



Truck fully loaded with timber fruit cases.

With cardboard and plastic boxes being used more and more, the demise of the timber fruit case was inevitable.

Bellthorpe Box and Timber Company closed its doors in 2000.



Woodford Historical Society 2025

Compiled using information from:-

David Keir and photos provided courtesy of David Keir

Fact Sheet – B2



Sawmills of Durundur ...

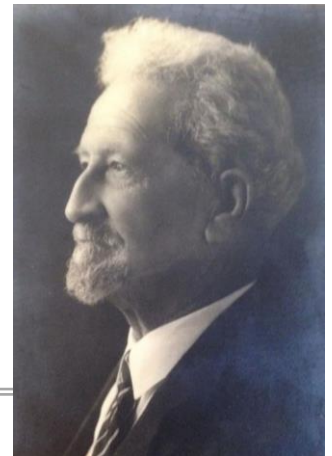
Keir's Sawmill (c1945 – 2000)



c2016: Keir's Sawmill

In about 1945, Hector Menzies Keir started a sawmill on the family property at Bellthorpe.

David Keir (1854-1933)



Bellthorpe Sawmills

Keir's Sawmill *continued*

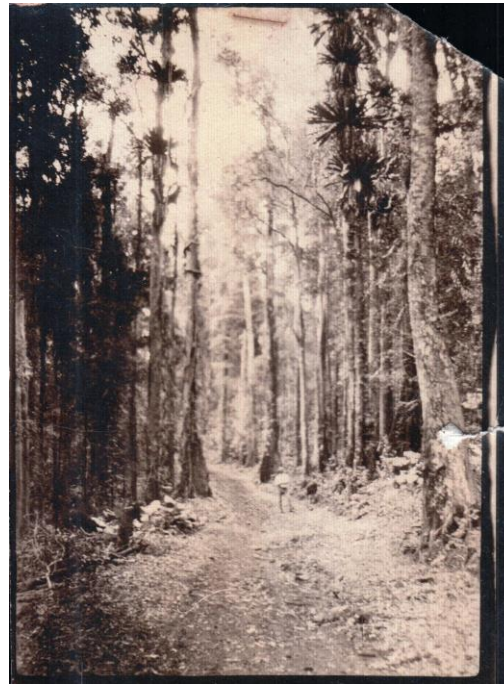
David Keir (Hector Menzies Keir's father) came to Bellthorpe, then called Bellford, from New South Wales in about 1907 with his wife Martha and their children. They were part of 'Bellford Settlement' of NSW settlers.



Dave Keir's recollections:

My father, Hector Keir, started his first sawmill in about 1945 further down the back of the property from where the most current one had been. It was run by a Titan engine out of an old two cylinder tractor which was kerosine and petrol driven.

He later bought a Southern Cross from Nugget Brooker (Brooker's Case Mill Woodford) and in around 1948 the second sawmill was built closer to his home at the front of the property.



Keir Road, Bellthorpe

My father and I became partners in the sawmill (HM & DRL Keir). We did our own cutting, hauling and snagging. Timber was cut by cross cut saws and pit saws and hauled by a team of horses. At one stage all we had to haul the logs and sawn timber was an old Reo bus I had bought in Gatton. We made a cab for it and it had an 18 foot wheel base.



Dave and Fred cutting timber



Brothers Lionel and Hector cutting a log

On Dad's passing, I took over the running of the sawmill by myself and renamed it Bellthorpe Box and Timber Company. I employed 4 people and with them cut timber for fruit cases.

Bellthorpe Box and Timber's fruit cases were delivered far and wide around Australia with orders going to Humpty Doo in Darwin and thousands of tomato cases were sent to Bowen for just one farm. The sawmill also cut 90% of the pineapple bins required in Queensland.

At one stage, to value add to the operation I was building the case boxes as well and there were up to 10 men employed.

As well as cutting the case timber, sawn timber was cut for building. My brother Hux was a builder and built all the housing commission houses in Ipswich with timber from Bellthorpe Box and Timber.