

The Story of either an unprovable childish bet between two Private schools that had horrible consequences for an undeserving tree and its Community.... or was it the work of The Nutter...????



## The McWilliam tree story...

IF there is one singular striking feature of Tuross Head, it would be its magnificent Norfolk Island pine trees.

A pioneer settler of Tuross, the late Mr. Hector McWilliam planted more than 200 trees, many of which line the town's main road, which was named after him.

The town commemorates Mr. McWilliam's tree planting effort with a beautiful stone cairn surrounded by pine trees in a reserve overlooking the ocean.

All the Norfolk Island pine trees planted were germinated from seeds, except two plants which came from the island.

s/star 7/11/1990

# ONE TREE POINT PINE RING-BARKED

The people of **Tuross** Head are angry.

The Norfolk pine on One Tree Point, a significant landmark of Tuross, was ring barked by vandals on Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

The damage is so severe that a local

horticulturalist says the tree may not survive.

Soon after 8 a.m. on Sunday Walter Kohler of Bodalla Nursery received a phone call seeking his advice and help.

The call came from Shire Engineer Peter Spurway, a resident of Tuross.

Mr Kohler went to One Tree Point and examined the damaged tree.

## DEEP

His comment was: "The bark is deeply cut, to above 80 centimetres in places, and there are the marks of an axe and a saw".

Then operation Tree Rescue began. People on the spot helped to gather fresh bark, stripped from vigorous young Norfolk pines and this was painstakingly applied to the ring barked area in a method known as bridge grafting.

A covering of hessian was added for 'visual protection' after the graft had been nailed on.

It was essential, said Mr Kohler, that the tree have as much water as it needed, to reduce any stress, and here the

Tuross Fire Brigade came to the rescue, running hose pipes from the parking area of the point out to the tree.

And a tree lover named Alf volunteered to do the watering.

This is not the first time the lone pine on One Tree Point has suffered at the hands of vandals; on another occasion some of its upper limbs were swan off.

"But will it survive this time?" is the question on Tuross lips.

Walter Kohler's reply is cautious.

"We will know in about six months time.

"It is a young tree, about 30 to 40 years of age, and it is healthy.

"Fortunately the damage was discovered early and so the treatment has a fair chance of being effective but the cuts are deep.

"We will just have to wait and see.

One local resident is so annoyed by the attack on the tree he has offered a \$300 reward for information leading to the conviction of the culprit.

Details of that are in an advertisement in today's Star.

*The Examiner*

# Tuross shocked at tree damage



ABOVE: Walter Kohler at work trying to save the pine on One Tree Point (insert), the symbol of Tuross.

Tuross residents were shocked on Sunday morning as the news spread through the village that vandals had caused massive damage to the Norfolk Island pine on One Tree Point, the symbol of Tuross Heads.

Sometime on Saturday night vandals ringbarked the tree, removing about 60 cm of bark right around the tree and cutting deep into the trunk with a saw in a failed attempt to cut the tree down.

Reaction was swift once the word spread via the newsagency as residents picked up their Sunday morning papers.

Lesley O'Brien was one

## Town's symbol is ringbarked

who was quick to respond. "We got blisters carrying buckets of water out to the point from the carpark trying to keep the trunk wet," she said.

"I just can't understand why anyone would do this."

The Tuross Bushfire Brigade later organised a long line and soaker hose to keep the moisture level high on the windy headland.

To try and save the tree, Walter Kohler from the

Bodalla Nursery was called in and he began to place "Bridge Grafts" across the ringbarked area with the help of Graham Calcutt, Mick Ivory and Sue Nash.

As helpers bought pieces of bark taken from healthy pines in the area, Walter nailed and pasted them into place to restore the tree's lifeline.

"They are difficult trees to save," said Mr Kohler, "but it's a battler this one."

"The top has been lop-

ped off at some stage, it's a fighter, it wants to live."

Harry Watkins, one of the locals gathered to assist the rescue effort, said the tree had been planted by Hector McWilliam, the original owner of Tuross in the 1930's.

"He planted all the pines around here, taking the seed from the big tree up at Tuross House."

"He walked around town with a backpack and horse and cart to water them and make sure they lived."

Mr Kohler said a stream of visitors to the tree was constant on Sunday morning as he worked all expressing dismay and disgust at the senseless vandalism.

# Town's symbol hit again

An attempt was made last weekend to blow up the Norfolk Island pine on One Tree Point at Tuross, the same tree which was massively damaged the previous weekend when it was ringbarked.

Planted by Hector McWilliam, the original owner of Tuross about 50 years ago, the tree has become the symbol of the village and the criminal vandalism has angered residents.

On Sunday morning, the hose provided by the Tuross Bushfire Brigade to water the tree was found cut in four places and a four gallon drum of an explosive mix of fertiliser and diesel was found next to a hole which had been dug at the base of the tree.

Graham Calcutt was one resident particularly angry at the destruction and he has offered a \$600 reward by information leading to the apprehension of the people responsible, as well as pushing for the floodlighting of the area.

"The town is getting angry, if we floodlight the point there will be 150 windows looking out over it at night, watching the tree."

"If the council say their budget won't allow them to do it I'll be happy to pay for the lights."

Mr Calcutt, who was one of those who worked with tree surgeon Walter Kohler to bridge graft the ringbarked trunk. He said the vandals had not damaged the section they had patched.

"In fact, thanks to all the watering it has had, the tree wept beautifully and is starting to seal up around the graft, which gives us more hope that it will recover."

Fencing would not solve the problem, according to Mr Calcutt.

"It's a Public Reserve and the minute you start putting up fences, a criminal like this would have them worked out."

At the meeting of the Eurobodalla Shire Council on Monday, the plight of the One Tree pine was raised by Shire President Chris Vardon and the council resolved to hold immediate discussions with the Illawarra County Council on the costs of providing floodlighting.

The council will also investigate the option of fencing the tree to prevent further damage.

Examiner

14/11/1990

## HERITAGE ORDER PLAN FOR TUROSS PINE

Councillor Con Baltis said yesterday he intended moving at the next meeting of Eurobodalla Shire Council that the tree on One Tree Point, Tuross, should be placed on National Heritage lists.

"That would deter vandals," he said.

"Apart from anything else, if the tree was listed damaging it would result in hefty fines."

The tree was heavily ringbarked one night about a fortnight ago.

Afterwards residents applied bark grafts and were anxiously watching to see if the tree would recover.

Then last weekend someone planted a bomb

... a four gallon drum containing diesel fuel and nitrates ... in a hole under the tree.

### WENT OFF

It didn't go off.

But local man Graeme Calcutt did!

He doubled the reward of \$300 already on offer for information leading to the conviction of the vandals.

And he contacted Eurobodalla Shire Council suggesting a floodlight could be rigged up to illuminate the tree.

"Apart from being a

deterrent to vandals," he said, "the light would be an aid to fishermen and sailors."

Mr. Calcutt said one of the attributes of the tree was that during the day it was a landmark for people at sea.

"Darkness is a friend of people who do this sort of thing," he said.

"If the tree were lit people harming it could be seen through anyone of 150 windows."

Council has decided to take action on the proposal, in consultation with Illawarra County Council.

S/S/Star  
16/11/1990

# 50-year tradition ends



At work building the man-proof fence to protect the Norfolk Island pine on One Tree Point at Tuross on Wednesday, Ted Butler (left) and Bill Seymour.

30 NOV 1990

"It's a real shame it has come to this," said both workmen and onlookers at One Tree Point at Tuross on Wednesday afternoon.

Council workmen were building a two metre high man-proof chain wire fence around the Norfolk Island pine tree which has been massively damaged by vandals in a series of attacks in the last month.

The tree is recognised as the symbol of Tuross and was planted 50 years ago by Hector McWilliam, the man who carried out the first subdivisions of the town.

It was ringbarked a month ago, an attempt was made to blow it up and diesel has been poured around the base.

As well, hoses used to

## Tuross pine fenced

water it in an attempt to lessen the trauma have been slashed twice.

"I've been coming here since I was a child, as did my father and his father," said one bystander who walked up to see what was happening.

"This is a real shame, both to see the damage to the tree which has been here as long as I can remember and what has to be done to protect it."

The fence was built on the orders of the Shire

Council, given at the meeting held last Monday.

The Shire Engineer was directed to take immediate action on the construction to save the tree.

The workmen on the job on Wednesday, Ted Butler and Bill Seymour both agreed the construction of the fence was a job they wished had not been needed, but they agreed the councillors had no alternative until the vandals are caught.

"This is just a beautiful, pristine area and a six foot fence topped with barbed wire seems really out of place," said Ted Butler.

Tuross residents have offered a \$700 reward for information leading to the conviction of the vandals and the area will be flooded in the near future to help prevent repeat attacks.

# One Tree pine is protected after attacks

The Norfolk Island pine tree on One Tree Point at Tuross will be protected by the Eurobodalla Shire Council.

The tree has been the target of vandals in recent months, being massively ring-barked and having explosives placed at the base in an attempt to blow it up.

Skilled tree surgery appears to have saved the tree and following a public outcry, the Eurobodalla Shire Council built a man-proof fence around the tree late last year.

A number of submissions were received by the council, asking the tree be placed on the Heritage List which may afford some protection in providing increased penalties for vandals.

Submissions came from Tuross Community Aid, Tuross Bushfire Brigade, the Progress Association, Senior Citizens and Pensioners Club and the Tuross Lakes Preservation Society as well as the Moruya and District Historical Society.

All felt the tree had significance as it was planted by Hector McWilliam, the man who pioneered the establishment of the village of Tuross.

Bodalla horticulturalist, Walter Kohler was asked to place a value on the tree and he estimated it was worth \$10,976, based on a method developed by the Australian Institute of Horticulture.

That method takes into consideration factors like occurrence, historical association, location, form, vigour and live crown size.

The council considered applying to have the tree placed on the state Heritage List, but felt it could not be demonstrated the tree had "significance to the state".

But it does have local significance, so protection was provided under a planning control called IDO 3 which allows the conservation of items of environmental significance.

Director of Planning, Paul May told the councillors in a report to last Monday's council meeting that this mechanism, combined with the Tree Preservation Order, the security fence and lighting installed by Illawarra Electricity was the best way to protect the tree.

# New pine for One Tree Point

S. STAR  
19-2-93

The Norfolk Pine at Tuross Head One Tree Point has been declared dead and will be cut down as soon as possible and handed over to the Tuross Lakes Preservation Group and The Tuross Rotters for promotional and fundraising purposes if Council adopts the recommendation of its Works and Facilities committee.

ties Committee recommended Council approve the proposals including that the community groups should instigate a public meeting aimed at formulating a management plan for One Tree Point.

The pine at One Tree was a well known landmark but unfortunately damage to the tree inflicted by vandals led to its death despite efforts by local groups and residents to save the tree.

But a new tree will be planted and local groups have suggested a more interesting facility for tourists and residents alike can be built on the site.

It has been proposed to place some form of plaque on the point giving a brief history of both Aboriginal and white settlement of the area and the significance of One Tree Point.

## IDEAS

The Tuross Lakes Preservation Group and the Tuross Rotters have both come up with ideas on the rehabilitation of the area.

A common theme of both groups is the need for additional security lighting near the site to prevent vandals attacking the tree.

Various proposals have been made as how money could be raised to fund extra lighting through promotion of the original tree and its disposal.

In a report to the Works and Facilities Committee director

Ross Hayward pointed out if any use was to be made of the timber from the original One Tree it should be cut down within the next few weeks.

He proposed Council Workforce cut down the tree and the Preservation Group and the Rotters be advised they have been donated the timber.

## TALKS

The replanting of the tree and any associated works would be subject to further discussion among the interested local parties.

The Works and Facili-

# Tuross mourns loss of historic pine

A 4 era ended on Monday morning as the historic lone pine at Tuross Head (pictured right) was felled.

The tree, which had died despite several attempts to save it, was removed by members of the Tuross Rotters organisation and professional tree-feller "Monkey" Mick May about 9am on Monday.

Repeated attacks by vandals had helped to kill the Norfolk Island Pine at One Tree Point.

Rotters spokesman Graham Calcutt said logs cut from the felled tree would be treated and stored for three months. They would then be turned into souvenirs to be sold.

The organisation planned to use the proceeds from sales to help establish lighting for the area.

In consultation with other Tuross community groups, it had been agreed that no replacement tree would be planted until the lighting had been established.

The dead tree was estimated at being 48-years-old.

Tuross Rotters and the Tuross Lakes Preservation Group have taken on the project to replace the tree and restore the point to properly reflect its heritage value.

A suitable Norfolk



Island Pine, about 1.2 metres high, preferably growing in a tub, is needed to replace the dead tree.

Tuross Rotters has ap-

pealed for a pine to be donated.

Those willing to help with the project can contact Graham Calcutt on (044) 738661 or 742973.

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# (Pine vandalised, again

TUROSS residents hope to track down the vandals who have left Lone Tree Hill bereft once again.

A small Norfolk Island pine tree which "materialised" on the historic hill earlier this year was severely vandalised last weekend.

It is believed tourists planted the tree to replace its towering predecessor, which had to be cut down 20 months ago following five separate vandalism attacks.

The original tree, planted 40 years ago by

Eurobodalla pioneer Hector McWilliam, was once the pride of Tuross.

Attracting as many as 300 visitors a day, the towering pine survived massive ringbarking, homemade explosives and a dousing in distillate.

But when the fire brigade hose used to provide water to the tree was destroyed, it was the last straw.

Tuross residents were forced to cut down their favourite tree, which local woodturners later made into souvenirs.

When the second tree was mysteriously planted in January, members of the Rescue One Tree organisation in Tuross hoped it would grow to maturity.

But it wasn't to be. The second tree went in the same way as the ill-fated pine Hector McWilliam planted.

The latest attack of vandalism on Lone Tree Hill has outraged Tuross residents and Rescue One Tree members.

"We're very upset," said Rescue One Tree president Graham Calcutt.

"The tree kept the spirit of the place alive, and now it's gone."

Mr Calcutt said the small tree had been "pulled apart and wrecked".

"Several lines of inquiry are currently being pursued, and volunteers are patrolling the hill to make sure the vandals don't return," Mr Calcutt said.

Mr Calcutt said Tuross residents were determined to plant a new tree on the hill to replace the two which were vandalised.

However, a new tree will not be planted until security measures are in place.

The Rescue One Tree organisation are planning to erect a fence and strong lighting with the help of Eurobodalla Council.

An anonymous donor has given the organisation a 2000 candlepower spotlight, similar to those used on cricket grounds to illuminate night matches.

"We will be erecting the light soon, and the erection of the fence will follow," Mr Calcutt said.

"But we're adamant that another tree won't be planted without the fence and light."

27/7/1994

# Pine tree return

The Tuross community has replanted One-Tree-Hill with a five-foot-high Norfolk Island pine to re-instate its symbol of spirit.

Approximately 60 people gathered on Monday, 10 Npm, to witness the re-planting and the culmination of a lot of hard work by some 30 Rotters (Replace-one-tree'ers), Tuross golf club and bowling club members and locals.

The planting day was perfect, beautifully sunny and warm and almost a sign for those present that the tree would grow quickly, safely and strong alongside its namesake which had stood since 1928 until vandalism last year.

Mayor Chris Vardon and Deputy Mayor, Rob Pollock, both took a hand on the spade and later mayor Vardon express both delight and sadness.

"There is delight in the way all have come together to make this planting possible and sadness indeed that there is this fence around it - almost a jail - to stop the new tree being vandalised.

"Many people recognise the significance of this tree as a symbol to be preserved - representing the spirit of the people of Tuross and of the people of our shire."

Both mayor and deputy mayor Rob Pollock took turns on the spade to plant the tree while Graham Calcutt, President of the Rotters, acted as MC.

Mr Calcutt presented the mayor Vardon and Cr Pollock with timber turnings from the old one-tree, as well as to Alwin Himan, the council's southern works manager, and to others.

Then Mayor received a gavel and wooden base "to keep his council in order," and Cr Pollock and Mr Himan, wooden vessels to hold pens and items.

Mr Calcutt thanked the woodturner Basil Marsh for his work in creating some 100 items out of the old one-tree which included bowls, vases, jewellery boxes, and clocks which were subsequently raffled and sold for over \$1000 to help make the re-planting possible.

Harry Watkins was also

Continues next page....

*Examiner*

# ns to Tuross

thanked for his woodturning role in making the clocks which he says "were cut from the tree to create a wonderful fleck pattern".

Harry also managed to transport with his backhoe, 188 tons of topsoil to one-tree-hill, aided by volunteers, to help make the site a more amenable environment for tree and grass growth and to limit wind erosion.

Also thanked were Richard and Isabell Brice of Trunketabella Gardens and Nursery for supplying the six-year-old Norfolk pine.

"It will take many, many years for the tree to grow - it is not a quick grower, just the opposite," says Richard.

And somewhere in that statement is a bit of the Tuross spirit for something that grows despite the hardships.

Hector McWilliam apparently made some attempts to grow the Norfolk



A crowd of 60 people gathered to witness the new six-year-old tree being planted.

Pine at One-Tree in 1928 and finally succeeded on the third attempt.

Perhaps the message is about the preservation or conservation spirit or about the community's perseverance and symbiotic relationship with his environment.

Perhaps about conscience.

Whatever the modern spirit, no chances are being taken with the erection of a powerful floodlight by Illawarra Electricity's area manager, Allan Boyce.

The light illuminates One-Tree and also the in-

coming waves on both sides of the causeway.

Only time will tell whether the community's spirit will again be broken by vandalism but only a strong optimism prevailed on Monday's bright sunny day at the new One-Tree-Hill.

# Tuross spirit lives on



Mayor Chris Vardon, deputy mayor Rob Pollock and president of the Replace-One-Tree (Rotters), Graham Calcutt, planting a new spirit of Tuross - a five-foot- high Norfolk Island pine - at Tuross's One-Tree-Hill on Monday. Full story - P5.





Chris Varden commented to Harry ... “it was good that you dressed up for the occasion....”

For more photos please click [here](#)