

The Timbertop Memorial Grove of Significant Trees

Planted 23-25th May 2024 – Five *Wollemia nobilis*, Four *Nothofagus cunninghamii* and Three *Quercus canariensis*

In remembrance of Graeme Vanner (1960) and Tim Collins

The finished site ready to hand over to Timbertop School maintenance staff. The tree seedlings were carefully planted to retain water then double tree-guarded against larger animals (cattle and deer) and with an inner circle against rabbits. Each of the twelve seedlings has its own gravity-fed water supply from the 1000 litre IBC tank near the crest of the hill. A tap controls the volume of water for each plant when the master tap at the tank is turned on for a short period.





The three Significant Tree species were donated by Clive Blazey (TT 1959) of Diggers Garden Club and were chosen for their backstories that may excite an interest in botany in 14-15 year-old students who regularly complete their cross-country runs nearby.

The Wollemi was known from the fossil record but only discovered in 1994 when Parks Ranger David Noble abseiled down a deep canyon in the rough mountainous ranges NW of Sydney. This highlights the fact that anyone can still discover a new species – perhaps a Timbertop student?

The Nothofagus tells the Gondwana story since it is found living in South America's Patagonia, Tasmania and parts of Victoria as well as in the fossil record in Antarctica from a time when these continents were joined together. The Quercus oak was chosen for its attributes – usefulness, hardiness, strength, longevity and its visual appeal – plus its fire-resistance for the other species.

The twelve selected trees and their design layout resulted from the discussions over the previous twelve months with tree aficionados Elizabeth Gilfillan, John Hawker and Clive Blazey. Their help and expertise is greatly appreciated.



Son Peter (TT 1990) was well able to scale the steep slope with spray-can in hand to mark the agreed layout ...



... and identify one possible site for the memorial plaque and information board that will explain the reasons behind the choice of the tree species.

The school's post-hole auger, with Farm Manager Judd at the helm, made short work of digging out the marked area for each tree – 800mm in diameter by 600 deep – to give the best chance of tree survival through optimum root establishment.



The centre of each site was 'turkey-nested' so that water could be concentrated in the small area of the roots in the young seedlings – but could still drain down such that the roots do not become water-logged.

Then an inner tree guard of rabbit netting was erected as well as an outer ring 1760mm high to prevent damage by cattle and deer. A *Quercus canariensis* seedling in place.

Irrigation was then installed in trenches with a hired trencher driven by Steve. Not an easy job on this slope as the heavy trencher had a mind of its own!



Working out the pipes and fittings that are required is always an interesting exercise!





A large 1¼" poly pipe leads to smaller 19mm then 13mm pipes before terminating with a tap for each tree



A crucial test of the rate of water flow being conducted with onlookers Este Collins (mother of Tim Collins) and Head of Timbertop Ross Hopkins who has been an enthusiastic supporter of the project.



Steve, David and Russell relax with visitors Anna and Este Collins and Timbertop's Ross Hopkins with the job now well on the way to completion.



Right: The Three Musketeers, Steve Finlay, David Angliss and Russell Luckock completed the work in three days in May 2024.

Timeline ... arriving for the start of the 1st day with a car-roof-load of poly pipe, picks, shovels, crowbars ... then the School's self-propelled auger and Steve battling a hired motorised trencher ...

... to near the end of the 3rd and final day ... a visit by two Timbertop Assistants, Gwen and Paula to check on our progress provided the excuse for a damper and marmalade lunch!





The view from the top of the hill with Mt Timbertop behind Brad Bolden, the Second-in-charge at Timbertop (3rd from left).

Care was taken to ensure that the canariensis Oak (*Quercus*), maturing at 30metres+ high, was planted far enough down the slope behind Brad to not block the view of Mt Timbertop from this popular recreational spot in 100 years' time!

Russell Luckock
31/05/2024