Timber was always important in the district. The buildings and fences put up by Stephen must have used local timber, but we have no details, except for the brief mention of ‘seventy to eighty thousand [super?] feet sawed Timber’ when the property was offered for sale in 1838 (see Chapter 2). A substantial timber industry did not start until the first mill at Kioloa, around 1884.

A speculative link with the earlier days might be the name ‘Logpaddock’ for the headland south of Bawley Point now called ‘Juwin’. My father always used the earlier name, often abbreviated to ‘Log’. There was no sign of early structures there in the 1920s. Perhaps it was at least a local dumping ground for logs cleared from Stephen’s, and more particularly Morris’, grants in the first decades of occupation.

Cedar was the earliest timber exploited in the Illawarra district, but it did not extend further south than Ulladulla. I have not heard of any having been cut in the Bawley Point–Kioloa–Termeil area.

The earliest record of a ‘mill’ in this area is of a hand-powered pit-sawmill owned by Woons (or Woon). Neil Evans claimed it started in 1858, and was on Portion 9, about one kilometre west of Merry Beach. This date seems too early. A map of Kioloa shows land leased to Soulby and Woon in 1882 ‘for a sawmill’;¹ the land was on O’Hara Head, south of the most recent sawmill site.

¹ Archives Office Map No. 3258.
In 1883, the *Town and Country Journal* claimed the timber trade was almost the sole industry in the Batemans Bay and Clyde River district, with 13 mills operating and another three being built.\(^2\) They provided employment for 250–300 families.

The previous issue of the *Journal* mentioned a mill at Redhead (now Bendalong), which was later moved (around 1884) to Kioloa to become the first mill in the district. Their description of the Redhead mill is interesting, both for the mill itself and for the size of township it supported:

> A small township recently sprang up at Redhead, where four and a half years ago the firm of Goodlet and Smith established a sawmill. The mill manager is Wm Pearson, and 30 men are employed. The mill has a 25 horse-power engine, breaking-down frame, 3 circular [saw] benches, and a shingling machine … There were 52 children enrolled at the school.

Goodlet and Smith continued to own and operate the mill, with Pearson as first manager, after its move to Kioloa. It was set up near the present boat ramp, at the south end of Kioloa beach, but is reported to have been slightly further inland than its successor. The millhands lived close to the mill (see Chapter 5).

This first mill ceased operation after a boiler tube burst in 1893. The decision not to repair it at the time was probably influenced by the economic depression, which severely affected the timber industry. After letting the mill lie idle for seven years, Goodlet and Smith ‘disposed of all the buildings, timber carriages and other fixings locally’, then shipped most of the mill machinery to Sydney.\(^3\) Curiously, the ship used for this was named *Willinga*, presumably after the lake or settlement of the same name near Bawley Point.

The firm Goodlet & Smith was established in Sydney in 1856. They dealt in timber, galvanised iron, joinery, mouldings, doors, pottery, and plate, sheet and ornamental glass. Their head office was at 493 George St, Sydney, and they had two substantial buildings in Pyrmont. In addition to the Kioloa mill, they had one at Coolongolook, between Bulahdelah and Taree, and mills in Sydney at Pyrmont and Redfern. John Hay Goodlet, a founder of the firm, had come from Scotland in 1856, via Melbourne, where he met Smith.\(^4\) In Sydney, Goodlet was very active in public life: builder and founder of the Queen Victoria Hospital Homes at Thirrmere, a director of Australian Providence Society, the Benevolent Society and Sydney Hospital, a founder of NSW YMCA and of Presbyterian Ladies College.

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\(^2\) *Town and Country Journal*, 3 February 1883.
\(^3\) *Ulladulla and Milton Times*, 26 May 1900.
\(^4\) McClelland, J. *A History of Parramatta’s Pioneers*, Pioneer Productions, Sydney, 1985, pp. 65, 67. (Page 67 has a portrait of Goodlet; the original is in the Ashfield Presbyterian Church. Information from Chris Leslie Woods, who wrote this chapter of the book.)
Figure 13: McKenzie’s sawmill, Kioloa, probably before the 1916 fire.  
Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

Although Goodlet and Smith has been taken over, there is still a vestige of the original firm on one of its original sites, as G. and S. Brick and Pavers Supply, Granville.

It was not till 1912 that milling resumed at Kioloa, with a new mill owned by Hepburn McKenzie. It was described at the time as the largest sawmill in the southern hemisphere, and was capable of cutting up to 100,000 super feet of timber each week.5 It was destroyed by fire around 1916, but rebuilt soon after and operated until the buildings were destroyed by another fire around 1928. Operation in this period was probably not continuous or full-time. The mill closed due to log shortage in 1918, and for unspecified reasons in 1922.6 The mill was closed at the time of the 1928 fire. The machinery was then moved to Coramba, near Coffs Harbour, where it operated for another 30 years. George Moore, who had been engine driver/fireman at the mill for some years but had left before the fire, was brought back to move the machinery.

Lucy King mentions that a large boiler was purchased for the mill at Kioloa from the old gold mine at Yalwal, near Nowra, and was hauled to Kioloa by two bullock teams.7 No date is given, but the boiler was probably for McKenzie’s mill.

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5 Ulladulla and Milton Times, 17 October 1914.
6 References prepared by mill manager at Kioloa for Robert Moore, dated 30 March 1918 and 5 May 1922.
In the 1920s, the Kioloa mill employed 72 men: mill hands, log fallers, bullockies, teamsters, blacksmiths, line and truck maintenance men. There were 19 bullock teams and 42 horses, and the mill cut around 5,000 super feet (11.6 cubic metres) of timber a day.8

Figure 14: McKenzie’s sawmill, Kioloa, c. 1920, with ship moored for loading.
Source: The Edith and Joy London Foundation of The Australian National University.

The mill at Bawley Point was owned initially by Francis Harrington (‘Frank’) Guy (1863–1931). The Guy family, Francis I, his wife and seven children, emigrated from England in 1841. Their son Francis II (1837–1910) was a pioneer of milling, mining and shipbuilding at Batemans Bay.9 Francis II had two sons, George Thomas and Francis Harrington Guy (Francis III, known as ‘Frank’). It was Francis III who owned the Bawley Point mill and the Willinga property (see Chapter 7). His brother George was also involved in South Coast sawmilling; he is said to have started the mill at Pebbly Beach, and his six children were born at Batemans Bay. One of these (Francis IV, 1885–1947) also lived for a time at Pebbly Beach, where his two children were born.10

8 Nulladolla, Milton/Ulladulla and District Historical Society, 1988, p. 32.
10 Information on the Guy family kindly supplied by Mrs Natalie Guy, Sydney.
The mill area at Bawley Point was surveyed on 7 October 1891 by Fred Arnheim. The survey plan shows a ‘saw mill in course of erection’, and ‘W B [weatherboard] Cottages in course of Const[ruction]’ on 10 blocks each 20 metres wide, west of the mill. The most easterly of these cottages later became my first home. The same plan carries the curious note ‘permanent fresh water in rock holes’. I hope this did not lead anyone astray; fresh water does seep into the rock holes, but rarely at a useful rate. This plan has the name written ‘Ball-y Point’, presumably to stress the pronunciation (see Chapter 3).

From the information in this survey plan, we can assume Bawley Point mill started in late 1891, or perhaps early the following year. It operated with at least one change of ownership until destroyed by fire in April 1922. A report of the fire reads as follows:

Word was received on Friday last that Bawley Point mill was burnt down, reports the Milton ‘Times’. The fire was discovered by Mr. Robt. Allan, son of the manager, Mr. J. Allan, who happened to be in Sydney at the time. When discovered at 3 a.m. the mill was well alight. All hands were quickly on the scene but nothing could be done. The mill was owned by Messrs. A. and E. Ellis Ltd., and was employing 13 hands in the mill, apart from the men engaged in hauling and timbergetting, about 30 in all. Owing to the slackness in the timber industry however, we understand that for some time the mill had been working nothing like its full capacity. It had only resumed operating on Monday last after the Easter holidays.

The Ellises probably took over the mill before 1913, when building of their ship Douglas Mawson started (see Chapter 6), but it might have been as late as 1920: the Lands Department Plan referred to above carries the overruled inscription ‘Sp Lse 21.1 Febry 2nd A & E Ellis Ltd for “Sawmill” from 1st Sept ’20 to 31st Dec ’27 Granted Gaz 7 April 22’.

This mill was kept going with difficulty during the 1890s depression. The main building was completely destroyed by fire in March 1894. The coroner found ‘that the premises were feloniously and wilfully set on fire by some person or persons unknown’. The loss was estimated to be between £75 and £100. The mill worked only part-time during most of 1895–96. There was a brief closure around May 1896, followed by a few months shutdown after another fire on 30 August 1897. In this case the coroner was not able to say if the fire was accidental, or deliberately lit. Damage was estimated as £400.

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11 Sketch Plan of Portion S. L. 91.4 Milton, Lands Department, Sydney, Ref. 91.8925.
12 Nowra Leader, 6 May 1922.
13 Coroner’s Report, kindly provided by A. McAndrew.
14 Ulladulla and Milton Times, 4 September 1897. (Gives an account of the inquest.)
The two partners in A. & E. Ellis were brothers, Alfred and Edwin. Sid Ellis, son of Alfred, was also in the business in later years. He and his family often came to stay at Bawley Point guest house in the 1920s and early 1930s. The Ellis family were in the timber business for many years, the family name continuing to the present in the Sydney firm Hayman Ellis.

There are traces of iron spikes or ring bolts on the north side of Nuggan headland, but I have not been able to trace when they were used. I believe there was never a mill at Nuggan. Logs may have been loaded there before the Bawley Point mill started. Neil Evans said a single load of sleepers was loaded there for New Zealand during the depression.

The following paragraphs give a brief outline of the operations of cutting and transporting logs, and milling and loading the timber. Practices in the earliest decades may have been different.
Figure 16: Mill lease at Bawley Point (from Lands Department map 91.8925. Survey by Fred Arnheim, 7 October 1891).

Source: Lands Department, NSW Government.
The tree was felled by axe and sometimes crosscut saw, and trimmed. For the first part of its journey to the mill the log was hauled by a bullock team. In difficult country this might start with the log being pulled along the ground with a chain around one end, a process called ‘snigging’, but the preferred method was ‘punting’, in which one end of the log was raised off the ground by using a jinker. This made the work much easier for the bullocks, but they were still slow, so they took the log only to the nearest ‘tramline’ depot where the log could be mounted on bogies that were pulled along the tramlines by horse teams. The tramlines were specially installed for this job; they extended up to about 20 kilometres from the mill, and had several branches (see Map 1). Their construction involved cuttings, culverts and drainage. The line into Bawley Point crossed Willinga Lake on a specially built bridge 800 metres east of the present road bridge. This line had a branch to Cockwhy, which included a zigzag east of the Princes Highway and north of Stephens Creek to lower the gradients. The tramline rails were 10 x 10 centimetres turpentine or ironbark, spiked to half-round sleepers laid directly in the soil.

Figure 17: Horse team pulling logs on the tramline, Kioloa.
Source: J. Wallace, Milton, NSW.

A horse team consisted of about eight horses in single file. They pulled up to three logs, each on its own pair of bogies. The arrangement of the logs in line rather than stacked meant that pulling up a short incline was a bit easier, as not all the weight would be on the incline at the same time. Brakes, applied by hand-screw to the bogie wheels, were used on down grades. Long, steep inclines remained a problem. The Kioloa tramline descended from a saddle
in the Murrarang Range about two kilometres west of the mill, at a spot called ‘The Dangerboard’. Here the horses were unhitched and the loaded bogies allowed to run down the incline under gravity. On one sad occasion the unhitching was left a bit late and the bogies overran the team, pulling them off their feet and killing the lot. A similar accident occurred on the Bawley Point line. In this case, the logs making up the load were shorter than usual, so their weight was more concentrated and the brakes were not able to control the speed down an incline. At Bawley Point the horse teams usually made two trips a day from Termeil.

Figure 18: Horse team led by ‘old Prince’ crossing tramline bridge over Willinga Lake, c. 1914.

Note man sitting on front end of log, and the single telephone line.
Source: J. Wallace, Milton, NSW.

The tramline routes must have changed over the years, but no records have been found. The line from Bawley Point to Termeil appears to have been built around the time the mill opened or very soon after; it was already operating in June 1893.15 A long tramline was also operating at Kioloa in 1893 (see Chapter 5).

In the early 1920s, Mr Shoebridge, who lived at Termeil, was the teamster on the tramline into Bawley Point. Earlier, around 1915, Henry Browne had the job, and earlier still it was Neil Evans’s grandfather, Mr McInnes. The horses were

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15 ibid., 24 June 1893.
carefully selected for work on the tramlines. They had to have the right ‘step’, to suit the spacing between the sleepers, but this was not enough. Some horses simply did not suit the job.

Figure 19: Workers and children at Bawley Point sawmill, c. 1915.
Source: The Edith and Joy London Foundation of The Australian National University.

At the mill the logs would be stacked to wait their turn. At Kioloa a crane was used for stacking, and the stack could be up to 40 feet high and contain 100 logs. The first step in processing was to cut the long logs into more convenient lengths. This was done at Bawley Point by two men with a cross-cut saw, but Kioloa had the luxury of a steam-powered cross-cut. The milling proper started with the ‘breaking down’ or ‘frame’ saw, which had two vertical blades set parallel to one another, about 30 centimetres apart. The log, attached to small bogies by chains or cant-hooks, was moved horizontally through the saw, so it was cut into three flitches, each of which had at least one flat side.

The flitches were cut to final sizes on the bench saw, whose circular blade was about 1.4 metres in diameter. The initial cut on a flitch would be to trim off one irregular edge. This cut was done by eye. Subsequent cuts were made with the timber pushed against a ‘fence’ set at the required distance from the saw blade. After several passes, a single flitch would be reduced to several pieces of timber.
of the familiar rectangular section. The sawyer had to cut the sizes wanted at the time, but of course not all wanted sizes could be cut from any one flitch, so he had to make quick decisions to avoid waste.

At Bawley Point four men at a time operated the bench saw, though this was later reduced to three. The sawyer was responsible for setting the fence to control the width of cut, and for guiding the flitch so as to get uniform dimensions. Movement of the flitch was helped by powered rollers at the front and back edges of the bench. The direction and speed of drive to these were controlled by another man (the ‘lever man’). The other two would ‘tail out’: they stood at the back of the bench and received the two pieces cut from the flitch on each pass through the saw. A cut piece would be either sent for stacking, returned for further cutting, or sent via a chute to the waste heap for burning. A sawmill had a manager; other key men were the sawyer, engine driver/fireman and saw sharpener or ‘saw doctor’.

There was a second smaller bench saw at Bawley Point mill, used for cutting palings and similar light pieces. A small swinging-blade circular saw called the ‘docker’ was used when necessary to cut pieces to required lengths. Power came from a steam engine and horizontal wood-fired boiler. At Bawley Point the engine had only a single cylinder, but at Kioloa, at least in the later mill, a two-cylinder compound engine was used. The engines had large flywheels (three metres in diameter at Kioloa). The saws were driven by a system of belts and shafting; idler pulleys were installed so each saw could be stopped without stopping the main engine. The drive to the main shaft from the engine used hemp rope five centimetres in diameter, working in four or six grooves on each pulley. At Bawley Point one single very long loop of rope was used, but at Kioloa there were four separate loops. The Kioloa mill was two storeyed; I think breaking-down and bench saws on the top storey, and docker saw and stacking area below.
Exhaust steam was not condensed for reuse. At Bawley Point, boiler feedwater was obtained from a well at the south-west corner of the beach, where a small steam donkey engine pumped the water to the mill through a galvanised iron pipe. Some reports claim that a condenser was used at Kioloa to get boiler feedwater from sea or well water, but this would have been unusual, and is unlikely.

The sawn timber was stacked on skids in sling-loads, ready for shipping. At Bawley Point the skids were rather too steep, so chocks held in place by chains were used to keep the stacks in place. Eric Simpson recalled that during his time a stack did get away and fell into the sea, and that they had to ‘fish it out’. The skids were lubricated with tallow. Timber and waste were moved about the mill site on small trolleys which ran on light steel rails.

The ship had to be moored about 100 metres from the shore. Each stack of timber, held together by two wire slings called ‘snotters’, was pulled off the skids into the water by the ship’s derrick, pulled sideways through the water to the ship’s side, then hoisted up and inboard and loaded into the hold or on deck. At Bawley Point, the hand-powered crane on the wharf was not used in the timber-loading process. There was a pitch-covered punt ashore, which could be put into the water by using the crane. This was used to bring bags of...
chaff ashore for feeding the horses. The crane, often wrongly called the gantry in later years, survived for many decades, and was used by fishermen to launch their boats. The crane, and perhaps the punt also, may have been relics from earlier days, when sailing ships picked up the timber. There are references in 1893 to the use of a punt for loading timber onto the ships at both Kioloa and Durras (see Chapter 5). A punt was used at Kioloa around 1920 for unloading feed. One report says the punt was pulled to the ship by the ship’s winch, but pulled back to the shore by a team of bullocks.

In good weather, loading timber into the ships was continued into the night, sometimes even all night, using the ship’s lights and oil flares ashore. But sudden changes in the weather put the cat among the pigeons. George Moore recalled:

We saw on a few occasions near disasters with the ships tied up loading and a wild storm breaking. There was the furious haste of getting the hawsers untied and getting out to sea so the ship would not be blown ashore.

Each mill had its own blacksmith’s shop. The one at Bawley Point may have survived the 1922 fire. What a fascinating spot it was for any young nipper! It was the main centre for men to congregate and yarn. I was often hustled off home to protect my innocence, and can remember resenting this. George Moore, a young nipper at Kioloa at about the same time, also remembered the Kioloa smithy:

There was a large blacksmith’s shop at the mill and many essential projects were carried out there. Two which come to mind readily were the fitting of iron tyres to the big bullock wagon wheels also the tightening of them. After the tyre was welded it was too tight to fit on the wheel so a fire was built around it; when it was red hot … about ten men would take hold of it with their pinchers (made on the premises) and force it onto the wheel. Immediately it was in place water was poured on to cool and shrink it. This tightening process was called ‘cut and shut’. We also took great delight in watching the big horse shoes being made, the red hot iron coming out of the forge and the proverbial sparks flying everywhere. We also took some delight of the admonishing of the unfortunate striker swinging a fourteen pound hammer and not hitting the exact spot as indicated by the blacksmith.

There was great demand within Australia for timber for some decades after 1860, as a result of the big influx of people to the goldfields. Later, there was an appreciable export market. Much of the timber cut at Kioloa was for export. Peter Scheele recalled that large amounts of flooring and weatherboards were exported to New Zealand, South Africa and England. The timber for export had to be the best quality: no gum veins, heartwood or sapwood. This resulted in great waste of otherwise quite usable timber. In later years, about 40 per cent
of the gross volume of a log would be wasted. The best quality timber was described as ‘wheelwright timber’, though this quaint term had nothing to do with its end use.

Timber of fairly heavy section, suitable for use as girders or for boat building, was also cut in the mills, but very heavy and long pieces, as would be used for the keels of large wooden ships, were usually shaped in the bush using a squaring axe. I was told a keel 30 x 30 centimetres and 18.3 metres long was cut as a single piece at Bawley Point mill.

The timber industry was openly exploitative. You cut in any area until the good logs were gone, then moved the mill somewhere else. Unless extensive tramlines were put in, as at Bawley Point and Kioloa, a mill site might be uneconomical after less than 10 years, as was apparently the case at Bendalong. This situation changed when the road system improved and motor trucks became available to move logs over long distances. George Moore commented on the gloom that descended on Kioloa in the 1920s, when it was realised the time was nearly up.16 One log-cutter said to George’s father, ‘I don’t know what is going to happen, as we are now cutting the best of the bad logs that are left’.

Some of the other mills in the area will be mentioned briefly. There was a mill at Pebbly Beach, which operated till the late 1920s. It is said to have been started by Frank Guy’s brother George, but was being run by George’s son Francis Guy IV in the mid 1920s, when Heather Browne worked there looking after his children. The mill was between the present picnic area and the beach, and the timber was loaded onto the ships from the rock platform at the north end of the beach. A tramline with metal rails was used between mill and loading area. Logs were brought down by bullock or horse teams along the steep route of the present road; there was no tramline for incoming logs. At least one accident bringing logs down this incline is reported, resulting in the death of some of the team of horses. This mill is reported to have cut a lot of timber of fairly large cross sections (30–45 centimetres square). These large pieces were cut to final sizes at a mill in Sydney, or exported directly. There was a local settlement, strung out along the shore to the south of the mill, and a school with up to 40 pupils. McAndrew gives the dates for the school as September 1910 to April 1929, but mentions only 17 pupils. These dates are probably close to the dates for opening and closing the mill.17

A mill operated at Flat Rock (five kilometres north of Termeil) for many years, but I am not sure when it began. It was operating when the Bawley Point mill burnt down in 1922, and was owned at the time by A. & E. Ellis. Timber cut at

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16 George Moore, handwritten reminiscences, transcribed by H. J. Gibbney, c. 1975.
17 McAndrew, A. Tales out of School, A. McAndrew, Epping, NSW, 1990, p. 134.
Flat Rock was slung under jinkers and hauled to Termeil by bullock or horse teams. At Termeil it was transferred to the tramline bogies and taken to Bawley Point for shipping. My father, who was working at Bawley Point mill at the time of the fire, stayed on there to stack and tally the timber, ready for shipping. This arrangement did not last long. By 1929 ships had stopped calling at Bawley Point, and timber cut at Flat Rock was being taken to Ulladulla by motor truck for shipping. My father worked at the Flat Rock mill for a few years before the mill shut down during the depression. It started again afterwards, but was burnt down in 1949.18

There were mills at Brooman, Benandra, Bridge Creek (about eight kilometres west of Termeil) and East Lynne. In later years, and at different times, there were four mills at Termeil. One (Jackson’s) was at ‘The Gap’, about two kilometres east of Termeil, on the Bawley Point road. It closed in 1939. Another (Bray’s) was half a kilometre east of the present highway, and south of the Bawley Point road; it began around 1950. Chapman had a mill on or near the old boarding house site, on the old highway south of Termeil, from 1930s to 1950s, and Don Baxter still runs a mill near Monkey Mountain. Charlie Mison had a mill west of Murramarang; it started some decades ago, and closed about 1985. All these mills were smaller than the earlier mills, and employed fewer people.

In more recent years, there has been a tendency towards even smaller mills. ‘Spot’ mills have only a single bench saw with a circular blade; the initial breaking down being done with a chain saw. ‘Swing’ saws also used a single circular blade, but in this case the blade and its 10-kilowatt petrol or diesel motor were mounted on wheels, and were moved over the timber being cut. These mills could be operated by two or three men.

The advent of tractors and motor lorries, and the improvement in roads, meant less call for working bullocks or horses. Bullocks were still useful near where the logs were cut, and the Rixons and Drurys still had working bullock teams at Termeil or further west as late as 1973.19

Working conditions for mill hands in the larger mills were poor. Much depended on the manager and the mill boss who had power to hire and fire. The mill boss appears to have been a foreman, but that term was not used. Eric Simpson, whose father John David Simpson had taken up a 200-acre selection at Termeil around 1907, got his first job at Bawley Point mill around 1918, when he was 15 years old. At that time they worked 48 hours a week, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. each week day and four and three-quarter hours on Saturday. There were two breaks during the day, the first which was called ‘Joe’ was at 9.30, with a longer lunch break.

18 ibid., p. 138.
THEY CAME TO MURRAMARANG

later. (The name ‘Joe’ for the morning tea break has always provoked interest, and many individuals have been suggested as the original ‘Joe’, but its origin might go back a long way. Hammond noted its use on all the goldfields, initially to warn mates that police were coming, but later to attract attention to anything amusing.20 Since many miners must have drifted into the timber industry, it is easy to imagine they brought ‘Joe’ with them, and adapted its meaning.)

Most mill workers wore aprons, usually of leather, since a lot of pushing of the heavy pieces of timber was required. Surprisingly, gloves were not always used. The hands became tough, and green timber is not as splintery as dry wood.

The boilers had to be cleaned inside, to remove scale. The boiler at Bawley Point consisted basically of two steel tubes, one inside the other, but with their axes displaced. The fire was in the inner tube, and the water and steam in the space between the tubes. Eric Simpson recalled disliking the cleaning job; there was not much room in the narrowest part of the space between the cylinders, and he was afraid of getting stuck there. Eric told the story of ‘a young chap who climbed up to look at the safety valve, which was just about to blow off. He put his finger on it, and it started — and frightened the life out of him!’ My own memories of the mill are vague as I was only four years old when it burnt down, but I do recall being afraid of the machinery, which looked immense and threatening to a small child. Not a good start for an engineer.

Wages in the industry were low; a wage book for Brooman mill in 1924 showed an hourly rate of two shillings and a penny,21 making it £5 ($10) for a 48-hour week. Eric Simpson commented that wages in most mills were lower than this.

The toilet facilities at Kioloa were described by George Moore as:

    simple and hygienic. The toilet was built on the edge of the wharf over the water, and anyone sitting there meditating could watch all the fish swimming underneath. The more the toilet was used the more fish.

At Bawley Point the facilities were even simpler: you squatted on the rocks to the east of the sawdust heap, where the next tide would clean the area.

Cutting railway sleepers was an industry separate from sawmilling. The sleeper-getters worked more as individuals, or as loosely organised small groups, and all the work was done by hand at the site where the log was felled. There was great demand for sleepers in the early 1900s, both for use in Australia and for export, and the industry in its original form lasted for around 50 years.

21 Shown to me by Jack Wallace, Milton.
The methods were simple, but required skill and lots of hard work. The log was cut with a cross-cut saw into several pieces, each the length of the finished sleepers. Each piece was then split along the grain, using a maul and wedges, to give slightly oversized billets. These were shaped to final size using a broad axe or, in earlier years, an adze. The reason for shaping sleepers by hand, rather than putting them through a sawmill, was due to strength and safety of the final product. Hand-cut sleepers must have the grain running from end to end, whereas milled sleepers could have wandering grain in the timber, leading to warping and even splitting along the grain during service. The ban on sawn sleepers was lifted in later years, probably around 1950, and wooden sleepers are now being replaced by concrete.

The sleepers were moved to the nearest shipping port by any available means — usually bullock teams in the early days. They had to be passed by a government inspector before being bought by an agent. Loading was similar to the loading of sawn timber, but was frequently done directly from a beach, with only rough skids.

Charlie Stephens, at the tender age of 12, had come from Sydney to Kioloa around 1906 to join his father and brother Bill in a sleeper-cutter’s camp at Johnson’s Creek, two kilometres west of Kioloa.22 There were 15 to 20 men in the camp, but no women. The men did not stop long. In those days, they didn’t have much — a broad axe, a bundle of wedges, a cross-cut saw, their clothes, and perhaps a tent. The ship Charlie remembered coming to pick up sleepers was the old Queen Bee. It was apparently a steamer, but underpowered: ‘they reckoned they had to stop the engine to blow the whistle!’ Loading was from the beach, and the sleeper-cutters had to come in from their camp to help with the loading: Kioloa mill had not been rebuilt at that time, so there were no men about to lend a hand.

Pit props for use in mines were another special-purpose timber product of the district. These were left in the round, another safety requirement. From memory they were around 15–20 centimetres in diameter, so were cut more easily than sleepers.

The following brief notes on the industry in general are based on a recent book published by the Forestry Commission of New South Wales.23 This interesting and readable account has many photographs and first-hand descriptions of working conditions and techniques. Licences for cutting timber were required as early as 1820, but it was impossible to police the regulations. Some forest reserves were set up by 1871, and the poet Henry Kendall was appointed first

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Inspector of Forests in 1881. The Forestry Commission was not set up till 1916, after which date controls over areas to be cut, and size of tree, were introduced. The industry had a reputation for low pay, due to competition from softwoods imported from countries with more efficient milling techniques. Carpenters preferred the imported timbers as they were easier to work. There were almost no safety measures until the 1940s, and no compensation for injuries till around 1930. Missing limbs or fingers were ‘a trademark of the industry’. There was little union activity and very few strikes.

We might end by recording the names of those killed in the industry in the Murramarang district; their names are from a much longer list for the whole shire, compiled by Jack Wallace, Milton:

- Pross Andrews (Kioloa, before 1910): A jinker pole fell while slinging a log.
- Jack Bennett (Kioloa, 1910): Riding on a dray load of sleepers when dray overturned.
- Jack Donovan (Termeil, 1964): Hit by limb while falling logs.
- Fred Tetley (Durras, 1959): Wire rope offsiding for a ‘dozer’.

Figure 21: Bawley Point mill site, 1976.
Source: The Edith and Joy London Foundation of The Australian National University.
This text is taken from *They Came to Murraramang: A History of Murraramang, Kioloa and Bawley Point*, by Bruce Hamon, edited by Alastair Greig and Sue Feary, published 2015 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.