

Supplementary information supplied to Senate Inquiry, Hobart, 31/03/2014

Many people of the Huon region have long family histories going back many generations in the resource industries, and in the timber industry in particular.

The timber industry has always been of an "industrial scale" and at least to the extent of the industry technology available at the time.

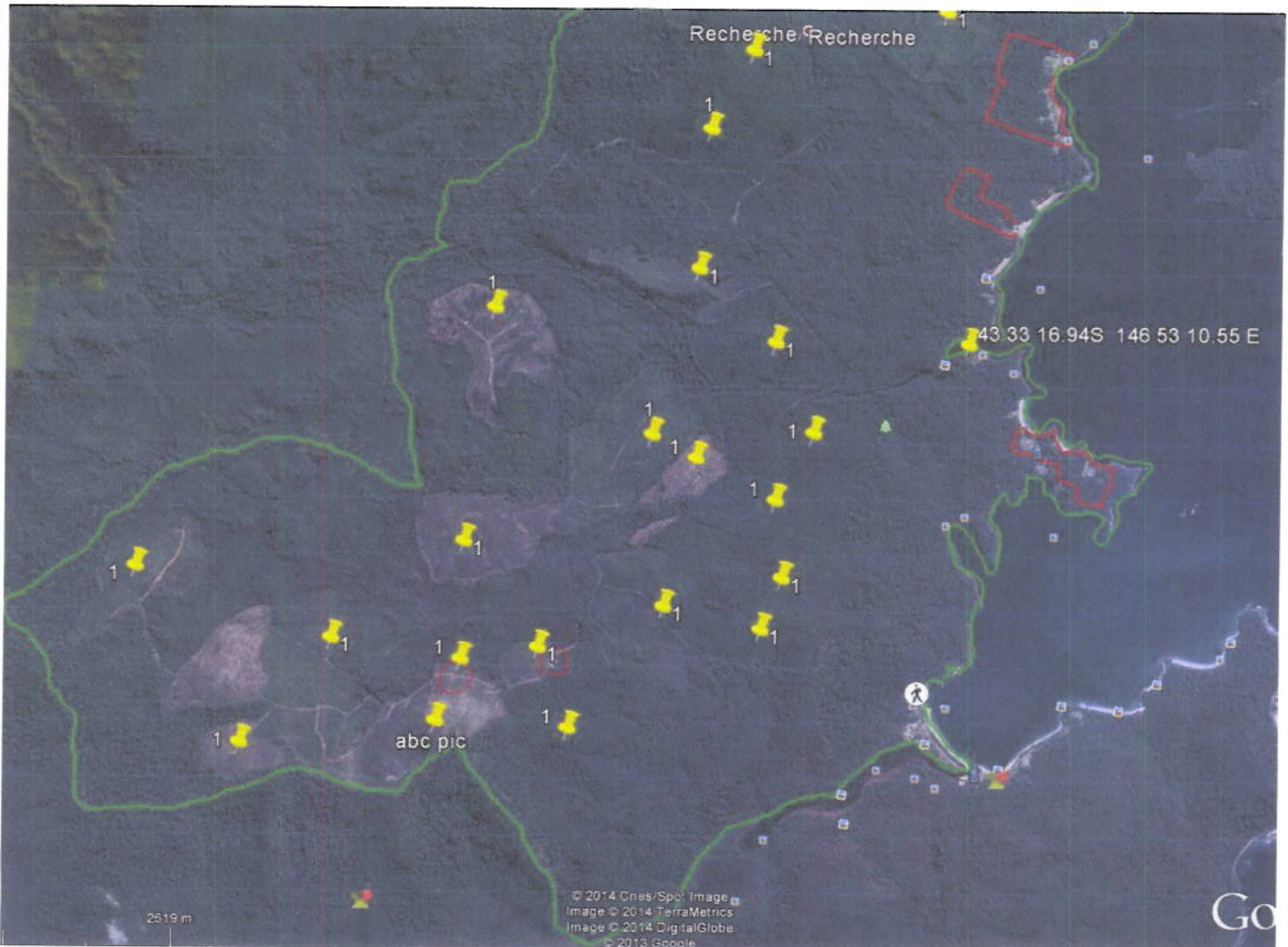
Early timber harvesting was done by axe and hauled by horses or bullock teams, often on timber tramways to mills in the area. Sawn timber was often transported from the region by boat to Hobart and beyond. The trading ketch *May Queen* was built near Hobart in 1867 for bringing supplies to various locations throughout the Huon, and for transporting timber.

The following images show the *May Queen* berthed at the wharf near the major mill at Ramea, (1), early 1900's, and at Lune River (2) on Christmas Day 1895.



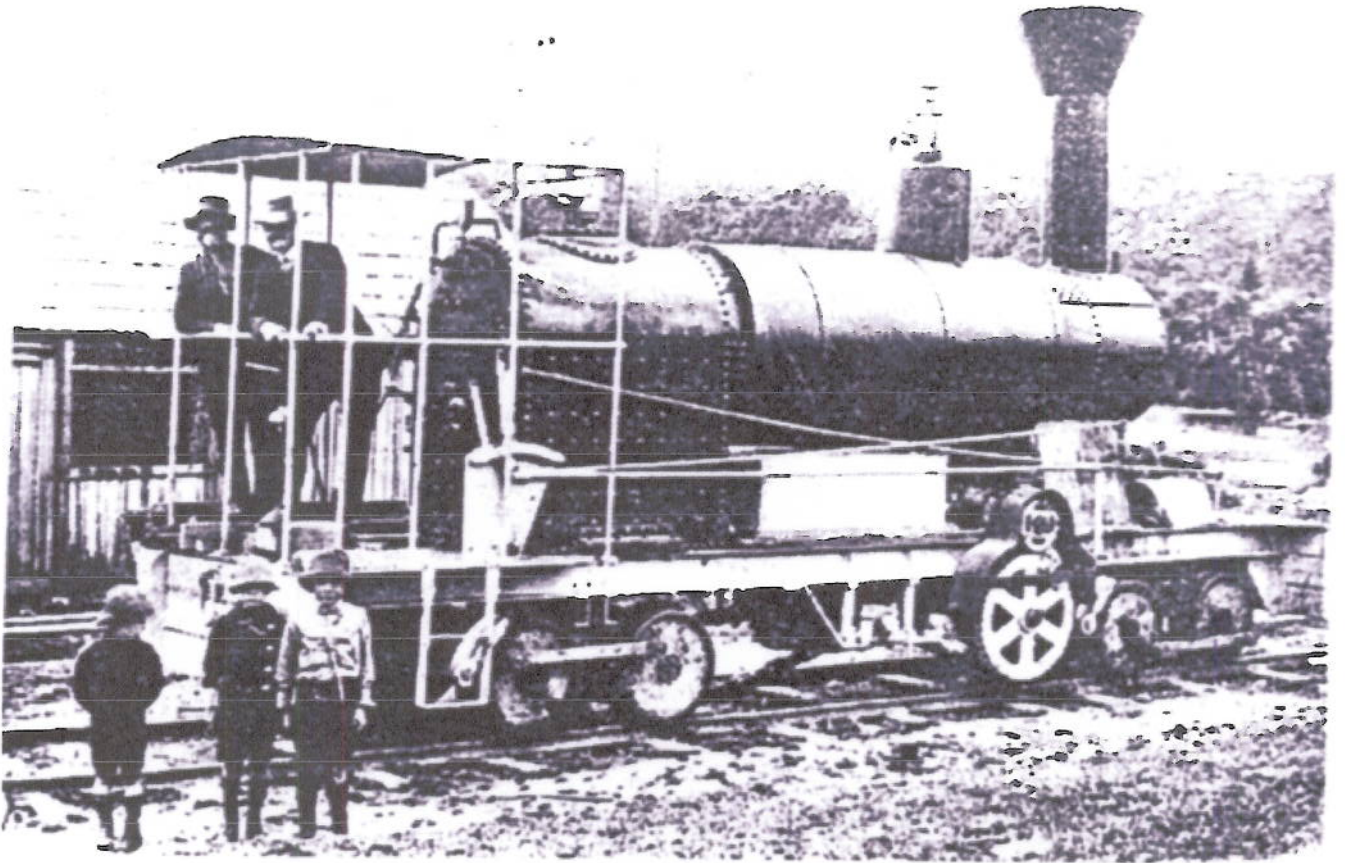
Raminea and Lune River are at the northern end of the Recherche Bay area, (area 14) that is currently in the 2013 WHA extension, but which is sought to be removed by the current Minor Boundary Modification proposal that is the subject of the current inquiry.

Harvesting of timber started near the water's edge, and moved progressively inland. ALMOST ALL of the Recherche area included in the WHA in 2013 has been previously harvested, with some areas into their second and third rotations. The forested areas closest to the water's edge are all regrowth. See the current area on Google Earth imagery, with recent harvesting coupes identified:



Early last century the Heather family had sawmills and timber leases in the Catamaran area. Jean Burgess (nee Heather) passed away on February 11, 2014, in her 84 th year, and was a keen member of the HRDG. As a sixteen year-old, Jean featured in an article in the Melbourne 'Truth' in 1946 (attached) with her older brother and two older sisters describing their activities felling large trees, extending the tramways and working in their parent's saw mill. Jean used to take up the left-handed axe position, standing on "shoes" above the ground, felling trees. Jean was amazed to hear that as the same forest was being harvested for regrowth billets for the Ta Ann rotary peel veneer mill it was being claimed by local forest activists as ancient and pristine wilderness forests.

See following: maps of the Heather family timber leases, an image of Jean Burgess (nee Heather) and copies of the 'Truth' article...



This interesting locomotive was a double-bogie chain and rod driven engine built about 1912 in Hobart by Andrew B. Buyers for use on the Chesterman's logging tramway at Raminea, south of Dover in Southern Tasmania. So, was this industrial logging, or not?



About the Huon Resource Development Group:

The Group was formed around 14 years ago to support the passage of the Southwood development site through the Huon Valley Council, and attracted the support of a number of former and serving councillors on the Huon and merged municipalities from the district, as well as resource industry supporters. It proved necessary as the proposal ultimately passed with a margin of five votes to four.

Our group contains members whose families have been involved in the timber industry and related industries for many generations, and who can testify to the extent that areas submitted for inclusion in the 2013 TWWHA extension has been extensively harvested for at least 140 years.

The group soon affiliated to become the Huon branch of Timber Communities Australia, but supports all resource-based industries in a broad charter.

The Group participated in the discussions with the Reactive Monitoring Mission from the World Heritage Centre when the delegation visited the area in early 2008, and lobbied in favour of the position to reject any extension to the TWWHA.

The Group was involved all the way through the signatories process from the beginning of the Round Table and the Statement of Principles negotiations, and right through the Heads of Agreement, the Intergovernmental Agreement and all the other iterations of this sordid process to the present day, and we can say it was the most sordid and corrupt process most of us have ever seen.

Our group believes the 2013 WHA extension in its entirety is illegitimate, and offended against integrity and proper process, and will have a deleterious and unacceptable impact on businesses, employment and the aspirations of citizens within our community. Our group believes the impact of the extension and the manner in which it was brought about will cause international embarrassment to Australia and damage to its reputation if it is allowed to stand and if appropriate action is not taken to put the situation right. If the situation is allowed to stand, it will be an endorsement of poor and inappropriate behaviour.

Our group believes that World Heritage has been used as an instrument by fundamentalist green groups to attack the very existence of the native forest-based timber industry, and it has been achieved by the misrepresentation of the facts, the dubious application of academic reputation and the deception by omission. We believe it trades on the perception in the community that acceptance by the international organizations of WHA status means that it must be right, and once achieved is unassailable and beyond question. We are asserting that it is a flawed result from a flawed process driven by those prepared to deceive and accepted by desperate state and federal governments of the same colour who were prepared to accept the bending of the rules and it was green-lighted by the larger players in the timber industry who were negotiating under duress.

Our group is not impressed by the role played by the former federal minister for the Environment, Tony Burke, and the manner in which he conducted himself. We are not impressed with how he dealt with the Members of the Tasmanian Legislative Council, and how he submitted the proposal for the 2013 Minor Boundary Modification prior to the issue being fully considered by the Tasmanian parliament and the Legislative Council Select Committee of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Forests Agreement Bill.

Our group believes the World Heritage Committee should be petitioned to annul the entire 2013 TWWHA extension, and that the State Party, Australia, should be asked to undertake a proper process to evaluate areas adjacent to the previous boundary and prepare a submission that should only go forward after it has observed all proper protocols, and which has attained the full assent of the parliament of Tasmania.

George Harris
President
on behalf of the members of
Huon Resource Development Group

31/03/2014