



The Timber Preservers' Association of Australia
Conserve the forest – Protect the wood

CONTACT

June 2018 Issue

... Vale Doug Howick ...

I am sad to advise that Doug Howick, recently passed away after a sudden short illness. A long time ago, a colleague told me that the timber industry is full of larger than life characters. Doug was just such a character and he will be greatly missed. On behalf of you all, I extend TPAA's condolences to Doug's wife Sigrid and the whole Howick family.

Doug's life was celebrated at a wake held last week and I have included Doug's obit below.

Charles Douglas Howick

1935-2018 (83 years)

The Doug Howick era in wood protection is over.

What an expansive and positive era it was.

He has provided a solid base for the next era.

By Jim Bowden and Ion Staunton

Charles Douglas Howick passed away in Melbourne on the 1st of June 2018 after a short illness. His loved and loving wife Sigrid was by his side.

Departing from his usual style of formality, he had stipulated there be no memorial service but a private cremation followed by a Wake when friends could gather and tell of their recollections. It wasn't formal, but it was proper — as he'd have expected.

Life started for Doug Howick at Twickenham, London, on April 9, 1935.

After his early education he joined the Merchant Navy serving as an radio operator with the Shaw Saville Line on the MV Romanic. His travels took him to many ports and eventually he chose to "go ashore" in Melbourne. Brighton, a bayside suburb, became his home for the rest of his 83 years.

His first step into wood protection was taken in 1961; he joined the CSIRO Division of Forest products in Melbourne as a Technical Officer and Experimental Scientist, retiring some 31 years later as Assistant to the Chief of the Division as a Senior Specialist.

His research focused on termite and other insect studies and the management of a variety of projects in wood protection, but also importantly, industry interactions, networking and technology transfer. His emphasis on these last three were the reasons he became one of the best known persons in the world of wood protection.

Doug's many positions on industry bodies included

national secretary of the J.W.Gottstein Trust(1984-87) and Secretary-Treasurer to the formation committee of the National Association of Forest Industries (1986-87).

Already making an impression and being noticed in CSIRO as someone with potential, in 1967 he was awarded one of the early Australian Churchill Fellowships, for a ten-month world study tour — "*An International Study of the incidence, distribution and economic significance of certain wood-destroying insects having the potential ability to establish in Australia*". For the most of 1968, he met and worked alongside most of the international gurus in that field in USA, UK, Europe and South and East Africa. He returned to his Division to find that many of those international experts had communicated commendatory remarks about his abilities to the CSIRO management. The Organisation listened to and accepted his recommendations to expand its research and experimental entomological endeavours.

Doug was author of more than 60 scientific papers on forest products entomology, wood technology and pest management as well as a further 50 reports, conference papers and presentations. He retired from CSIRO in 1992, aged 57. He was far too young, had too much knowledge, too many contacts and therefore involvement with so many organisations, to actually retire — so he didn't.

He was offered the position of the National Secretary of the Timber Preservers Association of Australia (TPAA) which he held for 20 years, and during that time he also served as the National Executive Director of the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association (AEPMA) for 10 years. His drive in both organisations saw an increase in membership and involvement with government and like-minded organisations — and he was honoured by both with Life Memberships. The deepening ties between the AEPMA

and the Federation of Asian and Oceania Pest Managers Associations (FAOPMA) led to Doug being given the title of Honorary Advisor to FAOPMA. Then he “retired”. He was only 71, he was still healthy and he wanted to continue being useful.

His Advisory role within FAOPMA, meant attending the conferences with Sigrid and, to fill in “spare” time, he edited and produced their bi-monthly Newsletter “PPM News”, and continuing his involvement with TPAA, did the same with the “CONTACT” newsletter.

For most of all this time, Doug was also a member of the timber industry service club: the Hoo Hoo Club. He became the Jurisdiction IV President, 1983-84, and also wore the mantle of Hoo Hoo Historian. He was the driver of the Hoo-Hoo International Convention in Melbourne in 1982 which attracted the biggest delegation of US and Canadian industry representatives ever assembled Down Under. He earned his Life membership there as well.

Then he did something for himself.

Doug had authored many scientific papers but he thought he might have something else to say — to write a book on the history of termite research in Australia. He phoned Ion Staunton and asked about his historical-flavoured *Preface: in the beginning*, in the book *Urban Pest Management in Australia*. After an overnight think, Doug phoned Ion again and asked if he would be his co-author. He felt that between them, the threads of scientific developments could be entwined with the threads of commercial stories.

Doug had a cavernous vault of meticulously recorded facts about anything pertaining to wood particularly termites including many hard copies — real paper scientific papers — in two steel cabinets beside his desk. Over 600 of these are listed in three Appendices. The book as planned, morphed into something bigger during the writing and the word “concatenated” from the Hoo Hoo influence was inserted into the title which was published in October 2017 as *Colonies in Collision: a concatenated chronicle of termites and termiteers in Australia 1788-2018*. (Doug really liked alliteration).

During the co-writing years they referred to it as “the CTB” (coffee table book) and, printed in Australia on good quality “paper from trees not eaten by termites” and weighing 1.5 kg, it will hold down any coffee table. It was favourably reviewed and buyers usually comment on how delightfully readable it is. It was Doug’s last big effort — apart from always being on-time or a day-early with the bi-monthly newsletters. Mr Dependable.

The Wake was a wonderful tribute to Doug, Sigrid and their family. Attendees from WA, SA, NT, QLD, NSW and Victoria spent a few hours reminiscing on Doug-stories rather than his achievements.

“I thought he would live forever; he was so helpful and an inspiration to me as a young timber technician.”

“I thought he was indestructible.”

“Sad news. A mate gone too soon.”

“Doug had the rare combination of being both a gentleman and a character. His knowledge of the industry was immense.”

“How dreadfully sad! That is one very important pillar of our industry gone that will not, cannot, be replaced.”

“Doug always seemed above mere mortality to me.”

“I am deeply saddened... Doug was an old friend of FAOPMA and his contributions to the industry are beyond what any words can describe” — Ms Huang Xiaoyun, President.

“Doug’s presence, integrity and humour are but three

of so many words that fit – and which he wore quite comfortably”.

Many speakers began with the words: “I first met Doug in...” That told us that meeting Doug Howick was a significant milestone in the life of so many.

“He was many things... all good, but I think his way with words and use of puns was endearing”.

An example: Doug wrote a column in his industry newsletters entitled “Howick-citing” in other words, Doug’s viewpoint. We think he’d appreciate Jim Bowden’s newly minted pun for this occasion: “Howick-traordinary.”

IRGWP meeting South Africa



The 49th meeting of the International Research Group on Wood Protection was held in Johannesburg between 29 April and 3 May. This was the first meeting to be held in Africa and was extremely well organized. Have a browse through the programme

[http://www.irg49.co.za/docs/IRG49 Programme IRGWP 18-60434 23042018.pdf](http://www.irg49.co.za/docs/IRG49_Programme_IRGWP_18-60434_23042018.pdf)

. . . . and let me know if there is anything there that might interest you. I (Jack N) found the plenary presentations interesting, and in particular the presentation by Dallin Brookes. My 'take home' message was that we, the wood protection industry, should reframe what we say when interacting with the outside world. Whether we like it or not, the public is frightened of chemicals. There is a general Chemophobia out there regardless of the fact that without chemicals the world would be a terrible place. Try going without paracetamol!

Anyway, Dallin's message was that we need to promote ourselves as an industry that is about forest sustainability. If we do our job correctly, we can reduce the pressure on our forests. If our product performs as we want, you don't need to cut down another tree to replace a failed product. Don't talk about wood preservation because that implies the use of chemicals. We need to talk about wood and forest protection.

Attending the IRGWP conference is hard work. There are four days of presentations with each lasting 20 – 30 minutes. You constantly scurry between rooms and there is a mountain of information to process. You have the papers and the abstracts to gauge a presentation but it is a lot of reading and some of the presentations that look great on paper are quite ordinary whilst others that are hard going on paper are really good.

Discussions over coffee or lunch are not to be underestimated either. A lot gets organised out of session.

All the time you are wheel spinning on how the information might impact on your world.

You can read the abstracts from all the papers on the IRGWP web site <http://www.irg-wp.com/> and if you are really keen, please contact me and I'll see what I can do.

... National Centre for Timber Design Life and Durability...

Professor Jeff Morrell from Oregon State University has been appointed to be the leader of the new National Centre for Timber Design Life and Durability. Jeff is to start in his new position towards the end of September and in preparation, Jeff conducted workshops in each of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Attendance was a little light on, but Jeff felt that he got a reasonable grasp of the issues facing the timber protection industry in Australia.

... Web page stats...

The following numbers are for the last month (the last 30 days). I am still new at using Google Analytics and all comments are welcome.

Total number of users: 821

Number of sessions: 883

Number of sessions per user: 1.08

Page views: 1250

Pages per session: 1.42

Country

Australia: 703 or 85.63%

New Zealand: 25 or 3.05%

France: 19 or 2.31%

USA: 19 or 2.31%

Nigeria: 6 or 0.73%

China: 4 or 0.49%

UK: 4 or 0.49%

India: 4 or 0.49%

Malaysia: 4 or 0.49%

Hong Kong 3 or 0.37%

Device

Desk top: 56.1%

Mobile: 36.9%

Tablet: 7%

Active Users

Monthly 3,600

Weekly: 794

Daily: 113

Page views

FAQ: 618

Timber treatment: 157

Home page: 56

Treatment plants: 40

Contact: 21

Index: 19

Allied Timber Products P/L: 15

Publications: 14

Boral Timber Nowra: 10

Hurford Hardwood Kyogle: 8

...Moveres & Shakers...

Mark Fortune is the lucky (??) one!**City of Residence:**

Christchurch NZ

Inhabitants at my residence: My wife (Clare), of us have had a long eldest son (Benjamin), association and have youngest son (Harrison) collectively been through and our cat (Lexi) – an old puss now. some very interesting times together. “The timber preservation journey”.

Start date and current position

TimTechChem International Ltd:

I started in August 2013 as the GM Sales and Services. Prior to this we were known as TimTech Chemicals Ltd. We started the whole shebang off in 2001. What a ride!

What I like best about working for

TimTechChem

International Ltd: The

with I also enjoy the immensely interesting challenges we have to constantly work through along with the new technologies / chemistry being developed.

Best job: Would have to say is my current role.

Worst job: Hospital medical instrument sales rep. I lasted 1 day!

Favourite place to live: All things being equal, I would

love to live in Central Otago – South Island NZ

Motto or Personal Mantra:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you – “the golden rule”

I’m happiest when:

spending quality time with my wife, followed closely by clicking off a few km’s on the road bike. The km’s aren’t as numerous as when I was young and in my prime!

What I fear most: Not really fearful at all. Blessed I would say here.

I’m proudest of: My wife

(especially for her putting up with me), our three kids and two grand kids.

Favourite sports or

pastimes: Have a few. Fly fishing (when I get time), road cycling (exercise and time out), diecast model collecting – esp. WW 2 aircraft.

The Top 3 Highlights of

my Life: Getting to 59 yr.’s young, considering some of my youthful experiences, the amazing journey of our marriage and everything it has brought to us (kids included), attending our sons graduation at Canterbury University. Benjamin achieved First Class Honours in Engineering and is now doing his PHD in robotics. Got his brains from Clare.

People would be surprised to know: In my younger days I was not too bad a competitive road cyclist – crashes and all.

If I could do it all over again, I would: have bought several acres of land in Queens Town 30 – 40 years ago. An absolute gold mine now.

Favourite Memory: Family holidays 35 – 40 years ago at one of the South Island high country lakes. Just so much fun. Fishing, shooting, rowing. Family holidays at their best

Pet peeves: The PC world that has gone totally mad!

Favourite song, movie, book, or comedian:

Movie: Raiders Of The Lost Ark

Book: The Bible

Comedian: The Goons

Song: Burn slowly the candle of life by the Moody Blues

Best Vacation: A visit to Aitutaki Cook Islands. So amazingly beautiful

Favourite Vehicle: Call me old school but I would have to say an E type Jaguar soft top, followed very closely by an MGB GT Roadster or MGB hard top

Before I die, I would like
to: Fly as a back seat
passenger in either a P51D
Mustang or a Spitfire.

...Final Note...

I would like to put on record
my thanks and appreciation
for all the help and support
that Doug has provided me
over the last couple of
years. He will be missed!