



M. C. Davies

Maurice Coleman Davies

By B. F. HAMMING

1. THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

Maurice Coleman Davies was born in London on 24th September, 1835. England during this period was in the throes of the industrial and agricultural revolutions. It was no wonder that about the time when Maurice Davies was five years of age, his father and mother, John and Katherine Davies, decided to take their family to Tasmania where conditions would be a great deal more promising.

The Davies family arrived in Tasmania and settled down to a farming life. Where they settled is not known, but it is known that young Maurice attended school with his brothers and worked with them on the farm till he was sixteen years old. It is also known that Maurice had an older brother Benjamin, and a sister Dinah.⁽¹⁾ On 9th June, 1849, gold was discovered in Victoria, and many people flocked to the gold fields to make their fortunes. It would be quite natural that Maurice Davies would hear tales about these Utopias, where nuggets were so easy to find. So in 1851 at the age of sixteen, Maurice Davies, like a great number of Tasmanian youths of that time, felt the desire to take part in the more exciting happenings which were occurring on the mainland, and voting the island too quiet and small for their activities, he left for the goldfields in Victoria. He sought his fortune in the Blackwood diggings, where in a partnership he worked for some years⁽²⁾.

It is not known how successful he was at the Blackwood diggings, but he must have had some success, for in 1856 he established himself in Adelaide as a contractor supplying building materials on a commission basis. He prospered and in 1867 he opened as a general commission agent and merchant in Gilbert Place, Adelaide.⁽³⁾ This business was a very successful one and in 1877 it shifted to Grenfell Street, and he continued to conduct his own business as a supplier of building materials. In 1882, in conjunction with Messrs. J. Wishart and Baillie, he was the successful tenderer for the Adelaide to Nairne section of the Adelaide-Melbourne railway, the tender being £119,932/10/8. This venture was also a very successful one and continued for a number of years under the name of Baillie, Davies and Wishart; Wishart being in charge of constructions and Davies of supplies. Baillie retired from the firm in 1885, but the other two partners continued.

In 1882 the partnership was the successful tenderer for two government contracts:— 6,000 cubic feet of tuart timber for the South Australian Railways for the sum of £1,343/15/0; also 8,000 cubic feet of tuart timber for £1,683/6/8 for the South Australian Railways. In 1884 they also constructed the passenger station and signal cabin

at Nairne station for the sum of £2,240. The Morpeth street bridge for £39,722/11/11, the swing bridge at Company Basin, Port Adelaide, for £30,000.⁽⁴⁾ In 1882 Davies became the chairman of directors of the Adelaide Quinham Tramway Co., and held 600 shares in the company, but was not one of the original promoters of the company.⁽⁵⁾

Maurice Coleman Davies married Sarah Salom in Adelaide on 24th March, 1858, and there were six sons and two daughters to the union:

Leana Judah	- - -	born 1st May, 1859
Katherine Salena	- - -	born 8th May, 1864
Herbert	- - -	born 21st June, 1865
Walter David	- - -	born 14th June, 1867
Arthur Louis	- - -	born 6th Dec., 1869
Miriam Florence	- - -	born 27th Sept., 1872
Phillip Vivian	- - -	born 22nd Feb., 1874
Frank Benjamin	- - -	born 8th March, 1875 ⁽⁶⁾

He and his wife and family lived in various parts of Adelaide. Up to 1867 their home was in Margaret Street, North Adelaide, and they remained there until 1872, when they moved to 142 Ward Street, North Adelaide. In the 1890s the home was in the name of Leana Judah Davies, who was at that time a contractor like his father.⁽⁷⁾

Timber was an important factor in the construction of railways and bridges during this period, and it was quite natural for M. C. Davies to look towards the large forests in Western Australia, as South Australia had nothing to offer him. So in 1875, the year Frank was born, Maurice Coleman Davies left his family and crossed the Bight to associate himself with the timber industry of Western Australia. He became a shareholder in the Jarrahdale and Rockingham Timber Co. in the same year. The Jarrahdale and Rockingham Timber Co. was one of the first successful Western Australian exporting timber companies. This was because of the railway which connected the forests with the jetty at Rockingham. The railway enabled the company to have large amounts of jarrah timber carried quickly to Rockingham for shipment overseas. Later Davies based his Karri-dale estate on the system used by the Jarrahdale and Rockingham Timber Company.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF KARRIDALE

In February, 1875, the Western Australian government proclaimed regulations providing that in order to promote the introduction of new industries of public utility, the Governor, with the advice of his Executive Council, could grant 'Special Timber Licences', for periods up to fourteen years subject to such rent fees, conditions and reservations as the Governor might prescribe. The previously granted rights of the concessionaires were protected.⁽⁸⁾

It was not long before the special regulations of 1875 were used. On Christmas Eve, M. C. Davies was in Perth, applying to the government for a lease of 1,920 acres in the Bunbury district. Opposition was shown in the district to the granting of a fourteen-year lease, as it had been in a previous instance when Messrs. Connor and McKay applied for a licence for 10,000 acres. Next year, however, Davies obtained a licence and erected two small mills at Worsley in the Collie Ranges. However, at this period conditions for saw-milling were most difficult.⁽⁹⁾ The primary and most important handicap with which his mill was faced, was the transporting of his milled timber. The roads were of an extremely low standard and haulage to the port of Bunbury was very expensive. In those early days there was little hope of the government ever providing railway facilities to the nearest port, which was Bunbury, some twenty miles away. Even with transport to Bunbury, Davies found that shipping accommodation was very poor.

M. C. Davies severed his connections with the Jarrahdale and Rockingham Timber Co. in 1878.⁽¹⁰⁾ While working the timber in the Collie and Wellington districts he commenced to look further afield for some more profitable sphere for his labours, and then in 1877 he became interested in the timber between Cape Hamelin and Augusta. The land there was held on a timber licence by a Mr. Eldridge, formerly of the W.A. Timber Co., but he intended to forfeit his claim to the licence. Davies had a verbal agreement with the government respecting his claim to the land, and early in February 1878 he wrote applying for the licence.⁽¹¹⁾

Eldridge was quite agreeable, commenting very favourably on his small mills near Bunbury. Negotiations began concerning the terms of the licence, Davies wanting a lease of 70,000 acres for 50 years. The Executive Council, on 27th September, 1879, refused to agree to those terms, although he had already commenced working there.⁽¹²⁾ Instead, a licence for fourteen years was granted. Later in 1882 he received better conditions. A new licence gave him 46,000 acres for 42 years at a rent of £150 a year.⁽¹³⁾

The concession included the right to cut and remove the whole of the timber standing, growing or which might grow upon the area during the term, with power to construct railways or tramways anywhere through the land, and with the pre-emptive right to purchase at the rate of 10/- per acre certain blocks within the boundaries of the concession and land at Hamelin Harbour.⁽¹⁴⁾ In 1883 Walter "Karri" Davies bought the land grants of the late J. Turner of Augusta. He secured the land in the Blackwood River area at 3/- an acre and 2/- for the balance at Leauwin.⁽¹⁵⁾

While work was still just beginning at his Karri-dale station, Davies applied for a fourteen-year licence for 30,000 acres in the

Wellington district near to his existing mills. He envisaged mills employing 266 men and 60 teams.⁽¹⁶⁾ Controversy arose over the question of who was to pay for the cost of the upkeep of the road between the forest and Bunbury. Davies objected to paying, as it already had cost him 25/- a load to transport the timber to the port, and the local authorities objected to paying as it was Davies' timber teams that did most of the damage to the road. The matter was debated in the Legislative Council, Carey, the member for Vasse, being most strongly opposed to a licence which might give a "monopoly"; he moved a motion recommending that Davies share the expense of maintaining the road. The House agreed with him, taking the view that it could see no reason why the colony should afford Davies those facilities which every other timber company provided for itself. Such being the case, Davies did not persist with his application, contenting himself with his smaller establishment.⁽¹⁷⁾

Davies selected the Karriale estate on account of the superb forests of karri, jarrah and red gum, the convenience of its situation — in close proximity to Hamelin and Flinders Bay — the possibilities attached to its abundant rainfall of 40 inches per annum, its mild and equable climate, and its excellent soil.⁽¹⁸⁾ At that time jarrah was already famous as an enduring hardwood, but karri was quite unknown in the world's timber markets. Abundant local evidence however was available as to the durability of the latter: karri fence posts, and huts erected by settlers nearly half a century earlier were found to be in excellent preservation, and logs of the same timber which had for over 40 years lain on the beach between wind and water were in equally good condition. Davies presented the museum in Kew Gardens with a section of one of these logs. These facts, together with the highly satisfactory tests conducted by Thomas Laslett, timber inspector to the Admiralty, fully satisfied Davies as to the high qualities of karri.

In 1882 Davies started the construction of the jetty at Hamelin Bay.⁽¹⁹⁾ This jetty was 1,800 feet long and very solidly constructed with fender piles at each berth and rails laid along its entire length. A storehouse was erected half-way along the jetty, and a telephone line connected the shore to the office at the end of the jetty. Fresh water was piped to the ships at their various berths, and there were also two large steam cranes as well as stationary cranes on the jetty. From davits hung rowing boats ready for any emergency, and the jetty boasted three berths in depths of 18, 15 and 13 feet.

Davies knew that good management and suitable facilities would bring a prosperous timber industry, and his choice for establishing the industry fell on a spot called Coodarup (now known as Kudarup) about 22 miles south of Margaret River township. The first mill at Coodarup immediately began to exploit the forest of karri in 1883. Davies employed between 30 and 40 men in the first venture, and



Log hauling in the Karri forest

from the beginning success was evident. The milled timber from the Coodarup mill was exported via two ports. In winter months ships called at Flinders Bay and in the summer period at Hannein Bay. Davies had chosen a very suitable site for his mill, as Coodarup stood midway between the two ports. The Coodarup mill began and finished its career without locomotives. Horses hauled the output down to the two harbours on a track of wooden rails. Coodarup mill closed down in 1884 and a new, larger mill with the vertical breaking-down type saw was erected at Karridale the same year. This new mill had a capacity of 12,000 super feet per day. As a result of the timber boom, many workers flocked to join the race for employment; the wages paid at the Karridale estate ranged from 7/- per day to 13/4 according to the ability of the worker.⁽²⁰⁾

In 1885 Herbert Davies travelled from Adelaide to Karridale to join his father in the business. As the years passed the business continued to thrive and in 1891 Davies found the need to build a still larger mill, this time at Boranup. Boranup, situated three miles north of Karridale, became an important factor in the success of the concern towards the end of the century. The first mill constructed at Boranup was very quickly destroyed by fire, but it was immediately replaced on a larger scale. In the following years the centre employed up to 300 men who had cottages close by the mill, and it became almost a self-supporting community. It had its own store, which was situated alongside the railway line to save unnecessary handling of merchandise. The small township also had a produce store and stables. It was at Boranup that many people realised the agricultural value of this area, for a few settlers began to grow vegetables for commercial use and many animals were grazed. North of Boranup was a slaughter-yard and a piggery; on some occasions as many as 150 porkers were kept while turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens were also slaughtered for sale.

The butcher's shop at Boranup which provided residents with beef and mutton, claimed to have the largest butcher's block in the colony — a complete section of a tree. Boranup was managed for the most part by ⁽²¹⁾ a Mr. McGregor who became a well known identity in the southern timber trade.

In 1889 M. C. Davies' mother died at Hay, N.S.W., at the age of 94 years.

3. HEIGHT OF PROSPERITY

By 1894 Davies and his six sons were all very much involved in the timber industry in Western Australia and in its marketing overseas, and the name of the business changed from M. C. Davies to M. C. Davies Company Limited, with a capital of £6,000. This move was purely a private one for the purpose of incorporating Davies' six sons into the industry. It became evident to the company that,

with the rapid increase in markets, both at home and abroad, its resources were being taxed to the utmost to keep pace with the great demands of the trade, and as a result it was decided in 1897 to refloat the business in London. This was done in order to provide the capital required to equip the mills and increase the capacity threefold, if possible. This flotation venture was successful, and the new company became known as M. C. Davies Karri and Jarrah Co. Ltd. The capital made available to the company was about £250,000, of which £50,000 was in cash. In 1898 the chairman was Sir Sydney Shippard, K.C.M.G., the managing director M. C. Davies, J.P., and the local directors in Western Australia Sir James Lee Steere, K.C.M.G. (Speaker in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia), and Robert L. J. Davies of Karridale.⁽²²⁾

The assets secured by the company included mills, railways, ships, jetty and plant to the value of £72,000; land to the value of £86,000; and timber cut to the value of £10,000.

On 18th April, 1898, a directors meeting was held at Karridale; Sir James Lee Steere was the chairman and G. Richardson, M. C., L. J. and H. Davies were present. It was agreed at this meeting that two new mills be opened at Slabbyford and Boodjup. It was also agreed that all new mills be of a portable type. At the meeting in November it was stated that the Boodjup mill had been abandoned because of the lack of permanent water. At the April meeting M. C. Davies felt that there was a need for more rolling stock and this was agreed to by those present. They laid the estimate for the new rolling stock at £3,000. The Karridale estate in 1889 had twenty miles of good railway of the government gauge; they were strong and well graded, and in every way capable of conveying the heaviest logs with safety. The rails were constantly being extended to open fresh blocks of timbered land well in advance of requirements. At that time the rolling stock consisted of two locomotives (*Renown* and *Kate*), two covered goods vans, four open wagons, twelve tip wagons for railway construction, three tank wagons for conveying water where needed, and one inspection car neatly fitted up with seats, roof and open sides.⁽²³⁾ *Kate* was built by T. E. Green and Sons of Leeds and *Renown* by Hawthorn Leslies of Newcastle, England.⁽²⁴⁾ Davies employed Tom Irving as the first driver of *Kate* and Joe Richards as the driver of *Renown*.

At the directors meeting held at Karridale on 7th November, 1898, it was disclosed that two new locomotives had been bought. The *Karri* and *Sampson* No. 2, which cost respectively £1,800, and £1,000. It was found necessary to purchase *Sampson* in consequence of the delay in sending *Karri* out from England.

At the turn of the century the M. C. Davies Karri and Jarrah Co. Ltd. was in full production, and at this point a picture of the

Karridale estate can be penned. The centre for the timber industry naturally enough was the township of Karridale. The township consisted of stores, office, and the principal mill and workshops of the company. The whole of the developed area radiating from the centre was served by very good dirt roads and 40 miles of railway extending as far northward as Margaret River. The thriving township was fortunate to have a school, public library, hall, sporting field, race course, a church and rectory with a resident clergyman, and a qualified medical man. At Karridale M. C. Davies had a large home, a dignified low timbered house with a wide verandah running around its perimeter. The home had 27 rooms and a hard-based tennis court to its left. This tennis court was next to the home of Herbert Davies, which was somewhat like his father's home. M. C. Davies had the home completely finished before he would permit his wife Sarah to leave the Adelaide home.

M. C. Davies brought two grand pianos, one of which was placed in his home, and the other he presented to the people of Karridale.⁽²⁵⁾

Many of the Karridale employees had pretty gardens by their cottages, which were dotted about the bush in a picturesque fashion. The single men had rows of cottages to themselves and there was a large dining-room built for their use; it was presided over by a good house-keeper and as house-rent was free, and there were no rates or taxes to pay, it proved to be a paradise for the working community. There was a large store adjoining the company office, and although it was a private agency, settlers in the district also could get their supplies there. At the hall the people usually held entertainments, and a ball was one of the frequent recreations in the winter time. There was an unusual institution of a hospital for the horses, of which there were 200 in the place. M. C. Davies never refused a man food for himself and family and, if the family were too extravagant, they were put on rations. When a man had a job there, he had one for life, provided he worked when he was wanted.⁽²⁶⁾

Although about 200 miles from the capital city, Karridale was far from isolated; it had a very good telegraphic communication office. Cables could be sent overseas and mail arrived by horse coach three times a week from Busselton.

Figures for Karridale Post and Telegraph Office in 1897 show that 15,000 letters were posted, 3,700 telegrams were transmitted, and 665 money orders for £2,340 were issued and some received and paid. Within the estate a telephone service was in operation for use by office and staff. A telephone connected the office with Boranup mill, the jetty at Hamelin, and also the Leeuwin lighthouse. At that time a local electric lighting system was under construction, to lessen the fire risk which prevailed owing to the large number of kerosene lamps used about the estate.⁽²⁷⁾

At Hamelin there arose quite a little community with workers' huts, a police station, school and a timber yard. The timber yard was situated at the beginning of the jetty and close by was a slipway on which boats could be repaired and Davies' private yacht could be slipped during bad weather.

Davies paid his workers on a bonus system, and the management expected a set output from the mills each day; a bonus was given for all timber over the required or set amount. Every man was supplied with a cheque book and he was entitled to cash his cheque at any time. Any cheque bearing the M. C. Davies signature could be cashed anywhere in the colony.⁽²⁸⁾ The payment went even further than described, as when each man had £10 to his credit he would receive 5% interest.

Thus Karridale was so self-sufficient that it even had its own currency. It was customary every year at Christmas for the company to give one bottle of rum to each man over sixteen years of age and one bottle of the best port wine to every female.

The company during 1900 had three large mills in operation at Karridale, Boranup and Jarrahdene (built 1895) and the output per day was 21,000 super feet. The company could also boast of the largest vertical whin in the colony, which had wheels ten feet in diameter and could handle logs with a girth of 24 feet. The famous "King Karri" tree felled in this area, however, had a girth of 30 feet and stood 242 feet high. The King Karri would have cut 3,000 sleepers, enough to lay one and a half miles of railway. The value of this one tree would suffice to pay at this time for a return holiday trip to Europe. The hauling of logs to the mills and the carrying of cut timber to the port was all done with steam-driven locomotives. These had taken over from the previously horse-drawn wagons run on wooden lines. The locomotives became a very popular characteristic of the district; the *Karri* was later taken to Wynndham, where it was used at the state meat-works.⁽²⁹⁾

The mills were also distinguished by the presence of Western Australia's only real bushranger, Moondyne Joe. Evidence indicates that this colourful figure worked as a carpenter for the M. C. Davies Karri & Jarrah Company and it was during this time that one of his more famous incidents took place. During the time of his employment at Karridale rivalry began with a smaller jarrah milling concern near Busselton; the climax came when the millers from Busselton were holding a timber exhibition. They were said to have plotted an incursion into the reserves of M. C. Davies to find the poorest quality log and display it as typical of their southern rivals.⁽³⁰⁾ Their plot somehow became known to Moondyne Joe, who, unknown to his workmates, rode off to follow the Busselton workers. He found them cutting several logs in his employer's reserve and, unknown to the cutters, he removed the logs from their dray and set about his cum-

ring scheme. When the men returned, they saw the logs had disappeared and realised their plot was out. Hastily they climbed into the wagon and whipped the horses homeward, but before the dray had gone many yards, it collapsed groundwards. Moonidine Joe had cut the wooden spokes of the wheel within a fraction of an inch. It seems as though rivalry ceased from that day.

4. SHIPPING DISASTERS

Hamelin jetty was extended in 1898 by the addition of two more berths. A powerful steam tug S.S. *Waterlily* of 31 tons was at this time on order,⁽³¹⁾ and was to supplement the fleet of lighters, then consisting of one 50-ton cutter and five 10-ton cutters. There were four sets of the heaviest ships moorings laid down in the bay, consisting of 2½-inch cables and 2½-ton anchors.

Although Hamelin Bay provided the M. C. Davies Karri and Jarrah Co. Ltd. with a necessary and well-placed harbour, it also proved hazardous under certain conditions and it took its toll on boats. The first boat lost was the barge *Aymicourt* of 443 tons in April 1882. In July the following year the barge *Chandlere* sank, and was follow in September 1889 by the French barge *Artside*. But nothing equals the year 1900 in which no less than five boats sank. On the 20th June the *Glenberrie* sank with a full cargo of timber. On 22nd July there were four boats at the Hamelin jetty. They were the *Katinka*, *Lovespring*, *Northwester* and *Elisie*.⁽³²⁾ During the afternoon the northwest breeze began to strengthen and it rained very heavily. The captain of the *Katinka* was at Karridale, and the first mate decided to take the boat out to one of the moorings, as it was considered dangerous to have a boat moored to the jetty during a storm. The captain arrived back at the jetty at 3.30 and signalled that it was too rough for him to make the boat. The first mate then had to decide whether to go to sea and ride the storm or stay at the mooring. He decided to stay, and during tea, about 7.30 p.m., the main cable broke; and soon after the little cable broke and the *Katinka* was adrift. Not long after the boat broke in half and the stern sank immediately. The crew on the other half either climbed the rigging or swam ashore during the terrible storm. Those on the rigging were picked up the next morning. Five were drowned including the cabin boy.⁽³³⁾

The *Northwester* came aground on the south side of the jetty and the next morning was refloated, but the *Lovespring*, tied to the jetty, swung out and sank when it broke its front hawser. The *Elisie* also finished at the bottom of the sea.

In October 1900 M. C. Davies, at the request of the Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, presented John Dells, L. C. Peterson, Carl Carlsson and S. Neilson with the medal of the Royal Humane Society in recognition of the gallant manner in which they rescued the crew of

the *Katinka* during the terrible gale in Hamelin Harbour. The last of the wrecks was the tug S.S. *Waterlily* in February 1907.

One year the S.S. *Newton Hall*, belonging to Chas. G. Dunn & Co. Ltd, Liverpool, arrived at Flinders Bay on Friday, 24th August, and berthed on the following day at M. C. Davies and Co's pier.⁽³⁴⁾ On the 15th October the vessel sailed for Liverpool with 2,055,600 superficial feet of karri and jarrah. This was the largest cargo ever taken from the company's piers. The captain, A. C. Hostler, said that he was highly satisfied with the port of Flinders Bay, and with the accommodation afforded shipping at Messrs. Davies & Co's wharf. The berthing he found was very convenient and the work was carried on in the most expeditious manner; there was absolutely no delay in the matter of trucks or the supply of timber. The whole of the work was carried on under the direct supervision of Herbert Davies, then manager of the Karridale estate.

5. LEEUWIN LIGHTHOUSE

M. C. Davies and John Wishart were the successful tenderers for the well-known Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse. The lighthouse stands at the extreme tip of the cape, in latitude 34 degrees, 24 minutes south and longitude 115 degrees, 09 minutes east, and the site chosen was approximately 70 feet from high water level. The successful tender of £7,782/11/0 was agreed upon in April 1895, and the foundation stone was laid by the premier, Sir John Forrest, on 13th December of the same year.

In a glowing speech the premier showed his intense satisfaction with the work. He had watched the colony grow from boyhood. He had stood by in the troublesome years when the policies of the country had been determined from the motherland, and now with the advent of self-government, the opening up of new lands, and the prosperity of the country growing with the gold discoveries, he had seen many of his dreams come true. "The construction of this lighthouse", he said, "is a landmark in the history of the colony, and is a milestone on the road we are travelling on to progress. A great change has taken place in this colony during the past few years. From being a place almost unknown and very isolated it is becoming a place of considerable importance. This magnificent light will be here for all time, and will shine when we are gone and forgotten, and will be indispensable not only to those that are travelling to our coast, but going far across the ocean. This work upon which we are engaging is in the interests of humanity, and is a philanthropic work, and I am glad that we are doing something for humanity and progress for, although we are removed from the large centres of population, we have great responsibilities, for we have to lay the foundations of public policy in this colony. We must remember this in all we do, that we are the lighthouses to guide those mariners who come after

us. We must remember that we are the trustees of the future. No doubt you who are living in this district feel yourselves isolated, but I cannot help saying how grateful you should be, to put it in the beautiful words of Tennyson, that your lot is cast 'by the long, wash of Australasian seas far off, and that we hold our heads to other stars and breathe in converse seasons'. Of all the works executed by the government in the past five years, I feel most interested in the Leeuwin lighthouse."

Documents, together with several copies of newspapers published in the colony and several coins of the realm, were enclosed in a jar and placed under the foundation stone. Wishart presented the premier with an engraved silver trowel and a handsome mallet made of karri with a sandalwood handle fashioned at Karridale.

The Leeuwin lighthouse was connected by telephone to the Karridale Post Office. This telephone line carried the first news of the sinking of the *Percles* on 31st March, 1910. At about 6 p.m. the message was received at Karridale: "The steamer *Percles* struck a rock three miles south of Cape Leeuwin and foundered about 6 p.m."⁽³⁵⁾

The second almost forgotten monument is a bridge spanning the mighty Blackwood river. It was constructed by Davies for the government and was originally a beautiful white bridge of seven spans stretching 400 feet. Today the old bridge is still used but has been superseded by a larger structure. The cost of the old bridge was \$1,100.

6. A FAMILY BUSINESS

If M. C. Davies was a hard taskmaster, he was also scrupulously fair. His six sons all had to begin their careers as labourers and learn to respect a karri from the ground up. When in 1894 he incorporated them in his business, Herbert became the general manager of Karridale, Arthur the manager of the store and stock department, Phillip the works manager, and Frank the mills manager. By 1898, when the company was refloated in England, the Davies sons were controlling the company for their father. M. C. Davies placed his sons in various parts of the world to act as agents for his company. Walter, known as "Karril" Davies, became the South African agent and while there, was prominently associated with the famous Jameson raid, and afterwards distinguished himself in the relief of Mafeking with only eight men.⁽³⁶⁾ This was regarded at the time as the most remarkable feat of the Boer War. He was offered the Companionship of the Bath by King Edward VII, but he declined the offer.⁽³⁷⁾ Arthur Davies went to Bombay, India, and stayed there until the 1st World War; Frank settled in America; and Leama Judah "Robert" became the London director and on 19th October, 1904, had a declaration printed in the paper stating that he would no longer use the name

of Leama Judah, but would assume the name of Leama Robert Davies, having all his life been known as Robert Davies.⁽³⁸⁾ Herbert remained the general manager of Karridale and Phillip went to the Far East. M. C. Davies had department managers for every part of his business, and was able to check his sons' results in their running of the business.

M. C. Davies was able to travel abroad quite extensively. It was on these tours that he introduced the karri hardwood to the world markets, and so secured many new clients for the M. C. Davies Karri & Jarrah Co. Ltd. These clients included the Ceylon government, the London City Council and the South African government. In 1886 M. C. Davies was the commissioner of Western Australia at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London. Two years later, in 1888, he was again the commissioner for Western Australia, this time at the 1887-8 Melbourne Exhibition.⁽³⁹⁾ The Melbourne Exhibition drew 2,000,000 people to inspect exhibits of 93 different countries.

7. LIVERINGA

The Kimberley district was first opened up in 1879 by Alexander Forrest who led an exploring expedition from the De Grey river to Beagle Bay and then along the coast to the Fitzroy river, which he followed up for 240 miles. He discovered and named the Margaret and Ord rivers. His report of the territory through which he had travelled was highly favourable to settlement. The Fitzroy he designated as the longest and largest river in Western Australia, flowing through 4,000,000 acres of pastoral lands capable of depasturing sheep.

Julius G. Brockman was the first in the field in 1879 and was followed shortly afterwards by the Murray Squatting Co. In 1881 the Kimberley Pastoral Co. was formed; M. C. Davies was its chairman and the other members of the partnership were W. Marmion, Pearce Brothers, Sholl, J. P. McLarty, W. G. McLarty and A. Cornish.

The sailing vessel *Annur* was chartered by the company, and loaded with the necessary plant for starting operations. It also took on live-stock, horses, cattle and 900 sheep. The expedition, under the control of the McLarty brothers, and A. Cornish, sailed from Fremantle on 12th November, 1881. After a prolonged and difficult trip the expedition arrived at King Sound, the rendezvous chosen for unloading.

The stock and supplies were landed under great difficulty and shifted to the mouth of the Fitzroy river. Thus Liveringa station was first established, having a frontage of over 60 miles to one side of the river; the coastal area was established under the name "Lulingur" as a cattle station, while the area 60 miles up the river contained the homestead of Liveringa. In 1882 the flock was further supplemented

with the purchase of 3,000 sheep from Millstream station, which were conveyed in the *Annur* in two shipments. Heavy losses were sustained in the first shipment; 300 sheep were lost, principally through drinking sea water. In 1883 2,000 ewes from Canowie station, South Australia, and 250 rams from A. B. Murray were shipped in a chartered vessel to Beagle Bay. From this flock a very good type of medium-sized Merino was obtained.

During the 32 years that M. C. Davies was chairman of the company, it developed into one of the state's largest sheep and cattle stations. Hundreds of miles of fences were erected, dividing the station into paddocks of from 4,000 to 16,000 acres; numerous bores and wells were sunk, and all the necessary buildings established. By 1912 the station was estimated to be stocked with 100,000 sheep and 15,000 shorthorn cattle, truly a great pioneering effort.⁽⁴⁰⁾

In conjunction with his sons Davies also founded Napier Downs station in the North West. This station was traded under the name of M. C. Davies & Sons.

In the wheat-belt, Davies selected some of the finest land in the state, holding 3,000 acres in his own name at Kojonup, adjacent to the present town. He also developed 12,880 acres in the Katanning area. This venture was controlled by the Davies family under the name of the Palmirup Grazing Co.⁽⁴¹⁾

8. MILLARS TIMBER & TRADING CO.

The M. C. Davies Karri & Jarrah Co. formed in the year 1897 to take over the M. C. Davies interests soon came under pressure from other mills. With falling markets and price-cutting the timber industry was in a very parlous condition. In 1902 a proposition was put forward by the rival mill owners, Millar Brothers, to amalgamate several firms and put stability into the industry.

The companies concerned were:—

Millars Karri & Jarrah Forests Ltd.

M. C. Davies Karri & Jarrah Co. Ltd.

Gill McDowell Jarrah Corporation Ltd.

The Canning Jarrah Timber Co.

Jarrahdale Jarrah Forests & Railway Ltd.

Jarrah Timber & Wood Paving Corporation.

The Westralian Jarrah Forests.

Jarrah Wood & Saw Mills.

Imperial Jarrah Wood Corporation.

The parties agreed to amalgamate and a new and influential company was formed, with a nominal value in share capital of over £2,900,000, although many of various companies' shares had been of no real value. It was agreed that the new company would take the title of Millars Timber & Trading Co. Ltd., with the head office in London.

The first elected board of directors consisted of: James White, LL.D. (chairman), Sir Ernest Paget, Bart. (vice chairman), Richard Combe, C. Peto Bennett, E. F. Millar, L. R. Davies, Joseph Temperley and Charles Temperley. The local directors were: Sir Edward Witherston, K.C.M.G. (Australia), Alex J. McNeil, W. McMurtrie, J. H. Astrop (S. Africa) and A. L. Davies (India).⁽⁴²⁾

At this stage M. C. Davies' control of the industry ceased but his sons continued to hold high positions with the new company. Herbert Davies continued with the managing of Karriale mills and later was in charge of the Wellington mills for the same company, while Robert Davies was a London director, Phillip Davies a Far East representative, Arthur Davies Indian representative, and Frank Davies manager of Marrinup mill.

9. RETIREMENT AND DEATH

With his retirement from an active interest in his sawmilling interests, M. C. Davies resided at "Peradeniya", 262 St. George's Terrace, Perth. He named this beautiful residence after the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, at Kandy, Ceylon, which he had visited while building Australia House, Colombo, in 1899. The building in Colombo, otherwise largely a city of bungalows, was so far ahead of the average mercantile office in Colombo at the time that it acted as an impetus to the commercial interests to put more of their rupees into bricks and mortar. The replacement of many ramshackle business humpies or hen-coops was the result. In 1913, the year of his death, Davies had under construction Colombo's most modern building. It was for the National Mutual Life Association of Australia, a beautiful nine-storey stone structure.⁽⁴³⁾

Maurice Coleman Davies passed away at his residence "Peradeniya", on Saturday, 10th May, 1913. He was 78 years old, and had been ailing for some months, but his health did not give his family grave apprehension until about a fortnight before his death, when a change for the worse occurred and he gradually failed. The remains were interred in the Jewish portion of the Karrakatta Cemetery. The cortege moved from the family residence and on its arrival at the cemetery gates, representatives of practically every section of the community joined the procession to the graveside. On reaching the little chapel in the vicinity of the place of interment, the pallbearers, E. Cusper, J. Silbert, G. Lubber, S. Goode, M. Hart, G. Ginsberg, B. Roffman, H. Kiovitz and W. Breckler, the members of the committee of the Chevora Kedisha, removed the coffin from the hearse and entered the building, where in the presence of the chief mourners Herbert and Frank (sons), H. Salom and E. Hamer (nephews), and J. Alhutt and the assembled gathering, a brief service was conducted by the rabbi, the Rev. D. I. Freedman.

The rabbi delivered an impressive address. He reminded the

assembly that they were gathered to leave in the grave the mortal tenement of him whom God had summoned to the celestial realm. They performed that duty with a sense of sorrow which came to them whenever Death claimed one whom they respected and esteemed, and yet they fulfilled it with a sense of gratitude to God for His kindness in permitting him around whose bier they were standing to pass the allotted span of man's life on earth. The blessing of long life had been vouchsafed to their departed friend, M. C. Davies, and with him it was a blessing well used, for he filled his life with an energy, an enterprise, and a resourcefulness which won for him more than mere reward and gratifying success, but served to place him on the roll of Australia's honoured sons. They all had unbounded admiration for the pioneer; for him who went into the untamed forests to wrestle with Nature in all her varying moods and to win from her what she was so glad to yield to those who knew how to struggle with a stout heart. Such a pioneer was Maurice Coleman Davies. Truly might M. C. Davies say with the Psalmist, 'My lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel.' For not only did he enjoy worldly success, he had that most precious of all blessings — a long, happy domestic life. His was the rich blessing of a wife who was sincerely devoted to him and who for 56 years trod the path of life with him, heart to heart. He had the blessing of sons and daughters who gave him every cause to be proud of them — a son whose name rang throughout the British Empire for his splendid courage, and who spoke the famous phrase that he desired to serve his King without pay, decoration or promotion."

Amongst those present were the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Edward Stone, Sir John Forrest, Sir Winthrop Hackett, A. C. Kessel (representing the Premier), E. Lee-Staere, J. McMurtrie (representing Millars Jarrah & Karri Co.), David Forrest, D. J. Goyder, Arthur Male, M.L.A., Dr. Joel, Frank Wittenoom, G. W. Richmond (representing the Union Bank), R. A. Sholl, Horace Sholl, Joe Sholl, and J. E. Clarke (representing the W.A. Shipping Association).⁽⁴⁴⁾

Davies' gross assets amounted to £42,054, including real estate to the value of £9,454, and personal estate of £33,594, the total for duty being returned at £37,667. He left all his household effects, carriages, horses, etc., to his wife for her use during her lifetime, an annuity of £200 to his sister, Dinah Tarrakover, of Sydney; £200 to each of her unmarried daughters, and he directed the rest of the estate to be held upon trust for his wife during her lifetime; upon death various other family bequests were to be made, including one of £30,000 to his daughter, Catherine Selina Levi, of Melbourne; an annuity of £400 to his daughter, Florence Miriam Davies; £100 on trust for each grandchild, and £200 to each female grandchild. After these legacies had been provided for, the residue of the estate was divided into equal parts for his six sons.

10. EPILOGUE

The timber resources at Karridale cut out in 1913, just a few months after the death of M. C. Davies and sometime after the amalgamation which had brought the Karridale mills under the control of Millars Timber & Trading Company.

Although the Davies venture had been accused of cutting the magnificent wealth of karri wastefully, and sending thousands of pounds worth of beautiful timber straight over the chute into a huge waste fire, just because it did not happen to be the length they were cutting at the time,⁽⁴⁵⁾ the truth of the matter was that the heart of both karri and jarrah is useless and has to be carefully cut from the sound timber in the process of sawing, whereas the heart wood of all northern hemisphere timbers is the best. The reverse is the case with all Western Australian eucalyptus, principally karri and jarrah; the sap wood in these timbers is the best.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Production at Karridale eased as a result of the depression and the war years; gradually the major mills closed down, the houses and other buildings were deserted and the town presented a picture of peace and solitude. But until 1961 there was still some evidence of past glory. The main store, the town hall and the picturesque little church remained huddled in a magnificent regrowth of karri.

Then in March 1961 the most devastating fire ever experienced there, swept through the whole of the Davies concessions, completely destroying the evidence that remained of the past, but it could never obliterate the name of Maurice Coleman Davies, and the great Leeuwin light continues to be a reminder of this great pioneer. A fitting epitaph was placed on his gravestone by his wife Sarah:

"With thy rude ploughshare, death turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow with seed we sow,
For this is the field and acre of our God,
This the place where human harvests grow."

APPENDIX

The staff at Karridale, at the formation of M. C. Davies Karri & Jarrah Co.:

- L. J. Davies — Private Secretary.
- Herbert Davies — General Manager.
- A. L. Davies — Manager, Store and Stock Dept.
- P. V. Davies — Works Manager.
- F. B. Davies — Mills Manager.
- I. Butler — Chief Mechanical Engineer.
- J. M. Bagot, C.E. — Engineer and Surveyor.
- J. Delfs — Harbour Master.
- W. Jamieson — Accountant.
- R. C. Bennett — Cashier.
- S. H. Carr — Private Secretary.
- A. E. Randell — Doctor.
- J. Ross — Foreman, Karridale Mill.
- G. F. McGregor — Foreman, Boranup Mill.
- J. Rodgers — Foreman, Bush.

- W. Gepp — Foreman, Horses and Livestock.
 J. Thomas — Foreman, Wheelwrights and Carpenters.
 Len McDaniel — Chief Storekeeper.
 Jack McDaniel — Bookkeeper.
 D. McVicar — Mills Storekeeper.
 A. McMillan — Foreman, Foundry.
 A. McKay — Foreman, Railway Works.
 Hugh Tombs — Manager for Mills.
 J. Richards — Train Driver, *Renown*.
 Tom Irving — Train Driver, *Kate*.
 Mr. Dyer — Headmaster of Karridale School.

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Ebb-flow of a Boom Town: The History of Bullfinch

By G. J. DELLAR

1. THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN THE YILGARN

Some years before the discovery of gold at Bullfinch, there had been considerable development of the industry elsewhere in the Yilgarn area. It is therefore pertinent to touch first upon the earlier finds significantly connected with that of Bullfinch.

Yilgarn (the native name for white quartz) was first found to be a gold-bearing district in 1887, when Charlie Glass discovered a specimen while sinking a dam near his home at Murgakine, six miles north west of Kununoppin.⁽¹⁾ A party was fitted out by the Settlers' Association, with the aid of a government grant of £300, and under the leadership of Bernard Colreavy the country east of Newcastle (now Toodyay) was prospected. It was quite promising, but they could not trace the origin of the stone which Glass had picked up. It was believed that it had been carried there by an emu or an aborigine. A second expedition was financed by Edward Keane, and at the same time a Perth syndicate under Harry Anstey set out. Late in 1887 Anstey returned to Perth with reports of a find in the Yilgarn hills. This resulted in a rush to peg out the country, but nothing came of it. There was a report that a dolly pot which had been welded with brass had been used.

In 1888 Colreavy discovered Golden Valley. This is eight and a half miles north west of Bullfinch, and is of historical interest, as it was the first gold mining lease in the Eastern Goldfields. A plaque stating this fact was erected in 1928.

Other finds quickly followed. Tom Riseley and Mick Toomey after sinking and driving to about 200 feet at the Golden Valley found the reef had cut out, so they decided to try further south. Accompanied by Charlie Crossland they got to Koorkoordine, where their black boy told them there was "plenty gabbie, never die". They struck one of Hunt's wells, which was as dry as themselves, so had to tramp back to Barcolin. They travelled by the Southern Cross, which led to the naming of the present town. Three days later, after a fall of rain, they found gold about four miles from Koorkoordine. After pegging the claim, one of their horses was staked, and they had to return to Golden Valley.⁽²⁾ The news of a silver find at Mt. Jackson led them in that direction. On the way they met Hugh Fraser and Joe Rodgers, who went through to Southern Cross, where they pegged out leases known as Fraser's. Another prospector, William J. Parker, discovered Parker's range. Tom Riseley later turned coachman and teamster and drove the first four-in-hand to Sou-