

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: ROWE'S SAWMILL SITE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: off Mill Lane WOHLPOOER

STUDY NUMBER: 454

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 21 (& SECTION: no PARISH: PARISH OF WOHLPOOER
23?) section

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 389 D; VicRoads 55 D7; located on the south side of Mill Lane off the Henty Highway and at the head of Cattle Station Creek

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Heritage Inventory



Rowe's Sawmill Mill Lane, Woolpooer, canteen chimney

Image Date: 3/04/03

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the surviving structures including the canteen kitchen, the tramway and the fuel depot and 10,000 sq. of land sufficient to include all potential archaeological sites.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The sawmill site extended south from Mill Lane. A fuel depot building survives close to Mill Lane. It is gabled shed, elevated on high stumps and clad in corrugated iron. The remains of timber outbuildings, including a chicken-house used by a later occupant, survive nearby. The only other substantial structure is the chimney of the workers' canteen, located about .5km to the south-west of the fuel depot. About .4km to the south there is a large dam and the remains of a tramway. It seems that the sawmill was located between the fuel depot and the dam.

"Rowe's, Strachans and Fitzpatricks took huge quantities of logs to their mills in Hamilton and Dunkeld. Four million superfeet a year left the Victoria Range each year from 1954-1964" (Clabburn, 44).

HISTORY:

George Lewis purchased allotment 21 (no section) of the Parish of Woohpooer comprising about 321 acres in January 1888. The allotment was immediately south of a large State Forest reserve straddling Cattle Station Creek. George Lewis married Johanna Mackie in Hamilton in 1882 (PI, Reg. No. 4846). They had a daughter, Edith May born in the Cavendish district in 1888 (PI, Reg. No. 1663). Other people with the surname Lewis purchased adjacent blocks at different times along the western tributary of Cattle Station Creek. It is not known if the Lewis family conducted a saw mill on the site.

According to local tradition, the Rowe family had been sawmillers from the area east of the Grampians (Pers. Comm, Barber, 3/04/03). They were one of three main families felling saw logs from the Grampians in the early twentieth century: the Rowe's, the Strachans and the Fitzpatricks. The Strachans had a large mill in Ballarat Road Hamilton. The Fitzpatricks "moved into the Valley near the Darks in 1930 and had mills at four different sites" (Clabburn, 44).

Timber felling has been practised in the Grampians from the earliest times, at least for immediate use by locals. Timber shingles and palings were the first 'exported' product, as early as the late 1840s. Later, in the 1850s and 1860s, posts and rails were required for fencing with the shift away from shepherding sheep and the enclosure of country under the Land Selection Acts. In the 1870s, the expansion of the railways and the need for both sleepers and fuel created a new demand. Red gum blocks were made for the paving of main roads in Melbourne in the 1880s. The export of very large whole logs was limited by available transport and at first was by bullock dray. This and the need to move around in the forest from site to site, meant that saw mills were small and transient. "In 1872 Charles Lovell had the Victoria Saw Mill and in 1886, Charles James Field had a mill which employed 15 men in the [Victoria] Valley" (Clabburn, 42). The King family from Benalla, the Strahbogies, Dean's marsh and Fulham bought out Tom Dark's mill at Three Mile Bend and they set up other mills. The Templetons, Walters and Crawfords were other families associated with timber felling before the First World War.

The life in remote camps and settlements was lonely. Weather effected the opportunity to fell and work timber. The collection of honey was a parallel industry and saome men worked in both as well as holding down small selections. The introduction of powered machinery, first by steam and later by petrol and diesel, enabled the export of larger sawlogs to more substantial mills located in or near townships. The Rowe sawmills in Mill Lane and Hynes Road were transitional in that they were neither isolated nor urban.

As well as their main sawmill, the Rowe family held substantial acreage about 15kms to the north-east of this site. Some of the last land was purchased by C L Rowe during the Second World War in the Parish of Bepcha. This, as well as nearby state forest reserves, were used for getting timber. [According to the PI, there was a Rowe family: Charles and Kate or Catherine Sophia Rowe, nee Faris, with three children who

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lived in the Cavendish district in the later 1860s and early 1870s.]

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3 Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

3.4 Utilising natural resources

3.4.4 Making forests into a saleable resource

CONDITION:

High degree of archaeological potential.

INTEGRITY:

Almost all structures and works have been removed.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The site of Rowe's Sawmill is located on the south side of Mill Lane off the Henty Highway and at the head of Cattle Station Creek at Woolhpoer. There are few above ground remains of the Sawmill site, but a corrugated iron fuel depot building and the remains of timber outbuildings, including a chicken-house survive in Mill Lane. The only other substantial structure is the chimney of the workers' canteen, located about .5km to the south-west of the fuel depot. About .4km to the south there is a large dam and the remains of a tramway. It seems that the sawmill was located between the fuel depot and the dam. According to local tradition, the Rowe family, who had been sawmillers from the area east of the Grampians started the sawmill at this site in the early twentieth century. The site has high archaeological potential although most of the elements are in poor condition.

How is it significant?

Rowe's sawmill site is of archaeological and historical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire as a Heritage Inventory Site.

Why is it significant?

~~The site of the former Rowe's Sawmill site is of historical significance as a representative example of the now-passed saw millers' way of life. It is of archaeological significance for the evidence it may yield about that lifestyle.~~

COMPARISON:

0226 Englefield Sawmill Hut (and School Site (Former)), Coleraine-Balmoral Road, Balmoral

0323 Green Creek Road, Sawmill, Green Creek Road and Glenelg River Road, Victoria Valley

0314 Hynes Woolshed and Outbuildings, Hynes Road, Glenisla

0172 Timber Kiln and Sawmill Site, Station Street, Balmoral

ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN & MG

ASSESSMENT DATE:

10/03/2004

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Elise Claburn, ed.	Dunkeld and District, A Short History	1989	44

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Robert Barber

Personal Communication

2003