

# Welcome to the Stoodley Plantation Forest Walk.

## *A visitor's guide*



The walk focuses attention on some interesting remnants of the old plantings and shows how an area of intensive wood production can be used for a pleasant recreational experience. It takes between three quarters of an hour to an hour to complete. It starts and ends at the carpark. Please follow the signs. Points of interest are numbered and correspond with the numbers in this brochure.

**Stop 1.** *Pinus Radiata*, or radiata pine - grows on both sides of the track and were planted in 1981 following the harvesting of trees planted in 1939. By a process of pruning and thinning, these trees are being managed to produce large knot-free butt logs. Pruning is done by hand. This forest will again be harvested in approximately 2006 at which time it will yield high quality veneer and sawn timber.

**Stop 2.** *Eucalyptus globulus* - or Tasmanian blue gum - was also planted in 1939. The trees are now about 45 metres high. It is

generally believed that this is the oldest blue gum plantation in the State. Note the characteristic strips of bark and the great height before the first branches appear. The small, exotic plant in the understory which is between one and two metres high, is *robinia*, a member of the legume family. It was planted here to improve the soil's nitrogen fixing ability. It is useful to compare this plantation with natural forest of *Eucalyptus obliqua* (stringy bark) and *Eucalyptus amygdalina* (peppermint) growing on the hill in front of you. The spacing of trees in this natural forest is irregular and the rate of growth is much slower than the trees you see in this plantation.

**Stop 3.** This is a section of natural forest. The main species growing here are *Eucalyptus obliqua* (stringy bark) and *Eucalyptus amygdalina* (peppermint). This area has been harvested over a number of years.

**Stop 4.** *Pinus radiata* - this small patch contains some remnants of the original 1939 plantation and contains some very tall trees. In 1990 the tallest tree was found to be almost 58 metres tall with a diameter of more than 80 centimetres. This is, perhaps, the tallest radiata pine in Tasmania.

**Stop 5.** The path now crosses a compartment of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*) planted in 1981. Compare the tree heights with the radiata pine plantings of the same age. There are some remnants of coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) trees mixed in with the Douglas firs.

**Stop 6.** This is a stand of *Pinus nigra* (Corsican pine) planted in 1939. This can be distinguished from radiata pine by the colour of its leaves and the fact that its leaves are in bundles of two rather than the three in radiata pine.

**Stop 7.** This coastal redwood tree is a native of the west coast of North America. It is closely related to the giant redwood (*Sequoia gigantea*).

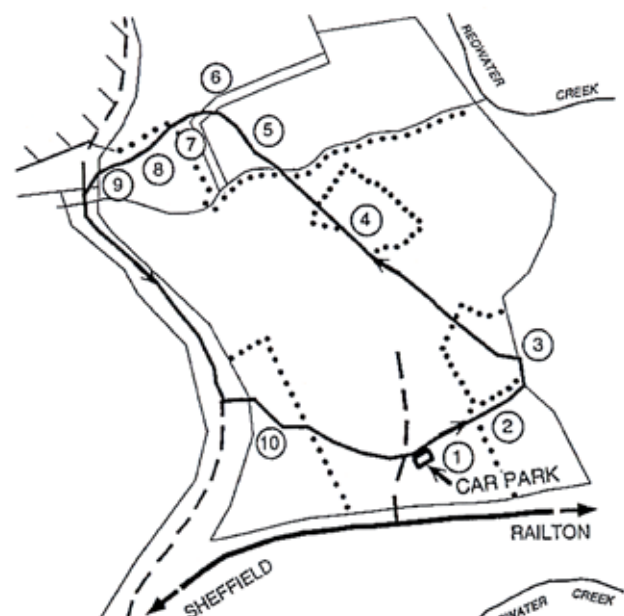
**Stop 8.** On your left is a row of western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*). These were planted in 1939 and are native to North America.

**Stop 9.** The forest here is European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) which has light green leaves during summer and a provides a wonderful autumn display of golden leaves during May. These trees are the same age as the tall pines you saw at Stop 4. The track leads on to a minor road which follows the line of the old railway line from Railton to Sheffield. At one time there was a station at Stoodley. The last trains ran in 1957.

**Stop 10.** A forest of Douglas fir planted in 1939. Note the difference between the dense, unthinned sections and the more open parts which have been thinned. Some old stumps in the thinned section have been kept alive by roots connected to living trees. Some of the timber here was supplied to shipwrights who were restoring ships for the 1988 Tall Ships race. A short walk from here returns you to the carpark.

### **A brief history of the plantation**

The Stoodley Plantation area has much to offer in the way of history. The area was originally surveyed during the 1850s and sawmilling soon followed. One of the early sawmills was operated by James Cables in 1854 on the nearby Red Water



Creek. Timber was carted by road to Ballahoo Creek near Latrobe on the Mersey River from where it was shipped to markets. Further downstream of Red Water Creek the Winter family developed a water-powered sawmill in the 1880s - see the mural on the northern face of the Church of England Hall in Railton, near the Railton State School.

The township of Stoodley, including the school, once stood on the Sheffield Kimberley Road south of the plantation.

The Railton Roland via Sheffield railway line, which passes through the plantation, was opened on 7 November 1914. It closed on 5 November 1957. The Stoodley railway station was situated near the intersection of the old railway embankment and the road to Sunnyside, east of the Forestry Commission's ranger's cottage.

The original wooden water trough on the Sheffield side of the plantation was built in the early 1900s on the only flat ground on the long pull up from Lowes Bridge at the bottom of the hill.

This trough was a regular stopping place for horses and their riders. Traction engines would also stop here to top up their boilers. The waylay in front of the water trough offers a stopping place for motorists and provides a very pleasant view of the surrounding plantations.

Perhaps one of the most interesting constructions in the area is Dick Lowe's Bridge. This is hidden away under several metres of built up road and is to be found in the bend on the Railton side of the plantation. The bridge was originally built in 1877, further works being carried out during the early 1900s and in 1920. Although this bridge is small, it features a fine bluestone archway. The weir upstream and the pipeline passing under the arch bridge was a former water supply for Railton.

Prior to the establishment of this plantation, the greater part of the area was so badly infested with blackberry, bracken and rabbits that it was regarded as a serious menace to neighbouring farms. Concerns were passed onto the State Government who eventually bought the land, cleared it and converted it to plantation forest. The first plantings were made in 1938. The principal species planted was radiata pine however, a number of other species were planted on an experimental basis. Much of the original plantation has now been harvested and a second crop planted. This crop of radiata pine is being managed to produce high quality sawlogs.

## How to get there

Stoodley is on the Sheffield Road between Railton (5.5 kilometres) and Sheffield (5 kilometres). The turn-off to the carpark where the walk starts is on the north west side of the road near a stand of blue gums. It is a right hand turn when travelling from Railton, about 600 metres past the Stoodley Road turn off. Follow the signs.

## Finally...

- Take all rubbish home with you
- Keep vehicles to formed roads and carparks; and
- Protect all flora and fauna.

For further information contact the District Forester, Forestry Commission, Stoney Rise, Tugrah Road, Devonport - phone 6424 8388.

This walk is a joint venture between The Tasmanian Arboretum, Inc. and the Forestry Commission, Tasmania

This brochure has been retyped for Railton and Districts Development Association inc.

