

The Augustine Henry Memorial Grove— A Record

O. V. Mooney¹

On the 29th September, 1951, the Society of Irish Foresters with the co-operation of the Department of Lands, Forestry Division, dedicated a grove of trees and shrubs to the memory of Professor Augustine Henry, at Avondale, and, as the report of the event in the *Journal* (1) of that time runs, "the Dedication Stone was unveiled by the Minister for Lands in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering of members of our Society, friends and colleagues of Dr. Henry and members of the public." Alice Henry, his widow, who had been Professor Henry's close and gifted collaborator in his work, was present, and was the most honoured guest on the occasion.

Mr. T. McEvoy, the President of the Society at that time, Mr. H. M. FitzPatrick, a friend and a one-time student of Professor Henry, and Dr. T. Walsh, Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Dublin, paid tributes and recounted many incidences of his career and were fully reported in *Irish Forestry* (1). However, for those who have come to the Society in more recent times a brief resumé of Professor Henry's career and his achievements may not be out of place at this time.

Augustine Henry was born in 1857 into an ancient Irish clan, the O'Innerighs of Derry, and spent most of his boyhood near Draperstown, in that county. In 1877 he took his B.A. degree at Galway, with first-class honours and a gold medal, and his M.A. at Queen's, Belfast, in the following year. In 1879 he passed his final medical examination at Queen's and, subsequently went to Edinburgh for post graduate medical studies. In 1881 he went to China to take up a medical post in the British Chinese Customs Service. Dr. Henry did not find fulfilment in his medical work, or satisfaction in the social life of the white man in China posts at that time. He turned to the study of plants and botany and became a plant collector, a line which eventually completely absorbed him and led him on his main life's work.

During his time in China he sent back great numbers of plants to Kew, and it has been stated that he introduced five hundred new species to Europe and twenty-five new genera. The total number of specimens received at Kew amounted to 158,000.

Dr. Henry left China in 1900 and soon after he went to

¹Senior Inspector, Forest and Wildlife Service, Department of Lands, Dublin.

Nancy to study Forestry for two years. Returning, he worked at Kew and started in 1903 with Elwes his great work, "The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland," which was published in 1913 and still stands as a classic of its sort. In 1907 Dr. Henry took up a post as Reader in Forestry at Cambridge University, where he spent six years. It was during these times that he became the pioneer worker in tree genetics producing amongst other things two hybrid poplars and became world famous for his work in this field.

Finally in 1913 he came back to Ireland as Professor of Forestry at the Royal College of Science for Ireland, later part of University College, Dublin, where he worked until his death in 1930.

There is no doubt about Henry's world standing in his own fields of work; forestry, tree breeding, and botany. Of him, Dr. Ernest Schreiner, now one of the world's first tree breeders, said: "Augustine Henry was the first forester to realise the possibilities of creating better forest trees by scientific breeding and he was the first forester to do something about it." In 1929 a new wing in the Fan Memorial Institute of Botany and Biology in Peking was dedicated to "Augustine Henry, through whose assiduous botanical exploration of Central and South Western China, the knowledge of our flora has been greatly extended."

Professor Henry's contribution to forestry in his own country was great if not so well recorded. It was he who in 1907 emphasised western N. American conifers as the basis of a future forest industry in Ireland and his influence through Mr. A. C. Forbes was great in the formation of the early forest plantations such as Avondale and elsewhere.

Henry was, to quote Sheila Pim (2) "Irish through and through." He turned away from greater laurels and greater fame to come back and work and live his life in, and for Ireland.

THE MEMORIAL GROVE

In the early stages of planning the Henry Memorial Grove it was the intention to fill the plot with trees and shrubs which had some association with Henry or which were specific to his name. Due to the non-availability of appropriate plants and the length of time it would have taken to come by them it became evident that the original ideal would have to be abandoned or at least watered down considerably. At this juncture it was Mrs. Henry herself who happily commended a compromise to some "Henry trees" and a representation of trees from other parts of the world as Henry was a much travelled man and was associated with the growing of exotic trees in forestry practice in Ireland.

Thus the apparently random *mixum-gatherum* of trees in the

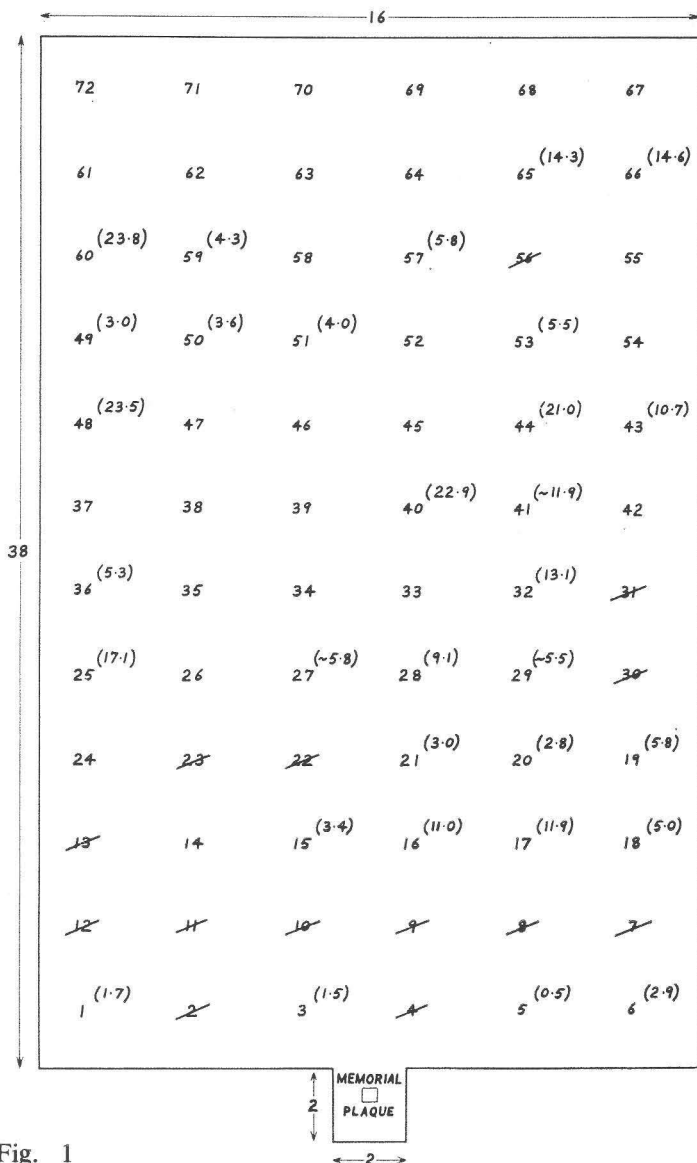


Fig. 1

Plan of Memorial grove. Not to scale. Numbers 1 to 72 are original planting positions. For plant names see Table 1. Numbers with oblique strokes indicate failures. Numbers in brackets beside tree numbers indicate tree heights. All measurements are in metres.

Grove. Nevertheless there are six species of trees and shrubs in the plot which have a direct association with Henry. Regretably there is no representative from the South American continent.

The trees and shrubs in the plot were planted at 3.2m. apart in 1950 and 1951. They were pit planted and there were no special cultural operations at establishment time except for the eucalypts which were moss-balled. The *Abies nobilis* were lifted from a plantation and were about 1m. high at the time. The lay-out and the location of the various plants at planting time is shown in Figure 1 and Table 1.

Plant numbers 1 to 36 were planted in March 1951, and the remaining numbers up to 72 with the exception of number 50

Tree No.	Identity
1, 3, 5	<i>Hypericum patulum henryi</i>
2, 4, 6	<i>Rhododendron henryi</i>
7, ...	<i>Tsuga diversifolia</i>
8, 9, 10, 11	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>
12, ...	<i>Tsuga brunoniana</i> (<i>T. dumosa</i>)
13, 18	<i>Cedrus atlantica glauca</i>
14, 15, 16, 17	<i>Pinus armandi</i>
12, 24	<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> var <i>elegans</i>
20, 22	<i>Abies lowiana</i> (<i>A. concolor</i> var <i>lowiana</i>)
21, 23	<i>Acer rubrum</i>
25, 30	<i>Pinus radiata</i>
26, 28	<i>Thuja plicata</i>
27, 29	<i>Quercus cerris</i>
31, 36	<i>Cedrus deodara</i>
32, 33, 34, 35	<i>Pseudotsuga taxifolia</i> (<i>P. menziesii</i>)
37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47	<i>X Populus vernirubens</i>
38, 40, 42, 46, 48, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60	<i>Eucalyptus muelleri</i> (<i>E. Johnstoni</i>)
44	<i>Spiraea henryi</i>
49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59	<i>X Populus generosa</i>
50	<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>
61, 66, 67, 72	<i>Abies procera</i>
62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71	<i>Abies grandis</i>

Table I. Henry Memorial Grove. Key to Fig. 1.

This table shows the identity of the trees as recorded at the time of planting. Modern synonyms are shown where necessary in brackets.

were planted in 1950. No. 50 *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, The Fossil Tree or Dawn redwood was planted a few years later having been obtained from the Botanic Gardens as a plant from the original world distribution of seed of this tree which was only discovered in Central China in 1945.

A number of trees failed and these failures are indicated by oblique lines through the appropriate tree numbers. The reasons

for the failures are unrecorded and can only be guessed at and accordingly will not be discussed.

A number of selected trees were measured for height and these measurements are indicated above and to the right of the tree numbers.

Some simple points of interest emerge from the comparative performances of the various species at this present time. *Populus generosa* and *Populus vernirubens* both hybrids produced by Henry have shown the abhorrence this genus has for competition from vegetation and lateral or overhead shade and low pH and are mostly weak malformed trees. The identity of the eucalypts in the plot calls for critical examination. As is already well established the eucalypts can in certain sets of circumstances outgrow any other tree we have here. We note that No. 60, *E. urnigera**, at 23.8 m. and No. 48, *E. Muelleri*, at 23.5 m. are fine trees. All the original plantings of eucalypts are recorded as *E. Muelleri* but it is evident that *E. urnigera* and *E. johnstoni* (from Glenealy) are present and the identities will require reconsideration. It will be remarked that No. 65, *Abies grandis*, probably our fastest growing conifer on this type of ground has only reached 14.3 m., and No. 66, *Abies procera*, beside it has reached 14.6 m. The two rows of conifers 61 to 71 have closed canopy between the rows and completely suppressed ground vegetation. Douglas fir and western red cedars are all good healthy specimens but unspectacular in height growth so far.

Pinus armandi. These trees have grown well and look healthy, one, No. 17, having reached 11.9 m., but No. 15 has had its top blown off at 3.3 m. It is of interest to note that seed of this tree, Armand's pine, was sent from China to Britain by Henry in 1897 and is regarded as the first introduction there though beaten a close head in Europe by seed which was received by Villmorin in France two years earlier. (3). Both specimens of *Cryptomeria japonica* var *elegans* are in excellent condition at about 5.8 m.

The *Hypericum patulum henryi* are variable but No. 1 is a fine bush and flowers profusely. No doubt all these bushes and the *Rhododendron henryi* (this should probably be *R. augustinii*). No. 6 would respond to cultivation and manuring.

Probably due to its being planted a few years after and possibly to its use as a source for cuttings the *Metasequoia* has not grown very vigorously being much overshadowed, but it is still a healthy tree. Some trees have been lost but the only failures of importance are the four *Ginkgo biloba* which have completely

* Tree No. 60 is plainly *E. urnigera* and is accordingly referred to as such.

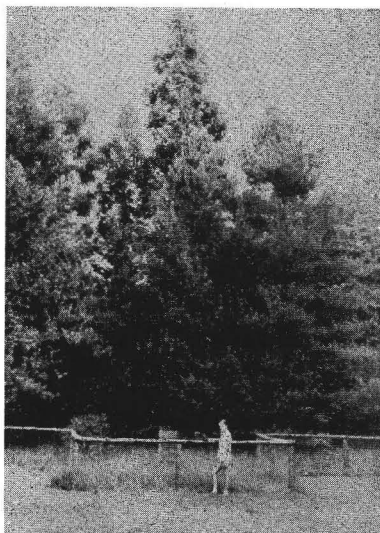
disappeared. Some trees which have been suppressed like *Abies lowiana* and others might be helped by discreet removal of overhead competition.

Finally, one name does not appear in the chronicle of events associated with the Henry Memorial Grove, the late Michael O'Beirne whose silvicultural skills had contributed so much to Avondale. Having retired from the Forest Service he took a very active part in establishing the Memorial Grove.

In writing this note I have been helped by recollections and knowledge of events at the time of planting from Mr. J. J. Deasy and I am grateful to Mr. Chris Kelly for drawing the plan and to the Editor for suggesting that the present state of play should be put on record.

REFERENCES

1. Anon. 1951. Dedication of Memorial Grove to Augustine Henry. *Irish Forestry* 8, 78-80.
2. Pim, Sheila. 1966. *The wood and the trees. A biography of Augustine Henry.* MacDonald, London.
3. Dallimore, W., Jackson, A.B., and Harrison, S.G. 1966. *A handbook of coniferae and Ginkgoaceae.* Fourth Edn. Edwin Arnold. London.



General view of Memorial Grove