

North of Brisbane

This section provides an overview of sawmilling north from Brisbane to Petrie, Dayboro, Caboolture, Woodford, Kilcoy and the Jimna area.

There were many sawmills in what are now northern suburbs of Brisbane. Beyond Northgate, Mick Simpson's sawmill at Virginia closed as recently as March 1997 after fifty years operation and still using old methods with logs hand fed to the saw.¹

Woodland Holdings Limited established works at Sunshine, served by rail, in 1971 for particle board manufacture, four years before establishing a major plant at Monkland near Gympie. Both were later acquired by CSR.

A siding was provided for Raymond and Hossack at Geebung in 1923, presumably for their sawmilling operations. The siding remained in use until 1960, ownership having passed to T. Laver, Robert Usher & Sons, Interstate Timber Company and W. Grant of Kedron. All appeared to have been successive owners of the sawmill in Robinson's Road, Geebung. Hyne's had acquired the siding by 1963, but went on to establish their Brisbane plant at Zillmere.² J. Mitchell and N.J. Robson were milling at Bald Hills in the 1920s and H. Davis post war.

Richard Jackson and Charles O'Brien had a sawmill at Strathpine in 1892 as well as at Peak Crossing. Richard Winn had a sawmill at Strathpine in the 1910s but closed the mill in 1929. Rosenfeld and Company had a sawmill at Strathpine in 1922, possibly the same operation as Pine Mills Limited.³ R.H. Harris, sawmiller was granted a lease on a siding at Strathpine in 1949, cancelled in 1953. Then in 1971 the Australia Match Manufacturing Company began making matches at Strathpine, with its own rail siding but it lasted only a few years.⁴

The sawmill at Lawnton, the last in the Pine Rivers areas in 1988, was started by N.S. (Nesse) Boyle and A.L. (Ab) Werner in 1926, and traded as Lawnton Sawmill. Even in the 1980s it was known as Boyle's mill. In 1941 Werner sold his share to Milo Boyle, Nesse's Brother. A frame saw was erected towards the rear of the site to speed up breaking down logs during the war and postwar the whole mill was relocated to this area. Ron Boyle, son of Nesse, succeeded as Manager when L. Strain retired in 1984. The older Doyles had died in 1963 (Milo) and 1967 (Nesse).⁵

J. Storie Jr. and W. Taylor were milling at North Pine, now Petrie, before 1910. Josias Hancock had a Petrie branch 1911-14. W. Neilsen and H. & J. Neilsen had sawmills at Petrie in the 1920s and 1930s. APM Limited began construction of its paper mill just east of the railway at Petrie in 1951 with a railway siding but work stopped in 1952 due to economic causes and the plant did not start operating until 1957.⁶

The Dayboro branch railway facilitated the establishment of sawmills in an area which had been logged to supply mills in the Pine Rivers Area. R.R. Winn operated a mill at Mount Samson from 1923, from 1939 supplemented by a mill at Samsonvale operated, Winn and his sons operating the mills.⁷ Gordon and Sons established a new sawmill at Samsonvale railway station in 1924.⁸

Six years after the extension of the railway from Kobbie to Dayboro, R.E. Stephens of Kobbie Creek moved his sawmill to the new terminus. He had originally cut firewood in the Samsonvale district before establishing a small sawmill in the Kobbie station yard.⁹

Hancock and Gore appeared to have operated the first sawmill at Dayboro, known prior to the opening of the railway in 1920 as Terrors Creek. This firm and John Tyack were both recorded as having a sawmill at Terrors Creek in 1903 but neither was listed in the following years. Samuel Heathwood was recorded as sawmill proprietor from 1907 until 1912 when the operator became the Terrors Creek Timber Company. This name appeared for another 15 years. The Dayboro Timber Company Limited was, however, registered on 4 August 1922 to take over the business then being carried on by the contractor Edward Duhig and his wife Sarah Mary Duhig plus the South Brisbane sawmiller Arthur James Kirby as partners or shareholders. The new company included a number of local farmers as shareholders but they may have been shareholders in name only, to meet the requirements of registering a company, and the company was struck off in 1928 having sent in no returns after 1923.¹⁰ In 1934 Dayboro Sawmills were recorded as being located at 14 Annerley Road, Woolloongabba. From 1943, C.M. Stephens, later joined by M. Simpson, was operating at Dayboro.

Near Dayboro, Charles Rose and his sons built a sawmill at Mount Pleasant in 1930 but within a few years it was sold to Miles and then to Brett Brothers who moved it to Byron Creek.¹¹

Thomas W. Thomason was recorded as sawmilling at Mount Mee from 1913 to 1915. Herb Currie was photographed with Linn Tractor in *Tracks and Times*, reputedly dated as 1930. Hancock Brothers of North Ipswich operated at Mount Mee from around 1938.

A short incline tramway, possibly just a single line used to winch logs uphill, was located near the mill and has been recorded in the Mount Mee study.¹²

Caboolture, Woodford and Kilcoy

North of Petrie, Clugson and Company had a sawmill east of what is now Dakabin on the [Old] Gympie Road in 1899, connected to the railway by a simple tramway. The area was then known as Deception Bay and the mill operated for about 6 years.¹³

Also at Dakabin, John Charles Webb obtained a lease of railway land for a sawmill in 1905, transferred to W.J. Richardson in 1906. Webb moved to Woodford but the siding was still known as Webb's Siding, used mainly to load firewood for Brisbane.¹⁴ Richardson, whose headquarters were in Albion, Brisbane, sold out to Pentland and Clout in 1912. When the railway was being duplicated the siding had to be moved. The simplest solution was for Queensland Railways to purchase the business for £250. The sawmill was valued at just £62 and was moved to Normanby, Brisbane, until a use could be found for it.¹⁵

There were also sawmills at Narangba including Hill Brothers from the 1930s and James Biggs was sawing at Burpengary in 1892. Burpengary Sawmills had its office in Brisbane in the 1910s. John Finlay had a sawmill at Morayfield from 1897. J.W. Wilkinson operated a sawmill there from 1927, trading as Wilkinson & Sons and postwar as Wilkinson Brothers, their main activities being in the Yandina area.

Caboolture was a major sawmilling centre with Andrew Johnson erecting a mill powered by 25 horsepower steam engine in 1885, three years before the railway linked Caboolture with Brisbane, the main market. Born in Sweden, Johnson had settled at Caboolture in 1874, working first as a sawyer and then a farmer.¹⁶ From 1892 the firm was trading as A. or Alfred

Johnson & Company until 1924 when it may have been acquired by Proctor and Son (of Toombul, Brisbane).

Joshua Rotbery was operating the Queensland Sawmill at Caboolture in 1889 and W.G. or George W. Seeney from 1900.

Soon after construction of the railway to Woodford and Kilcoy, Attewell and Proctor had a siding inserted on the branch on the outskirts of Caboolture in 1913. From 1917 the firm operated as F. Attewell and later as Attewells Ltd. The siding was put out of use in 1980 which may represent the closure of the sawmill.¹⁷

Martin Zanow, born at Zillmere in 1870 and trained as a blacksmith, started in the timber trade in 1898. He moved his mill from Woodford Road, Caboolture to the railway half a kilometre beyond Attewell's in 1910, also obtaining his own siding. In the mid to late 1940s, S.A. Thurecht took over the business, and then Krebs and Company in 1955. The siding was removed in 1959, probably as road transport had been substituted. The regulations on road haulage had not long been relaxed.¹⁸

Woodford and Kilcoy

Construction of the Kilcoy railway stimulated logging and many sawmills were established along it. It was also the railhead for the Jimna area.

Arthur Woodrow (from 1918) and in the 1920s, W.J. Spillane and J.H. Wilkinson were milling at Wamuran. Whitlock & Noon and E.A. Shadforth began milling at Bracalba around 1917.

A., J. & C. Carmichael whose Brisbane mill was by the river at West End, began milling at D'Aguilar by 1911 and had their own siding put in at the 16 Mile (from Caboolture) in 1913. The siding was placed out of use in 1939 although the business may have closed about 1934.¹⁹

Woodford was the terminus of the first section of the Kilcoy railway. It was a sawmilling centre at least from 1886 when the Woodford Sawmill Company Limited was registered with a capital of £1800 in 60 shares. It was set up by a number of sawyers, tradesmen and businessmen, mostly from the area. Owen T. Hagger, a carpenter, became managing director but in 1889 the sawmill was sold. The company was wound up, paying the creditors in full.²⁰ The mill was said to be where the police stand now stands.

Fredin's first mill on the bank of One Mile Creek was burnt down about 1923 and he rebuilt in the town area. Fredin and Sons operated until about 1959 when W. Grant and Son took over the mill and the siding which was restored to use. The mill was still operating in 1982.²¹

Beanland, King and Company had a siding constructed in 1913 at 17 miles 55 chains a little beyond Woodford, now the site of the Bowling Club. Peder Nielsen Lovf bought the mill about 1914-1916. The mill was burnt down in 1928 and the siding was placed out of use in 1930.²²

Davis, Binnie and Company also had a mill in Woodford with its own siding in 1916.

Seeney and Green were operating at Woodford by 1896. They operated at Woodford for four years. James Green moved to Villeneuve, erecting a sawmill with three times the capacity. This occurred by 1908, possibly a few years earlier. Green also established a case factory at Rosalie (Brisbane) in 1905 before making his Brisbane headquarters in Wickham Street, Valley, by 1909. When the railway was extended beyond Woodford, Green had a siding inserted in 1914 at 28 miles 67 chains (just beyond Villeneuve) but it fell out of use in 1926, the mill presumably having closed.²³

Seeney and Green (James Green from 1900) also operates at Yatesville until about 1906 while George Seeney milled at Hereford Hills, listed 1908-1911.

Jack Swensen (listed under Wamuran) and Gilbert Nonmus had a sawmill in the Stanmore area. Nonmus acquired a small mill in 1910 powered by portable steam engine. With brother Frank, he milled at various sites in the Woodford area.²⁴

In the area between Woodford and Glass House Mountains there were several mills around Bellthorpe or Belthorpe. Peter N. Levy [presumably a mistake for Lovf] was listed there in 1914. Ken L. Keir and later H.M. Keir were sawmilling from the mid 1930s. Brandon began around 1940. After Main Roads Commission resumed where Olsens had their Nundah sawmill in Brisbane, Brandon with Walter Lovf bought Olsen's Mill and erected it at Bellthorpe, trading as Brandon Lovf Pty Ltd. It operated until 1963. The mill was then purchased by Grant Timbers for the quota and added to their Woodford Mill.²⁵

Dave Thurecht had a mill at Mary Smokes Creek and had a tramline (wooden or steel?) to carry

logs which descended by chute from the area of Mary Smokes Lookout near Maleny.²⁶

The earliest sawmill in the Villeneuve area was erected by Frank Villeneuve Nicholson. He obtained land in 1877, part of the Kilcoy and Durundur resumption and erected the Villeneuve sawmill, plus houses for his workmen, a school, church and store. Sawn timber was initially taken by bullock team to Ipswich but was hauled to Caboolture after the railway opened to there in 1888. Nicholson established a timber depot in Countess Street, Brisbane, beside the railway. Losses in the flood which severely damaged the sawmill combined with financial depression to close the sawmill in 1893 and the Brisbane yards in 1895.²⁷

The township of Kilcoy dates from around 1890, known at first at Hopetoun. It has been a sawmilling town for most of that time. George Brown Brothers had sawmills in Brisbane and Hopetoun 1901-1903, possibly the same mill operated by J. Grau (1904-05) and Joseph H. Wade (1906-08). H.M. Jones milled at Hopetoun/Kilcoy 1907-1938. James Green operated a mill at or near Kilcoy the year after opening at Villeneuve.²⁸ Other operators at Kilcoy included Albert E. Woodrow, Thomas G. Payne and the Kilcoy Saw and Planing Mills.

In the upper Brisbane Valley, Hancock and Gore built a new mill at Monsildale in 1912, on Portion 7, rented from Horne. Where there had been just a homestead, a little township sprang up. Apparently because the rental on renewal was excessive, the mill was moved in 1922 to Foxlowe, now called Jimna (a distance from the original Jimna diggings).²⁹

There was another sawmill at Monsildale, owned by Les Young, or maybe some of the original mill was retained. He changed to cattle and sold all the cottages and moveable assets on 20 January 1962.³⁰

Hancock and Gore erected a mill at Louisavale about 1916.³¹ The mill closed in April 1930 after the frame wheel broke, but the depression was the real reason. Six bullock teams were put off and the other six used to haul logs to Linville to rail to the company's other mills. It was 1934 before the mill reopened with lorries used to move the sawn timber.³² It was still operating in 1938.

Brown and Broad also had a mill, apparently at Monsildale, possibly at Hancock and Gore's old site, but sold it to the United States Armed Forces during World War II and it was shipped to New

Guinea.³³ Hancock and Gore listed a mill at Monsildale in 1943-44 but not Louisavale so presumably it was moved to Monsildale and the property eventually sold to Les Young.

When Hancock and Gore moved their first Monsildale mill seven miles to Foxlowe in 1922, it was erected on a site recommended by the Gympie Land Ranger, George Carter, Harry Woodrow, Forest Range of Monsildale, and 'Boy' MacDonald of Yabba station. The mill, store, provisional school, butcher shop and houses were all dismantled for the moved, supervised by manager Tom Davies and re-erected under the supervision of George Watt and Jack Fox. The 16 houses were rebuilt along Yabba Creek.³⁴

As the Postal Department rejected Foxlowe as a name, Jimna from the old goldfield, two miles away, was adopted. Hancock and Gore extended the telephone line from Yabba to the mill in 1924. The sawmill closed for several months in 1930 but Henry Hancock allowed the families credit until it reopened. The mill cut only pine.³⁵

A planing machine and small case benches and dockers were installed in 1935 plus a generator for the new equipment although the mill remained steam powered. The mill was enlarged in the late 1940s. The hardwood mill was added in 1943 with frame saw, rack and three hand benches. A fire on 17 December 1943 destroyed the office, store and records. Another fire in 1947 destroyed the pine mill, boilers, steam engine and generators. The pine mill was rebuilt 1947-1948. The mill had a band saw. In 1960 or 1961 electric power and compressed-air driven log carriage replaced the steam driven one. The thinnings mill with twin log slabbers, two Edger benches and two radial arm benches and new powerhouse were built 1947-1948 with steam boilers and 320, 225 and 100 KVA generators. The main equipment was converted to electricity. In 1963 a diesel plant was added.³⁶

A trolley line on wooden rails operated at Monsildale (State Forest 207). A winch powered by steam was used to raise timber from the Forest Floor. The remains have been recorded and the trolley removed for preservation.³⁷

The Yednia Sawmilling Company Limited operated at Yednia from around 1916 to 1943. Queensland Soft and Hard Woods Pty Ltd of Nundah took over about 1944 and from 1948 to 1963 also operated a steam driven sawmill at Sunday Creek (now the site of the Environmental Education Centre). The barracks were taken over by forestry in 1964.³⁸

Endnotes

1. *Courier-Mail* 26 March 1997 p. 10.
2. WN 8/23, 2/60.
3. Lawrence S. Smith, *Tracks and Times*, p. 94; Arch. & Building J. Qld. Sep.1922 p. 55.
4. Weekly Notices 22/49, 31/53, 4/71 p.8, 5/78 p.8.
5. Lawrence S. Smith, p. 94.
6. Tutt, Stan, *From spear & musket 1879-1979*, p. 261.
7. Lawrence S. Smith, p. 94. This text may need to be verified with more local research. See also The National Estate of the Pine Rivers Shire Historical Sites and Buildings, North Brisbane College of Advanced Education.
8. BC 11 feb 1924.
9. Q 31 July 1926 p. 29. Lawrence S. Smith, p. 95.
10. Company 87 of 1922, A/28574, QSA.
11. Cheryl Luxford, *The Mount Pleasant Story 1874-1985*.
12. Cheryl Luxford gives GPS recording 27 deg 3 min 57 sec South and 152 deg 40 min 52 sec East.
13. Q 17 June 1899 p. 1141.
14. File 1916/1838, A/12508, QSA; Stan Tutt, *By Many Campfires*, p. 64.
15. File 1916/1838 Batch 5G, A/12508, QSA; WN 365.
16. W.F. Morrison, Vol.2, unpagged.
17. WN 231, 38/80 p.9.
18. Stan Tutt *By Many Campfires*, p. 60, WN 101, 40/48, 37/55, 29/59.
19. WN 266, 35/39.
20. Company 281 Book 3, A/21397, QSA.
21. *From Durundur to Woodford*, pp. 41, 50-1; WN 656, 35 & 48/59.
22. *From Durundur to Woodford*, pp. 41, 50-1; WN 278, 13/30.
23. E.J.T. Barton, pp. 345-6; WN 295, 25/26.
24. John Dargavel, pp. 87-8.
25. Stan Tutt, *Sunshine Coast Heritage*, p. 87; Red Folder 4, Bellthorpe, M. Kowald, DoE.
26. Red Folder 4, Bellthorpe, M. Kowald, DoE.
27. W.F. Morrison, Vol. 2, unpagged; Historical Notes of Kilcoy District, copy Department of Environment.
28. E.J.T. Barton, pp. 345-6.
29. Historical Notes of Kilcoy District, p. 11; QT 31 March 1917.
30. *Brisbane Valley Star* 2 February 1962.
31. First reference, *Queensland Times* 7 February 1916 p. 7.
32. *Queensland Times* 9 April 1930 p. 14, 24 April 1930 p. 12, *Brisbane Valley Advertiser* 16 May 1934, *Esk Record* 2 February 1935.
33. Historical Notes of Kilcoy, p. 11.
34. Kilcoy, p. 11.
35. Kilcoy, p. 16.
36. Kilcoy, p. 14.
37. Department of Forestry to Historical Museum Gympie 30 April 1973, reference 47/9 and 1/33, copy M. Kowald, Department of Environment.
38. Leslie J. Dwyer, *Jimna*.

Near North Coast

This section provides an overview of sawmilling along the North Coast north from Caboolture to the Cooran area.

From 1914 Walter S. Hambling and from 1916 William F. Holt were listed as having sawmills at Elimbah, each operating for about a quarter century. John Wilkinson also operated in the 1920s. Holt Brothers conducted the Elimbah sawmill to 1949. In 1957 Newbury and Stewart of Elimbah Timbers were granted a lease on a siding by the Railway Department.¹

W. and Kenneth Grigor were operating at Maleny and Glass House Mountains from the late 1890s until 1908. After World War II, several sawmills operated at or near Glass House Mountains, including Pattersons Pty Ltd of Toowong, Brisbane.

James Campbell arrived in Brisbane from Scotland on 28 May 1853 aged 24, but two decades elapsed before he acquired his first sawmill, near Brisbane in the 1870s.

The first sawmill on the near North Coast was built at what became Campbellville in 1881 by James Campbell, his second mill. It was on the north bank of Coochin Creek just below the junction with Mellum Creek. Timber getters had already been at work, hauling logs by bullock team and rafting them from this site, known as the Mellum Rafting Ground. Logging cedar, hoop and bunya pine began in 1879.

The mill site, selected 4 miles up the creek to get fresh water supplies, included some of the mill from Capalaba, Campbell's first mill, operating since 1876. The saw mill, wharf shed and cottages were erected on Portions 22 and 22A, Parish of Bribie, and the settlement became known as Campbellville. Some of the timber was shot down McCarthy's shute from the Blackall Range near the site now of Mary Cairncross Park.²

Although sawn timber was hauled over a short tramway from the sawmill to the wharf, the tramway surveyed in 1883 from the range to the sawmill, 8 miles, was never constructed.³ The Caboolture Divisional Board contemplated building the tramway in 1885 and George Phillips reported on the line in 1885 but by this time the North Coast Railway was under consideration by the government. It proved a more convenient means of access to Brisbane. Since the sawmill was 4 miles east of the railway, opened in 1890,

and the timber came from west of the railway, it spelled the end of the sawmill, which closed in 1893.⁴

Peachester

William Grigor, who milled in Glass House Mountains and Maleny from 1897, established the first mill in Peachester by moving his mill from Maleny there in 1899. The area was originally known as Peach Trees after trees growing near the sawmill. The mill was steam powered, its site marked in the 1980s by a big fig tree. It operated for two decades.⁵

After Grigor's mill closed, trucks driven by Dance Brothers carted to rail. The new road opened in 1930 was a big improvement. The Peachester Timber Company, formed by W.J.S. Grigor, haulier, W.J. (Jim) Hefferman, sawmiller, and Les Tagg, cutter, established a local mill in 1947. This mill was converted to electricity in 1952. The mill and licence were sold in the 1980s to W. Colless and Sons of Nambour. City Electric Light, through its subsidiary Queensland Industries Ltd, known as Q.I., operated a modern sawmill at Peachester in the 1950s. It closed in 1959.⁶

John Simpson operated a sawmill at Beerwah from 1904 to 1939. It is said to have been established by William Pettigrew in 1901, but this needs substantiation.⁷ Brown and Broad operated at Beerwah from 1941, possibly the former Simpson's mill, and it appears it operated to 1974.⁸

Large amounts of logs and sawn timber were railed from **Landsborough**. Henry Dyer's [Dwyer's?] sawmill erected about 1896, operated by Thomas Dyer from 1919, was the principal or only mill until C. Gerbes (1919) and A.P. Jensen (1920) began sawmilling.

The Queensland Coastal Timber Company Limited with head office in Brisbane was registered on 28 June 1921, formed by a number of Brisbane businessmen, including timber merchants L.L. Gill and H.C. Davis. Thomas Wrigley the mill manager at Landsborough held 200 shares. The company may have been formed to take over Dyer's mill or other existing mill but this was not stated. Shareholders voted to wind

up the company voluntarily in February 1928.⁹ Whether it closed or was sold is not known.

Several mills operated at Landsborough at various times since including P. Imberger (1922-1940) and Hancock & Gore Limited (1923-1947). Hancock and Gore were granted a lease of land beside the fork line at the railway station 1949-1952, transferred to Queensland Industries Ltd in 1952, possibly for a sawmill.¹⁰ Tesch Brothers who milled at Caloundra (subsequent to B. Counter), Landsborough, Maleny and Witta in the 1940s, also had a lease on a siding at Landsborough 1949-1970.¹¹

Cedar cutting in the **Maleny** area began in the 1870s. Lahey Brothers mill listed 1892-1899 was the first sawmill but they then moved the machinery south to Hillview on Christmas Creek.¹² William Grigor started his mill in 1897 but moved it in 1899 to what is now Peachester. The Obi Sawmill Company, Francis Dunlop and William Livingstone were other operators in the 1897-1899 period.

Thynne and Pattemore had a sawmill beside Fryer's Creek 1906-1918 which subsequently became Skerman and Moffatt's mill. Thorne Brothers' and Tesch Brothers' mills dated from around 1927 and other mills started during and after the war.¹³

Near Maleny, there were mills postwar at Kidaman Creek and Camboon. Tesch Brothers at Witta milled until the 1950s and the Obi Obi Sawmilling Company was there in the 1930s. Arthur Tesch worked at Tesch Brothers mill for 60 years.¹⁴ Christian Krogh of Obi Obi, date unknown, built a water wheel to operate a sawmill, diverting the stream at a bend in the creek.¹⁵

At **Conondale**, R.H. Perrott milled from 1941 and Hamilton Sawmills had one of its branch mills at Conondale from 1943. This Hornibrook subsidiary also had mills at Whinstanes, Mapleton and Flaxton. J. Wilkinson & Sons had a mill at Conondale postwar. Currently R. & T.D. Green operate Conondale Timbers.

David Burns opened a sawmill at Glenview from around 1907 (possibly first H. Walat's and then H. Jacobsen's in 1905-1906) but Tutt records Davie Brothers as owner of Glenview Sawmills.¹⁶

There were several mills at or near Mooloolah besides Glenview, including Russell & Isard Ltd in the 1910s, which may have started as C. Ditherner's mill around 1909. F. Wakerling

milled from the late 1920s and C.A. Joseph and Patterson's of Toowong dated from the 1940s.

Eudlo remains a sawmilling town, the best known, oldest and surviving mill first owned by Dr Corlis for whom a siding was inserted when the mill started operating in 1911. In 1913, Andrew, Fred and Norman Olsen bought the mill, cutting a variety of hardwoods for the Brisbane market. Norman Olsen took over in 1938, and electricity replaced steam in 1941. A planing shed 80 x 40 feet was built to dress brushbox and turpentine for flooring and VJ lining boards. N. Olsen died in 1962 but Colin, Dudley and Keith continued until the mill was acquired by Paul Keleher on 1 October 1993, still operating as Olsens sawmill. (The railway siding was put out of use in 1959 with the change to road haulage after restriction on road transport were relaxed.) Olsen also had a mill at Nundah. The Eudlo mill was sold in 1995 to Deufer, Cookston and Clinton Keleher. Modern log cutting and hauling equipment works in conjunction with the old mill.¹⁷

Other sawmillers at Eudlo, included Richard Sexton in 1914, and A.E. Kuskopf & F. Roser from 1944, later Roser and Tolson.

John J. Walker was sawmilling at Palmwoods (circa 1903-1906) followed by R.P. Remington (1908), H. Hancock (1909-1920), T. Lingard (1921-1922) and then W. and later Harry E. Fielding from 1929 to 1940. Trevor Cartor operated a mill from 1937 and others in the 1940s.

Connected to Palmwoods by narrow gauge railway, **Buderim** had a sawmill operated by C.H. Pope from 1918. Gilbert Nonmus established his sawmill about 1915 but enlisted, selling the mill to the Lindsay family but buying it back when he returned, despite a right arm crippled by shrapnel. The Nonmus family also had a mill at Woodford and for a time at Maroochydhore. By giving extended credit and building houses, he survived depression. He sold the Buderim mill to Norm McCowan in 1946 to retire. He in turn sold to Barnes & Dean trading as Buderim Lumber who diversified into builders supplies and ready mixed concrete.¹⁸ Ackland Parsons and other mills operated at Buderim from 1929 and E.J. & R.W. Parsons at Forest Glen, postwar.

Christian J. Wyer operated the Flaxton Saw Mills from around 1900 and around 1942 Hamilton sawmills had a branch sawmill at Flaxton (possibly the same as listed as Montville in 1946).

Woombye

The name Thomas Bartholomew was synonymous with sawmilling at Woombye from just before the turn of the century. He had saw and planing mills. An early photograph of the site, beside the railway on the town or eastern side, shows two rail sidings visible, not necessarily private sidings as the mill was close to the rail yard. From around 1908 the firm was a partnership of Bartholomew and Cary with premises at Wickham Street, Valley, Brisbane. Bartholomew was presumably the same family as were partners in Ferguson and Co. of Gympie. From 1927 the Woombye mill was simply J.B. Bartholomew and Sons. The building, now clad in steel, remains but is shared by local businesses, not having been a sawmill for some time. The distinctive character of the building is a reminder of its heritage.¹⁹ Other sawmillers at Woombye included William Brookes and Rose Brothers in the 1905-12 period, and from 1935 Alfred Kuskoff plus others postwar.

The sawmill at Diddillibah, or on Diddillibah Road, Woombye was established in 1952. Since 1985 it has been owned and operated by Peter Carter as a hardwood mill mainly cutting flooded gum with Tim Mayers logging contractor in 1996.²⁰

William Pettigrew established a depot at the mouth of the Mooloolah River in 1863 for shipping logs to Brisbane. He considered the suitability of a railway and in September 1865 referred to placing boilers at Mooloolah.²¹ In 1891 he established a branch mill at Maroochydore which operated to 1898. Some of the timber was rafted to this mill; after it closed, logs from the area were mainly railed south.²²

Gilbert Nonmus operated a mill at Maroochydore from around 1926. It was sold to Richards about 1928 and apparently closed in 1933. There were other sawmills in the area postwar.²³

Nambour north to Gympie

Henry E. Lowe was sawmilling on the southern side of Nambour from 1904 and in 1911 had a railway siding inserted for his mill. The Richmond Timber Company also used the siding. Munro and Nicholls used the siding from 1940, their sawmill apparently taken over by the Richmond Timber Company in 1942. W.A. Bott took over the siding and perhaps Richmond River sawmills in 1953 but it was out of use in 1961 (probably because road haulage was then

permitted) and the date of closure of the sawmill is not known.²⁴

The near North Coast westward to the coastal ranges supported large numbers of sawmills, and most townships were either established by sawmilling or had one or more sawmills.

Nambour was of minor significance before the opening of the sugar mill in 1897 but Jesse Mitchell and Sons was listed as sawmilling at Nambour from 1892, later trading as Sylvania Saw Mills but closing about the turn of the century. Nathaniel Whalley was milling from 1905, possibly the same mill as Robinson and Son from 1928. Several mills were operating in the 1940s. The sugar mill had its own sawmill with its own railway siding.

Stands of timber extended to the coast, where early exploitation was concentrated near the coast, with rafting and shipping of timber to mills in Brisbane and other coastal locations. James Low came from Brisbane in 1863 to Pettigrew's timber depot at the mouth of the Mooloolah River in 1863. Timber cutters were working on the site of Yandina by 1866. The industry was long lived, with still 32 licensed sawmills in the Maroochy Shire in 1971. Amalgamation took place during the 1970s. In the 1980s Christopher Skase's company Quintex bought several North Coast timber mills and closed down labour intensive mills. Boral Timber later acquired the timber operations.²⁵

What was known as the Maroochydore Mills was located at Coolum, operating to 1905.

Timber in the **Mapleton** area was largely inaccessible until roads improved. W.H. Rosser opened the Mapleton Sawmill on New Year's Day 1909, about a mile north west of the town, rebuilt after fire (1924) on the eastern side of the Mapleton Hall ground. A.E. Brandon of Wynnum purchased the mill from Rosser. It was closed some years during the depression and was acquired by M.R. Hornibrook Pty Ltd's Hamilton Sawmills around 1941.²⁶ Other mills were opened in the 1940s. There were three case mills after the war, Ted and Eric Richards in Delicia Road opened in early 1946; Nobby Tirrell in partnership with Ray Lovelock opened in 1949; and Horrie Hingston who sold to Ken Crouch and his father.²⁷

There were many case mills. Rubert S. Dyne and Sons opened one at Valdora in 1946. The banana boom in the late 1920s and 1930s provided the first stimulus for case mills. Some of them

included Adams in North Arm, Atkinsons in Cooloolabin Road and B.C. Love in Kiamba Road, producing mainly cases. Love used the same engine as they used for their arrowroot mill. Their mill was bought by E.P. and J.V. Winston in 1984. J.F. and W.H. Duhs the present sawmill at Kiamba, west of Yandina. Harry Duhs hauled logs by bullock team from Kiamba to local sawmills and Yandina railway station for 23 years until 1949 when he and brother John established their own mill, which operated until 1957.²⁸

Charles Albin was milling at **Yandina** from 1894 but was not recorded after 1897. There was J.W. Lynn in the 1911 and 1912 lists and then Neils and A. Jocusmen from 1920 and Victor Jensen from 1935 and A.J. Foster from 1936. Jocusmen's mill was at Cooloolabin until the mid 1920s when he shifted it to Low Street, Yandina, operating as Jocusmen and Stephens. Bert Pascoe opened a case mill in Stevens Street in 1946, acquired by Batson and Co. in 1950 and by J. Wilkinson and Sons in 1954. From 1951 to 1976 the Oliver brothers had a sawmill in Wappa Falls Road.²⁹

J.P.F. Wilkinson bought Jocusmen's mill in Yandina in 1934 for £500 when it was operating only spasmodically, a result of the depression. Most of the bullock teams had gone so Wilkinson bought a crawler tractor, Caterpillar 35, the first in the area. It snigged, loaded and hauled two bullock wagons from the range via Kiamba, one trip per day until 1938 when the first motor truck was introduced. The Caterpillar worked until 1962 when a D7 replaced it.

The Wilkinsons, Strakers and Luttons joined to form Northcoast Sawmills Pty Ltd in 1970 with its headquarters at Cooroy. It formed a valuable partnership and was bought out by Quintex in 1980.³⁰

In 1935 Albert Foster from New South Wales built a new sawmill at Cooloolabin, logging from State Forest 318. It was moved in 1945 to Sunday Creek in the Yednia-Jimna area. M.T. Atkinson and Son milled at Cooloolabin from 1941 and Queensland Softwoods and Hardwoods from 1944. In 1996, E.P. and J.V. Winston were still operating at Cooloolabin.³¹

Atkinson and Fountain had a mill at North Arm in 1913, which apparently became Olsen and Russell in 1915 and Carney and Ward's in 1921. George and Fred Abel opened a case mill; in the late 1920s using a kerosene-fuelled tractor to bring in logs. Just before World War II they moved into North Arm with an electrically

powered it. It was sold to Landt and Beaton in 1960, and J.D. and G.W. Davidson in 1962, and is still being operated by the Davidsons.³²

Etheridge erected a small saw mill in 1881, mainly for his own use, near what became **Eumundi** (listed in 1895 Pugh's as at Nambour). He offered to erect a sugar mill if farmers grew enough cane but apparently this did not happen.³³ HESSIE LINDSEN states George and Bert Etheridge erected the first sawmill in Eumundi on Main Camp Road in 1895. In 1920 it was moved into town, now the site of Caplick Park. It had an elevated tramway to move sawn timber to the railway siding. The mill closed the year after George died in 1937.³⁴

Gilliland and Straker brought Bill Parry's Verri-erdale Mill in to Eumundi in 1922, erecting it in the railway yard beside the Butter Factory Siding on which sawn timber was loaded. In 1937 Straker and Co. sold to Vansleve and Williams. They cut hardwood, working 24 hours a day for a period in World War II to fulfil orders. Brian Williams bought the mill in 1953 and in 1959 sold it to the Wilkinsons. It was closed in 1969.³⁵ Around Eumundi there were mills at Doonan, Belli and Ridgewood.

Cooroy was a logging centre before it was a township, with the firm Dath Henderson having large tracts of land east of Cooroy until resumed from the government in 1907 for closer settlement. This precipitated large scale logging in the time allowed before it took possession.³⁶ Several sawmills were established to mill timber as the new selections were cleared. Fenwick Brothers and Morish established a mill on the western side of the town near the creek in 1908 trading as Canadian Saw Mills. In 1910 Clugston and Ireland built a sawmill where the Bowling Club now stands. It was burnt down in December 1914 but was rebuilt. A siding was provided to the mill in 1916 but it burnt down about 1928.³⁷

Other sawmillers included Sivyver and Dunbar from around 1921, W.H. Howard and E.N. Wheeldon 1923 and after the depression, E.H. Llewellyn, listed from 1934, which may be the same mill as Ford Brothers from 1941.

Straker and Sons' Cooroy sawmill, trading as the Cooroy Sawmilling Company from around 1944 is the sole mill remaining in the town area.

To counter shortages of log timber and safeguard their future, Wilkinsons of Yandina, Strakers of Cooroy and Cooran and Luttons of the Mary Valley joined together to form Northcoast

Sawmills Pty Ltd at Cooroy in 1970. Together they established a new mill at Nandroya in 1972, with logs coming from a wide radius and incorporating modern equipment for efficiency. North Coast Sawmills was acquired by Quintex in 1980 and subsequently Boral which continues to operate both the Cooroy and Nandroya plants.³⁸

A fire on 2 May 1997 threatened the Cooroy mill but was confined to a small area leased for experimental product development.³⁹

The formation of Northcoast Sawmills was a natural development of the partial amalgamation in 1956 when the Cooroy Sawmilling Company of Cooran, Straker & Sons Cooran and J. Wilkinson & Sons of Yandina and Conondale jointly formed Kiln Dried Timbers Pty Ltd to erect four double kilns and new planing mills on an area of three acres at Cooroy. The kilns enable the companies to market timber in southern states and western Queensland where naturally coastal dried timbers are not acceptable. Arthur Straker and Peter Wilkinson supervised the project, the site adjacent to the Cooroy sawmill.⁴⁰

In 1877 Dath Henderson, partners in Ferguson & Co. at Gympie, established sawmilling operations at Newstead, Brisbane, beginning milling at the start of 1878 and their **Tewantin** sawmill was erected starting in December 1878. They purchased a schooner for transport and in 1882 launched a 66 foot long steamer *Black Swan* built at Tewantin. The Tewantin mill employed 50 men.⁴¹ It apparently closed around 1900.

Mills were established at Tewantin this century. A.C. Hunter was recorded from 1926, and Marton Brothers from 1938 which may have been acquired by G.R. Jones and C.C. Meyers from around 1944. More mills were erected postwar. Tewantin sawmills, located at Noosaville, owned by McKinnons, closed in 1969.⁴²

Several mills were established in and around **Pomona**. Pomona itself was a minor village until it became the headquarters of the Noosa Shire in 1910. Possibly the first was established by Charles Houghton at three miles from the railway station at what became Kareewa which quickly became a village with school, cottages and church. The mill was built in 1911 with P. Anderson manager, and included Canadian breaking-down bench, Robinson 4-sider planing machine and was powered from a 25 horsepower boiler. The mill employed 14 hands with another 16 to 20 cutting and hauling timber. The enterprise was burnt down in early 1914 and apparently was not rebuilt.⁴³

N. Bushnell, R.F. Butcher and Appleby and Burchill were listed at Pomona in the 1910s, possibly successive owners of the same mill.

The Richmond River Timber Company, which also had mills at South Brisbane and Imbil, operated at Pomona from around 1923 to 1940.⁴⁴ The Central Sawmilling Company was also listed from 1923 to 1936 and Ford Brothers were milling in the 1940s. O'Connors Mill in Hill Street, milling from the 1940s, was active after World War II and operated until 1960. It developed into a truss, frame and timber company. Frank O'Connor also had a mill at Cootharaba, a case mill in the railway yards and a mill where Page Furnishers now operate, possibly the site of his first Pomona operations. O'Connor had a Canadian bench operated by compressed air at Hill Street in the 1950s.⁴⁵

Cootharaba

The timber stands of the Noosa River, Kin Kin Creek area and Lake Cootharaba were known in the 1860s. Pettigrew records in 1864 that the ship with machinery intended for a sawmill at Noosa was driven ashore on Moreton Island.⁴⁶

The wealth and markets created by the Gympie Goldfield resulted in the formation of A.F. Luya and Company which ordered a sawmill plant for Elanda Point beside Lake Cootharaba in 1871; some was built by Walkers of Maryborough.⁴⁷ The advertisement for a manager in April 1872 indicates the time of the completion of the mill.⁴⁸

Luya and Company bought the steamer *Culgoa* in early 1873 to provide regular transport. The partnership was rearranged with James McGhie, Abraham Fleetwood Luya, Frederick George Goodchap and John Woodburn running the enterprise as McGhie, Luya and Company.⁴⁹

The boiler explosion for which the Cootharaba mill was infamous (although not the worst such explosion) occurred on 29 July 1873. Thomas Bartholomew was manager of the mills. The explosion resulted when the end of the boiler blew out, and apparently resulted from weakness of the boiler rather than carelessness.⁵⁰

The sawmill supported a small township with store and butcher shops. A 20 foot long Cornish boiler replaced the exploded one in late 1873. The whole enterprise including timber getters employed 100 men in 1874.⁵¹

McGhie, Luya quickly followed Pettigrew in building a tramway to bring logs to the mill from the west. It was horse operated, there being no necessity to use locomotives. Although the descriptions date from 1877, a fatal accident when a schoolboy jumped on a loaded trolley as it passed the school on his way home shows it was in operation by November 1875, although not necessarily to its full length.⁵²

The tramline was three miles long in 1877 and was not built for speed but to obviate the interruptions in wet weather when bullock teams could not bring in logs. The teams continued to snig loads cut out of the forest and haul them to the tramline. The logs were loaded, one per wagon, using skids and a winch on a trolley anchored to the sleepers. Two horses pulled two loaded trucks.

Construction was not easy with a raised section on logs laid for 349 yards in order to cross the swamp near the mill. This section was described as four years old in 1877. On solid ground the sleepers were laid at three feet centres with slots in them to take the wooden rails, of pender and iron bark, 4 x 2 inches, wedged into place. Curves were kept to a minimum 15 chain radius to avoid the need for iron rails and the embankments were flanked by drains and sown with couchgrass. The space between the rails was filled with gravel for the horses to walk on. At the Lake end, four tramlines ran from the yards down to the wharf for loading sawn timber into shallow draft vessels or pontoons.⁵³

The mill closed in about 1898. The directors of Moreton Sugar mill bought three miles of tramline in early 1898, which suggests that the wooden line was all or nearly all relaid in iron or steel. A section of such rail was found in 1971.⁵⁴

The history and remains have been extensively researched, and this detail is not repeated here.⁵⁵

This century several sawmills operated in the Cootharaba and Kin Kin area. Eltherington and Fuller were listed at Cootharaba in 1908. Ferguson and Company established a mill at Cootharaba in 1923.⁵⁶ The Cootharaba Timber Company, Cutmore Brothers and F.A. O'Connor were among the sawmillers.

Andrew Doyle, who later joined his brothers in the Mary Valley, had a mill north of Kin Kin in 1907.⁵⁷ Arthur Towns was milling at Kin Kin - apparently on the Wahpunga Range according to Pedley - from 1913. In the 1920s H.A. Miller and

J.S. Simpson, later Ireland and Russell, milled near Kin Kin.

Allan Stewart and Albert Davidson, of the Moran Group settlers, set up a pine mill about 1918, initially powered by internal combustion engine tractor, and Davis and Braddow and later F.A. Connor in the 1940s operated mills at Como.⁵⁸

Cooran

Sawmilling at Cooran continued for about 70 years. Albert Doyle was recorded at Cooran 1907-10, and it may be the same mill site that successively operated as Renshaw and Loseby (1910-13), George Renshaw (1914-26) and from 1927 Straker and Company. Logs came first by teams and by motor from 1934 when the Strakers bought a Ford V8 2-ton truck and built their own jinker. This small unit was inadequate, especially in braking power. Cliff and Arthur Morton were some of the early operators. Jack and Jim Collette continued to use bullock and horse teams hauling from the Kin Kin area.

Arthur Straker began work in the mill in 1930 when the mill had few orders because of the depression. The sawmill was steam powered, with circular saws and five-foot gate vertical frame saw. Even in the 1930s there were still logs too large for the equipment which had to be trimmed manually to fit the saws. At its peak the mill employed 20 including four bush cutters. The mill was electrified but eventually closed in the late 1960s.⁵⁹

Between Cooran and Gympie there were mills at Ironstone Creek and Coles Creek near Cooran, at Mount Tuckekoi, one beside the old Brisbane Road owned by Neilsen Brothers and Paddy Dwyer's case mill. At Traveston there was a mill on R.W. Kenman's property and Jack Martin operated at Tandur subsequently. R.N. Rasmussen milled at Woondum.⁶⁰

Endnotes

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3. Q 18 April 1883 p. 648, Q 10 May 1884 p. 725.
4. Q 13 June 1885 p. 936, 30 January 1886 p. 191.
5. R. Breton in *Peachester Pioneers, A Centenary History*, October 1985 Joy Hodgens Alison McNeilly and Helen Page, p. 3.
6. R. Breton in Hodgens et. al., pp. 15, 16.
7. Joanna Talberg ed., *The History of Beerwah State School 1888-1988*, p. 12.
8. WN 13/74 p. 10.
9. Company 53 of 1921, A/28529, QSA.
10. WN 3/49, 18/52.

11. WN 13/49, 47/70 p. 7.
12. Shirley Lahey, p. 8.
13. *Maleny 1878-1978*, pp. 19-20.
14. *Sunshine Coast Sunday magazine* 23 June 1996 p. 4.
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16. Stan Tutt, *By Many Campfires*, p. 104.
17. Colin Olsen in *Timber, Logger and Sawmiller* p. 20.
18. John Dargavel, pp. 87-8.
19. All information from Queensland Post Office Directory trades listings.
20. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, p. 21.
21. W. Pettigrew Diary entry at 11 March 1865, listed as memo Mooloolah Sep 18.
22. Batson and Coulson, p. 6.
23. John Dargavel, p. 88.
24. WN 134, 11/40, 29/42, 41/53, 37/61.
25. *Yandina 125 years 1871-1996*, p.5; Forestry Department File 1/3/7, copy M Kowald, DoE; Letter to editor from Richard Giles, *Noosa News* 31 March 1995 p.19.
26. Lindsey Wareham, pp. 46-51.
27. Lindsey Wareham, pp. 52-3.
28. *Yandina 125 years 1871-1996*, p. 6.
29. *Yandina 125 years 1871-1996*, pp. 5, 6.
30. *Gympie Times* 14 June 1996 p. 15.
31. *Yandina 125 years*, p. 6.
32. *Yandina 125 years*, p. 6.
33. Q 15 January 1881 p. 90.
34. Hessie Lindsell, p. 15.
35. Hessie Lindsell, p.15.
36. Ian Pedley, p. 248.
37. Edna Smith, p. 37; *Nambour Chronicle* 21 November 1913, 18 December 1914 p. 2; WN 399, 2/28.
38. *Gympie Times* 14 June 1996 p. 15; *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, pp. 14-5.
39. *Gympie Times* 3 May 1997 p. 3.
40. *Nambour Chronicle* 9 November 1956 p. 1.
41. *Gympie Times* 5 January, 6 & 14 December 1878, 11 March 1882; W.F. Morrison, Volume 2, unpagged.
42. Martin Hirsch in *Gympie Times* 24 September 1996 p. 19.
43. *Gympie Times* Christmas Issue 15 December 1911 p. 23 (with photos); *Nambour Chronicle* 30 January 1914 p.5.
44. Arch. and Building Journal of Qld Jan.1923 p.51.
45. Martin Hirsch in *Gympie Times* 28 May 1996 p. 12.
46. Pettigrew Diary 13 July 1864.
47. MC 9 December 1871 p. 2.
48. Q April 1872 p. 1; Pugh 1872 pp. 235-6 for description of area.
49. MC 11 January 1873 p. 2; *Gympie Times* 22 March 1873.
50. *Gympie Times* 30 July 1873; BC 1 August 1873; Inquest 73/153, JUS/N37, QSA.
51. *Gympie Times* 11 October 1873; MC 22 November 1873 p.2 quoting Brisbane Courier; *Gympie Times* 19 December 1874.
52. Q 18 November 1875 p.7.
53. BC 7 July 1877 p. 6, 18 July 1877 p. 4.
54. *Stack Talk* December 1971 pp. 117-8; *Light Railways* No.52 (Winter 1975) p. 19 and No.55 pp. 11-5 (Autumn 1976).
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56. *Historical Sketch of Gympie 1867-1926*, p. 110.
57. Ian Pedley, pp. 259-60; J.D. Dale, p.60.
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Gympie and the Mary Valley

This section provides an overview of sawmilling around Gympie, the upper Mary Valley and the Cooloola area.

The construction of the Mary Valley railway, opened to Kandanga in 1914 and Brooloo a year later greatly facilitated the exploitation of timber. Many sawmills followed. Only a few mills, like Doyles' at Upper Kandanga and south of Brooloo preceded the railway.

Near Gympie, Sandy Parr operated a sawmill opposite the Dagon Methodist Church; later Jack (Norm?) and Jack Ormes took it over (Ormes from 1934, Chapman 1939, then Dagon Sawmilling Company, B.E. Thatcher and John Harrigan in the 1940s). John Steele bought it in 1970 by which time it had changed from a case mill to cutting railway sleepers. In 1996 as Mary Valley Timbers owned by Wayne and Kaye Morris, it was one of the oldest mills still operating. It had more modern equipment in the bush - Stihl chainsaws and John Deere 548G grapple skidder to handle logs. The mill produces fencing, landscape sleepers and house frames.¹

Amamoor had four sawmills, the first built pre-World War I between Townsend's Crossing and the township. It was started by Ernie Jensen, later run by Bob Hawkins and about 1931 acquired and upgraded by John Doyle. Opposite it J. Lefroe had a small mill driven by vertical steam boiler, and Ernie Neisler had a one-bench mill outside the township. Hyne and Son acquired Neisler mill at Amamoor in expanding and eventually employing 17 men plus 22 in the bush, and mainly handled thinnings. As the volume of thinnings grew, Hyne and Son acquired four mills in the Mary Valley - Liston Andrew's mill near Kandanga, Wesley Lutton's mill on the road between Imbil railway station and Imbil Forest Station, Jim Ehrenberg's mill beside the Imbil Showgrounds, and Neisler's mill at Amamoor.²

Hyne concentrated work at Amamoor and Imbil but then built a single substantial complex at Melawondi, opened by Premier Bjelke-Petersen on 24 September 1976. The mill was equipped with a pair of 8 inch Firano twin bandsaws to enable each log to be cut in the most suitable way. Preservative treatment and drying kilns were part of the new complex, treating up to 800 logs each day.³

John Doyle, Kandanga

John Doyle began milling at Kandanga a decade before the railway was built. It was there by 1904 and may have been the first Doyle mill and the first in the area. The mill was on Kandanga Creek, near the Kandanga Creek school. John Doyle is commemorated in the naming of a drive near the school, not far from the sawmill shed which still stands close by the creek.

John Doyle was born at Condamine in 1861, followed the Western Australian gold rushes, droving and then pit sawing in Queensland before settling Kandanga in 1897. He built his mill with a 25 horsepower engine powered by Cornish boiler. Doyle used his own teams for log hauling. The mill had a vertical breaking down frame with two saws. The output was taken by dray to Traveston siding, travelling in pairs to be able to double up at the steep Mary River crossing. John Doyle stayed at Upper Kandanga until the late 1920s.

Bill Sterling married Alice Doyle, John Doyle's daughter. He took over the Upper Kandanga mill and purchased a 10 ton Caterpillar tractor to get logs from the steep ranges above Kandanga.⁴

After the railway opened, James Doyle bought a mill near the railway, a mill started by Charles Mitchell, Sid Stephens, Reg Rasmussen (the manager) and Steve Polkinghorne. Dakin Peberdy had the mill 1920-24 and sold it to James Doyle, although Post Office Directory trade lists indicate Meyer Brothers operating at Kandanga 1925 to 1939, and then Alfred G. Doyle from 1941.⁵

Andrew Doyle established at Bollier by 1911, a settlement east of Imbil and not to be served closely by the railway.

Imbil

The first mill at Imbil, on the eastern side of the railway yard, was the state mill, established in 1916 or 1917 using second hand machinery moved from elsewhere. By 1924 it was of declining value but continued in operate to 28 June 1929. Six cottages and later the mill machinery were sold.⁶

Oden Marsden and Christie Meyers established a large mill at Imbil which subsequently became Lutton and Meyers from around 1927 and J.W.

Lutton and Sons from about 1935. John Wesley Lutton came from Rockhampton to Imbil about 1920, and later bought a half share before buying out Meyers. The mill employed 20 men at its peak. Luttons joined Wilkinsons and Strakers in 1970 forming Northcoast Sawmills Pty Ltd. The machinery was getting out of date by the 1960s and the mill presumably closed in the 1970s.⁷

The Richmond River Timber Company operated at Imbil around 1923-40, Zwisler Brothers in the 1930s (before moving to Builyan) and postwar, H. Barsby and L.G. Ehrenberg.

Between Brooloo and the Gap, Andrew Doyle had a mill (apparently distinct from the one at Bollier) with Grogan operating a mill near the Gap. It is stated that Luttons later bought and modernised Doyle's mill. Thomas Rodwell's mill at Bollier and Andrew Jocusen's date from around 1913. Doherty also operated a mill near Brooloo.⁸ Listed at Brooloo after the railway were Jocusen and Grogan and from 1926, Walter Keate, William Allen and P.N. Sutton.

The railway was never extended south from Brooloo to Kenilworth as approved by parliament. Consequently the Kenilworth area depended on road transport to Eumundi. As early as 1872 timber was rafted down the Mary from near Kenilworth.⁹ The first sawmill was established in Kenilworth in 1910. F.W. Goeths or Goethe's sawmill at Mount Ubi was built in 1911. The opening was celebrated on May Day 1911 with an invitation picnic and speeches. It was known as the Coolabine Sawmills.¹⁰ W.G. Doyle had a mill at Kenilworth in the 1930s and 1940s. William Allen was listed from 1927 with Allen and Company at Mt Ubi from 1922. At Lower Kenilworth or Gheerulla, Stan Adams was listed from 1925 with J.W. Adams and Company at Mount Ubi from 1919.

Gympie

Gympie is geographically the focus of the timber industry in south east Queensland. There were hundreds of mills within a 100, perhaps even within a 50 kilometre radius.

There were many other operators in Gympie, especially this century, including John Doyle, Neisler Brothers on Jones Hill, Rasmussen and Walker on Stewart Terrace, the Crescent Road Timber Company, Gympie Timber Company in Chapple Street and T.J. Nolan on Ashfords Hill.

Ferguson and Co's Union mills in 1885 comprised 3 sheds covering 84 x 100 feet, a capacity of

14,000 super feet of pine daily, cranes, a large breaking down frame for logs, boarding frame, travelling bench and hand bench. The hardwood mill was behind the pine mill with its own steam engine from Walkers powered by two boilers, and breaking down frame with 10 saws. With planing and moulding machines, the enterprise kept 52 men in work, not counting the timber-getters and haulers.¹¹

There was a sawmill at the One Mile, Berrie Smyth and Company from 1881, trading from 1888 as the One-Mile Sawmill Company at Crescent Road.

The One-Mile Saw Mill Company Limited was registered on 17 January 1883 with seven local miners and businessmen each holding a thousand ten shilling shares, among them the miner William Smyth and Peter McGregor Berrie. The company continued in operation until in 1927 it was decided to wind up the company. By then the mill had been dismantled.¹²

Berrie, manager of the mill, was born in Scotland in 1843. He studied engineering and emigrated to New Zealand. After a year of mining he went to Victoria, spent five years erecting sawmills and in the 1870s came to Gympie, mining and timber getting until he erected the mill known as Berrie, Smyth and Company. The original mill was demolished in 1884 and a £7000 mill erected. Berrie also directed several mining companies.¹³ It appears that the One Mile Sawmill was located on Ashford's Hill.

Ferguson and Company relocated their mill from Mary Street to Nashville in 1917, a site convenient to the railway that provided the log supply. The mill has its own private siding until 1937 when it became the COR fuel siding.¹⁴

William Henderson had a sawmill on Calton Hill from around 1901 and about 1908 it was moved to a site near the One Mile School.¹⁵

Some of the many mills around Gympie include Elliott's Sawmills in Wise's Road, operating from the 1930s to the present, and Robertson Brothers Sawmill at 30 Old Wolvi Road, by then more than 40 years milling hardwood. The 1996 decision to extend woodchip export licences to sawmill waste led Graeme Robertson to negotiate to realise this potential new market.¹⁶

Another contemporary mill is S&S Timbers of 46 Chatsworth Road, largely a pine operation. Gympie is the site of the Woodworks Museum

with a relocated steam sawmill, operated at three monthly intervals and for special events.

Woodlands

The major enterprise of Woodland Ltd began with the purchase of Harold Kidd's Pie Creek mill in 1946 by Jim Wayper. He gradually modernised, assisted by Norm Schache, and went overseas to study the use of waste timber to make particle board. Together they designed and installed a modern plant to use thinnings and with local capital floated Woodland Limited. The company opened a plant in Sunshine Brisbane in 1971 and the Gympie plant in 1975. CSR acquired Woodland in 1981.¹⁷

Near Gympie

There were many areas where timber getting and sawmilling was the major industry.

Harry Coop erected the first mill in the Pie Creek area at Mooloo during World War I, initially powered by traction engine. Later Coop moved his mill to Widgee and then in 1934 set up a hardwood mill in Chapple Street, Gympie. Neisler Brothers in the 1920s had a mill beside what is now the recreation reserve (presumably Mooloo).¹⁸

Chapman and Sons (and later Ormes and Kidd and then Harold Kidd alone) milled at Pie Creek in the 1940s. George James (Jim) Wayper bought the original rundown Pie Creek Sawmill in 1946 and with Norm Schache modernised it. Wayper went overseas to study methods to use sawmill waste and Woodland Ltd was the result, having its beginning in the 1955 purchase of Harold Kidd's Pie Creek Mill (at the corner of Pie Creek Road and Mary Creek Road).¹⁹

Cedar and pine logs were harvested from the Eel Creek area last century but it was 1911 before H. McIntosh, O. Bonney and E. Blackburn of the Columbia Sawmill Company erected a sawmill on the northern-eastern end of the Dryfesdale estate. It had 30 horsepower boiler, twin Canadian bench and 4 foot 6 inch circular saw but no planing machine in 1911.²⁰

Around 1918, Meyers Brothers and James Campbell & Sons erected mills at Eel Creek, which took the name of Langshaw from the name of the Campbell Mill. Campbells mill was flanked by about seven houses for mill workers as well as huts for the single men. Campbell's mill eventually closed while Meyers mill was sold to

Cronins and by 1934 it was acquired by Raymond and Hossack but burned down about 1936.²¹

There was a steam powered sawmill at Mary's Creek around 1930, south of the Gympie-Glastonbury road, the logs hauled in by teams.²²

Glastonbury and Greendale

The Glastonbury Sawmill Company at Greendale, north of Glastonbury employed about 15 men. It was built in 1912, steam powered until 1962. It was then electrified but was burnt down in 1966. It was rebuilt in reinforced concrete and steel but closed finally in 1979.²³

The first mill at Glastonbury was erected by Paddy Green (who selected land there) and his son Austin. In 1922 he sold to Walker Brothers trading as Glastonbury Sawmilling Company, Richard W. Walker was described by his accountant as too honest to have made money during the war. By 1946 he was running out of local timber supplies and needed Forestry allocations.²⁴

Prongers took over in 1949 and later a Maryborough Syndicate bought the mill. The mill was steam operated with 40 horsepower boiler and an engine from one of the Gympie mines. There was a camp of 2000 servicemen not far from the mill. The new mill would appear to have been electrically operated from its construction but reportedly could not complete when Forestry introduced the quota system.²⁵ Alternatively the management was too extravagant, according to oral comments of people not directly involved.

From the 1940s Smith and Blane, and postwar Alfredson and Company operated a sawmill at Widgee.

North of Gympie

Percy Corbet of the Gympie Timber Company, run by Perry Corbet, bought a mill from Harry Coop and it still operates at North Deep Creek.²⁶ There were also mills at Curra, Glenwood, Gunalda, Jensen Brothers at Theebine in the 1940s. At Miva, postwar, Fairlie and Son of Maryborough owned a mill which was electrified in 1959 when power was extended to the area.²⁷

East of Gympie

There various mills operating east of Gympie. A case mill owned by George Lewis on Bacon Road, Cedar Pocket (also known as Ormesby) operated in the 1930s. Postwar, G.W. Hillcock

and Tompkins Brothers had mills at Wilson's Pocket. Eddie Kitchen had a mill at Ross Creek. R.A. (Alf) Salmon and George Hillcoat milled at the top of Wolvi Range.²⁸ The only mill remaining in 1979 east of Gympie was the Wolvi Timber Company, operating since September 1924, originally by George Lorensen and Herb Gilmour and in 1979 owned by Noel Lorensen.²⁹

As far back as 1878 Atkins and Durston of Tagigan Creek were seeking Maryborough investment to build 6 miles of tramline and an equal distance of road between Goomboorian and Tin Can Bay as a means of exploiting its timber.³⁰

Alec Hinds, who had been a pit sawyer, established the first sawmill in the Goomboorian area early in the 20th century. Petersen Brothers were listed at Killarney and Goomboorian 1927-1935 but Pedley refers to Albert Jolly establishing a mill at Tagigan, taken over in 1935 by Reg and Fred Meyers and moved to central Goomboorian. To the north, at Kia-Ora, there were a number of small operators at times, including G. (Moses) Richardson towards Neerdie.³¹

Tin Can Bay or Cooloola

William Pettigrew's Cooloola operations centred on a well-engineered wooden-railed tramway some nine miles long. It took logs to water for rafting to Maryborough. Its history captured the imagination more than any other local timber operation. The tramway was the first privately owned railway in Queensland, and its cheap construction was used by critics of the high capital costs of the government railway system to force a reduction in standards. The fact that Pettigrew's and other private tramways were never designed to perform the haulage task required of the government railways, was not mentioned by the critics.

Pettigrew was examining the timber resources of Cooloola in June 1865, a month before the first government railway opened, and concluded that six miles of railway, much across flat barren sandy country would enable the timber to be taken to Tin Can Bay.³²

Pettigrew returned to Cooloola in 1872 and began surveying the tramway route, planning a locomotive hauled line given the absence of feed. The locomotive was ordered from Walkers Limited. Named the *Mary Ann* (both partners, Pettigrew and Sim had daughters with that name), the locomotive made a test run on wooden rails down Bowen Street on 30 June 1873 and was immediately shipped to Tin Can Bay. William

Sim supervised the tramline construction, using spotted gum for the rails. The first ones were sawn at Maryborough and two miles completed by the end of July but after the *Mary Ann* arrived, the engine was used, when stationary, by power take-off, to drive a portable sawbench, thus sawing the sleepers and rails for the line it would traverse.³³

After three and a half miles were completed, an official opening and celebration picnic was held on 30 October with visitors taken to Tin Can Bay in the *Hercules*. The use of parbuckling to load logs was demonstrated and the guests travelled up and down the line. The engine was vertical boilered and apparently had a geared drive. The breaking of a cog, forcing the guests to walk some of the way back, was treated as of no consequence, just a flaw in casting. More distressing was an accident 18 days later when a log more than five feet diameter, about to be unloaded and rolled into water at the rafting ground, slipped and killed William Sim.³⁴

Work on the line stopped. Its gauge of 3 feet 3 inch, "made to suit the engine" according to Pettigrew. Only 3 3/4 miles instead of 7 miles had been constructed. The engine weighted about 5 tons and rails 4 1/2 by 3 inches and sleepers 7 feet long. As the rails bent under the weight of the engine, Pettigrew considered 6 x 3 inch rails would be better; he did not state how far apart the sleepers were. Only one minor bridge was required on the line.³⁵

Completing the line required solving the problem of crossing the sand ridge to give access to the lower Broutha Scrub. Pettigrew was unable in October and November 1875 to survey a way around the ridge, even with 4 chain radius curves. Having decided a rope operated line would be needed to cross the ridge, on 3 November he ordered a second locomotive plus a boiler (presumably to operate the winding engine). This solution required separate locomotives either side of the ridge.³⁶

Work then proceeded on the cuttings crossing the first ridge, before tackling the main ridge, which Pettigrew surveyed in March 1876. It crossed the main ridge at a height of 484 feet above sea level before descending 182 feet into what Pettigrew termed Thannae.³⁷

Pettigrew did not have the area unchallenged and Wilson Hart and Ramsay Brothers were also harvesting timber, hampered by the difficulty getting feed for animals.³⁸

The second locomotive was completed on 18 September 1876, named *Dundathu*, built to a similar design to *Mary Ann*. Pettigrew tried again to get a conventional line over the ridge and finally gave up on 20 November and accepted that a winding engine would be needed on top of the ridge.³⁹

A report in February 1877 declared the railway complete to the first scrub and the small saw mill - presumably worked by the locomotive - in working order. Ramsays were contemplating a line towards Noosa but it did not materialise.⁴⁰

In 1877 Pettigrew surveyed an extension from Coolooli Creek terminus ending west of the point at Shellbank but decided the jetty would be too expensive. The first test of the winding engine hauling up the 1 in 4 incline failed when the equipment broke. Steel rails were shipped for the incline section.⁴¹

In July 1878, Pettigrew completed the survey into the hollow, also known as the Pot Hole. By November the line was complete. A sawmill was located by the line to saw hardwood, mainly to replace worn out rails. The stationary engine on top of the ridge used chains to haul up the wagons up the ridge. It was arranged that a wagon was lowered down the other side at the same time as one was being raised to make use of gravity and minimise the energy required.⁴²

The complete line may have operated for less than 7 years as in January 1885 the Tin Can Bay line was reported to be out of use. Pine had been planted in the hope that it would regenerate. It apparently never operated again. In 1902 there was said to be remains of an old sawmill at the head of Tin Can Bay.⁴³

The remains of the tramline were visible in 1969. More detailed study of the ridge resulted in remains of the winding engine atop the ridge being located and removed to a museum.⁴⁴

Endnotes

1. Pedley, p.199, 253; **Timber, Logger & Sawmiller** p. 24.
2. Pedley, pp. 253-4.
3. Pedley, p. 254.
4. Pat Towner, pp.13, 33, 37, 60; Pedley p. 251; map opposite p. 208, PP 1904-05 Vol. 2.
5. Pedley, p. 251
6. Evidence C.H. Bromiley, PP 1917,3,1240 & 1252-3; report of visit of Minister for Lands 6-8 May 1930, copy M. Kowald, DoE; Annual Report Forestry Dept. 1931-32 p.28; PP 1933,2,418-9.
7. *Gympie Times* 14 June 1996 p.15.
8. Pedley, p. 252.
9. MC 28 December 1872; Hessie Lindsell, p. 59.
10. Report dated 13 May 1911, from *A Souvenir, Opening Day*, Kenilworth and District Museum, copy from Audienne Blythe, Yandina.
11. J.R. Thackeray, *Gympie and its District*, p. 19; detailed description in A.J. Ivimey, *The Gympie Mining Handbook*, Brisbane 1887 p121-3.
12. Company 159 Book 2, A/21387, QSA; *Historical Sketch of Gympie* p. 153 re p. 110.
13. WF Morrison, Volume 2, unpagged.
14. *Historical Sketch of Gympie* p. 110; Railway Department, General Appendix 1925, 1935; WN 35/37.
15. Photograph and caption, Coolooli Shire Library, Gympie, Local History Collection, Sawmills.
16. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller* p. 3; *Gympie Times* 2 November 1996 p. 1.
17. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, p. 9 (also undated Woodlands supplement to *Gympie Times* [1996]).
18. Ian Pedley, p. 257.
19. as 17.; Pedley, p. 254.
20. *Gympie Times* Christmas issue 15 December 1911.
21. Pedley, p. 158-60.
22. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, p. 6.
23. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, p. 5.
24. Letter Ronald Grant to Director of Forests, 20 Sep 1946, R82 Brooyar B Batch, Forestry File, extract held by M. Kowald, DoE.
25. *Rural Lifestyles*, May 1996 pp. 6-8.
26. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller* p. 10.
27. E.M. Carlson comp., *A Century of Settlement in the Miva District, 1859-1959* p.35.
28. Pedley, p. 260.
29. Pedley, p. 279, photo p. 223.
30. *Gympie Times* 11, 18 Sep 1878.
31. Pedley, p. 260.
32. William Pettigrew Diary, entry 29 June 1865.
33. MC 1, 5 July, 4 August 1873.
34. MC 1, 20 & 22 November 1873.
35. Pettigrew Diary 1874.
36. Pettigrew Diary 29 October-3 November 1875.
37. Pettigrew Diary 8-20 March 1876.
38. MC 16 May 1876.
39. MC 29 August, 19 September 1876; Pettigrew Diary 17 November-1 December 1876.
40. MC 20 February 1877.
41. Pettigrew Diary 25 July-12 October 1877.
42. Pettigrew Diary 21-23 July, 20-30 October 1878; MC 12 November 1878.
43. MC 8 January 1885; J.N. Devoy, *Yachting in Sandy Straights*, p. 19.
44. D.G. Bailey, "Wide Bay Safari", *Sunshine Express* April 1969 p. 21, July 1969 p.74-75, February 1981 p. 19; J.D. Kerr, "The Calooli Creek and Thanne Railway", *Queensland Heritage*, Vol.2 No.3 (Nov.1970) pp. 14-20.