

AR 2016

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## The Greg Booth Tasmanian Tiger Sighting 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2015

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The following is a detailed account of the Tasmanian tiger sighting that took place in SW Tasmania in 2015. This information was taken from personal thylacine notes given direct from the witness Mr Greg Booth in 2016.

Adrian Richardson

## **The Greg Booth Tasmanian Tiger Sighting**

**3 April 2015**

**Date** Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2015      **Time** 1:20 pm

**Location** Forestry track SW Tasmania    **GR** 6 - - 9 - -

**Weather condition** Mild & 17 degrees C

**Persons present**      Greg Booth      George (Joe) Booth  
                                 (Woodcutter)    (Retired Forester)

### **The Reason of being in the location**

Greg and Joe were having some valued father & son time together exploring a Tasmanian State forest. Joe was showing his son areas of bushland where he worked as a forester many years prior.

Joe had remembered an overgrown track in the area that had been constructed during the Tasmanian early settlement days. The Dawson Track had been cut in and worked upon by convict labour that had to endure the tough terrain including the harsh penal conditions from many years ago.

It was to be the last stop in the area before returning back to Joe's home town of Ellendale.

Greg was driving for his dad in his father's Toyota single cab 4WD ute and was instructed to drive some 400 metres up a secondary forestry track & park the vehicle at a Y junction.

## **Background**

In early April of 2015 I was notified by a friend from Wayatinah, a small town in the Tasmanian Central Highlands that an acquaintance of his had a Tasmanian tiger sighting.

In the same conversation my friend informed me that the family involved were no longer talking to anyone about the sighting. Even though I was given a surname to follow up, I took my friends advice and decided to leave the family alone.

The following month in May, Joe Booth an elderly retired forester who was present at the sighting, had written his record of events in (his own words) into The Highland Digest (Issue No 182 of May 2015, page 9).

A footnote to Joe's report indicated that another Tasmanian tiger sighting had taken place only 3 kilometres away in the same area by a Log truck driver. As it turns out this separate incident is an interesting story from 2012 and that the Log truck driver (name withheld) had to stop his truck in fear of running over the animal.

Upon reading the Digest article written by Joe, I instantly felt from my previous thylacine research experience that this was a Tasmanian tiger sighting like no other & that there was much more to this story than what was written into the monthly local community newsletter. (Joe was 79 years old at the time of the sighting & of writing the article)

Indeed there was more to the story, and at the time I did write into my thylacine journal notes that this encounter would awaken the scientific world. However this never happened as this sighting was not reported to the two major local newspapers or media outlets.

The Tasmanian tiger sighting was only spread by word of mouth throughout the local rural community.

By the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2015 (two months to the day after the initial sighting) I had completed 6 reconnaissance trips into the area trying to locate what I thought could have been the likely location of the sighting. The only bearings I had was the Dawson Road and this involved me having to drive some 1,400 kilometres during my research. It was my 6<sup>th</sup> and final trip (and taking photo's) that I ended up only 50 metres shy of the actual sighting position which was indicated later when Greg & I were on our research trips in the area together. Greg was amazed by looking at the photographs that I had taken from my previous trips that I had stumbled into the actual position without a guide & only the use of 1:50,000 conventional maps.

It wasn't until the following year in 2016 that I received a surprise phone call that came out of the blue from Greg Booth, asking if I would assist him with his own private search.

When Greg made this initial phone call little did we know that we had met some 18 years prior as he was a partner to my wife's niece.

In hindsight really I should have made contact with Joe & Greg in April 2015 however at that time I did not relate that Joe was Greg's father.

Greg needed to be heard reference his sighting. He expressed in his (own words) the sighting & of the countless times that he had reflections & images mirrored back to him from his flashbacks.

Greg was very sincere and emotional when describing the animal he saw.

Unfortunately Greg found some people within his rural local community had doubts that he had seen a Tasmanian tiger. (Like most of the general population, due to the fact that we have all been educated to believe that the Tasmanian tiger is extinct)

Once again ridicule raised its ugly head just like it does with majority of Tasmanian tiger sightings here in Tasmania. The common phrase I hear is “don’t you know that the tiger is extinct”.

Ridicule is why many sightings are not reported to Tasmanian authorities.

Greg to his credit did not in any way waiver from his original statement, including when he actually did a walk through on location of the tiger sighting with leading Tasmanian biologist Nick Mooney.

Greg stated in 2016 that he thinks of that tiger he saw at every waking moment and that he still gets flashbacks of the sighting.

Two years on from his sighting (in 2017) Greg still couldn’t get his unprecedented tiger sighting out of his mind.

To give reflection to what Greg saw I believe at this point would be an ideal time to mention a quote by Brene Brown, an American professor & author.

“In order to empathize with someone’s experience you must be willing to believe them as they see it, and not how you imagine their experience to be”.

## **The Tasmanian Tiger Appeared from No Where**

As previously explained Joe's vehicle was parked at the Y junction.

The vegetation covering the area was rather thick with Tea tree, young & old eucalypt trees plus other species of trees including Myrtle & Celery Top Pine.

This area had been logged several times before over many years by Forestry Tasmania (now named Sustainable Timber).

Greg was instructed by his father to walk & follow the forestry track back to where they had just driven while Joe would venture some 20 metres into the undergrowth to try and follow the old convict track.

Impressively for a man of Joe's age he is very active & could skilfully jump over logs & walk the thick undergrowth with ease.

Greg was now moving down the forestry track and keeping in line with his father who was mostly unseen but could be heard from within the undergrowth following the old abandoned convict labour built track.

Having walked some 400 metres down the track and around a bend Greg decided to stop & wait on the edge of the gravel & wait for his father to catch up with him. At this point of time Greg was thinking of rolling a cigarette & he was just staring & looking into the undergrowth. Directly in front of him the bush was rather thick & there was two large pushed or fallen eucalypt trees lying across the hidden convict track.

Greg was just staring into the undergrowth when his world of normality changed.

As Greg said, it was then that everything suddenly happened.

Out of the thick bush from under the closest fallen eucalypt tree came an animal and it walked directly towards him.

The animal did not notice Greg until it got within approximately 3 metres or 10 feet from him.

Both Greg and the animal were in shock & disbelief in meeting each other. (Greg told me that he was totally gobsmacked with this initial encounter & it was an animal that he had not seen before ever, in his time in the bush)

It was at this point Greg stated that he realised he was looking at a Tasmanian tiger.

On seeing Greg the Tasmanian tiger went into the seated position.

The seated tiger & Greg just stared at each other. (One could not imagine what was running through Greg's mind at this stage)

Greg estimated that the time spent staring at each other would have been 5-6 seconds in duration. This is the reason how Greg managed to highlight the facial features of the animal in fine detail, including a scar above its right eye.

The description of the thylacine given by Greg was rather extensive which included its dark & deep set eyes, with white patches below each eye with a very long snout, dark nose with a strong jaw line, short ears with a tough thick neck.

In his own words as he was describing the thylacine Greg said that the tiger was not a pretty animal to look at and it wasn't in as good condition as his own domestic dog. (Greg's dog being a solid well fed tan coloured French Boxer)

The colour of its fur was short and not thick being no longer than 1cm or ½ inch in length and it was light tan.

Once the initial shock of the meeting ended the seated tiger used its tail to assist itself to all four feet & pushed itself upwards some 70-75 cm prior to landing onto its front feet, just like a kangaroo would when it uses its tail to move.

Greg noted that the front legs looked shorter than the rear legs.

Once the Tasmanian tiger was standing on all four feet it turned to its right & started to walk onto the very edge of the gravel & move back up the forestry track heading towards the parked vehicle.

Greg stated that the Tasmanian tiger stood at a man's knee height of approximately 50-60 cm (2 feet).

It was at this point Greg saw the rear opening pouch and the enlarged bottom area including the exposed anus region of the animal.

Greg explained that the rear opening pouch was approximately 18 cm or 6 inches long, or about the length and size of a man's open hand. It reminded him of seeing a Tasmanian Devils rear opening pouch.

The tiger had approximately 15 dark stripes running along its back and very little hair on its tail but there was a tuft of fur at the very end, and that the tiger's tail was stiff & straight with a light kick up at the very end. In fact Greg stated that the tail was so straight you could put a builder's spirit level on it and the vertebrae could be seen along the length of the tail.

At some point Joe called out to Greg but he couldn't respond properly as he was trying to keep up with the now trotting Tasmanian tiger that was moving back up the track & heading towards the parked vehicle.



Greg couldn't see the legs of the tiger at times due to the bush however he could see the top of the tiger as it moved in & out of the bush and onto the edge of the gravel track.

Greg believes at this point while following the tiger he called for his father to get onto the track and follow him.

The two distinctive points that Greg raised was when the tiger was trotting & moving up the track was how the dark stripes disappeared & blended into her light tan fur, and also how the animal maintained its straight & stiff tail when moving. (Further discussions regarding the animal's movements with Greg and he felt that the tiger was wanted to cross the track however refusing to cross due to Greg being in close proximity)

Greg then watched the tiger go around the parked vehicle at the Y junction & then disappear into the Tea tree bushes heading into a westerly direction.

Just as the tiger disappeared into the Tea tree Joe finally caught up and reached his son at the vehicle. Greg then explained what he had just seen to his father.

Unfortunately Joe had not seen the Tasmanian tiger that he had disturbed & flushed out from the undergrowth on the old convict track, however he instinctively knew that it was a tiger that his son had seen & described to him. Joe then asked Greg was it a Tasmanian tiger that you just saw?

Greg replied immediately with a definite yes!

Greg said that prior to that day he had never really given any thought to the Tasmanian tiger & that he had believed the animal was extinct. (For someone that thought that the thylacine was extinct then Greg's description & fine details were astonishing)

Greg's ability to observe & then describe (in his own words) were amazingly skilful. I had witnessed his observation skills on many occasions during our bush trips together when placing out game trail cameras.

## **Conclusion**

One of the biggest problems Greg had following the sighting was trying to convince the nonbelievers that he actually stood only 3 metres or (10 feet) from the animal.

Greg only wanted others to believe in what he had witnessed on that day. Greg had nothing to gain but plenty to lose as his personal credibility was at stake. On occasions Greg would say why me? And how come it happened to me?

My reply to Greg was you were fortunate to have that close encounter and that statistically it is about the same as winning Lotto, as that is about 1 in 4 million chance of winning. You actually won Lotto except you didn't win the money.

People have asked Greg as to why he didn't get a photograph of the tiger due to the length of his sighting? Greg was not carrying his mobile phone with him as it was on the seat in the vehicle parked at the Y junction. There is no mobile phone reception in the area so it was left in the vehicle. Greg also stated that he wouldn't have even thought of taking photographs with his mobile phone because the event was just so surprising and very quick. Greg also rightly stated, who walks around out in the Tasmanian bush with a mobile phone in hand?

Greg stated that he saw the Tasmanian tiger a total of 3 times and each sighting being 5-6 seconds duration.

Having walked this 400 metre track many times I believe that Greg may have under estimated his time when watching & following the thylacine moving in & out of the Tea tree scrub alongside the forestry track.

Nick Mooney a leading Tasmanian biologist on the thylacine who went to the site mentioned to Greg and I that he too believed that the complete sighting time combined while watching the moving tiger would have been longer than the 6 seconds that was estimated by Greg.

It is to be noted that Greg & Joe did not notify or report the tiger sighting to any local Tasmanian newspapers, or media outlets, or the Tasmanian Government Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment (DPIPWE).

The Greg Booth Tasmanian tiger sighting was spread only by word of mouth and the written article by Joe in May 2015 issue of The Highland Digest.

The reason that I have documented the Greg Booth Tasmanian tiger sighting from 2015 is because if it wasn't recorded directly from my witness notes that were taken in 2016 then this Tasmanian tiger sighting could possibly be lost forever.

Adrian Richardson

(Thylacine Research)

22 July 2020

Photograph No1	Greg Booth and the undergrowth on the convict track where the tiger first appeared.
Photograph No2	Joe and Greg Booth at the fallen tree on the convict track.
Photograph No3	Greg Booth on the forestry track where he followed the tiger.
Photograph No4	Straight section of the forestry track where Greg followed the tiger.
Photograph No5	Bend in the section of forestry track near the Y junction where the Tasmanian tiger was last seen by Greg.
Photograph No6	A bird's eye view of the same Tasmanian State Forest where the tiger was seen in 2015. (This is the also the location of a Tasmanian tiger sighting by a Log truck driver in 2012)
Sketch No1	Drawing of the seated Tasmanian tiger.
Sketch No2	Drawing of the Tasmanian tiger side view.
Sketch No3	Description of the Tasmanian tiger by Greg Booth in 2016.



### Photograph No1

Greg Booth standing at the position of where the Tasmanian tiger appeared from nowhere directly out from the undergrowth. The tiger then proceeded to walk towards Greg only stopping 3 metres (10feet) from him in 2015.

A.Richardson photograph 2016

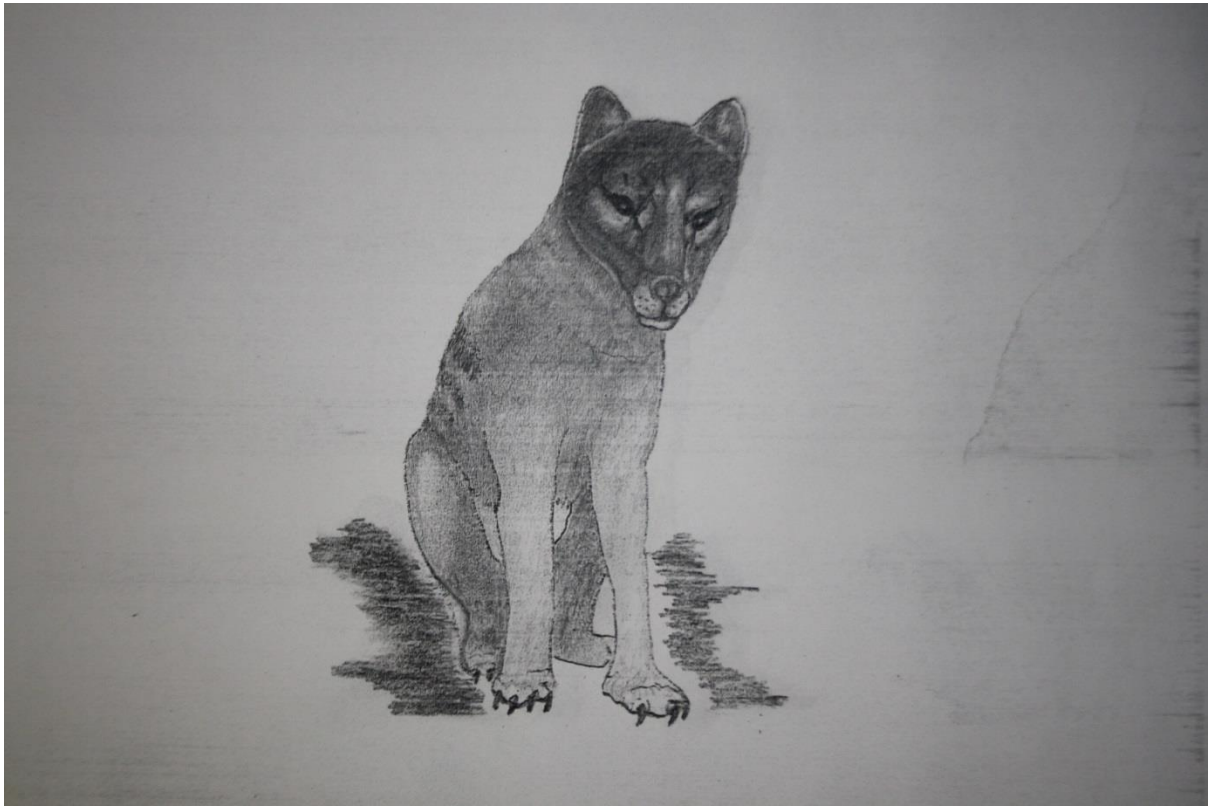




## Photograph No2

Joe and Greg Booth on the convict track and at the fallen eucalypt tree where the Tasmanian tiger first appeared in 2015.

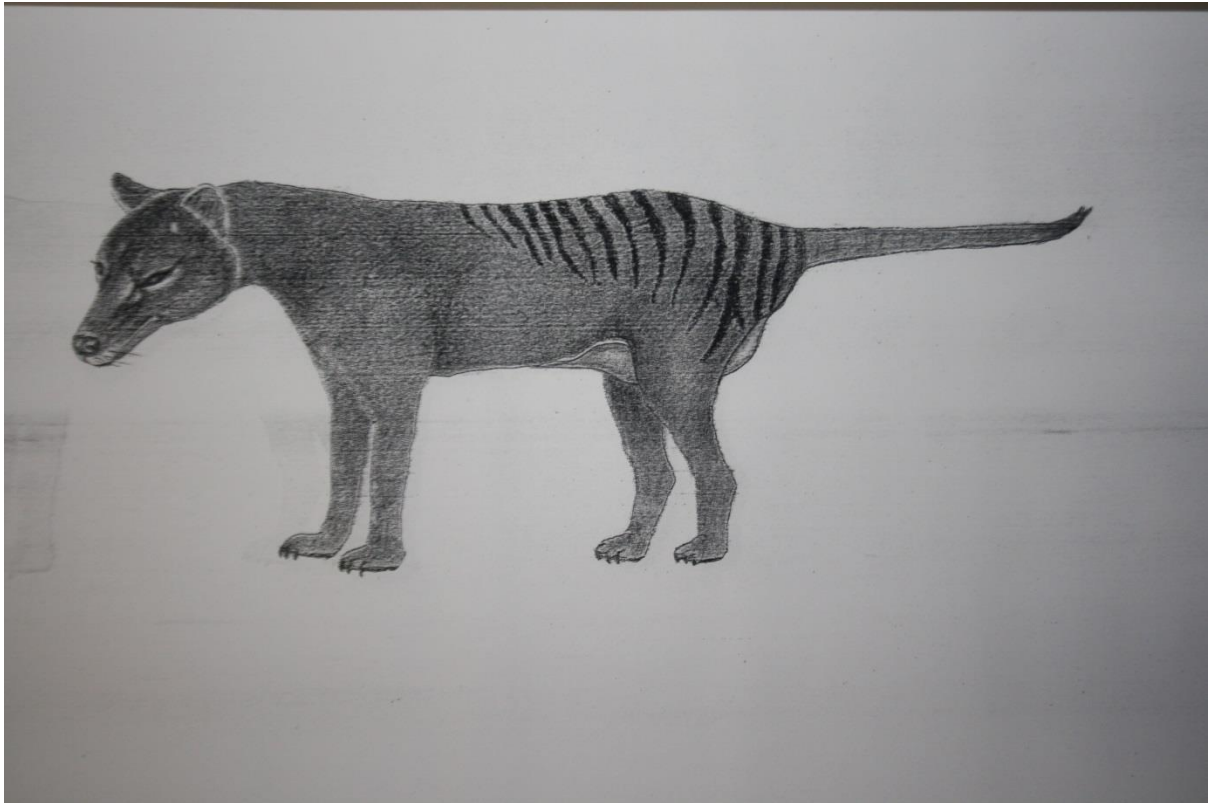
A.Richardson photograph 2016



### Sketch No1

Drawing of the seated Tasmanian tiger as seen by Greg Booth in 2015. The tiger was sitting approximately only 3 metres (10 feet) from the witness.

A.Richardson thylacine drawing 2016



## Sketch No2

Drawing of the Tasmanian tiger as seen by Greg Booth trotting up the edge of the forestry track in 2015.

Note the pouch and the straight tail.

A.Richardson thylacine drawing 2016





### Photograph No3

Greg Booth walking on the forestry track where he had followed the trotting Tasmanian tiger in 2015.

A.Richardson photograph 2016



Photograph No4

The straight section of the forestry track where the Tasmanian tiger was followed by Greg Booth in 2015.

A.Richardson photograph 2016





### Photograph No5

The bend in the section of the forestry track near the Y junction where the Tasmanian tiger disappeared into the bush in 2015.

A.Richardson photograph 2016

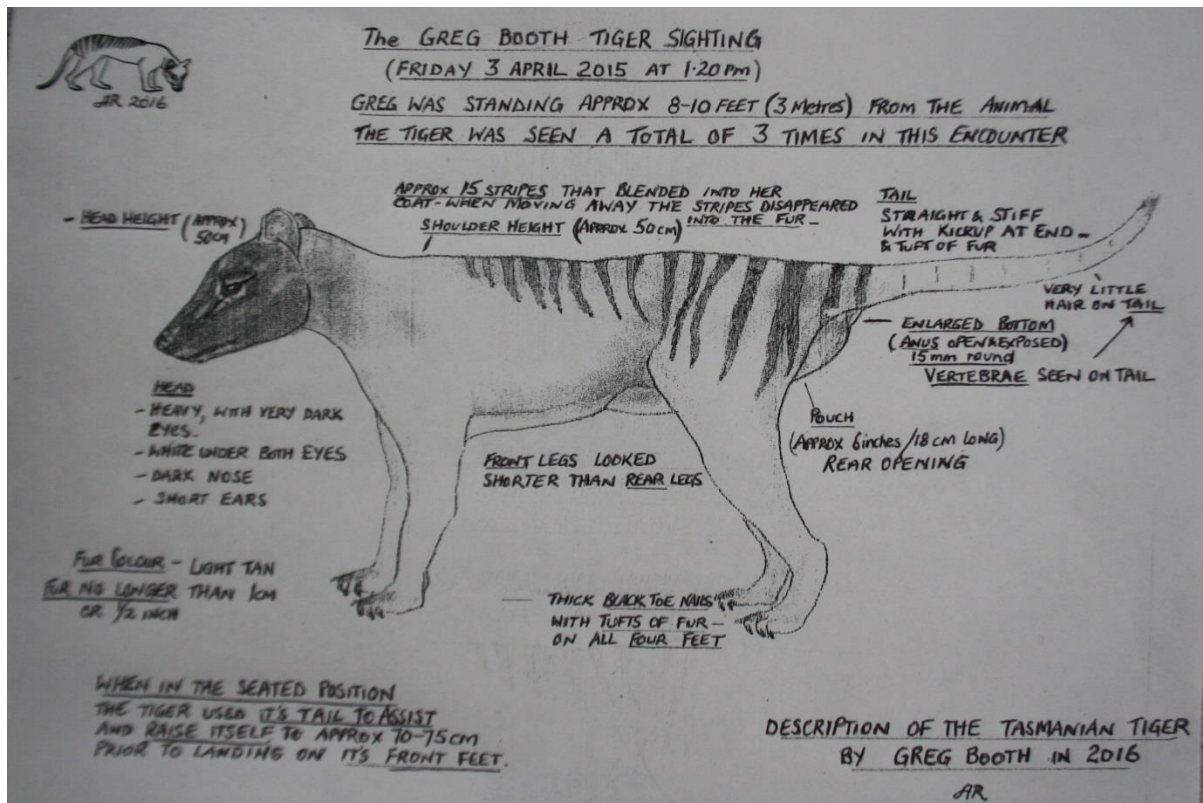


### Photograph No6

A bird's eye view of the Tasmanian State forest where the Tasmanian tiger was seen in 2015 (This is the same location that a Log truck driver saw a tiger in 2012).

A.Richardson photograph 2016





### Sketch No3

The original description sketch of the Tasmanian tiger as seen by Greg Booth in 2015.

A. Richardson thylacine drawing 2016