

CHAPTER 6

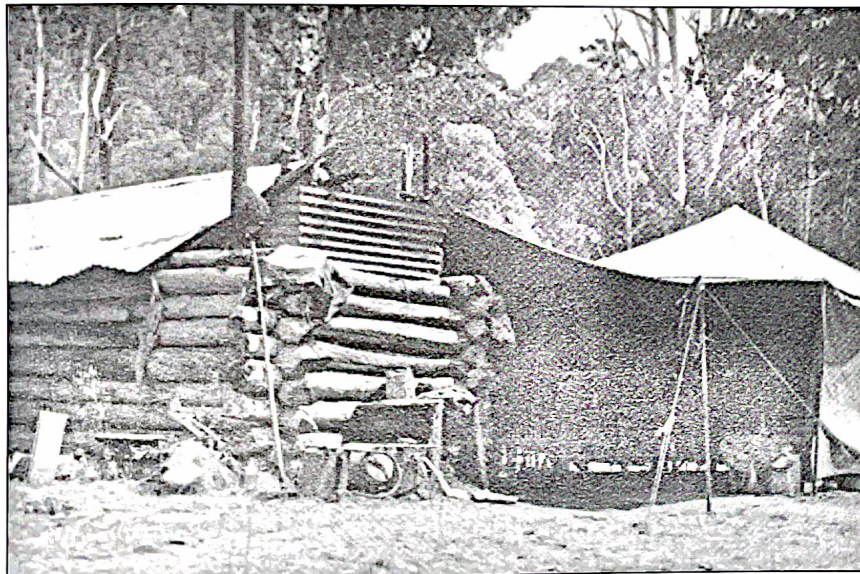
LOGGING THE HOWQUA AND UPPER JAMIESON

In 1949, attention was turning from the stands of timber in the Delatite River watershed to the potential of the Upper Howqua. A road had been previously constructed as far as King Saddle by the engineer's branch of the Forests Commission of Victoria (FCV) and became known as the Circuit Road.

In the spring of 1949, Forester's Joe Morley and Peter Britton led a party to expand the road and track network. The party was comprised of four FCV employees and assessors complete with an 'unreliable' International TD18 bulldozer, Blitz truck and a Land Rover. Later the 'Inter' was replaced with a 'Cat' D7c. A rough 'Jeep' track was constructed following existing bridle tracks from King Saddle, over Mt Stirling and the Monument down into the Howqua watershed under the Bindaree Falls to cross the Howqua near the existing Bindaree Hut. The last section down to the river was tricky to construct, so Joe Morley and Ian Hibbins carried out a reconnaissance beforehand on foot.



The first 'Blitz' to cross the Upper Howqua at Bindaree. Forest Commission timber assessor group, led by Joe Morley January 1950



Bindaree Hut and assessors camp 1950

They hit the river downstream of Bindaree Hut where 'we stayed the night at the hut and it was full of rats', Joe has written. The first assessor's camp in that area was established at 'The Springs', North of Bindaree near Stanley's Creek.

During 1949-50 three parties of assessors camped at Bindaree and worked down to the West of Ritchie's Hut. Another camp was established at the foot of Howitt Spur. The camps were serviced by a team of horses supplied by the Lovicks and Fred Fry.

To discover where the best timber was located, an exhausting technique of 'stripping' was used. This required walking the various stands of Timber in a grid pattern. The most common species

were Alpine Ash (*Woollybutt* or *E. delegatensis*), Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*), Mountain Grey Gum/White Gum (*E. cypellocarpa*), Blue Gum (*E. globulus subsp. bicostata*) and Narrow leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*). Manna Gum is found mainly along watercourses and Mountain Grey Gum is the most widely spread of the White Gums.

Howqua Hills Hut owner Kingsley Mills recalls that as a university student he obtained summer work with the timber assessors.



**Snow in the assessor's camp at the Springs
Circa 1949 Photo: Joe Morley**