



PALYNOLOGY OF 23 SUBSURFACE SAMPLES,

GIPPSLAND BASIN

BY

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I SUMMARY

The samples studied yielded the following zonal assignments.

Burong-1 :

4100 ft. (cutts) : mixed L. balmei zone (Paleocene) with minor late Cretaceous

4120 ft. (cutts) : C. paradoxa zone (late Albian)

Carrs Creek-1 :

3860 ft. (cutts), 4470 ft. (cutts) : mixed Tertiary, mostly Eocene

4570 ft. (cutts) : C. triplex zone (Coniacian-Turonian)

Dutson Downs-1 :

4590 ft. (cutts) : apparently L. balmei zone (Paleocene)

4740 ft. (cutts), 5360 ft. (cutts) : T. longus (Maastrichtian) to N. senectus (Campanian)

6020 ft. (cutts) : mixed C. triplex (Coniacian-Turonian) and C. striatus (early Albian)

Merriman-1 :

4708-14 ft. (CORE) : T. longus zone (Maastrichtian)

5057-81 ft. (CORE), 5740 ft. (cutts), 5950 ft. (cutts) : apparently all C. triplex zone (Coniacian-Turonian)

North Seaspray-1 :

3650 ft. (cutts) : C. paradoxa zone (late Albian)

3840 ft. (cutts), 4060 ft. (cutts) : C. striatus zone

(early Albian)

Seaspray-1 :

4590 ft. (cutts) : T. longus zone (Maastrichtian)

4790 ft. (cutts), 4879 ft. (cutts) : C. paradoxa zone (late Albian)

Wellington Park-1 :

3719-39 ft. (CORE) : L. balmei zone (Paleocene)

3816-19 ft. (CORE), 4550 ft. (cutts) : apparently all C. paradoxa zone (late Albian)

7380 ft. (CORE) : indeterminate mid Jurassic to mid Cretaceous

These data provide palynological confirmation for the Golden Beach Formation in Carrs Creek-1, Dutson Downs-1, and Merriman-1 and suggest its absence from the other wells. Heavy caving of the Tertiary in the cuttings samples could have masked older assemblages, however.

II INTRODUCTION

Babek Vazhebdeh of Cluff Resources submitted 23 samples for palynology from 7 Gippsland Basin wells. The study was aimed to test for the presence of late Cretaceous strata equivalent to the Golden Beach Formation, as discussed by Lowry (1987). Raw data is presented in Appendix I.

The published palynostratigraphic framework for the Cretaceous of Australia is most recently reviewed by Helby, Morgan and Partridge (1987). Dinoflagellates had been only rarely recorded from the Cretaceous of the Gippsland Basin, although Marshall (1988) provided taxonomic study of some Santonian dinoflagellates. In unpublished work, Marshall (1987a) describes dinoflagellates from new cuttings samples in Pisces-1, Marshall (1987b) describes taxonomy and some stratigraphy of Campanian dinoflagellates and in (1987c) describes some Santonian algal cysts. These all provide clues to the Coniacian-Turonian dinoflagellate sequence, but none provides the basis for a working zonation. The zonal scheme of Helby, Morgan and Partridge is shown in figure 1.

In the Tertiary, the Gippsland zonal scheme was most recently published by Partridge (1976), but the scheme is essentially similar to that for New Zealand for which substantial new data is available in Wilson (1988). Significant new Gippsland data is available in unpublished and privately circulated material, Harris (1985), Morgan (1988) and Marshall and Partridge (1988). The zonal framework of Partridge (1976) is shown in fig.1.

Organic maturity data was generated in the form of the Spore Colour Index. The oil and gas windows follow the general consensus of geochemical literature. The oil window corresponds to spore colours of light-mid brown (2.7) to

dark brown (3.6). This would correspond to Vitrinite Reflectance values of 0.6% to 1.3%. However, factors such as detailed kerogen type, basin type, basin history and heating curves all affect precise interpretation, and analytical machine-based maturity parameters are probably more reliable.

	AGE	SPORE - POLLEN ZONES	DINOFLAGELLATE ZONES	
Early Tertiary	Early Oligocene	<i>P. tuberculatus</i>		
	Late Eocene	upper <i>N. asperus</i>	<i>P. comatum</i>	
		middle <i>N. asperus</i>	<i>V. extensa</i>	
	Middle Eocene	lower <i>N. asperus</i>	<i>D. heterophlycta</i>	
			<i>W. echinosuturata</i>	
	Early Eocene		<i>P. asperopolus</i>	<i>W. edwardsii</i>
			upper <i>M. diversus</i>	<i>W. thompsonae</i>
				<i>W. ornata</i>
			middle <i>M. diversus</i>	<i>W. waipawaensis</i>
			lower <i>M. diversus</i>	<i>W. hyperacantha</i>
Paleocene	upper <i>L. balmei</i>		<i>A. homomorpha</i>	
	lower <i>L. balmei</i>		<i>E. crassitabulata</i>	
				<i>T. evittii</i>
Late Cretaceous	Maastrichtian	<i>T. longus</i>	<i>M. druggii</i>	
	Campanian	<i>T. lillei</i>		<i>I. korojonense</i>
		<i>N. senectus</i>		<i>X. australis</i>
	Santonian	<i>T. pachyexinus</i>		<i>N. aceras</i>
	Coniacian			<i>I. cretaceum</i>
				<i>O. porifera</i>
	Turonian	<i>C. triplex</i>		<i>C. striatoconus</i>
	Cenomanian			<i>P. infusorioides</i>
			<i>A. distocarinatus</i>	
Early Cretaceous	Albian	Late	<i>P. pannosus</i>	
		Middle	upper <i>C. paradoxa</i>	
		Early	lower <i>C. paradoxa</i>	
	Aptian		<i>C. striatus</i>	
			upper <i>C. hughesi</i>	
		lower <i>C. hughesi</i>		
	Barremian			
	Hauterivian		<i>F. wonthaggiensis</i>	
	Valanginian		upper <i>C. australiensis</i>	
	Berriasian		lower <i>C. australiensis</i>	
Juras.	Tithonian		<i>R. watheroensis</i>	

FIGURE 1

ZONATION FRAMEWORK

Ma

TRADITIONAL | PROPOSED

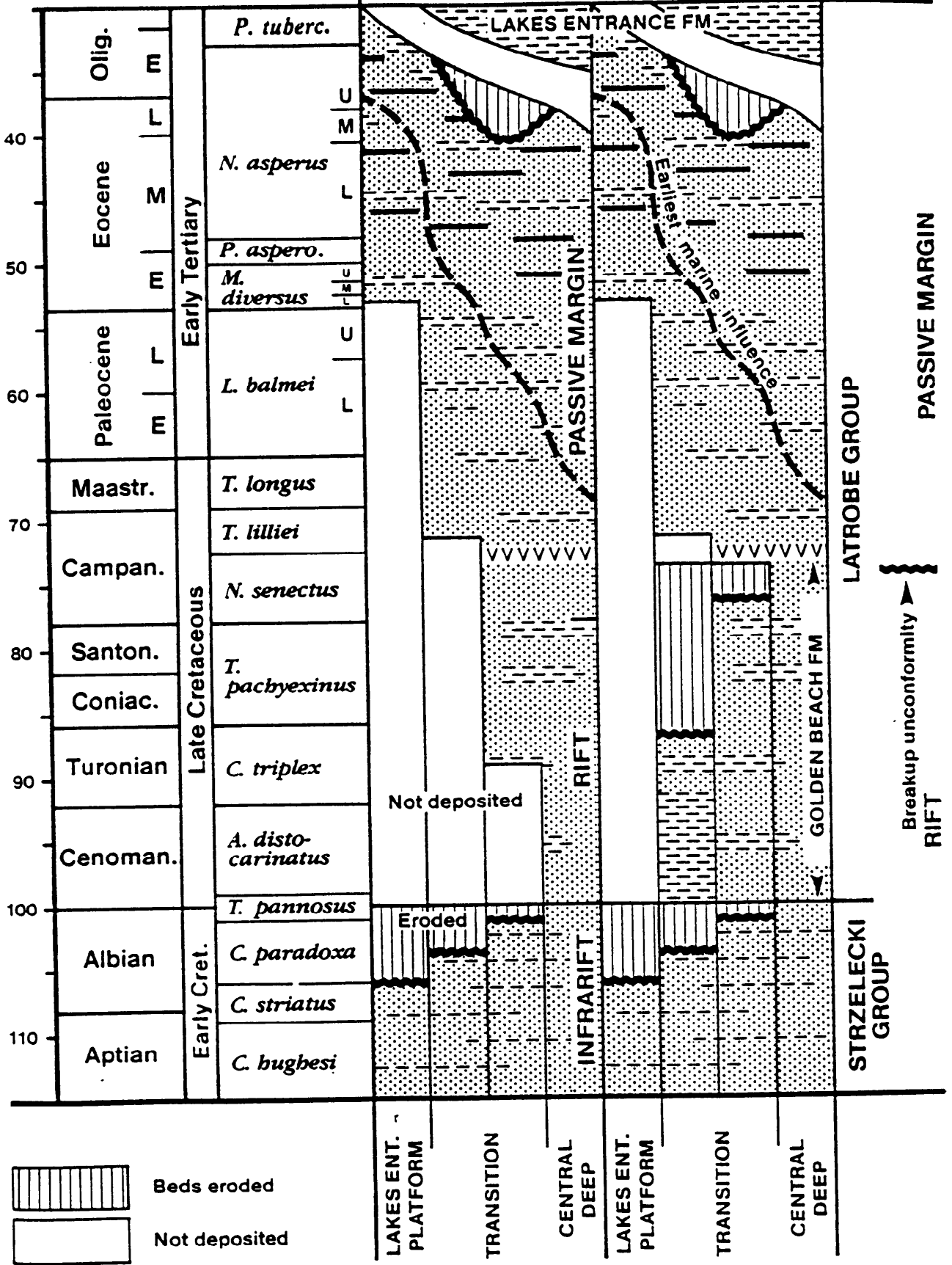


Figure 2 — Time-space diagram generalised for Cretaceous to Eocene in the offshore Gippsland Basin.

III PALYNOSTRATIGRAPHY

A. BURONG-1

- 4100 ft. (cutts) : mixed L. balmei zone and younger with minor late Cretaceous

The age is uncertain as rare Eocene restricted taxa (P. pachypolus and M. tenuis occur mixed with Paleocene and older taxa (L. balmei, G. rudata, T. verrucosus) and very rare Maastrichtian and older taxa (T. confessus). H. harrisii is dominant with frequent G. rudata and Nothofagidites spp. The most obvious interpretation is a Paleocene balmei zone assignment with minor reworked Cretaceous. However, a Maastrichtian upper longus zone assignment is also possible. Nothing older was seen.

Environments appear to be non-marine with abundant and diverse spores and pollen and no marine indicators.

Light brown spore colours suggest marginal maturity for oil generation.

- 4120 ft. (cutts) : C. paradoxa Zone

This assemblage is relatively clean, dominated by O. wellmannii and assigned on the presence of C. paradoxa and the associated spore dominated floras including Aequitriradites spp., C. australiensis, F. dailyi and T. trioreticulosus. Rare Triassic reworking was seen.

Environments are non-marine fluvial on account of the abundant and diverse spore dominated assemblage and absence of marine indicators.

Light to mid brown spore colours suggest early maturity

for oil generation.

B. CARRS CREEK-1

- 3860 ft. (cutts), 4470 ft. (cutts) : mixed Tertiary, mostly Eocene

These assemblages are dominated by H. harrisii, Nothofagidites spp. and Proteacidites spp. Eocene indicators include M. diversus, M. tenuis, P. pachypolus and common N. deminatus. Nothing older than Eocene was seen, but heavy caving may be masking something older.

- 4570 ft. (cutts) : C. triplex Zone

This assemblage is totally dominated by small Dilwynites and contains frequent P. mawsonii. More important, it contains the distinctive algal Rimosicysta spp, which are P. mawsonii zone restricted.

Non-marine environments are indicated by the absence of saline indicators, but lacustrine influence is suggested by the algal assemblage.

Light brown spore colours suggest marginal maturity for oil.

C. DUTSON DOWNS-1

- 4590 ft. (cutts) : apparently L. balmei zone

Assignment is made on L. balmei without older indicators. H. harrisii and N. emarcidus are common.

Non-marine environments are suggested by the common

cuticle and diverse spores and pollen without marine indicators.

Yellow to light brown spore colours indicate immaturity for hydrocarbons.

- 4740 ft. (cutts)-5360 ft. (cutts) : apparently T. longus to N. senectus zones

These samples are almost identical with that above apart from the presence of rare Late Cretaceous forms including T. sabulosus (longus to senectus restricted). T. longus (longus restricted) and T. confessus (longus to pachyexinus restricted). It is interpreted as upper late Cretaceous with heavy Tertiary caving, but caving is so heavy that it could be older and masked.

Non-marine environments are indicated by the lack of marine indicators and the abundant cuticle and spore-pollen.

Light brown spore colours suggest marginal maturity for oil.

- 6020 ft. (cutts) : mixed C. triplex zone with C. striatus zone

The early Cretaceous striatus zone is indicated by the association of C. striatus with P. notensis without C. paradoxa. Other spores supporting the Early Cretaceous age include C. holodictyus, Aequitriradites spp., F. wonthaggiensis and Triporoletes spp. The Turonian-Coniacian triplex zone is indicated by the algal Rimosicysta and frequent P. mawsonii but are considered caved. The triplex zone must therefore occur above this point in the well. Dominant however,

is the Paleocene balmei assemblage, caving very heavily.

Non-marine striatus environments are non-marine. Lacustrine triplex environments are suggested by the associations described above.

Light to mid brown spore colours suggest early maturity in the striatus zone assemblages.

D. MERRIMAN-1

- 4708-14 ft. (CORE) : upper T. longus zone

This lean and cuticle dominated assemblage is assigned at the base on oldest S. punctatus and at the top on youngest O. sentosa and frequent G. rudata, and the absence of L. balmei. Frequent forms include G. rudata and S. punctatus.

Non-marine possibly lacustrine environments are indicated by the very rare nondescript dinoflagellates in the cuticle and spore-pollen dominated assemblage.

Yellow to light brown spore colours suggest early marginal maturity for oil.

- 5057-81 ft. (CORE), 5740 ft. (cutts), 5950 ft. (cutts) : apparently all C. triplex zone

Assignment of the core is straightforward on youngest C. "pileosus" and oldest P. mawsonii. Common forms include P. mawsonii and M. antarcticus. The two cuttings samples beneath contain heavy Paleocene balmei caving, but also contain triplex zone indicators (common Dilwynites and algal Rimosicysta spp) and

nothing older. They are therefore assigned to the triplex zone.

Non-marine environments with some lacustrine influence are indicated by the algal acritarchs, diverse pollen and spores and abundant cuticle.

Yellow to light brown spore colours indicate early marginal maturity for oil.

E. NORTH SEASPRAY-1

- 3650 ft. (cutts) : C. paradoxa zone

Although the assemblage is dominated by Paleocene L. balmei zone and Eocene diversus zone taxa, the rare presence of Aequitriradites spp., C. paradoxa, C. striatus, P. linearis and T. reticulatus indicate the paradoxa zone.

Non-marine environments are indicated by the abundant cuticle, dominant spore-pollen, and absence of marine indicators.

Light brown spore colours indicate marginal maturity for hydrocarbons.

- 3840 ft. (cutts), 4060 ft. (cutts) : C. striatus zone

These sample are almost identical with that above, but amongst the rare elements, markers for the paradoxa zone cannot be found. Oldest C. striatus therefore indicates the older striatus zone, although its base could be caved.

Non-marine environments and marginal maturity for oil

are indicated as above.

F. SEASPRAY-1

- 4590 ft. (cutts) : probably T. longus zone

Although Paleocene L. balmei taxa dominate the sample, the rare occurrence of Cretaceous taxa such as N. senectus (longus to senectus restricted), T. verrucosus (balmei to longus restricted) and T. sectilis (longus to lillei restricted) indicate the longus zone assignment.

Non-marine environments are indicated by the absence of marine indicators and the diverse pollen and spores.

Yellow to light brown spore colours indicate early marginal maturity for oil.

- 4790 ft. (cutts), 4879 ft. (cutts) C. paradoxa zone

Although again Paleocene caving is dominant, rare Aequitriradites, C. paradoxa, C. striatus, Foraminispora spp. and Triporoletes spp. indicate the paradoxa zone.

Non-marine environments are indicated by diverse spores and pollen. The single spiny acritarch at 4879 ft. is considered caved.

Light to mid brown spore colours indicate early maturity for oil.

G. WELLINGTON PARK-1

- 3719-39 ft. (CORE) : L. balmei zone

Assignment is clearly indicated at the top by youngest L. balmei and T. verrucosus and at the base by oldest S. punctatus and T. verrucosus without older indicators. Common forms are P. mawsonii and Proteacidites spp. A single T. waiparaensis is considered reworked.

Non-marine environments are indicated by the diverse pollen and spores and absence of marine indicators.

Yellow spore colours indicate immaturity for oil generation.

- 3816-19 ft. (CORE), 4550 ft. (cutts) : apparently all C. paradoxa zone

Assignment of the core sample is straightforward on youngest P. notensis (and the other Early Cretaceous associates) and oldest C. paradoxa. Common forms include Cyathidites and Falcisporites. Permian and Triassic reworking were seen. The cuttings at 4550 ft. contain the same assemblage but could clearly be caved into something slightly older.

Non-marine environments are indicated on the absence of saline indicators and the diverse pollen and spores.

Light to mid brown spore colours indicate early maturity for oil.

- 7380 ft. (CORE) : Jurassic-Cretaceous : indeterminate

This sample is very lean of palynomorphs and all are long-ranging taxa. The presence of C. dampieri, C. penolaensis and R. nodosus indicates a Middle Jurassic

to mid Cretaceous age range, but more precision is not possible.

Non-marine environments are suggested, but too few palynomorphs have been seen to be confident.

Mid to dark brown spore colours indicate peak maturity for oil generation.

IV CONCLUSIONS

Clearly the current study was directed use palynology to test the log based already mapped distribution of the Golden Beach Formation. The Gippsland sequence along the northern margin usually comprises the early Cretaceous hughesi to paradoxa Strzelecki Group, a pannosus-distocarinatus unconformity corresponding to Southern Ocean breakup, an early Late Cretaceous triplex Golden Beach Formation, a pachyexinus-senectus unconformity corresponding to Tasman Sea breakup, and the lillei to asperus Latrobe Group. This is discussed in more detail in Lowry (1987) and summarized here in figure 2.

In all the cuttings samples, the younger Latrobe Group caves heavily and may confuse interpretation. Nevertheless, most wells are straight-forward.

In Burong-1, longus Latrobe Group appears to directly overlie paradoxa Strzelecki Group on an unconformity in the gap 4100 ft. to 4120 ft. The Golden Beach Formation appears to be absent.

In Carrs Creek-1, only cuttings are available, and these may mask the true situation. On the palynology, Eocene Latrobe Group appears to directly overlie triplex Golden Beach Formation, with the unconformity in the gap 4470 ft. to 4570 ft.

In Dutson Downs-1, again only cuttings are available and appear to have masked assemblages, making them appear to be deeper. The sequence appears to comprise balmei to possibly senectus Latrobe group (4590 to 5360 ft.), triplex Golden Beach Formation (somewhere in the gap 5360 to 6020 ft.) and Strzelecki Group (6020 ft.). Logs suggest Golden Beach Formation at 1442-1781m (4731-5848 ft.) (Lowry 1987)

and may well be right.

In Merriman-1, longus Latrobe Group overlies triplex Golden Beach Formation with the unconformity in the gap 4714 ft. to 5057 ft. The well appears to still be in Golden Beach Formation at 5950 ft., but these cuttings could be masking something older.

In North Seaspray-1, Strzelecki Group spans the sampled interval, although balmei-diversus Latrobe Group caving is heavy.

In Seaspray-1, longus Latrobe Group directly overlies paradoxa Strzelecki Group with the unconformity in the gap 4590 ft. to 4790 ft. The Golden Beach Formation is missing.

In Wellington Park-1, balmei to possibly longus Latrobe Group directly overlies paradoxa Strzelecki Group with the unconformity in the gap 3739 to 3816 ft. The Golden Beach Formation is missing.

V

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PALYNOLOGICAL DATA OF 7 WELLS incl. BURONG #1, MERRIMAN #1

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CLIENT: Cluff Resources

WELL: 7 inc. Burong, Carr's Creek, Merriman, Nth Seaspray

FIELD / AREA: Gippsland Basin (Northern Margin)


ANALYST: Roger Morgan

DATE: February '91

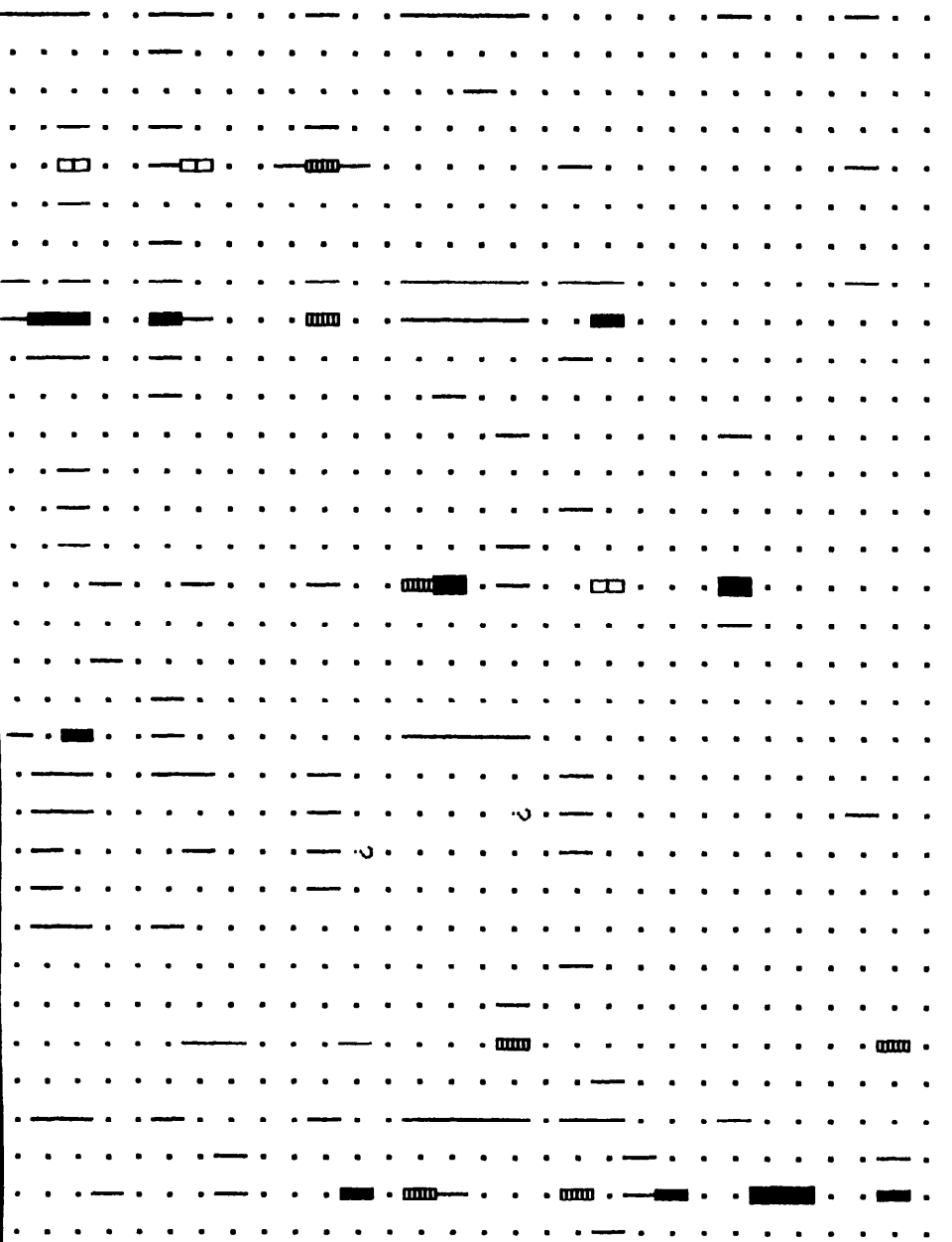
NOTE S: all sample depths are in metres

SCALE CHART OF GRAPHIC ABUNDANCES BY BY GROUP: DINOS and S/POLLEN

Key to Symbols

- 
- = Very Rare
 - = Rare
 - = Few
 - = Common
 - = Abundant
 - ? = Questionably Present
 - = Not Present

IRONG-1
 00 CUTT
 20 CUTT
 WRS CREEK-1
 50-60 CUTT
 60-70 CUTT
 60-70 CUTT
 TSN DOWNS-1
 80-90 CUTT
 80-90 CUTT
 70-40 CUTT
 50-60 CUTT
 10-20 CUTT
 BRIMAN-1
 08-14 CORE
 75-81 CORE
 70-40 CUTT
 40-50 CUTT
 H SEASPRY-1
 40-50 CUTT
 30-40 CUTT
 20-60 CUTT
 ASPRAY-1
 80-90 CUTTS
 80-90 CUTTS
 72-79 CORE
 72-79 CORE
 LINGTN PK-1
 19-39 CORE
 16-19 CORE
 40-50 CUTT
 79-80 CORE



- 34 COROLLINA TOROSUS
- 35 CORONATISPORA PERFORATA
- 36 CRYBELOSPORITES BERBEROIDES
- 37 CRYBELOSPORITES BRENNERI
- 38 CRYBELOSPORITES STRIATUS
- 39 CRYBELOSPORITES STYLOSUS
- 40 CYATHIDITES ASPER
- 41 CYATHIDITES AUSTRALIS
- 42 CYATHIDITES MINOR
- 43 CYATHIDITES PUNCTATUS
- 44 CYCADOPITES FOLLICULARIS
- 45 CYCLOSPORITES HUGHESI
- 46 DICTOPHYLLIDITES SPP
- 47 DICTYOTOSPORITES COMPLEX
- 48 DICTYOTOSPORITES SPECIOSUS
- 49 DILWYNITES GRANULATUS
- 50 DILWYNITES TUBERCULATUS
- 51 ELPHEDRIPITES NOTENSIS
- 52 FALCISPORITES GRANDIS
- 53 FALCISPORITES SIMILIS
- 54 FORAMINISPORIS ASYMMETRICUS
- 55 FORAMINISPORIS DAILYI
- 56 FORAMINISPORIS WONTHAGGIENSIS
- 57 FOVEOSPORITES CANALIS
- 58 FOVEOSPORITES MORETONENSIS
- 59 FOVEOSPORITES MULTIFOVEOLATUS
- 60 FOVEOTRILETES PARVIRETUS
- 61 GAMBIERINA RUDATA
- 62 GEPHRYAPOLLENITES CRANWELLAE
- 63 GLEICHENIIDITES
- 64 GLEICHENIIDITES CIRCINIDITES
- 65 HALORAGACIDITES HARRISII
- 66 INTERULOBITES INTRAVERRUCATUS

BURONG-1	1133	STERIESPORITES POCOKII
4100 CUTT	1134	STOVERISPORITES LUNARIS
4120 CUTT	1135	TETRACOLPORITES VERRUCOSUS
CARRS CREEK-1	1136	TRICOLPITES CONFESSUS
3850-60 CUTT	1137	TRICOLPITES GILLII
4460-70 CUTT	1138	TRICOLPITES LONGUS
4560-70 CUTT	1139	TRICOLPITES SABULOSUS
DUTSN DOWNS-1	1140	TRICOLPITES SP
4580-90 CUTT	1141	TRICOLPITES WAIPARAENSIS
4730-40 CUTT	1142	TRICOLPORITES ANGURIUM
5350-60 CUTT	1143	TRICOLPORITES PAENESTRIATUS
6010-20 CUTT	1144	TRILETES
MERRIMAN-1	1145	TRILOBOSPORITES TRIBOTRYS
4708-14 CORE	1146	TRILOBOSPORITES TRIORETICULOSUS
5075-81 CORE	1147	TRIORITES MAGNIFICUS
5730-40 CUTT	1148	TRIPOROLETES RADIATUS
5940-50 CUTT	1149	TRIPOROLETES RETICULATUS
NTH SEASPRY-1	1150	TRIPOROLETES SIMPLEX
3640-50 CUTT	1151	TRIPOROPOLLENITES
3830-40 CUTT	1152	TRIPOROPOLLENITES SECTILIS
4050-60 CUTT	1153	VELOSPORITES TRIQUETRUS
SEASPRAY-1	1154	VITREISPORITES PALLIUS
4580-90 CUTTS		
4780-90 CUTTS		
4872-79 CORE		
WELLNGTN PK-1		
3719-39 CORE		
3816-19 CORE		
4540-50 CUTT		
7379-80 CORE		

BURONG-1	
4100 CUTT	
4120 CUTT	
CARRS CREEK-1	
3850-60 CUTT	
4460-70 CUTT	
4560-70 CUTT	
DUTSN DOWNS-1	
4580-90 CUTT	
4730-40 CUTT	
5350-60 CUTT	
6010-20 CUTT	
MERRIMAN-1	
4708-14 CORE	
5075-81 CORE	
5730-40 CUTT	
5940-50 CUTT	
NTH SEASPRY-1	
3640-50 CUTT	
3830-40 CUTT	
4050-60 CUTT	
SEASPRAY-1	
4580-90 CUTTS	
4780-90 CUTTS	
4872-79 CORE	
WELLNGTN PK-1	
3719-39 CORE	
3816-19 CORE	
4540-50 CUTT	
7379-80 CORE	