
'WHEN THE TIMBER CUT OUT'

Archaeological Aspects of Timber Extraction Procedures and Shipbuilding in the Murramarang District, New South Wales.

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The archaeological remains of two small coastal sawmills that operated between 1892 and 1922 are located between Ulladulla and Batemans Bay on the South Coast of NSW. Bawley Point Mill was situated at Bawley Point and Kioloa Mill on O'Hara Head. A unique feature of the mills was their immediate location on the rocky headland to make use of marine transportation. Two 4 feet gauge wooden tramways serviced the mills using horse drawn trolleys. Loading areas were fed by bullocks snigging the logs along rough tracks. Several bridges were constructed for the tramway across lakes and creeks while other engineering features included Zig-Zags, earthworks, cuttings, drains and bridge approaches.

No evidence of the rolling stock, bogies, brakes, chain etc could be located in the area nor could the gauge of the tramway be established. Most of the machinery and rolling stock had been dumped in the Marine Environment when the mills ceased operation in 1922 and 1926. Surveys were taken of the artefacts on the sea bed and the measurement obtained allowed a reconstruction the tramway to be made and its operating procedures to be demonstrated.

Jetties existed on the foreshore however, it was established from concrete blocks on the sea bed that once held buoys, large admiralty anchors, chains and winching equipment, that the ships did not tie alongside but loaded the timber on a pulley system. An endless cable ran from shore to the vessel, the timber was attached by sling and hauled through the water to the ship. No evidence could be found of the steam boilers that powered the mill in the terrestrial environment. A survey of the seabed off O'Hara Head revealed the remains of a boiler and many items of milling equipment. The boiler was identified as an Under Fired Multi Tubular or Colonial Boiler that corresponded to the historical record of the mill. It was evident from the remains that an explosion had occurred destroying the boiler subsequently forcing the closure of the mill.

At Bawley Point Mill a timber vessel the *SS Douglas Mawson* was built and launched. Construction methods and remains of the slipways were recorded. Trees cut for crooks, frames and keelson for the building of the vessel were located and identified in the surrounding forest. A marine survey of the shipyard was undertaken.

Within the archaeological evidence gleaned from the Marine Environment much of the milling, transportation, tramway, docking and loading procedures and shipbuilding methods would not have been possible to demonstrate.

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