the late 1840s a Tasmanian clergyman, the Reverend Thomas Ewing, discovered a stand of trees like none he had seen before. In one square mile next to the Huon Road outside Hobart he found one hundred trees which each had a girth of at least 36 feet. Ewing called this area the 'Vale of Giants for puny indeed did men appear alongside these vegetable wonders'. He wanted the tallest tree 'held sacred'.

The local name for these trees in Tasmania was swamp gums which suggests that Ewing's fellow colonists did not share his admiration of them. Victorians displayed greater regard for these trees when they called them mountain ash. Australia's greatest nineteenth-century botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller, was most laudatory when he dubbed them *Eucalyptus regnans*, the king of the eucalypts.

Mueller's name was apt because these trees are the tallest eucalypts, yet they are more than that. They are also the world's tallest flowering plants, the world's tallest hardwoods. Before colonists began attacking them in the nineteenth century, the biggest may also have been the tallest trees in the world, eclipsing the sequoias or giant conifers of the United States of America.

These trees are not Australia's only giants. For all Ewing's amazement at the girth of the trees he found by the Huon Road, there are other species with even greater girths — above all, the baobabs, *Adansonia gregorii*, of north-western Australia. There are also species which live much longer — above all, the Huon pines, *Dacrydium franklinii*, of south-western Tasmania.

The scale of these trees — the way in which they extend across space and time — stretches the imagination as much as it stretches the eye. More than most other forms of nature, these trees are yardsticks of human existence. They make people look puny, as Thomas Ewing observed — small and shortlived, a witness to little. Their size and age make them one of the most patent manifestations of the wonder of the world.

Yet these trees are, above all, a test of our regard or disregard for nature. If we destroy these trees, what will we not destroy? If we do not safeguard the forests where they grow, what in the environment is safe? If they do not move and inspire us, what will?

The area where these questions now arise more starkly than any other is Tasmania's Styx Valley. The forests in this valley contain Australia's tallest trees, yet it is being clear-felled and wood-chipped coupe by coupe. More than a hundred and fifty years after the Reverend Ewing, the Tasmanian government still cannot see the wonder of a Valley of Giants. This exhibition reveals the wonder of Australia's giants in the hope of encouraging their protection.

Professor Tim Bonyhady
Australian National University

INTRODUCTION

(A great tree) is one of the noblest of natural objects; and it touches the imagination no less than the eye, for it grows out of tradition and a past order of things.

Dreamthorp, Alexander Smith (1830-1867)'

Sylva Britannica;

OR

PORTRAITS OF FOREST TREES



See page 112

Had, old patrimonial trees?

COWLEY.

*..... arched walks of twilight shade,
And vistas brown that Sylvan bow
Of pine or monumental oak*

MILTON.

As tempting as it may be to open with reference to famous remarks ‘on trees’ by the nineteenth-century naturalist Richard Jefferies, or to rural elegy in Alexander Smith’s *Dreamthorp*, it is better perhaps simply to reiterate the words of Thomas Pakenham in *Meetings with remarkable trees* (1996) and say that ‘this is not a conventional book about trees’.²

In sympathy with Pakenham’s approach to the subject of ‘remarkable trees’, this account of ‘ancient and historic trees’ offers no assistance with identifying trees, gives no advice on matters such as the cultivation of trees, timber usage or the pruning of trees. In short, for scientific or technical enquiry into the subject of trees, the reader must look elsewhere.

Instead, *Giant – ancient and historic trees* examines a dramatic aspect of natural history — the story of notable and significant trees — as seen through the lens of art history. *Giant* is concerned with famous images of famous trees — images such as David Roberts’ illustration *The Holy Tree, Metereah* (c. 1846), a gloriously ramshackle old sycamore near Cairo, a popular destination for Christian pilgrims, and supposedly a resting place of the Holy Family during their flight into Egypt.³ (fig 3) *Giant* is concerned also with contemporary images including photographs by John Gollings of significant Victorian trees, and wood engravings by Tim Jones of historic sites at Hanging Rock and Geelong.

The cultural and symbolic significance of trees, as expressed by artists working in the Western tradition of landscape, is a big subject; and is examined at length by Simon Schama in *Landscape and memory* (1995). In this monumental work of scholarship, Schama brings his particular vision and depth of insight to bear on the argument that ‘our entire (Western) landscape tradition is the product of shared culture (that is) built from a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions.’⁴ As for the role of trees in these ‘myths, memories, and obsessions’, it is Alexander Smith, once again, who suggests that ‘Ancient descent and glory are made audible in the proud murmur of immemorial woods’ where venerable trees are ‘the broad-armed witnesses’ of events in centuries past.

As wide-ranging in scope as this preamble is, *Giant – ancient and historic trees* is concerned ultimately with the pictorial documentation and representation of ‘remarkable trees’ (exotics and natives) from an Australian perspective. A precursor to this undertaking is the album of Australian ‘tree portraits’ compiled by the anthropologist Charles Mountford in 1956, (fig 4) while the exhibition itself includes copies of Ferdinand von Mueller’s *Eucalyptographia* (1879–1884) — a great milestone of botanical scholarship — and Russell Grimwade’s *An anthology of the eucalypts* (1920).

While the prime motivation for *Giant* is the distinctive and spectacular character of Australia’s own phenomenal and ‘remarkable trees’, and their signal presence in Australian art from the colonial period to the present, our subject is plainly not ‘the tree in Australian art’. This would be an unwieldy exercise given that landscape painting was the dominant stream in Australian art until the advent of modernism during the inter-war period of the twentieth century.

In terms of the history of representation of Australian flora, it is important to acknowledge, even briefly, the substantial research and extensive literature that exists on this subject in general including, *inter alia*, titles that are as different in approach as Bernard Smith’s *European vision and the South Pacific* (1960), the same author’s classic *Australian painting 1788–1970* (1971), and more recent titles including, notably, Tom Griffiths’ *Forests of ash: an environmental history* (2002) and Tim Bonyhady’s *A colonial earth* (2002). Ron Radford’s commentary in the Art Gallery of South Australia’s exhibition catalogue *Our country: Australian Federation landscapes 1900–1914* (2001) discusses the idea of ‘The Symbolic Landscape’ and refers to several images reproduced in this publication.

Giant – ancient and historic trees reflects the passionate advocacy of the worldwide environmental movement in seeking to preserve old-growth forests that come under threat from logging and



FIG 3
David Roberts,
The Holy Tree, Metereah,
c.1846, colour lithograph

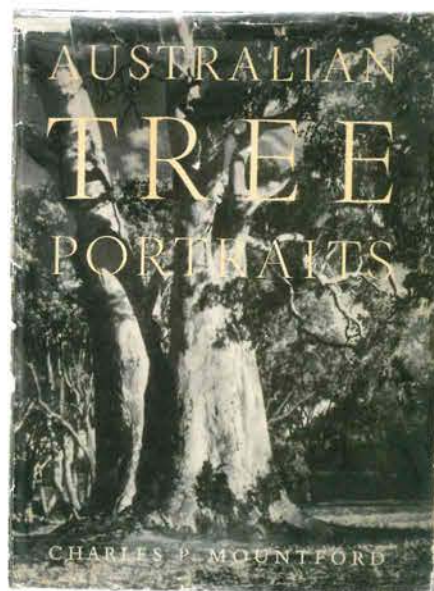


FIG 4
Charles Mountford,
Australian tree portraits,
1956, dustjacket

unsustainable developments of different kinds. Also, in the more intimate theatre of community advocacy, *Giant* further reflects the concerns of those who act to preserve lone trees or avenues of old trees with historical or regional significance.

As these individuals and communities are well aware, there is currency still in the rather gloomy plea made long ago by Richard Jefferies in his classic *The gamekeeper at home* (1877). In this essay, Jefferies makes a plea on behalf of large estates and ancient tracts of countryside in his native Britain. It is a plea that literally 'echoes down the ages'.

*No care is taken to plant fresh saplings, no care is taken to select and remove the trees which have passed the meridian of their existence... Perhaps the temper of the times is to blame for this neglect: men look only to the day and live fast. There is a sense of uncertainty in the atmosphere of the age: no one can be sure that the acorns he plants will be permitted to reach their prime... So the avenues die out and the keeper mourns to think that in the days to come their place will be vacant.*⁵

Giant is certainly no inventory of all known 'significant' trees in any particular bailiwick, whether regional, national or whatever. This information is already in print, and the Registers of Significant Trees maintained by branches of the National Trust of Australia are primary sources of the kind. In some instances, comprehensive lists of 'significant trees' are also posted on the Internet by public authorities and keen amateurs alike. Frequently, the jargon adopted by Internet 'tree' sites adds colour to otherwise dry lists of 'champion trees' or 'forest giants' whose heights and girths are recorded in minute detail along with information about the alleged antiquity or historical associations of the tree, and about its nearest rivals in the eternal quest for the oldest and the tallest examples of a species. In the event, though, specialised 'tree language' well predates the Internet.

Ancient trees, for instance, have long earned the sobriquet 'Methuselah', while the tallest are 'patriarchs' or 'mothers of the forest'. Occasionally, as emblems of patriotic self-esteem, the grandest and most famous trees are named after national heroes and identities in the manner of California's 'General Sherman' and 'General Grant' trees, giant sequoias both. In a novel display of nationalistic ambivalence, Australia once boasted not only an 'Uncle Sam' tree but also an 'Edward VII' tree, colossal specimens of blackbutt and mountain ash respectively, that were tourist destinations near the Black Spur in Victoria until their eventual demise in the late-nineteenth century.⁶

Both Nicholas Caire (1837-1918) and J.W. Lindt (1845-1926) hoped that their photographs of 'forest giants' would sway public opinion in favour of active protection for Victoria's old forests. Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-96) was more explicit in calling for the tallest of the mountain ash to be preserved, or at the very least, measured and properly documented. Over time, and regardless of the interest and attention that historic and notable trees receive, they are not always afforded the protection that should be their due. Today, for instance, a stone marker in England indicates what was allegedly the original site of the 'Glastonbury thorn' — the most famous of the country's 'Holy thorn' trees of Christian association. This sacred tree was believed to have sprouted from a staff of hawthorn wood carried by St Joseph of Arimathea when he came ashore at 'Avalon', arguably the present-day site of Glastonbury. Vandalised in Elizabethan times, the sacred 'Glastonbury thorn' was finally destroyed by Puritans in a fit of religious zealotry during the reign of Charles I. The stone marker is its lasting monument.⁷

In Australia, a giant mountain ash at Thorpdale in South Gippsland — a serious contender as one of the country's tallest trees — was cut down in 1881 by a farmer named Cornthwaite. It was subsequently measured at some 375 feet (114 metres) as it lay on the ground.⁸ No sober stone marks the site of this former giant. Instead, a

slender column rises in its place from a treeless plain like a colossal maypole of tragic aspect. A panel of metal lettering on top of the pole — that approximates the height of the tree — announces, with no hint of irony, this to be ‘the site of the world’s tallest tree’.

For most of us, however, an ancient or extremely tall tree is an inspiring spectacle, chiefly because of its physical presence, either as a towering colossus or heroic ruin. Ancient trees are plainly the world’s oldest living things, our ‘best antiques’ according to Alexander Smith. When William Wordsworth wrote of a ‘brotherhood of venerable trees’ he had in mind English oaks, elms and their like. All the same, his allusion might apply equally to the massive cedars in a woodblock print by Hiroshige (1797–1858), (fig 5) or more generally to the ever-diminishing territories of the world’s old-growth forests and to all surviving ancient trees in these increasingly embattled regions.

In spite of the systematic logging and land clearance that has occurred worldwide, much of it since the mid-nineteenth century, with the resulting loss of innumerable large and ancient trees, there are truly ancient specimens and species that survive to this day. A wizened bristlecone pine in the White Mountains of California is estimated to be 4,600 years old. No less phenomenal, is the recent discovery in Australia, in an isolated canyon surprisingly close to Sydney, of a stand of Wollemi pines, trees that have been described as ‘living fossils’, a species long presumed extinct. Their discovery in 1994 is rather like the arboreal equivalent of our reckoning on a brontosaurus or similar creature grazing in some remote corner of a distant savanna.⁹ Tasmania too is renowned for its formidable stands of messmate, mountain ash, and Huon pine, while Victoria’s Otway Ranges are home to equally venerable specimens of myrtle beech and mountain ash. In Western Australia, the tall karri and jarrah trees are the most noteworthy species.

Debates about the relative antiquity and scale of certain venerable trees have long occupied botanists, travellers and natural historians. The celebrated ‘Dragon tree’ at Orotava in Tenerife was much admired by the eminent German statesman and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), and an engraving of this exotic-looking tree features as the frontispiece to early editions of his *Travels*. Humboldt was convinced the tree was at least 6,000 years old, a calculation much reduced by modern experts to a not inconsiderable 600 years. Equally exotic, and also discussed by Humboldt, is the voluminous ‘Montezuma cypress’ at Tule in Mexico, a tree with the largest girth of any in the world. Once thought to be three great trunks fused and growing together, the cypress is now recognised as a single, individual specimen. A Huon pine in Tasmania is thought to be 2,500 years old, while the ‘Bowthorpe oak’ in Lincolnshire, England, a mountainous tree with a hugely thick bole — is said to be around 1,000 years of age. Jacob Strutt depicted this oak in his *Sylva Britannica* (1826), an album of etchings and concise histories of famous trees in England. (fig 2)

While Australia’s eucalyptus trees are certainly not as long-lived as the oaks and elms in Strutt’s *Sylva*, the mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) is certainly the world’s tallest hardwood. In the nineteenth century, various estimates of between 300 and even 500 feet (approx 120 to 150 metres) were made in respect of the height of the tallest specimens of mountain ash, with many of these found in Gippsland in southeastern Victoria. In any case, no trees of this enormous scale are thought to have survived beyond the 1860s by which time logging and bushfires had claimed the finest specimens. Today, the tallest known trees are well short of nineteenth-century records, with heights above 80 metres being rare.

Romantic poets and painters have often given expression to the idea that ancient trees are the noblest and most inspiring of God’s creations. To Keats, ancient oaks were like ‘green-robed senators of mighty woods’, while the poet Gray described the famous old trees at Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire as ‘very reverend vegetables’. (fig 15) Both John Constable (1776–1837) and Samuel Palmer (1805–81) made careful, naturalistic studies in pencil of ‘venerable’ and



FIG 5
Utagawa Hiroshige,
Stage 26. *Nissaka*, c.1850,
hand-coloured woodblock,
Geelong Gallery

'monumental' trees; whereas the writer William Gilpin (1724-1804) proposed elaborate and artificial distinctions between 'romantic' and 'picturesque' scenery, and between what he deemed to be desirable and undesirable artistic conventions for the representation of trees in landscape painting. (fig 6)



FIG 6
William Gilpin,
Remarks on forest scenery,
3rd ed., 1808

Gilpin took pains to demonstrate how the sculptural character of old, gnarled and otherwise venerable trees might well comply with his principles of a 'picturesque' landscape. He considered that conspicuous imperfection in the shape of a tree, or the ragged aspect of an elderly specimen, were no handicap whatsoever for an artist devising a 'picturesque' scene, so long as the artist adhered to his guidelines in respect of compositional harmony. Later still, the influential critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) also took a strong stand on the matter of artistic convention in the drawing of trees. In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin speaks of a quality he describes as 'tree-loveliness' and carefully explains the ways in which this quality — somewhat akin, so we read, to 'perfect fellowship' — might be either courted or lost by the landscape artist.¹⁰

Subsequently, in the 1870s in America, Alfred Bierstadt (1830-1902) prospered on the strength of the high drama and heavy allegory of his paintings depicting California's immense sequoias or 'big trees' in the Mariposa Grove; while in Australia, the gentler personality of Swiss-born artist Louis Buvelot (1814-88) expressed a similar sense of the sublime, but with none of the grandstanding of Bierstadt, in his masterpiece *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset* (1869). (fig 34)

A prologue to an early American guidebook, *The big trees of California* (1910) by Galen Clark, the Whitmanesque self-styled 'discoverer of the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees' and 'Guardian of the Yosemite Valley', eulogized California's 'spirit of the woods'.

*And I've been to the groves of Sequoia Big Trees
Where beauty and grandeur combine,
Grand temples of Nature for worship and ease,
Enchanting, inspiring, sublime!*¹¹



FIG 7
(The Grizzly Giant)
One of the trees in Calaveras Grove,
280 feet high and 93 in girth,
in *Silva and flora*, vol.2, 1904

This is the impulse underlying so many of the painted, engraved and photographic representations of the most awesome of the sequoias, the so-named 'General Sherman' and 'General Grant' trees, and the most famous of all, the 'Grizzly Giant' of the Mariposa Grove. (fig 7) These trees were admired for their colossal scale and grandeur, and were often portrayed as symbols of new-world pride and national ascendancy. Buvelot's contemporaries made similar claims for his paintings of mighty gums — paintings that served to promote a wider appreciation of native trees and to combat any notion that Australian flora was, in any sense, less impressive or 'stately' than conventionally 'formal' and 'shapely' European trees such as oaks, elms and beeches.

It was an abiding respect for England's ancient trees, and a concern to preserve them from the deprivation wrought by various industries that were desperate for timber as a fuel or for building, that underlies a hugely influential book by John Evelyn (1620-1706), first published in 1664 and titled *Silva - or a discourse on forest trees*. (fig 1) In many respects, Evelyn's *Silva* (also spelled *Sylva* in some editions) heralds the concerns of latter-day environmentalists. Interestingly, in this connection, Evelyn also recommended that the industries responsible for the destruction of old forests be required to make good the damage caused to the landscape by replanting the site with species native to the region, as opposed to cheaper, inappropriate alternatives.

In his *Silva*, Evelyn names the chief offenders in the 'impolitick diminution of our Timber' as 'the late increase of Shipping ... the multiplication of Glass-Works, Iron-Foundries, and the like', but he reserves his most damning criticism for a practice, on the face of it, that may have seemed comparatively benign — and that is 'the disproportionate spreading of Tillage (that caused) prodigious havock' in the great forests of England. For Evelyn, working himself into a lather of outrage, the desecration of old forests had already

reached 'Epidemical' proportions as landowners succumbed to the temptation 'not only to fell and cut down, but utterly to extirpate, demolish, and raze... all those many goodly Woods and Forests, which our more (provident) Ancestors left standing.'¹²

Evelyn's argument and outrage anticipate in many respects the comparable sentiments of contemporary conservationists who chain themselves to trees in the depths of forests, and lie spread-eagled in the path of the advancing bulldozer in the interests of protecting remnant old-growth forests in Australia, South East Asia, South America or wherever inappropriate development encroaches upon sensitive and significant tracts of natural environment.

Evelyn himself refers to the treatise on trees in the *Natural history* of Pliny the Elder (AD23-79), (fig 8) a wide-ranging account that provides information on forest trees and fruit trees, and reflects generally on trees as the earth's 'ultimate gift to mankind', and forests as 'the temples of gods'. Pliny documents some famous trees in mythology and describes various exotics including the 'fantastic' Indian Banyan tree, notable 'for its fruit and self-propagating'. (fig 9) Elsewhere in his text, Pliny deals with 'unusually large trees', citing the example of the 'largest tree so far seen in Rome...displayed (by the Emperor Tiberius) as a curiosity on a deck that had been rigged up for a mock naval battle.'¹³

Pliny also mentions the *Georgics* of Virgil (70-19BCE) in which the poet deals, in the midst of his great narrative on agriculture, with trees in mythology, and further proposes that 'Countries are distinguished by their trees'. To some extent, this last idea is rekindled in a modern meditation on the Australian landscape in Murray Bail's *Eucalyptus* (1998) where the author questions 'ideas of a National Landscape (or) an interior landscape, fitted out with blue sky and the obligatory tremendous gum tree.'¹⁴

Comparable notions surface in Roger McDonald's *The tree in changing light* (2001) when the author recalls early childhood images suggestive of 'an ideal (Australian) bush' that was not the 'bush-proper', but an impression of suburban backyards intermingled with the experience of 'a Europeanised mongrel remnant' of the landscape existing on the outskirts of cities.¹⁵ Where Murray Bail's allusion might apply to a sweeping vista of the kind associated with Hans Heysen (fig 10), McDonald's 'mongrel remnant' landscape — partially developed and cultivated, and within easy reach of a city precinct — conjures up thoughts of the Heidelberg School artists setting up their easels during the 1880s in the intimate and familiar landscapes they found just beyond the terminus of a day's journey by rail from Melbourne.

The American writer and journalist, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94), a longtime resident of New England, was also an admirer of such 'intimate' landscapes, and a champion of historic trees. There is a moment in his newspaper serial *The autocrat of the breakfast-table* (1857) when Holmes ponders the notion that someday 'somebody would get us up the following work: — *Sylva Novanglica photographs of New England elms and other trees, taken upon the same scale of magnitude*'.¹⁶ Since then, Holmes' aspiration has been realized in several publications, while the present exhibition and this publication aim to do something similar, but from an Australian perspective.

What follows is a brief commentary on 'the famous trees of the world' with reference to historical accounts of the subject. This leads to a discussion of famous trees in Australia until, in turn, the focus shifts to significant trees in Victoria and their representation in painting, photography and prints.



FIG 8
Pliny the Elder,
Naturalis historiae, 1669, v3, title page,
National Gallery of Victoria Library



FIG 9
William Daniell,
Banyan tree, c1807,
hand-coloured engraving



FIG 10
Hans Heysen,
Study of river gums, Ambleside, S.A.,
1940, pencil and wash,
Geelong Gallery

THE VOCAL FOREST

*It fortun'd not long since, that Trees did speake, and locally move,
and meet one another; Their ayrie whistlings, and soft
hollowe whispers became Articulate sounds, mutually
intelligible, as if to the soule of vegetation, the sensitive
faculties and powers of the intellect also, had been co-infus'd
into them.*

Dendrologia — Dodona's Grove, or the vocall forrest
(1640)

James Howell (1594-1666)

*Enormous it looked, its sprawling branches going up like reaching
arms with many long-fingered hands, its knotted and twisted
trunk gaping in wide fissures that creaked faintly as the
boughs moved.*

'The Old Forest' in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954-56)

J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973)

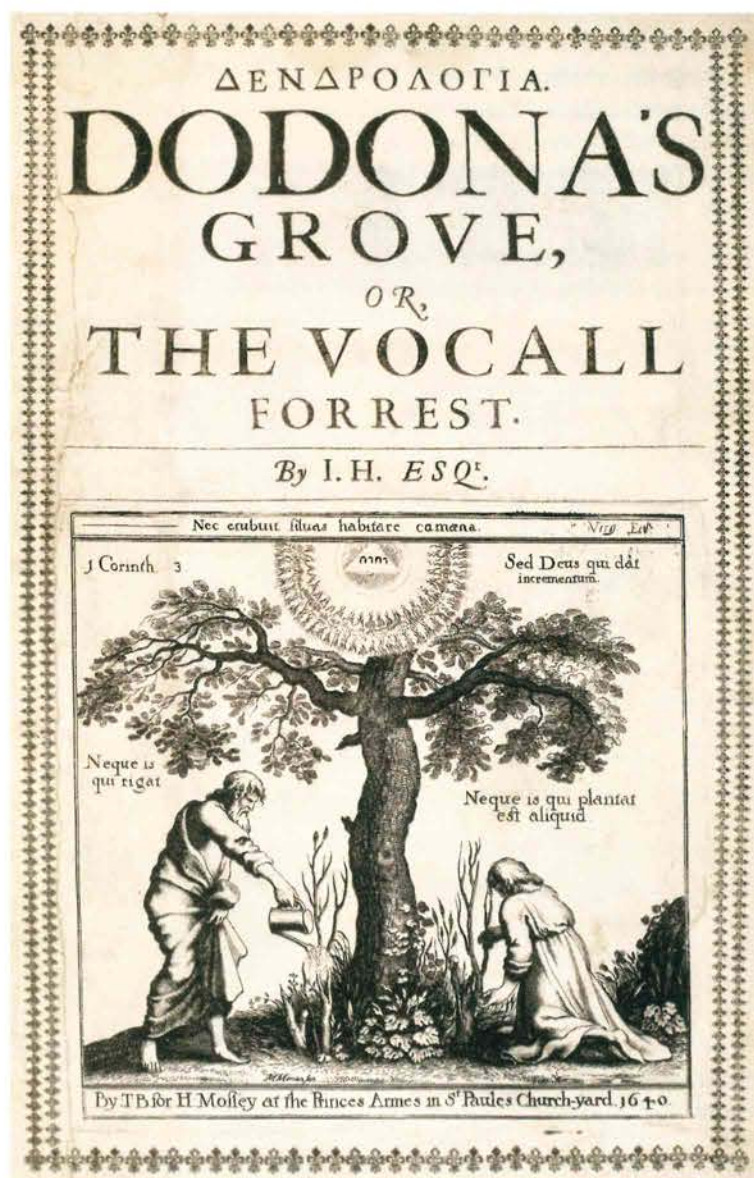


FIG 11
James Howell,
*Dendrologia. Dodona's grove,
or, The vocall forrest*, 1640,
title page

The mythology of trees is a subject as complex as it is vast. Myths involving trees are prevalent in the early literature and folklore of many countries, while allegories of a similar kind persist in modern fiction and in popular culture.¹⁷

The Bible is a rich source of 'metaphorical trees', while the celebrated 'talking grove' of Greek mythology has been reprised many times over the centuries. One such 'talking grove' appears in the guise of political allegory in seventeenth-century England. Others occur in numerous romantic poems including Tennyson's *The talking oak*, (fig 12) while the Disney studio's animated film *Flowers and Trees* (1932) involves a romance between young trees whose courtship runs the gauntlet of an antagonistic 'old stump' of a tree. Gnarled old trees are something of a stock feature in Disney's animated films where they usually resemble trees in Gustave Doré's sinister illustrations of the 'Dusky Wood' in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

J.R.R. Tolkien's illustrations to his own *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954-56) include a coloured crayon drawing of an 'old man willow' with snaking roots and massive trunk — the kind of specimen that would suit the purposes of the tree-house building Swiss family named Robinson. Another of Tolkien's illustrations — titled *The forest of Lothlorien in Spring* — features 'the mallorn trees of Lothlorien' of which the author says 'There are no trees like the trees of that land. For in the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold' — a circumstance, as we find, that is not uncommon in the shady realm of arboreal allegory.¹⁸

The roll-call of legendary trees in literature is extensive and includes a multitude of memorable or magical trees such as those in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Disraeli's *Sybil or the two nations*, and Adrien Le Corbeau's *The forest giant*. In narratives such as these, trees serve as beacons or landmarks in a spiritual journey, or else they embody the desirable virtues of constancy, strength, and wisdom.

Trees are central to the lore of the Druids — the oak in particular — while the most famous metaphorical trees in biblical narrative are those that represent the ultimate moral choice — the tree of knowledge of good and evil that confers mortality, and the tree of life that confers immortality, both of which grow in the Garden of Eden. Medieval stained glass windows feature the 'Tree of Jesse', a symbolic scheme that conflates Jewish and early Christian scripture, and represents the genealogy of Christ as recorded at the beginning of Matthew's gospel.

In Greek mythology — in the story of Jason and his Argonauts and their quest for the Golden Fleece — Jason consults the venerable oracle at the sanctuary of Zeus. Here, at Dodona in a quiet valley in the northwest of Greece, the god was said to communicate wisdom and prophecies with the rustling of leaves of a mighty oak. Thus, when Jason stripped a limb from this tree in Dodona's Grove, and used its timber as the prow of his ship called the Argo, the limb was found to be similarly possessed of the power of prophesy and was frequently consulted by Jason during the Argo's tumultuous voyage.

This classical myth of Dodona's Grove is the inspiration for an enigmatic seventeenth-century allegory written by the Welsh-born writer James Howell (1594?-1666), and published in 1640 under the title *Dendrologia — Dodona's Grove, or the vocal forrest*. (fig 11) The Oxford educated Howell was a man-of-letters, sometime diplomat and parliamentarian, and a staunch supporter of the Royalist cause in the reign of the Stuarts.

Although better known today for his collection of 'familiar letters' published in several volumes as *Epistolae Ho-elianae* (1645-55), Howell's *Dendrologia* takes up the myth of Dodona's Grove and transforms the classical 'vocal forest' into an elaborate and theatrical conceit in which various tree species represent the principal nations of Europe, their monarchs and aristocrats. Howell's overt royalist sympathies are played out in the narrative in which the oak stands for the English throne, the vine for France, the willow for Spain and so forth.



FIG 12
The Talking Oak, by
J.E. Millais (artist) and
John Thompson (engraver),
in Alfred Tennyson,
Poems, new ed., 1864,
engraving

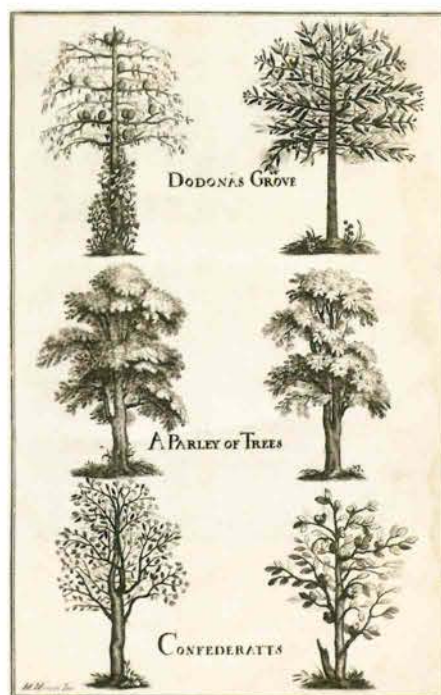


FIG 13
Dodona's grove, in James Howell,
Dendrologia, 1640

There is a goodly Forrest, Druina (England) by name, anciently called the White Forrest, wherein the royall Oke rules in chiefe, and with such a latitude of power, that Hee stretcheth forth his branches to the Sea, and his boughes unto the great Rivers.¹⁹



FIG 14
James Howell (1594-1666)

Howell's allegory gains momentum in the reading but requires constant reference to a glossary to determine the real personalities, heroes and villains implicated in the drama. Howell was imprisoned for a term of eight years during the Civil War, presumably for his royalist sympathies. After his release, and with the restoration of the monarchy in England in 1660, Howell was eventually rewarded for his loyalty, and for his literary achievements, with his appointment as Historiographer Royal. Howell's engraved portrait appears within a medallion as the frontispiece to his *Epistolae Ho-ellianae*. (fig 14)

The antiquarian imagination, however, has no franchise on the fanciful notion of a deep, even personal empathy with trees. For example, Peter Carey's *Bliss* involves Harry Joy's tree planting. Italo Calvino wrote *The baron in the trees*, while John Fowles, in *The tree*, laments our growing alienation from nature and speaks warmly of such places of pilgrimage as Gilbert White's Selborne, Richard Jefferies' Coate Farm, and Henry Thoreau's Walden Pond, describing them as shrines for lovers of nature and, by extension, of trees. Fowles mentions old myth and folklore concerning the 'idea of the man in the trees' suggesting that 'In all his manifestations, as dryad, as stag-headed Herne, as outlaw, he possesses the characteristic of elusiveness, a power of 'melting' into trees.'²⁰

Turning from the elusive and stag-headed Herne, we conclude this part of the essay with another short passage from Oliver Wendell Holmes, a passage, admittedly, that is closer in spirit to White and Jefferies than it is to Fowles.

... my friends, I shall speak of trees as we see them... in the fields... talking to us with their thousand whispering tongues, looking down on us with that sweet meekness which belongs to huge, but limited organisms.²¹

VERY REVEREND VEGETABLES

*In aged majesty a mighty Oak
Towers o'er the subject trees, itself a grove.*

Ovid (43 BCE-17 AD)

It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover Cliff... both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds.

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)



FIG 15
Burnham Beeches,
19th century, oil on canvas,
Geelong Gallery



FIG 16
‘The Dig Tree’, Fort Wills,
Bourke [sic] & Wills’ depot at
Cooper’s Creek, c1890s, photograph,
National Library of Australia

All cultures revere ancient and notable trees. Trees that bear ‘silent witness (to) the successive generations of man’ are thought notable for different reasons. Certain trees are revered for their association with important events that have shaped a nation. Others have a connection with pioneering enterprise. Trees marked civic boundaries, or the extent of private property, or served more generally as landmarks in a community. Many an ‘explorer’s tree’ bears testimony to its passing acquaintance with events of historical importance, its trunk blazed with weather-worn initials, crude symbols or the familiar abbreviated inscription. The so-called ‘Dig tree’, an old coolabah at Cooper’s Creek in central Australia, is the archetype of such a tree, and has become a poignant emblem for the hapless journey of exploration undertaken by Burke and Wills and their comrades in 1860. (fig 16)

Trees are famous also as exemplary specimens of their kind, or on account of their great size and age. Others still have entered the realm of literary legend as with the ‘venerable beeches’ described by the poet Thomas Gray in a letter to Horace Walpole; and in the case of a ‘vast oak’, the demise of which the naturalist Gilbert White describes in *The natural history and antiquities of Selborne* (1789).

In the centre of the village... is a square piece of ground surrounded by houses... In the midst of this spot stood, in old times, a vast oak, with short squat body, and huge horizontal arms extending almost to the extremity of the area. This venerable tree... was the delight of old and young, and a place of much resort in summer evenings... Long might it have stood, had not the amazing tempest in 1703 overturned it at once, to the infinite regret of the inhabitants, and the vicar, who bestowed several pounds in setting it in its place again; but all his care could not avail; the tree sprouted for a time, then withered and died.²²

Noble trees like White’s oak and Gray’s beeches, were popular subjects for photographers in the mid-nineteenth century and especially if they exemplified ‘picturesque’ ideals in terms of ‘form, lightness, and a proper balance’. Shattered oaks and elms, heroic remnants of once mighty trees, were popular subjects long before photographers took an interest in their bulbous trunks and contorted limbs as William Gilpin’s commentary on the ‘species of beauty’ known as ‘picturesque’ confirms.

These splendid remnants of decaying grandeur speak to the imagination in a style of eloquence, which the stripling cannot reach; they record the history of some storm, some blast of lightning, or other great event, which transfers its great ideas to the landscape; and in the representation of elevated subjects assists the sublime.²³

Here is Gilpin, once more, on derelict trees.

What is more beautiful, for instance, on a rugged foreground, than an old tree with a hollow trunk? or one with a dead arm, a drooping bough or a dying branch?... From the withered top also great use, and beauty may result in the composition of a landscape; when we wish to break the regularity of some continued line, which we would not entirely hide.²⁴



FIG 17
Thomas Baines, *The Boadab [sic] tree*,
c1873-1876, hand-coloured engraving,
from Edwin Carton Booth, *Australia*,
London, Virtue & Co., 1873-1876

Much later, in America, and in sympathy with the poetry of Robert Lowell (1819-91), painters and photographers focussed on ‘picturesque’ trees as subjects for romantic and spiritually charged imagery. Lowell himself wrote in support of the photographer and painter William J. Stillman who had been criticised for his choice of old and craggy trees as subjects.

Is there not a difference even in daguerreotypes in favour of the man who is enough of an artist to choose the right moment and point of view? And even were the tree trunk a deformed one, were it ever so ugly, mis-shapen, warty, scrofulous, carious, what you will, it is one of the curious psychological facts that it is not yet displeasing.²⁵

Narrative and pictorial records of famous trees also have a tradition of their own. Undoubtedly, the most celebrated historical account of specific trees — as opposed to general accounts of the characteristics of trees, their distribution and the uses of their timber — is *Silva – or a discourse on forest trees* (1664) by John Evelyn.

Evelyn is best remembered today for the diary he wrote from 1641 until shortly before his death in 1705. Evelyn's famous contemporary, Samuel Pepys, considered him to be 'a most excellent person... a man so much above others.' The *Silva* ran to eleven editions. The later editions were expanded and annotated by a Dr. A. Hunter, of York, and contain many superb engraved illustrations.

A century after Evelyn's death, his *Silva* inspired a natural successor in the lavish volume of prints of famous British trees published by the artist Jacob George Strutt, an acquaintance, so it seems, of the painter John Constable. Strutt's *Sylva Britannica, or portraits of forest trees notable for their antiquity, magnitude and beauty* was first published in 1826. (fig 2) The etchings of trees are accompanied by various annotations, measurements of the height and girth of the trees, information about their locations, and details of ownership of the land on which the trees stood. Strutt's account refers to several trees named by Evelyn and deals, in sequence, with oaks, elms, beeches and each of the principal species found in Britain. Strutt writes in his introduction:

Among all the varied productions with which nature has adorned the surface of the earth, none awakens our sympathies, or interests our imagination, so powerfully as those venerable trees which seem to have stood the lapse of ages — silent witnesses of the successive generations of man, to whose destiny they bear so touching a resemblance, alike in their budding, their prime, and their decay.²⁶

Strutt's style of documenting a selection of much-admired trees anticipates the general format of a number of modern titles, including two popular photographic essays by the Irish writer Thomas Pakenham. Interestingly, Pakenham portrays a few surviving trees, or in some cases the shattered remains of them, that featured in Strutt's *Sylva*. Similarly, the story of America's gigantic coast redwoods and giant sequoias has often been told, while other publications are devoted to the 'champion' trees of specific American states.

One example is *The historic trees of Massachusetts* (1919) that features photographs of some forty trees and groves of renown in the state. One hazy, sepia-tinted photograph shows the sorry remnant of the famous Cambridge elm under which George Washington 'stepped forward a few paces, made some appropriate remarks, drew his sword and formally assumed the command of the (revolutionary) army.'²⁷ Previously documented as being nearly 100 feet in height, with a spread of branches of some 90 feet, the elm had been part of a forest that once covered the locality in which it stood. (fig 19)

As founder of a worldwide organisation known as The Men of the Trees, the British-born forester and writer, Richard St Barbe Baker, is the author of several books dealing with notable trees in his homeland, in Africa, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Writing after the Second World War, St. Barbe Baker's style is proselytizing but engaging. He links patriotism with planting, favours the dramatic monologue as his writing style, and is keen on 'adventures in silviculture'. Ultimately, however, we recognise St. Barbe Baker as an effective crusader for global strategies to prevent further loss of the world's 'tree heritage' believing, as his Men of the Trees do, that 'the act of planting (a) tree, which in itself is a practical deed, is also a symbol of a far-reaching ideal.'²⁸



FIG 18
Burialm Beech,
19th century photograph.
Courtesy Buckinghamshire
County Archives



FIG 19
The Washington Elm at Cambridge,
in James Raymond Simmons,
The historic trees of Massachusetts, 1919

SYLVA AUSTRALIA

Beginning with the gullies of the Dandenong ranges, near Melbourne, the traveller can proceed from fairy scene to fairy scene along the coast to far-away Carpentaria and Papua, the vegetation preserving its identity, and yet slowly changing from a sub-tropical to a tropical character.

H. Willoughby, *Australian Pictures* (1866)²⁹



FIG 20
R. Godfrey Rivers,
Under the jacaranda, 1903,
oil on canvas,
Queensland Art Gallery,
Purchased 1903

In *Aspects of nature* (1808), the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) asserts that tropical landscapes represent the most noble state in nature, a belief inspired by extensive travel in South America and first-hand experience of the great rainforests of that continent. The celebrated baron never set foot in Australia, but his philosophy would have been known to a number of Australian colonial artists such as Augustus Earle (1793–1839) and Conrad Martens (1801–1878), both of whom favoured landscape subjects of a lush, sub-tropical persuasion.

In similar vein, Eugene von Guérard's *Ferntree Gully, Dandenong Ranges* (1867) (fig 21) depicts a luminous glade of tree ferns, towering specimens whose fibrous trunks sway slowly in the mountain air, their fronds fanned out against a light blue sky. The trunks of dead tree ferns lie across the forest floor. No human figures are present to suggest the scale of the trees, but we have an impression nonetheless of large ferns beneath an imposing eucalypt whose arched trunk frames the left side of the composition.

In the eyes of Australia's earliest European observers, the country's flora, like its fauna, was quite unlike the flora of any other place. Opinions on Australian trees ranged spectacularly from those that dismissed the local landscape as barren or uninspiring — and gum trees as somehow deficient in form and dignity compared with European trees — to others that saw great beauty and character in native trees and regional topography. In the Australian classic *Robbery under arms* (1888), Rolf Boldrewood writes about the 'big timber' country of Gippsland comprising stringy-bark forests of a 'darksome (and) gloomy' aspect, but negative attitudes to the landscape became increasingly rare as the century progressed.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the 'idiosyncratic' gum tree — and especially trees of monumental scale — were recognized as effective symbols of the spirit of the land and its people. The Australian landscape archetype was a painting by Hans Heysen, a golden vista framed by a group of heavy-limbed eucalypts — massive, ancient and heroic — seen from a low viewpoint against a dramatic sky. These landscapes were unmistakably Australian, emphatically grand and expressive of a sense of hard-won rural prosperity, combined with a sense of national identity and self-assurance. In contrast to the masculine sturdiness of Heysen's trees, the Sydney artist and writer Alfred Daplyn thought that few trees were 'so graceful in form and of such variety (as the) everlasting gum tree'.

From the first tentative efforts at representing the Australian landscape — executed mostly by topographical artists and the scientifically-minded amateurs accompanying the early voyages of exploration — it required several generations of colonial artists to contend with European preconceptions and pictorial conventions before artists came to fully understand Australian flora and to represent Australian trees and plants with any degree of accuracy. If the early topographical artists tackled the unfamiliar appearance of Australian flora with varying degrees of success, the English émigré painter John Glover (1767–1849) made a concerted and conspicuously successful attempt to represent the Australian landscape as altogether different to the classical vistas he had painted back in England — altogether different but no less splendid and majestic in prospect.

Bernard Smith describes Glover in Australia as a painter 'divesting himself of certain stylistic mannerisms' associated with his earlier English landscapes. In Tasmania, Glover made a number of pencil studies of trees that reveal an artist in search of botanical accuracy above pictorial effect. Smith records a note written by Glover of his Australian experience, in which he acknowledges that 'There is a remarkable peculiarity in the Trees in this Country; however numerous they rarely prevent you tracing through them the whole distant country.'³⁰



FIG 33
Eugene von Guérard,
Ferntree Gully, Dandenong Ranges
(Victoria), in *Australian Landscapes*, 1867,
chalk lithograph, Geelong Gallery



FIG 22
John Kauffmann, *The glory of the bush*,
c1910–1940, carbon photograph,
Collection Warwick Reeder

A deep appreciation and love of this 'remarkable peculiarity' informs the landscape paintings of every generation of Australian artists since Glover. Without hesitation, we think in this respect of the linear elegance of saplings in the landscapes of Roberts, Conder, Streeton and others in their circle; of Heysen's mighty trunks and the wistful trees in a pastoral reverie by Sidney Long; Namatjira's ghost gums; old figs drawn by Lloyd Rees; inky-blue Sydney trees in prints by Whiteley; William Robinson's vortex of rainforest trees; while finally we recall the dabs and knots of paint that coalesce as trees in landscapes by Fred Williams.

Images of Australian native trees and forest scenery are prominent in the work of early Australian photographers including, most notably, Nicholas Caire (1837-1918), J.W. Lindt (1845-1926), and John Kauffmann (1864-1942). While the 'tree portraits' of Caire and Lindt are distinguished by sharply focussed and closely detailed compositions, Kauffmann's photographs of lone, wind-swept trees, in comparison, are impressionistic, moody, and suggestive of a more 'painterly' conception of their subject.

A celebrated photograph by Harold Cazneaux (1878-1953), *The spirit of endurance*, (fig 23) shows an heroic gum in the Flinders Ranges, its roots exposed over time by incessant winds, but holding firm in the thin desert sand — a symbol of fortitude and resilience. The gum is presented in an attitude of high drama, its noble bearing and forceful profile strangely reminiscent of Delacroix's symbolic female figure of *Liberty leading the people*. Indeed, in *The spirit of endurance* Cazneaux evokes those attributes identified by the art critic Sidney Dickinson when he suggested to Australian artists that they 'make the gum-tree what it really is, the type and symbol of Australian vegetation.'



FIG 23
Harold Cazneaux, *The Spirit of Endurance*,
1937, gelatin-silver photograph,
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide,
South Australian Government Grant 1978

SYLVA VICTORIA

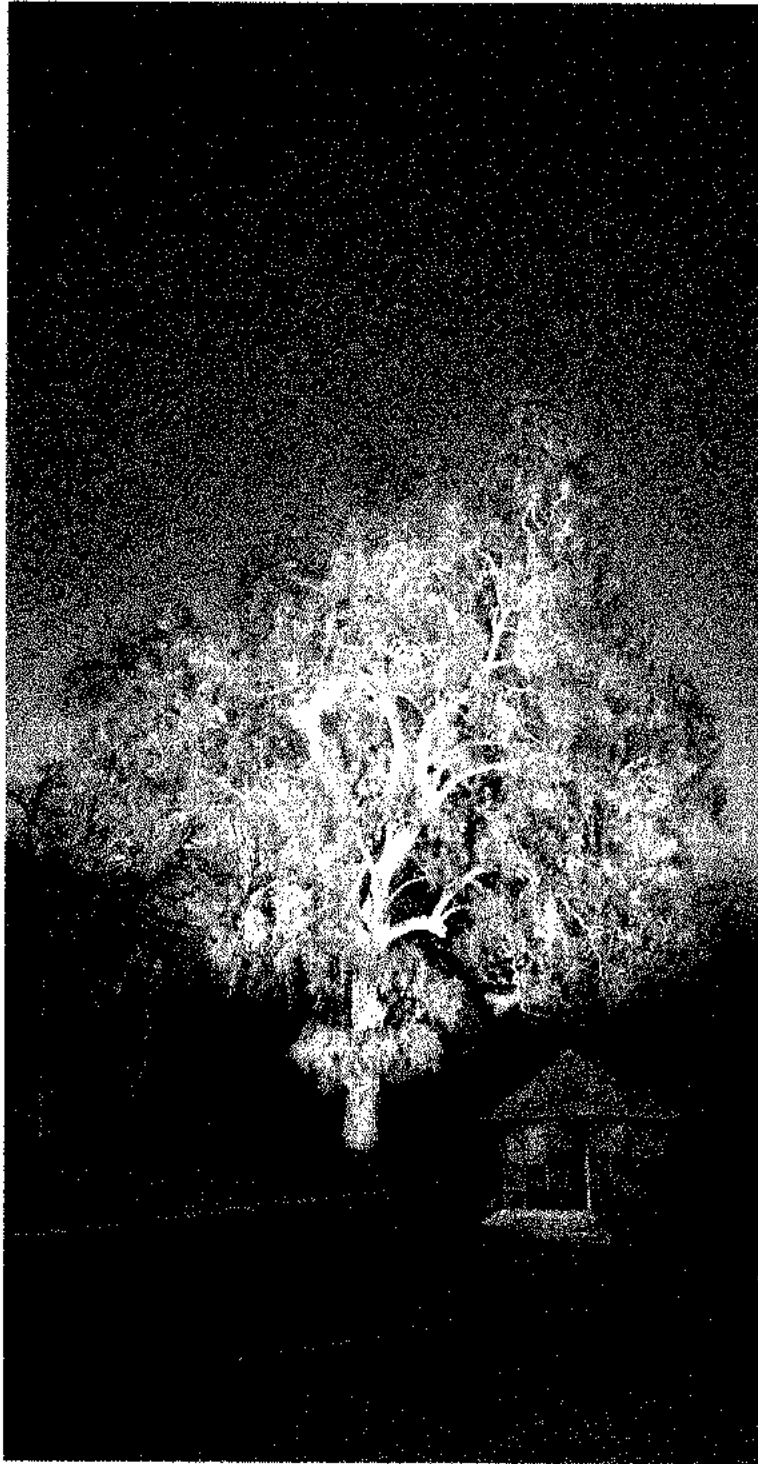


FIG 24
John Gollings, *Separation Tree*.
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.
2003, archival pigment inkjet
photograph, Creelung Gallery

On 26 January, 1853, writing on behalf of Lieutenant Governor Charles La Trobe — only recently appointed as administrator of the newly ‘separated’ colony of Victoria — the Colonial Secretary, William Lonsdale, sent the following advice to the young German botanist, Ferdinand Mueller.

I have the honor by direction of the Lieut Govr to inform you that His Excellency has been pleased to confer upon you the appointment of Government Botanist at a Salary of Four Hundred pounds per annum from this date.³¹



FIG. 25
Ferdinand von Mueller (1825–1896),
c.1876–1884, photograph by J.W. Lindt,
La Trobe Picture Collection State
Library of Victoria

Thus began a remarkable scientific and public career that lasted almost to the end of the century, and indeed right up to the time of Mueller’s death on 10 October, 1896. Mueller’s research into Australian flora, and that of the state of Victoria in particular, led to his becoming the most influential botanist active in Australia during the late colonial period. Having travelled to Australia in 1847 in the company of his two surviving sisters, Bertha and Clara, Mueller came primarily in search of a climate that would be more conducive to Bertha’s health than that of their homeland. Bertha had shown signs of tuberculosis, the disease that had claimed the lives of their parents as well as another sister. Initially, Mueller did not plan to remain long in Australia, but he did so, and during the course of the next four decades forged an international reputation with his scientific research on Australian flora. He gained recognition also as explorer, geographer, and director of the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne from his appointment in 1857 until his controversial removal from the post in 1873.

Mueller’s lifelong work on the identification and classification of flora, includes the seminal work *Eucalyptographica* (1879–84). Mueller made a close study of the tallest of Australia’s trees, the mountain ash, and was responsible for naming and classifying this species as *Eucalyptus regnans*. Keenly involved with efforts in the 1880s to locate any giant specimens of mountain ash that had survived the axe of ‘paling splitters’ seeking the tallest and straightest timber they could find, Mueller makes a pointed reference to these ‘monarchs’ of the forest in his *Second census of Australian plants* (1870).

This species or variety, which might be called Euc. regnans, represents the loftiest tree in the British territory, and ranks next to the Sequoia Wellingtonia in size anywhere on the globe.

When, in 1895, a party including the photographer J.W. Lindt, arrived at their destination in a forest near Healesville in Victoria, and stood admiring the colossal mountain ash that was the goal of their mission, they realised that their distinguished companion, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, had ‘wandered off on his own private botanical excursion and was not present to witness the occasion’ — the occasion was a re-naming of the giant mountain ash as the ‘Mueller tree’.³²

Sadly, the tallest of these giant mountain ash trees had already been cut down by the time parties of surveyors and photographers set out in the closing years of the nineteenth century in search of trees of record height — trees, for that matter, that had long been ‘witness to the successive generations of man’, that is, to successive generations of the original, indigenous owners of the land.

Along the banks of the Murray River, and in the vicinity of other rivers and tributaries in southeastern Australia, are ancient river red gums whose trunks are marked with long, welt-like scars that testify to the fact, as Robert Edwards writes in *Aboriginal bark canoes of the Murray Valley* (1972), that these trees, living or dead, are the ‘sole remnants of an important traditional industry of the hunter-gatherers who foraged the Australian landscape for many thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans.’³³

These are the ‘scar trees’ from which indigenous people cut sections of bark to make shelters, canoes and smaller vessels for use as containers. Such trees are found also along the course of the Yarra River, most notably in Richmond near the Melbourne Cricket Ground, in Burnley Park, and in Bulleen where an

example may be seen in the grounds of Heide, the former home of art patrons John and Sunday Reed.

Other trees of significance in respect of indigenous culture, are the so-called 'Corroboree trees'. (fig 41) These trees, invariably large and distinctive specimens in the landscape, mark clan meeting places that served also as sites of the dramatic dance and festivity that is depicted in a well-known painting by colonial artist Joseph Lycett (1774-1828). This vista shows a corroboree at Newcastle in New South Wales where lines of men with traditional body markings are performing the dance, their forms dwarfed by the moonlit limbs of old trees.

A rather different if no less spirited celebration took place in Melbourne, on 15 November 1850, a few days after news had been received from London that Queen Victoria had given approval for the Port Phillip District to officially 'separate' from the colony of New South Wales and be known henceforth as Victoria. The new colony was not formally proclaimed until 1 July 1851, when a crowd of joyous citizens gathered at the Botanic Gardens under an old red gum to celebrate Victoria's new status as a colony in its own right. The tree survives today and is one of the oldest in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. An early 20th-century photograph (fig 26) shows the 'Separation tree' skirted closely by an asphalt drive, and towering over a small, rustic pavilion. Taken at dusk, John Gollings' photograph of the tree as it appears today (fig 24) is an essay in phosphorescent nobility. The wooden shelter is there still, faithfully biding its time like a diminutive consort at the side of a gracefully aging regent.

Understandably, many of Victoria's 'significant' and best known trees are found in the state's oldest botanical gardens. Such gardens were established in major regional cities including Geelong, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Bendigo, some as early as the 1850s. Having attained a degree of maturity by the end of the century, and offering sunny and leafy spectacles of lawn and tree, spotted with visitors in leisurely attitudes, these gardens had become, like their counterparts in other states, (fig 20) popular subjects for professional and amateur artists alike. Rupert Bunny's paintings of the lawns and ornamental lakes of Melbourne's Botanic Gardens are the best known examples of the kind.

Many regional gardens benefited from the support of Ferdinand von Mueller in terms of advice and the supply of seeds and plants. Mueller's legacy extends throughout the state in public as well as large private gardens. In the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, amongst numerous significant trees, are trees associated with the garden's first directors, John Arthur, Mueller, and William Guilfoyle.

Often cited as 'the finest tree in the gardens', a New South Wales coast cypress pine, (*Callitris columellaris*) has a billowing texture noted by Frank Clarke, author of a 1920s guidebook to the gardens, as being reminiscent of a 'Wilton carpet'. For Clarke, and many writers since have shared his opinion, the 'eye and mind come back with a sense of rest to the velvet black pile of a pine.' The Gollings photograph (fig 27) of the same tree shows it to be scarcely changed in profile compared with its image in Clarke's earlier guide. Seen in silhouette against the surface of the ornamental lake, its dark Wiltonian profile is broken only by the intrusion of a neon sign, a Melbourne landmark of a different kind, barely visible in the distance, the subtlest inflection of an otherwise Arcadian prospect.

Established in 1857 and laid out in the newly fashionable 'landscape' style by the founding curator, an Englishman named Daniel Bunce, the Botanic Gardens in Geelong also have a number of rare and remarkable trees including, most spectacularly, a large *Ginkgo biloba*, allegedly the oldest and largest of its kind in Victoria and possibly in Australia. With its protuberant, Bernard Rackham-like trunk, the sculptural character of the tree is clearly expressed in another John Gollings photograph (fig 30). The southern boundary of Geelong's gardens is marked by a row of antediluvian native pines, the *Araucaria bidwillii* or Bunya pines. (fig 29) Similar trees are found in the botanic gardens at Ballarat.



FIG 26
Separation Tree.
19th century, photograph

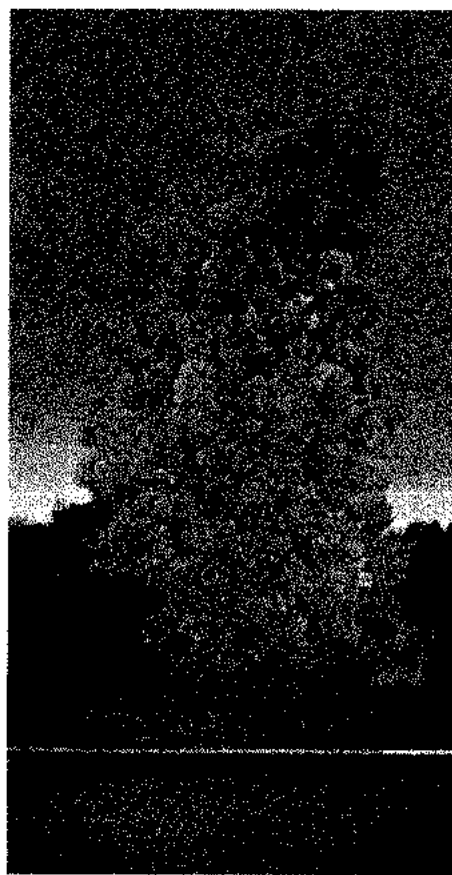


FIG 27
John Gollings, *New South Wales Coast Cypress Pine, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, 2003*, archival pigment inkjet photograph, Geelong Gallery



FIG 28
Felling a giant gum tree in the ranges. (detail)
1869, wood engraving, in *Illustrated Australian News*, 7 February 1869,
La Trobe Picture Collection State
Library of Victoria

Although the smallest of Australia's mainland states, the topography of Victoria is notably varied with the great forests of the Otway Ranges and in East Gippsland, the alpine environment of the far north-east, and extensive scrub and farmland spreading across much of the remainder of the state. Eager to record the most dramatic aspects of this landscape, a number of colonial painters, as elsewhere in Australia, traveled widely in quest of dramatic vistas and 'definitive' views. William Ford's *Picnic party at Hanging Rock, Mt Macedon* (1875) (fig 32) is such an image, showing a popular tourist destination — and a sacred site of the Wurundjeri people — a massive outcrop of volcanic rock, an unmistakable feature in an otherwise flat plain. Tim Jones' wood engraving (fig 33) is inspired by the artist's experience of the site as it is today.³⁴

Early Australian illustrated newspapers often show images of giant trees alongside stories of their felling. A similar account by a visitor from England, a Reverend Arthur Polehampton, working his way around southern Australia, determined to 'make a go' of life in plainly unfamiliar surroundings, tells of the task of timber cutting.

The havoc which even one man only can make in a very short time in the Bush, with his axe, is noticeable. The forest all round my tent — which at the time of my commencing wood-cutting, looked rather like a well-timbered English park — was now comparatively bare of timber and bleak-looking; indeed, Victoria will become an uninteresting-looking country when the characteristic beauty of its flat surface, its forest scenery, has been swept away; and this must be the case at no very distant date...³⁵

Thus, a growing realisation of the precariousness of Victoria's surviving forests is sensed not only in serious and scholarly publications such as those by Ferdinand von Mueller, but it is there also in popular 'recollections' of visiting journalists and authors, professional itinerants who published accounts of their travels throughout the Antipodes. While the Reverend Polehampton speaks for Victoria as a whole, the prominent writer, William Westgarth, refers to the environment of Melbourne, and specifically of Batman's Hill.

...one dear old friend... had passed away with so many others, and that was pretty green grassy Batman's Hill, in the far west of the city, with its open wood of 'She-oaks', whose wiry green foliage moaned its curious doleful note in the breeze. These now rare trees were with difficulty protected by Mr. La Trobe from the firewood thieves, ever on the alert for spoil when wood and coal alike had begun to rise in price upon the growing towns.³⁶

Indeed, over thirty years previously, Governor La Trobe had himself sketched the remains of an old tree in the yard of the original St Paul's Church in Melbourne, shortly before it was cut down on 21 April 1854. An annotation in La Trobe's hand on the sheet states that it was 'the last butt of the old Forest of Melbourne'.³⁷



FIG. 29
John Collings, *Bunya pine*,
Geelong Botanic Garden, 2003,
archival pigment inkjet
photograph, Geelong Gallery

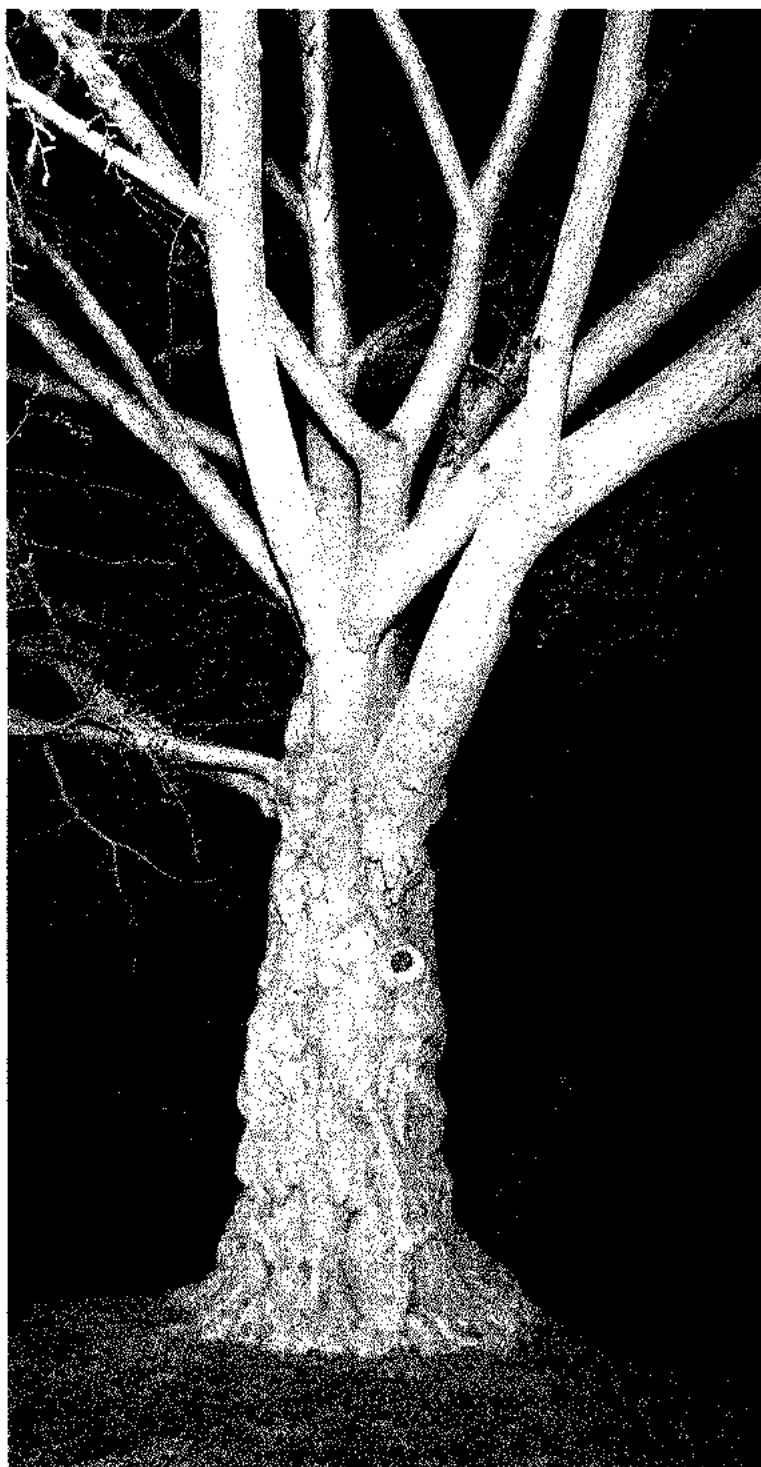


FIG 30
John Gollings, *Ginkgo biloba*,
Geelong Botanic Gardens, 2003,
archival pigment inkjet
photograph, Geelong Gallery

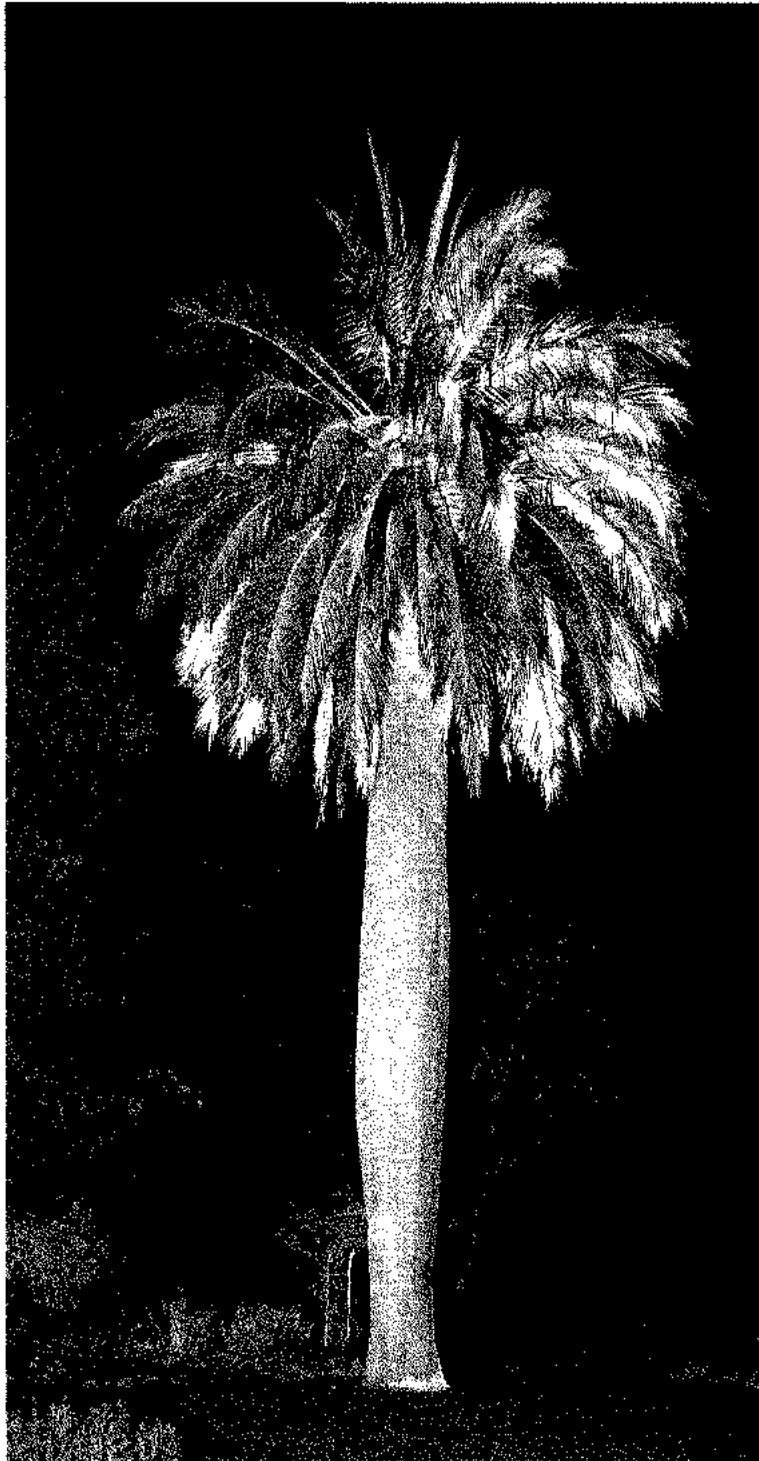


FIG 31
John Gollings, *Chilean Wine Palm*,
Geelong Botanic Gardens, 2003,
archival pigment inkjet
photograph, Geelong Gallery



FIG 32
William Ford, *Picnic at Hanging Rock,
Mount Macedon*, 1875, oil on canvas,
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased 1950.

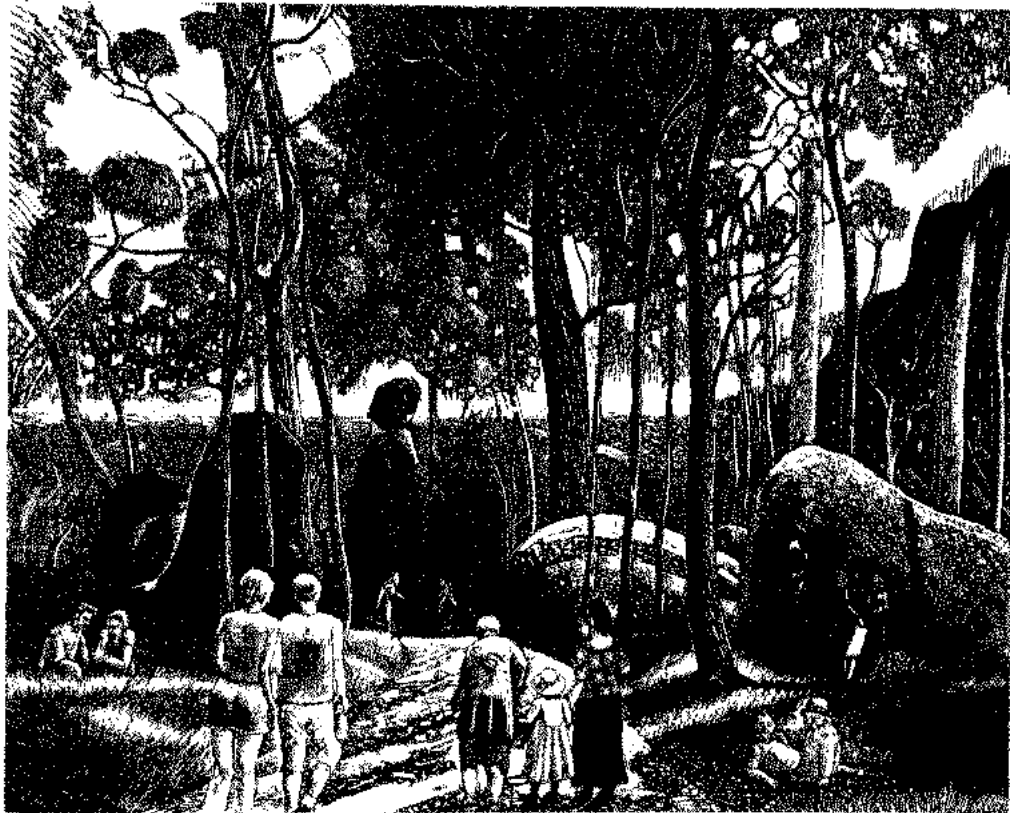


FIG 33
Tim Jones, *Hanging Rock*,
Mount Macedon, 2003,
wood engraving,
Geelong Gallery

EMBLEMS OF GRANDEUR

*The time-worn gums shadowing the melancholy water tinged with
the light of fast-dying day seem fit emblems of the departed
grandeur of the wilderness....*

Marcus Clarke (1875) ³⁸



FIG 34
Louis Buvelot, *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset*, 1869,
oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne, Purchased 1870

In 1875, the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library and Museum of Art issued a new publication with photographic reproductions of selected paintings in their collection. The novelist and journalist, Marcus Clarke, who was then Secretary to the Trustees, wrote commentaries to accompany the reproductions. Among the featured works was Louis Buvelot's *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset* (1869) (fig 34), the best known of several versions of the subject inspired by the artist's visit to Coleraine in 1867.

This visit was Buvelot's first experience of the prosperous pastoral district of western Victoria, a region that is sometimes described as the 'garden of Victoria'. By all accounts, the visit was happy and productive. Buvelot spent several weeks at Coleraine and was drawn in particular to the site of this painting — an otherwise unprepossessing duck pond overshadowed by a cluster of three massive river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). The location is just west of Coleraine township near an old watercourse known as Bryans Creek. The artist is recorded as saying that he had a great affection for the site, going there daily to scrutinize the scene and 'learn it'. He made both pencil (fig 35) and oil sketches of the waterpool with its ragged, oak-like gums, observing the spectacle at different times of day and at twilight.

The artist Thomas Carrington later recalled how an acquaintance of Buvelot's had described the artist's method of developing *plein air* studies into full-scale compositions such as *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset* and a similar painting at the Warrnambool Art Gallery. (fig 36) In both compositions, Buvelot endows a typical rural scene with a heightened dignity and pictorial formality. A turn-of-the-century photograph of the site shows that Buvelot has been faithful to the rudiments of the scene while, in composition and mood, *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset* remains somehow Claudean in prospect, serene and timeless.

The *Argus* newspaper of 5 June, 1888 printed Thomas Carrington's reminiscence.

one who knew (Buvelot) very well... (spoke of) days of encampment by lonely patches of ti-tree scrub, noting the varieties of form, and the changes of colour under changing light... And when he had looked long in the bush and made his many sketches, and taken all the impressions he thought it possible to remember and reproduce, he would go home to his work-room.

With the Coleraine pictures, this routine of 'going home to the work-room' produced a veritable *coup de théâtre* in the sunset version of *Waterpool*. By the time Marcus Clarke came to write his commentary, the painting was already acknowledged as a masterpiece of Australian art. Clarke refers to Buvelot's aged trees as emblems of a 'departed grandeur of the wilderness', noble survivors of a time when the primordial splendour of the landscape was unchanged by the agricultural incursions of European settlement. Nonetheless, given the iconic nature of Buvelot's painting — a seminal work of the Australian imagination — it is reasonable to acknowledge the artist's massive red gums as 'fitting emblems', rather, of the 'enduring grandeur' of the Australian landscape and flora, and as a testament to the power of landscape imagery as an expression of the spirit of an age and of national identity.

With their muted gray-green palette and dappled brushwork, Buvelot's tranquil and poetic landscapes are often said to reflect the influence of the Barbizon School. Human activity in Buvelot's landscapes is often absent or else marginal, unhurried and even lackadaisical. Only the stage coach that corners a bend in Buvelot's *On the Woods Point Road* (1872) (fig 37) introduces a note of mild urgency, but even here the pace is unremarkable — and considering the condition of the road, how could it be otherwise — while two horsemen following the coach are dwarfed by large trees, and seem as oblivious to stress as Corot's boatmen or Daubigny's farm labourers.

Here is William Westgarth's impression of this same landscape seen on the road to Woods Point in Gippsland.



FIG 35
Louis Buvelot, *(Waterpool) at Coleraine*, 1867,
pencil on paper, 21.0 x 42.4 cm (sight),
The University of Melbourne Art Collection.
Gift of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing 1938



FIG 36
Louis Buvelot, *Waterpool near Coleraine*,
1874, oil on canvas, Warrnambool Art
Gallery, Purchased 1889

Our road continued on to Wood's Point... a place famous for gold-digging 'rushes' some years ago... Where we pulled up to return, in a great valley full of tree-ferns as well as great tall gum trees, there were two large specimens of the latter, one being thirty-six feet, the other about sixty feet, in circumference.... One has usually no conception of the actual size of such trees till getting close up to them.³⁹



FIG 37
Louis Buvelot, *On the Woods Point Road*,
1872, oil on canvas, Geelong Gallery

As with *On the Woods Point Road*, aspects of Buvelot's *Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset* recall the classical tradition of pastoral landscape painting. In the latter image, the artist records the characteristic features and atmosphere of this typical Australian rural vista. The pond is glassy in its reflective stillness. All is quiet except perhaps for the buzzing of insects and the sound of ducks. The landscape is suffused with the glow of the setting sun. An axe, abandoned by a farmer at the end of his day's labour, rests against the rotting log at the edge of the pool, an allusion to the fact that this is not, after all, an ageless Arcadian prospect, but a real place of disinterested contemporary toil.

At the time of the 1872 Victorian Exhibition, the catalogue for the event gave credit to Buvelot, in effect, for having acclimatized the local populace to the admirable and distinctive features of native trees, and for demonstrating that native trees were indeed subjects worthy of artistic contemplation:

(Buvelot was) the first to reveal to us the special picturesqueness, and the wonderful variety of form and colour presented by the commonly-despised trees of Australia, and to show that, whether in isolation or in combination, these ragged and rugged members of the eucalyptus family are no less beautiful than the more symmetrical and umbrageous elm, oak, beech and birch of the mother country.⁴⁰



FIG 38
John Perceval, *Two gums — homage to Buvelot*,
1960, oil on composition board,
Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Gift of the ANZ Bank 1960.
Reproduced with permission Celia Perceval

Comparing Buvelot's various sketches of the Coleraine water-pool with photographs of the site, we get a sense of the artist's pictorial adjustments to the topography of the scene before him. This process involves subtle alterations to the inter-relationship of the trees around the pool, to the height and profile of the hills along the horizon and to the ragged extent of the gums — great silhouettes of trees that take their place among the most memorable representations of native trees in Australian art. In his book *Eucalyptus* (1998), Murray Bail describes 'the voluminous mop-like canopy' of river red gums, and speaks of their 'massive individual squatness', calling them 'ancient, stained and warty (and with) a grandfatherly aspect' that reveals 'a long life of incidents, seasons, stories.'⁴¹

The 'squat and massive' gums in the various *Waterpool near Coleraine* compositions are indeed ancestral in character. Such images were a strong influence on the photographer and painter H.J. Johnstone, and they inspired later interpretations of the subject including, notably, John Perceval's expressionistic tribute in the collection of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. (fig 38) The site of Buvelot's waterpool is rather different now — as a recent photograph by John Gollings reveals (fig 39) — and fairly tests the limits of William Gilpin's recommendation that old, gnarled or 'blasted' trees, and even their stunted remnants, are perfect expressions of the 'picturesque' ideal.

The blasted tree has often a fine effect both in natural and in artificial landscape. In some scenes it is almost essential.⁴²

Today, two of Buvelot's once mighty gums are reduced to heroic stumps of weathered timber. In the Gollings photograph, they stand like Druid stones in the ethereal half-light of evening. The pool itself shows the effects of several dry seasons, but still the scene is tranquil and charged with a sense of 'spirit of place' as it must have been during those weeks in 1867, when Mr. Buvelot from Morges in Switzerland, and trained in Paris, came with his easel and paints and lovingly sketched and 'learned' these quintessential Australian trees, so it seems, by heart.



FIG 39
John Gollings,
Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset,
2003, photograph,
Geelong Gallery

FOREST GIANTS

At our furthest in this Fernshaw direction, the entire scene was of hill and dale covered everywhere with forest, mostly of the various gum trees, many of them of great size and height.

William Westgarth (1889)⁴⁵



FIG. 40
Nicholas Cairn, *The Cumberland Mammoth*,
Maryville, 58 feet girth, c1878-1904,
albumen silver photograph, 29.5 x 21.8 cm,
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,
Purchased 1984

Although suitably impressed on first seeing Victoria's giant mountain ash trees, the English writer William Westgarth's account of his experience was muted in comparison with other early reports of 'forest giants' glimpsed by the first Europeans who ventured into the depths of Victorian and Tasmanian forests. The colossal scale of the mountain ash and other native trees in south-eastern Australia, and of the towering karri trees in Western Australia, frequently provoked extravagant accounts that were closer in spirit — if not in the same serene language — to Walt Whitman's hymn of praise to America's giant trees, the redwoods of California, whose felling is lamented in *Song of the redwood tree*, a poem from Whitman's famous *Leaves of grass*, first published in 1855.

*Along the northern coast,
 Just back from the rock-bound shore and the caves,
 In the saline air from the sea in the Mendocino country,
 With the surge for base and accompaniment low and hoarse,
 With crackling blows of axes sounding musically driven by strong arms,
 Riven deep by the sharp tongues of the axes, there in the red-wood
 forest dense,
 I heard the mighty tree its death-chant chanting.*

Whitman's lament for the felling of these giant trees, his 'majestic brothers', is echoed frequently in Australian commentaries informed by a passionate concern for the natural environment. The lament is reflected also in works by various Australian colonial and impressionist landscape painters, of whom Arthur Streeton is arguably the most notable for his explicit opposition to excessive felling in Victoria's old-growth forests, especially in the Dandenongs where Streeton spent much time. Photographers likewise expressed the same concern for the loss of old Australian forest trees and for the conservation of surviving stands of old trees. Nicholas Caire and J.W. Lindt were prominent in this respect.

Caire, in particular, photographed individual trees of significance, (fig 40) as well as scenes of ruthlessly logged forests that are strewn with the splintered remnants, like corpses, of once-mighty trees. Even more confronting are Caire's photographs of individual dead trees that have been left standing in the wasteland of an otherwise clear-felled hillside. With their sense of eerie stillness, silvery tonality and sombre detail, images such as these, to some extent, are sylvan counterparts to Mathew Brady's unforgettable photographs of American civil war battlefields taken in the aftermath of hostilities. On a more optimistic note, Caire was also responsible for searching out, measuring, photographing and occasionally naming various giant trees that had survived the axe of timber workers and 'paling splitters' who had effectively logged most of Victoria's oldest and presumably largest trees by the 1860s. Interestingly, this is the same period in which legislation was enacted for the protection of the most remarkable stands of Whitman's coast redwoods, a time when America's first national parks were proclaimed.

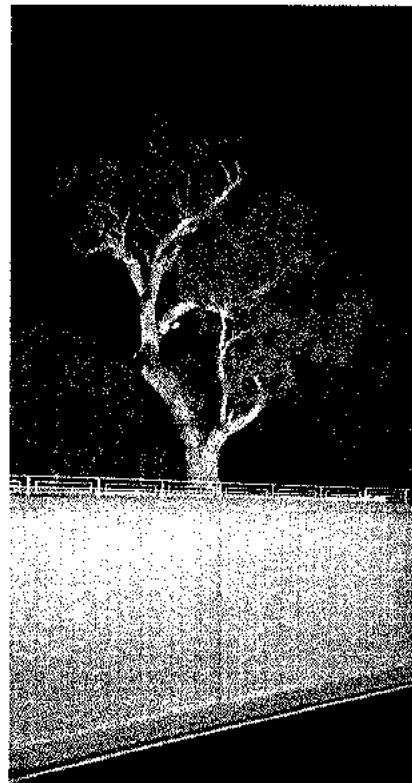


FIG 41
 John Gollings, *Corrobora Tree,
 St Kilda Junction, Melbourne, 2003*,
 archival pigment inkjet
 photograph, Geelong Gallery

While Whitman's *Song of the redwood tree* may be a tribute to the Californian frontier's 'flashing and golden pageant', to the pioneering enterprise of the region at large, and indeed to the manly work of timber cutters — to 'the echo of teamsters' calls and the clinking chains, and the music of choppers' axes' — but we are conscious, nonetheless, of the terrible destiny of these colossal trees that had, for many centuries past, grown undisturbed in 'their recesses of forest'.

*The falling trunk and limbs, the crash, the muffled shriek, the groan,
 Such words combined from the redwood-tree, as of voices ecstatic,
 ancient and rustling.*

There is a sense of voices 'ecstatic' although not 'ancient' — indeed those of several late 19th-century bush walkers who have come across some giant eucalypts in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges — in the magnificent vista of Isaac Whitehead's *In the Sassafras Valley, Victoria* (1875) (fig 42), a painting comparable in manner to the dramatic forest scenes painted by the American artists Asher

Brown Durand and Albert Bierstadt. Evoking the spirit of Alexander von Humboldt, Whitehead's *In the Sassafras Valley, Victoria* is a commanding representation of nature at her most majestic, with ancient trees rising from a tangle of lush undergrowth and soaring above the heads of a band of tiny human interlopers, one of whom salutes the natural spectacle before him.



FIG 42
Isaac Whitehead, *In the Sassafras Valley, Victoria*, 1875, oil on canvas, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Gift of the M.J.M. Carter Collection and the South Australian Government 1996

Australia's tall trees — and Victoria's 'forest giants' in particular — have long been an inspiration for artists and graphic designers. In Victoria, the tallest of the mountain ash trees were found in the forests of south and west Gippsland, the Otways, and the Dandenong Ranges. Tasmania's Styx Valley is another prominent home of giant trees.⁴⁴ The French émigré artist Henri Tebbitt (1852-1926) was one who painted large, salon-style landscapes such as *Old Australian giants* (c.1900), (fig 43) where sturdy gums stand like sentinels against the violet haze of distant hills. Tebbitt's trees rise through a layer of bracken fern that has grown, as Ron Radford has noted, following the destruction of an old forest on this site.⁴⁵

Percy Trompf (1902-64), a prominent Australian graphic artist and successful designer of travel and other posters in the 1930s, also created a memorable image of sentinel gums. Trompf's design claims these huge eucalypts at Marysville in Gippsland to be *The tallest trees in the British Empire*, (fig 44) and illustrates a sunlit prospect of equestrian bliss. Even the dappled and peeling bark of these architectural trunks appears ready to testify to the region's bracing air and its exquisite appeal for tourists from near and far.



FIG 43
Henri Tebbitt, *Old Australian giants*, c1900, oil on canvas, Geelong Gallery

Such is the apparently colossal height of the trees in Trompf's and Tebbitt's compositions, that the crowns have disappeared altogether, risen out of sight beyond the top edge of each image. The precise height of the tallest of Australia's 'tall trees', the mountain ash, has long been a subject of contentious debate, a saga that claimed the attention of none other than Ferdinand von Mueller himself who published a note in *Seaman's journal of botany* in 1862 concerning the measuring of a fallen tree located in the Dandenongs, a tree that was reputedly 420 feet in height. Another report alludes to a tree that was 480 feet in height or, according to Mueller, 'as high as the great pyramid.'

Claims such as these were discussed in some detail, and questioned, by A.D. Hardy of the State Forests Department of Victoria, writing in departmental reports from about 1910, and in various forestry journals through the twenties. In discussing the tallest of the mountain ash trees, Hardy and others refer to the height of the tallest of America's redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) that are calculated at between 370 feet (the 'Dyerville Giant') and 380 feet (the 'Eureka tree'), while the most 'massive' of American trees — and the most massive in the world — are the phenomenal 'big trees' (*Sequoia-dendron giganteum*) that are not as tall as the redwoods but have a much greater trunk diameter (traditionally measured at breast height), sometimes in excess of 25 feet. The unsurpassed 'champion' of the species is 'General Sherman' in Sequoia National Park in California, while a specimen that follows closely in the giant stakes is 'General Grant', a tree that is acclaimed as the 'most picturesque' of the group of California's foremost 'big trees', a group first identified and measured by John Muir, America's pioneer conservationist.

As far as record heights of existing trees in Australia is concerned, a tree at Wallaby Creek in Victoria — named 'Mr Jessop' after a former chairman of the state's Board of Works who encouraged forestry research — is thought to be exceeded in height only by a mountain ash in Tasmania's Styx Valley, the tallest in Australia at some 90 metres in height. Gippsland's 'Ada tree', an old mountain ash near Powelltown, is one of the most accessible of the surviving 'giants', while the photograph of this tree by John Gollings (fig 47) indicates the difficulty experienced by all photographers seeking a sufficiently uninterrupted line of vision to the tree through surrounding dense scrub.

Returning again to William Westgarth's visit to Australia, a journey scheduled to coincide with the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition in 1888, brings us finally to the matter of the international competition that was announced by the exhibition commissioners, who offered a generous reward to entrants from all nations, who were asked to identify, in effect, the world's tallest tree.⁴⁶ In spite of the reward, and in spite of the fact that national pride was at stake, the competition was never decided conclusively in favour of either of the two likely contenders — the tallest of California's legendary redwoods, and Australia's own *Eucalyptus regnans*, the mountain ash or 'forest giants' of our title. As we now know from recent accurate measurements, the mountain ash is the world's tallest hardwood and flowering plant.

The official record of the 1888 Centennial Exhibition noted that the event provided Australians with 'An opportunity... of comparing our mineral, agricultural, pastoral, manufacturing, and artistic development with that of older and more cultured communities in Europe, Asia and America' as well as serving as 'a useful landmark in the march of Australian progress'.⁴⁷ The tall tree competition is slightly ironical, then, in the sense that here, supposedly, is one demonstration of Australian 'pre-eminence' — in so far as Australian trees were allegedly taller than those of any other continent — and yet the tallest of the mountain ash had already been logged in the interests of another kind of progress of a plainly mercantile kind. One outcome of the competition is the album of photographs produced by J.D. Peirce, who set out with a surveyor named Cunningham to track down the tallest Victorian trees they could locate at the time.

The tallest of Peirce's trees was the 'New Turkey tree' on the New Turkey Spur, near Noojee. (fig 45) A.D. Hardy documents a recollection by the paling splitter who accompanied Peirce and his party on the Noojee excursion. The woodsman recalled 'a perishingly cold night in the snow, spent walking round a poor fire, in order to be ready for an early start.' Apparently, there was difficulty in getting one of the party out alive before the work was finished. This meant the abandonment of further operations in the region where, according to locals, there were much taller trees although difficult of access. The 'New Turkey tree' was measured at 326 feet, well short of the elusive goal of 400 feet — suspiciously, this measurement is only marginally greater than what was then the tallest tree in the world, a coast redwood.⁴⁸

But there it is, a plate in Peirce's album, *The giant trees of Victoria*, the 'New Turkey tree', its image slightly spectral and washed out in the light of a misty morning, flanked by the dark foliage of lesser trees, seemingly unaware of the significance of the occasion on which its image was being preserved for posterity as one of Australia's legendary 'forest giants'. Peirce's endeavour never identified a tree over 400 feet in height, and he did not secure the exhibition commissioners' prize money.

In fact, in the official record of the 1888 Centennial Exhibition, the name 'J. D. Peirce' appears simply in a list of exhibitors as 'Photographer, Alma Road, St Kilda', an address in the vicinity of St Kilda's famous 'Corroboree tree', (fig 41) only a few blocks away near the St Kilda Junction. Would that Peirce had seized the moment to photograph this old eucalypt at that time, a signal tree like many such trees whose dignified survival in the midst of urban development calls to mind Melbourne poet R.A Simpson's sentiment that 'trees are true'.⁴⁹



FIG 44
Percy Trompf, *Australia, the tallest trees in the British Empire*, 1930s, colour lithograph.
© Percy Trompf Artistic Trust, Courtesy Joseph Lebovic Gallery



FIG 45
J. Duncan Pierce,
Eucalyptus amygdalina regnans,
Height 326ft in (the New Turkey Tree),
Plate 3 in *The giant trees of Victoria*, [1890],
State Library of Victoria

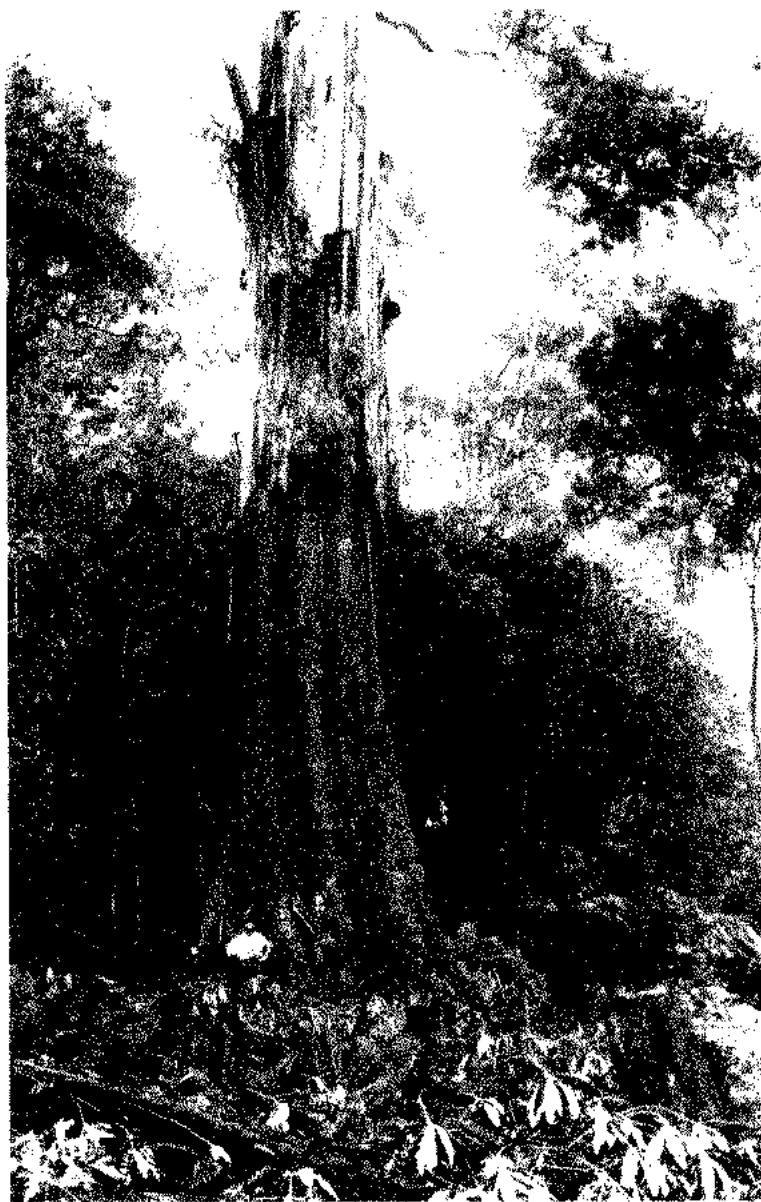


FIG 46
J. Duncan Pierce,
Eucalyptus Amygdalina Rejnans,
Nuyin Town Reserve.
Plate 2 in *The giant trees of Victoria*, [1890].
State Library of Victoria



FIG 47
John Collings,
The Ada Tree, Gippsland, 2003,
archival pigment inkjet
photograph, Geelong Gallery

- 1 Alexander Smith, *Dreamthorp, with selections from Lost Leaves*, Oxford University Press (World's Classics series), Oxford, 1914, p.228
- 2 Thomas Pakenham, *Meetings with Remarkable Trees*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1996, p.6
- 3 See Debra N. Mancoff in association with the Library of Congress, *David Roberts, Travels in Egypt & the Holy Land*, Pomegranate, California, 1999, p.78-79
- 4 Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, Fontana Press, London, 1996, p.14
- 5 Malcolm Elwin, *The Essential Richard Jefferies*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1948, p.128
- 6 See Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2000, pp.249-279
- 7 See Vaughan Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, Country Life Limited, London, c. 1940, p.80
- 8 See Tom Griffiths, *Forests of Ash, an environmental history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, Port Melbourne, etc., 2001, p.19
- 9 See James Woodford, *The Wollemi Pine, the Incredible Discovery of a Living Fossil from the Age of the Dinosaurs*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2000
- 10 See John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (Vol. 5), George Allen, London, 1902 (third edition), p.81
- 11 Galen Clark, *Big Trees of California, their History and Characteristics*, 1907 (second edition), p.13
- 12 John Evelyn, *Silva — or a discourse on forest trees*, 1706, pp.1-2
- 13 See Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, Penguin Classics series, London, 1991, p.164
- 14 Murray Bail, *Eucalyptus*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1998, p.23
- 15 Roger McDonald, *The Tree in Changing Light*, Knopf, Sydney, 2001, p.15
- 16 Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Everyman's Library, London, 1942, p.223
- 17 See Moyra Caldecott, *Myths of the Sacred Tree*, Destiny Books, Rochester, 1993, for accounts of tree myths from Africa, America, China, Russia, Greece, India, Scandinavia, etc.
- 18 Illustrated in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, George Allen & Unwin, Boston and Sydney, 1979, p.21
- 19 James Howell, *Dendrologia*, London, 1640, p.5
- 20 John Fowles, *The Tree*, The Ecco Press, New York, 1979, p.25
- 21 Holmes, p.223
- 22 Gilbert White, *The Natural History & Antiquities of Selborne*, Everyman's Library, London, 1926, p.8
- 23 William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery, and other Woodland Views, Relative to Picturesque Beauty*, London, 1808 (third edition), p.9
- 24 Gilpin, p.8
- 25 Anne Ehrenkranz, et al, *Poetic Localities*, Aperture, New York, 1988, p.108
- 26 Jacob Strutt, *Sylvia Britannica, or Portraits of Forest trees notable for their antiquity, magnitude and beauty*, (1830), p.xv
- 27 James Raymond Simmons, *The Historic trees of Massachusetts*, Marshall Jones Company, Boston, 1919, p.13
- 28 Richard St. Barbe Baker, *I Planted Trees*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1950 (fourth edition), p.78
- 29 H. Willoughby quoted in R. Ritchie, *Seeing the Rainforests in 19th-century Australia*, Rainforest Publishing, Sydney, 1989, p.16
- 30 Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989 (second edition), p.262
- 31 *Regardsfully Yours, Selected Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller*, Vol. 1: 1840-1859, ed. R.W. Home et al, Peter Lang, Bern, Berlin, etc., 1998, p.138
- 32 See A.D. Hardy, 'Australia's Great Trees', *Field & Naturalists' Club Proceedings*, Vol. LI, 1935, p.239
- 33 Robert Edwards, *Aboriginal Bark Canoes of the Murray Valley*, Rigby for the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, 1975 (second edition), p.6
- 34 See Terence Lane, *Nineteenth-Century Australian Art in the National Gallery of Victoria*, NGV, 2003, p.67
- 35 Arthur Polchampton, *Kangaroo Land*, Richard Bentley, London, 1862, p.139
- 36 William Westgarth, *Half a Century of Australasian Progress*, London, 1889, p.78
- 37 Dianne Reilly and Victoria Hammond, *Charles Joseph Ly Trobe, Landscapes and Sketches*, State Library of Victoria, 1999, p.189
- 38 Marcus Clarke in *Photographs of the pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne* (Melbourne, F.F. Bailliere, 1875)
- 39 Westgarth, p.234
- 40 Quoted in Ritchie, p.78 and in Tim Bonyhady, *Images in Opposition*, Melbourne, 1985, p.118
- 41 Murray Bail, p.109
- 42 Gilpin, p.14
- 43 Westgarth, p.233
- 44 Various journal articles written in the 1920s by A.D. Hardy (for the State Forests Department and the Field Naturalists' Club) discuss the location and measurement of the tallest recorded mountain ash trees.
- 45 Ron Radford, *Our Country, Australian Federation Landscapes 1900-1914*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2001, p.64
- 46 See Bonyhady, p.262
- 47 The Official Catalogue of the Exhibits, Centennial International Exhibition 1888-9, Melbourne, p.i
- 48 Bonyhady, p.265
- 49 R. A. Simpson, *The Forbidden City*, Edwards & Shaw, Sydney, 1979, p.17

CATALOGUE



FIG 48
The giant trees of the Dandenongs, 1868.
wood engraving, in *Illustrated*
Australian News, 3 March 1868,
La Trobe Picture Collection
State Library of Victoria

SYLVA MUNDI

1

JOSEPH E. BOEHM

Austrian, British 1834-1890

Portrait bust of John Ruskin 1870-90

painted plaster

62.5h x 38.0w x 30.0 cm d

Signed under left shoulder, incised
"BOEHM SCULPT". Not dated

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, 1943

2

WILLIAM DANIELL

British 1769-1837

in collaboration with

CADELL & DAVIES

British, established 1793-1836

Banyan tree 1807

From: *A Picturesque Voyage to India*, London,
Printed for Longman, Hurst Rees, and
Orme, Paternoster-Row; and William Daniell,
No. 9, Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square.
By Thomas Davison, Whitefriars, 1810

hand-coloured engraving

sheet 14.0 x 20.5 cm; image 10.5 x 17.7 cm

Signed and dated l.c. below image, printed
"Published by Messrs Cadell & Davies, London
March 1.1807", l.r. below image, printed
"Designed by W. Daniell"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

3

JOHN EVELYN

British 1620-1706

*Sylva, or A discourse of forest-trees and
the propogation of timber in His
Majesty's dominions as it was deliver'd
in the Royal Society the XVth of October,
MDCLXII upon the occasion of certain
quaeries propounded to that illustrious
assembly by the honourable the principal
officers and commissioners of the Navy*
1706

book

32.5 x 22.5 cm

PRIVATE COLLECTION

4

THOMAS HEARNE

British 1744-1817

in collaboration with

BENJAMIN T. POUNCY

British ?-1799

WILLIAM CLARKE

British, established 1790-c1829

An oak in Moccas Park, Herefordshire
1798

engraving

sight 26.4 x 32.3 cm; plate 18.7 x 25.0 cm

Signed and dated l.l. below image, printed
"Drawn by Hearne", l.r. below image, printed
"Etched by B.T. Pouncy", l.c. below image
"London. Published June 2, 1798, by
W. Clarke, New Bond Street, for
B.T. Pouncy, Pratt Street, Lambeth"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

5

THOMAS HEARNE

British 1744-1817

in collaboration with

BENJAMIN T. POUNCY

British ?-1799

WILLIAM CLARKE

British, established 1790-c1829

*The chesnut tree at Wymondeley Parva,
Hertfordshire* 1798

engraving

sight 26.1 x 32.3 cm; plate 18.8 x 25.4 cm

Signed and dated l.l. below image, printed
"Drawn by Hearne", l.r. below image, printed
"Etched by B.T. Pouncy", l.c. below image
"London. Published June 2, 1798, by W. Clarke,
New Bond Street, for B.T. Pouncy, Pratt Street,
Lambeth"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

6

UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE

Japanese 1797-1858

in collaboration with

MARUSEI

Japanese, active 1840-50s

*Stage 26. Nissaka (From the series 'The
fifty-three stages of the Tokaido')* c1850

hand-coloured woodblock

22.6 x 35.2 cm

Signed c.l., ink "HIROSHIGE GA",
(publisher's and censor's seals)

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
JH MCPHILIMY BEQUEST FUND, 1955

7

JAMES HOWELL

British 1594?-1666

Dendrologia [in Greek characters].

Dodona's Grove or The vocall forrest 1640

London: Printed by T.B. for Humphrey Mosley
book

29.6 x 20.5 cm

PRIVATE COLLECTION

8

MARMADUKE MATTHEWS

New Zealand 1889-1948

*The Kauri - Monarch of the forest,
N.Z.* c1930

etching

sight 13.7 x 10.0 cm; plate 11.5 x 8.8 cm

Signed in l.l. image, printed "M MATTHEWS"
and l.r. below image, pencil "M Matthews".
Not dated

PRIVATE COLLECTION

9

CAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS (PLINY THE ELDER)

Italian AD23-79

Naturalis Historiae 1669

Leiden and Rotterdam: Hackios

book

COLLECTION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA LIBRARY

10

SANDI RIGBY

Australian

The Tree of Awakening 2003

relief etching; artist's proof

sheet 76.2 x 57.2 cm; plate 25.2 x 49.8 cm

Signed and dated l.r. below image,

pencil "Sandi Rigby 2003"

COLLECTION: GEEBONG GALLERY
GEEBONG PRINT PRIZE, 2003

11

DAVID ROBERTS

British 1796-1864

in collaboration with

LOUIS HAGHE

Belgian, British 1806-1885

FRANCIS G. MOON

British 1796-1871

The Holy Tree, Metereah c1846

colour lithograph

sight 36.3 x 24.8 cm; image 35.0 x 24.0 cm

Signed l.l. in image, printed "David Roberts

R. A. L. Haghe, lith"; signed and dated l.c.

below image, printed "London. Published by

F.G. Moon, 20 Threadneedle St. July 1st 1849"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

12

JACOB G. STRUTT

British 1790-1864

Sylva Britannica or Portraits of forest trees, distinguished for their antiquity, magnitude, or beauty 1830

book

29.0 x 20.1 cm

PRIVATE COLLECTION

13

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

English, 1809-1892

Poems, with illus. by Millais, Stanfield, Creswick, Mulready, Horsley, etc., 1864

New ed., London, Routledge,

Warne, and Routledge, 1864

book

PRIVATE COLLECTION

14

WILLIAM WHITE

British, active 1890s

Portrait bust of Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1893

painted plaster

73.0h x 60.0w x 41.5 cm d

Signed and dated reverse shoulders,

incised "W. White Sc 1893"

COLLECTION: GEEBONG GALLERY
GIFT OF WM HITCHCOCK, 1907

15

UNKNOWN ARTIST

British

Burnham Beeches 19th century

oil on canvas

71.0 x 91.5 cm

Not signed. Not dated

COLLECTION: GEEBONG GALLERY
PURCHASED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HP
DOUGLASS BEQUEST FUND, 1983

SYLVA AUSTRALIA

16

THOMAS BAINES

British 1820-1875
in collaboration with

THOMAS HEAWOOD

British, German, active 1850-85

The Boadab [sic] tree, c1873-1876

From: Edwin Carton Booth, *Australia*, London, Virtue & Co., 1873-1876

hand-coloured engraving

sheet 16.5 x 21.5 cm; image 12.8 x 18.9 cm

Signed l.l. below image, printed
"T. Baines", l.r. below image, printed
"T. Heawood"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

17

A. BARTHOLOMEW

Australian, active 19th century

CHARLES TROEDEL

British, Australian, 1835-1906

E. pluti

From: Frederick McCoy, *Prodromus of the Palaeontology of Victoria: or The figures and descriptions of organic remains*, Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1874-1882, pl. XXXIX and XL

colour lithograph

28.0 x 37.9 cm

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

18

LUDWIG BECKER

German, Australian 1808-1861

Telegraphen-Baum zu Port Arthur in U.D. Land 1851

watercolour

24.8 x 17.6 cm

COLLECTION: LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

19

HAROLD CAZNEAUX

New Zealand, Australian 1878-1953

The Spirit of Endurance 1937

gelatin-silver photograph

image 32.4 x 26.7 cm

COLLECTION: ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA GOVERNMENT GALLERY, 1978

20

THOMAS DE KESSLER

Australian 1925-

The tree... 2002

pen and ink and white synthetic polymer paint

19.3 x 29.7 cm

Signed and dated l.l. and l.r., black fibre-tipped pen
"T. De Kessler 2002", on mount l.r., pencil
"Thomas de Kessler 2002"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THOMAS DE KESSLER, 2003

21

JOHN GOLLINGS

Australian 1944-

Corroboree Tree, St Kilda Junction 2003

archival pigment inkjet photograph

102.0 x 100.0 cm

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003

21

RUSSELL GRIMWADE

Australian 1879-1955

An anthology of the eucalypts 1920

Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1920

book

GRIMWADE COLLECTION, BAILLIEU LIBRARY,
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

23

NORA GURDON

Australian 1881-1974

Youth and age 1920s

oil on canvas on board

35.5 x 26.4 cm

Signed l.r., incised "N GURDON".
Not dated

PRIVATE COLLECTION

24

EDWARD HEFFERNAN

Australian 1912-1992

The canoe tree 1936/1978

linocut; ed 13/30

sheet 19.5 x 26.2 cm; image 17.8 x 15.3 cm

Signed l.r., pencil "Edward Heffernan".
Not dated

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GALLERY GRASSHOPPERS, 1983

25

CHARLES L. L'HERITIER DE BRUTELLE

French 1746-1800

Sertum Anglicum 1788: Facsimile with critical studies and a translation 1963

Pittsburgh: Hunt Botanical Library, 1963

book

COLLECTION: STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

26

HANS HEYSEN

Australian 1877-1968

Study of river gums, Ambleside, SeA 1940

pencil and wash

sheet 45.3 x 58.0 cm; image 41.4 x 55.0 cm

Signed and dated l.l., pencil "HANS HEYSEN
1940"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
PURCHASED 1943

27

FREDERICK McCUBBIN

Australian 1855-1917

Hillside, Macedon 1904

oil on canvas

60.0 x 82.8 cm

Signed and dated l.l., brown paint "F McCubbin/
1904"

ON LOAN FROM CURS ART COLLECTION

28

FERDINAND VON MUELLER

German, Australian 1825-1896

Observations on new vegetable fossils of the auriferous drifts

Melbourne: Government Printer, 1874-1883

book

GRIMWADE COLLECTION, BAILLIEU LIBRARY,
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

29

R. GODFREY RIVERS

British, Australian 1859-1925

Under the jacaranda 1903

oil on canvas

143.4 x 107.2 cm

Signed and dated l.r., paint "R.G. Rivers --- 1903"

COLLECTION: QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY PURCHASED 1903

30

SAMUEL W. SWEET

British 1825-1886

Proclamation tree, Glenelg c1880

albumen silver on paper support

image 16.4 x 21.6 cm

COLLECTION: ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GRANT, 1981

31

HENRI TEBBITT

French, Australian 1852-1926

In the scrub, dull weather c1900

watercolour

43.8 x 27.6 cm

Signed l.r., brown paint "H. Tebbitt". Not dated

COLLECTION: GELLONG GALLERY SYD. CRAIG BEQUEST FUND, 2001

32

ETIENNE P. VENTENAT

French 1757-1808

in collaboration with

PIERRE J. REDOUTÉ

Belgian, French 1759-1840

Jardin et la Malmaison

Paris: Imprimerie de Crepalet, 1800

book

COLLECTION: RARE BOOKS COLLECTION, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

33

UNKNOWN ARTIST

Australian

Sydney Cove and town 1790s

gouache

sheet 19.7 x 25.9 cm

COLLECTION: WARWICK REEDER, MELBOURNE

34a

OBJECTS

E. Camaldulensis nd

glass bottle and gum

17.5h x 7.0 cm diam

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34b

E. Camaldulensis nd

glass bottle and gum

15.0h x 7.0 cm diam

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34c

E. Sideroxylon timber sample ~ decorated by May Vale nd

wood

61.0 x 36.2 x 3.0

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34d

Eucalyptus Globulus (Myrtaceae) nd

wood

91.0h x 30.0w x 3.7 cm d

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34e

Eucalytus pluti nd

fossilised wood

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34f

Eucalytus pluti nd

fossilised leaves

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34g

Eucalytus pluti nd

fossilised leaves

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34h

Eucalytus Regnans (Myrtaceae) nd

glass bottle and oil

32.5h x 8.0 cm diam

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34i

Eucalyptus Sideroxylon (Myrtaceae) nd

wood

91.5h x 35.0w x 4.0 cm d

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34j

Nightcap oak nut nd

plaster cast

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34k

Three gum nuts nd

fossilised gum nuts

ON LOAN FROM MUSEUM VICTORIA

34l

Piece of bark from the 'Dig Tree' at Cooper's Creek depot c1963

bark

6.0 x 10.0 cm

COLLECTION: LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

34m

Portion of tree under which Robert O'Hara Burke was buried c1861

wood

14.5 diam

COLLECTION: LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

SYLVA VICTORIA

- 35
ROSALIND ATKINS
Australian 1957-
Cypress 1997
wood engraving
sheet 28.3 x 20.1 cm; image 17.8 x 10.2 cm
Signed l.r., pencil "RA"
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GEELOG PRINT PRIZE 1998
- 36
WILLIAM FORD
British, Australian c1820-c1886
*Picnic party at Hanging Rock, Mount
Macedon* 1875
oil on canvas
79.2 x 117.5 cm
COLLECTION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
PURCHASED 1950
- 37
FRANCIS B. GIBBES
British, Australian (1815-1904)
Old gum tree, Flemington 1878
watercolour
29.0 x 39.7 cm
PRIVATE COLLECTION. COURTESY BRIDGET McDONNELL
GALLERY
- 38
JOHN GOLLINGS
Australian 1944
Bunya Pine, Geelong Botanic Gardens
2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 39
*Chilean Wine Palm, Geelong Botanic
Gardens* 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 40
Ginkgo biloba, Geelong Botanic Gardens
2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 41
*One of Arthur's Elms', Royal Botanic
Gardens, Melbourne* 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
100.0 x 162.6 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 42
*Separation Tree, Royal Botanic Gardens,
Melbourne* 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 43
*New South Wales Coast Cypress Pine,
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne* 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 44
*River red gum (Lion mask tree),
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne* 2003
archival pigment inkjet photograph
192.0 x 100.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 45
TIM JONES
Australian 1962-
Ginkgo biloba, Geelong Botanic Gardens
2003
wood engraving (ed. 35)
20.0 x 45.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 46
Hanging Rock, Mount Macedon 2003
wood engraving (ed. 35)
20.4 x 25.4 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 47
Johnstone Park, Geelong 2003
wood engraving (ed. 45)
15.0 x 20.0 cm
COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003
- 48
JOHN KAUFFMANN
Australian 1864-1942
Mallacoota Inlet c1920
carbon photograph
18.0 x 23.9 cm
Signed l.r., pen and ink "J Kauffmann". Not
dated
COLLECTION: WARWICK REEDER, MELBOURNE
- 49
Swamp Ti Tree c1920
carbon photograph
30.9 x 23.5 cm
Signed l.r. on mount, pencil "J Kauffmann". Not
dated
COLLECTION: WARWICK REEDER, MELBOURNE
- 50
The glory of the bush c1908
carbon photograph
sight 24.9 x 17.8 cm; image 24.2 x 16.7 cm
Signed l.r. below image, pencil "J Kauffmann".
Not dated
COLLECTION: WARWICK REEDER, MELBOURNE
- 51
ISAAC WHITEHEAD
Irish, Australian c1819-1881
In the Sassafras Valley, Victoria 1875
oil on canvas
99.2 x 132.9 cm
COLLECTION: ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
GIFT OF THE M.J.M. CARTER COLLECTION AND THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, 1906

EMBLEMS OF GRANDEUR

52

Louis BUVELOT

Swiss, Australian 1814-1888

Landscape, Terrinallum 1869

watercolour

35.5 x 53.0 cm

Signed and dated l.r., brown paint "L. Buvelot
1869"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF MRS NEVILLE PALMER, 1944

53

Landscape, Terrinallum 1869

watercolour

35.5 x 53.0 cm

Signed and dated l.r., brown paint "L. Buvelot
1869"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF MRS NEVILLE PALMER, 1944

54

On the Woods Point Road 1872

oil on canvas

108.0 x 153.5 cm

Signed and dated l.l., brown paint "Buvelot/
1872"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
PURCHASED 1949

55

Waterpool at Coleraine 1874

oil on canvas

75.0 x 110.0 cm

Signed and dated l.l., "Buvelot 1874"

WARRNAMBOOL ART GALLERY COLLECTION

56

Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset 1869

oil on canvas

107.4 x 153.0 cm

COLLECTION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
PURCHASED 1870

57

JULIAN ASHTON

Australian 1851-1942

Portrait of Louis Buvelot 1880

oil on canvas

74.0 x 63.5 cm

Signed and dated l.r., "J.R. Ashton/1880"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
PURCHASED 1949

58

JOHN PERCEVAL

Australian 1923-2000

Two gums — homage to Buvelot 1960

oil on composition board

83.5 x 107.5 cm

Signed and dated l.l., "Perceval 60"

COLLECTION: BALLARAT FINE ART GALLERY
GIFT OF THE ANZ BANK, 1960

59

JOHN GOLLINGS

Australian 1944-

Waterpool near Coleraine, sunset 2003

archival pigment inkjet photograph

107.4 x 153.0 cm

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003

FOREST GIANTS

60

R. TAYLOR GHEE

Australian 1872-1931

Donnelly Creek, Healesville 1895

oil on canvas

102.6 x 44.1 cm

COLLECTION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
PURCHASED 1895

61

JOHN GOLLINGS

Australian 1944-

The Ada Tree 2003

archival pigment inkjet photograph

192.0 x 100.0 cm

COLLECTION: GEE LONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE GEELONG ART GALLERY FOUNDATION, 2003

62

JOHN LINDT

German, Australian 1845-1926

[Big tree, Victoria]

gelatin silver photograph

61.0 x 40.4 cm

COLLECTION: LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE
LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

63

Fagus Cunninghamii Euc. Regnans

Mt Arnold c1900-10

gelatin silver photograph

40.5 x 20.2 cm

COLLECTION: LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE
LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

64

CHARLES P. MOUNTFORD

Australian 1890-1977

in collaboration with

GWEN WALSH

Australian

*Australian tree portraits with drawings
by Gwen Walsh 1956*

Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1956

book

34.5 x 25.8 cm

PRIVATE COLLECTION

65

FERDINAND VON MUELLER

German, Australian 1825-1896

*Eucalyptographia: a descriptive atlas of
the eucalypts of Australia and the
adjoining islands 1879-1884*

Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer
1879-1884

book

GRIMWADE COLLECTION, BAILLIU LIBRARY,
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

66

JOHN FORD PATERSON

Australian 1851-1912

The dawn of night 1896

oil on canvas

142.0 x 71.0 cm

Signed and dated l.l., brown paint "J. Ford
Paterson/ 1896"

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF J.T. TWEDDLE, 1957

67

J. DUNCAN PEIRCE

Australian

The giant trees of Victoria

[Melbourne: Melbourne Centennial
International Exhibition, 1890]

book

COLLECTION: RARE BOOKS COLLECTION,
STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

68

HENRI TEBBITT

French, Australian 1852-1926

Old Australian giants c1900

oil on canvas

211.9 x 150.5 cm

Signed l.r. black paint "H. Tebbitt". Not dated

COLLECTION: GEELONG GALLERY
GIFT OF THE STATE OF PS GRIMWADE, 2017

69

PERCY TROMPF

Australian 1902-1964

in collaboration with

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
TRAVEL ASSOCIATION**

Australian 1929-1974

*Australia, the tallest trees in the British
Empire 1930s*

colour lithograph

size 52.8 x 32.4 cm; image 51.6 x 31.4 cm

Signed l.r., printed "TROMPF", l.c., printed logo

"AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION/ (kangaroo)"

PRIVATE COLLECTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge, with our grateful thanks, the co-operation and support of the many individuals and organisations who were involved with the preparation and presentation of the exhibition *Giant – ancient and historic trees*, and with the publication of this catalogue.

The Geelong Gallery is indebted to the generous lenders to the exhibition – institutional and private – and to our colleagues at each lending institution who assisted with different aspects of the loan arrangements. Private lenders have been most gracious in agreeing to make prized works of art available for the duration of the exhibition. In these respects we are grateful indeed to the following: Ron Radford, Director, and Jan Robison, Registrar, at the Art Gallery of South Australia; Margaret Rich, Director, and Anne Rowland, Registrar, at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery; Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director, Frances Lindsay, Deputy Director, Australian Art, Gordon Morrison, Head of Collection Management, Terence Lane, Senior Curator of Australian Art before 1900, Janine Bofill, Registrar, and Denise McCann, Assistant Registrar, at the National Gallery of Victoria; Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, Director, Euan McGillivray, Preservation Manager, and Briony Pemberton and Amanda Wild, Exhibitions and Loan Coordinators, State Library of Victoria; Ursula Richens, Assistant Collections Manager, Australian Society and Technology Department, and Dermot Henry, Senior Collection Manager, Geosciences, Museum Victoria; Doug Hall, Director, and Tiffany Noyce, Associate Registrar, Queensland Art Gallery; Murray Bowes, Director and Registrar, and Brenda O'Connor, Curator, Warrnambool Art Gallery; Ian Morrison, Curator, Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne; Warwick Reeder, Bridget McDonnell Gallery; and various private collectors.

Naturally, we are deeply appreciative of the generous and enthusiastic support of the organisations and individuals who have provided financial assistance for *Giant – ancient and historic trees*, and here we record our thanks to the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE, Freedom Furniture, E.J. Lyons Constructions, the Trustees of the Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation, Andrew Rogers, and to members of the Board of the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation. For their personal involvement in these discussions, we thank Ashley Brimacombe, Norman Lyons and Annie Young.

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sunset; Dr Chris McAuliffe, Director and Robyn Sloggett, Assistant Director, at the Ian Potter Museum of Art; Terence Lane at the National Gallery of Victoria; John Brookes; and Robert Wood.

I must record personal and grateful thanks to my colleague Brian Hubber, Curator at Geelong Gallery, for his comprehensive research for the exhibition and catalogue, and for his editorial advice and overall management of the project. This he did in conjunction with Veronica Filmer, Registrar of Collections at the Gallery. Credit and thanks are due to Veronica for her painstaking cataloguing of the exhibits, and Sue Ernst, the Gallery's Marketing and Development Officer, who assumed responsibility for other aspects of the project and its development. Thanks are due also to Anna Le Deux for her enthusiastic support and expertise in conjunction with the marketing and promotion of the exhibition, and to Helen Skuse who provided photographs that were used in the early development of the exhibition.

Several of the Gallery's own works included in this exhibition were comprehensively conserved for the occasion, and we acknowledge here the professionalism and support of the conservators Sandra Cockburn, Judy Dunlop and their colleagues. These conservation treatments were undertaken with a project grant from Arts Victoria whose generous support of this undertaking is greatly appreciated. We thank George Strawicki for his photography of many of the exhibits and we acknowledge the co-operation of Joseph Lebovic in relation to permission to reproduce a design by Percy Trompf. For other permissions, we thank Jennie Moloney and Adriana Giordani at the National Gallery of Victoria, Des Cowley and Dianne Reilly at the State Library of Victoria, Georgia Hale at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Kylie Timmins at the Queensland Art Gallery, Robyn Hovey at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Brenda O'Connor at the Warrnambool Art Gallery, Anne Rowland at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, the Hamilton Historical Centre, Buckinghamshire County Archives, and Celia Perceval and VISCOPY (licensee for John Perceval).

In relation to the photography of trees in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, we thank the Director, Dr Philip Moors, for his good counsel and for his involvement in the launch of the exhibition. At the Geelong Botanic Gardens we thank John Arnott, Curator of the Gardens, Ian Rogers of the City of Greater Geelong, and Jayne Salmon of the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

As in the past, we are mindful of the immensely fruitful partnership we enjoy with the design studio of Gollings+Pidgeon, and once again I am delighted to record our sincere thanks to David Pidgeon and his colleagues for their sensitive and vigorously creative approach to the design and preparation of this publication. Finally, the specially commissioned images of historic trees – the suite of photographs by John Gollings (ably assisted by Emma Cross) and the wood engravings by Tim Jones – are a key feature of *Giant – ancient and historic trees*, and have been one of the most satisfying aspects of the enterprise. Our warmest thanks to these artists is placed on record here.

Geoffrey Edwards
Director
Geelong Gallery

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Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE

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