Location: On the Derwent River near New Norfolk

Owner: Norske Skog.

The marker is located outside the entrance to the Mill.

The Mill

Construction commenced in 1938 and the mill started operation in 1941, using 75% eucalyptus hardwood fibre and 25% imported softwood fibre.

The company, Australian Newsprint Mills, was granted extensive hardwood forest concessions in the Styx and Florentine valleys. Logs were delivered by rail.

Rolls of newsprint were delivered initially by rail to the port of Hobart, then by barge down the river.

It took 20 years of research to find a way of making newsprint from hardwood. The team was lead by Lou Benjamin who became general manager of the Mill. Fellow researcher John Somerville became Chief Chemist. Sir Keith Murdoch was Chairman of the company. Percy Sandwell, a Canadian Engineer, oversaw the design and construction of the Mill.

The Mill produced 20,000 tons of paper in the first year. A second machine was installed in 1952, increasing output to 80,000 tonnes/year. The third machine installed in 1969 raised the capacity to 170,000 tonnes/year. The output had reached 300,000 tonnes/year in 2009 when the use of hardwood fibre ceased, and newsprint was produced entirely from plantation softwood.

Heritage Significance

The Boyer Mill was the first in the world to make newsprint from hardwood fibre and the only newsprint mill in the southern hemisphere.

Backed by Australia’s major newspaper publishers, the Mill averted a shortage of newsprint during world War 2.

The Mill pioneered the use of low grade high ash Tasmanian coal and transferred the technology to other Tasmanian industries.

The Mill provided significant social benefits to the town of New Norfolk.
Building of the Mill 1939-41

The mill offered such an important role for the town, power and water, that the need was great. The original site was in the north of the town. The town was located on the site of the old town of New Norfolk and is now known as Boyer. The mill was built in 1939-41 and was completed in 1941. The mill was designed by the famous architect, Percy Scudder, and was the first mill in Australia to use mechanical pulp. The mill was equipped with the latest technology and was able to produce high-quality paper.

Milestones in Development

1944: Boyer Mill opened for business.
1945: Boyer Mill produces its first paper.
1946: Boyer Mill achieves full production capacity.
1947: Boyer Mill expanded to meet demand.
1948: Boyer Mill becomes a major supplier of paper to the Australian market.
1949: Boyer Mill receives its first export order.

Community & the Mill The Modern Mill

In the 1980s the focus for further major expansion was directed to an existing mill facility at New Norfolk. The mill was located on the site of the old town of New Norfolk and is now known as Boyer. The mill was built in 1939-41 and was completed in 1941. The mill was designed by the famous architect, Percy Scudder, and was the first mill in Australia to use mechanical pulp. The mill was equipped with the latest technology and was able to produce high-quality paper.

In 2019, responding to the global paper market and community expectations, the Mill moved away from its initial market base to low-cost and enhanced environmental aspects of softwood plantations.