

## 16. SOME OF THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE ASSOCIATION

It is a daunting task to write of the input from many interesting people from diverse backgrounds who have contributed to the success of the Association in its first 50 years.

Just a brief record follows of Presidents, Life Members, and a few others who have made an exceptional contribution. Many others are mentioned in Branch histories or in their special fields, and no doubt many have been omitted who should have been included. Apologies to those so neglected.

### **Neil Alexander Barr 1908–96**

Neil was born in Palmerston North, his parents John Manson Barr and Grace Barr having arrived there from Canada at the beginning of the century. Neil's brother John, 4 years his senior, wrote a pretty detailed account of their early years for interested family members. The biggest event in their lives was moving to "Beresford" in 1916, the property later so well known for Neil's farm forestry.

John Barr senior with a partner, Charles Knowles, had bought the goodwill of the Maori lease from Roger Fenton. The property comprised some 1500 acres (610 ha), including rich but wet marine flats adjoining the Kaipara Harbour near Kaukapakapa, but also considerable "gumland" still with holes where kauri gum had been dug, and often full of water. The fertility was low; a severe storm in 1922 caused widespread erosion, and it was not until fertiliser could be spread with good grass seed that production was lifted.

It was a great place for boys to grow up though, with Neil attending Northcote Primary School, then later winning a scholarship to Auckland Grammar, but enjoying holidays on the farm.

After matriculating, Neil began work as a Trainee Clerk at W.D. and H.O. Wills, but after a few months was required to work on the farm, as both his brother and father suffered poor health. He was soon responsible for all stock

management on the property but the Depression, the war years, and the low productivity meant hard times with the farm barely surviving. Brother John had moved to Auckland, retaining ownership of the Araparera block which Neil later planted in *Pinus radiata* with some eucalypts. This property on the East side of SH 16 was left by John to Neil's children in Trust.



Neil Barr (*above*) and  
Rose Barr (*below*).



Neil brought in the first Angus cows to the lower north in 1929, and as conditions improved he set up a Romney stud, supplying two-tooth ewes and rams to the lower north and Waikato. He then established a Cheviot stud and one of the first commercial flocks of Perendales. Some Cheviots were exported to Australia and Niue Island. (Joll and Marjorie Hosking swapped six black sheep for one of Neil's Cheviot rams so that Neil's wife Rose could spin and knit the black wool.)

Neil married Rose Stanaway in 1931. The Stanaways were deeply involved with the Northern Wairoa River and the Kaipara Harbour during the years of the huge outpouring of kauri logs, acting as pilots to navigate ships over the treacherous Kaipara bar. Delegates attending the 1983 Conference sat on a hill overlooking the Kaipara while Rose described the sailing ships and log rafts so common until the 1920s. This was one of the few times she took centre stage and talked of things other than trees.

Rose was proud of her Maori ancestry, and both she and Neil took an active part in Maori community affairs near the farm. Neil and Rose had five daughters and one son, and so with a developing farm, a strong involvement with the Catholic Church, and boarding school, there were many busy years.

Neil's interest in trees was very much dictated by the need for shelter. Strong south-west winds with frequent showers at lambing time caused considerable mortality, particularly in 1934, and so Neil began planting *Pinus muricata*, *P. radiata*, *Eucalyptus botryoides*, other eucalypts, and other species he thought worth trying—some 16 km of shelter by 1961. It was the success of this shelter, and discussions with other local people also interested in trees

that led to the calling of the first farm forestry meeting in 1950 (*see* Branch Histories, Lower North Association).

With NZ Forest Service help, Neil travelled around the lower North Island in 1956 encouraging farm foresters to set up associations in Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Middle Districts, and Taranaki. This led to a meeting in Rotorua in 1957 where a Combined Farm Forestry Association was formed, with Neil as the first President, a position he held until 1963. A rapid proliferation of branches throughout New Zealand continued, with Neil attending most of the inaugural meetings.

Trees on farms and forestry in general took an ever-increasing amount of his time and interest, with innovative work on creosoting posts and battens cut on the farm, trials of more species of eucalypts, cypresses, and pines, and the actual milling of mature logs. This developed in Neil a realisation that diameter was necessary for a good sawlog, and that space between growing trees was necessary to develop diameter.

Neil met many foresters in his travels, developing a keen understanding of industry issues, from low stumpage due to price control to research matters where he was able to make a real contribution as for 6 years he served as a member of the Production Forestry Research Advisory Committee of FRI. His growing knowledge, combined with an easy conversational style, made him at ease with anyone from visiting forestry professors to the farm forestry beginner.

Neil's friendship with Harry Bunn, Director of the Production Forestry Division of FRI, increased his interest in eucalypts and agroforestry. After Harry's retirement, the two learned but practical foresters went around the country demonstrating stability pruning on young pines and answering queries on all manner of farm forestry topics. These were the well-attended Barr/Bunn clinics.

Neil had a gift for writing, producing regular articles for the *NZ Farmer* for some 24 years which led many farmers to join the Association. He also wrote for the Association's own *Farm Forestry* and *Tree Grower* on numerous occasions, and privately corresponded with many tree growers. Neil wrote his "Little Red Book" on farm forestry, particularly

silviculture. This was updated and issued as a supplement to the July 1944 issue of *NZ Farmer* entitled “Farm Forestry Review 1994”.

Neil and Rose held many field days at “Beresford”, for both the 1961 and 1983 Conferences, his own Lower North Branch, and a number of other branches, let alone the great number of individuals calling to get the gospel first-hand.

His leadership when the Association first began built an organisation that has always been practical, with Neil almost haranguing members to get out and plant more trees and not to get carried away with administration.

Neil and Rose were made the Association’s first Life Members in 1963. Neil was also made an Honorary Life Member of the NZ Institute of Forestry, a particular honour for a self-taught forester. He was awarded the MBE in 1971 for services to forestry and farming, and his name was put forward for higher honours on two further occasions. Neil was Patron of the NZFFA from 1988 to 1995.

On a number of trips to Australia, Neil established many more good friendships in the forestry field, particularly among those interested in eucalypts. He was invited to lecture in Western Australia, Tasmania, and New South Wales, with his input into various seminars always well respected.

Neil sold the farm in 1990 and retired to the Northbridge Retirement Village in Northcote. From there he was still active, particularly in encouraging the development of cypress hybrids and their vegetative propagation. He dictated on audio tape his thoughts on various aspects of farm forestry, with the collection of tapes being marketed by the Lower North branch. Neil almost finished his book “Growing Eucalypt Trees for Milling” before his death on 1 January 1996. The book was completed by Mike Smith with technical input from Harry Bunn and Mike Wilcox.

Neil’s funeral at Helensville was almost a happy occasion with so many members of his family, his friends, and farm foresters in attendance. There were seven past-Presidents of the NZFFA at the gathering. Neil Barr had a wonderful

memory, amazing farm foresters at what he recalled of their property and their family. It was this close association of families with mutual visits to each other's properties that established the Association on a different pattern to other organisations. This has been its strength and the reason for its success.

Norval Gibson Smith gave an obituary to Neil at the 1996 conference as Lower North President, while Mike Smith, Harry Bunn, Denis Hocking, and others wrote in *Tree Grower 17/1* February 1996

### **Niall Alexander**

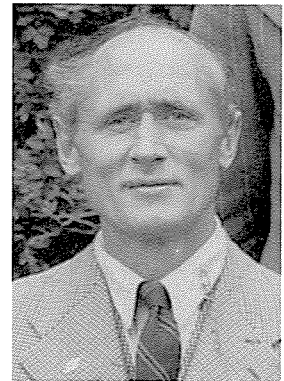
Niall was the son of the first Principal of Lincoln College. Before World War II he went to Tierra del Fuego with a load of horses and worked on a sheep station there for some time. Jack Harper recalls Niall telling him that while on the islands he developed a hatred of wind and of thieving postal employees!

He served overseas in World War II, being invalided home in 1943. For a time he managed the farm at Wesley College south of Auckland, until drawing a rehab farm at Onewhero near Tuakau. There he developed one of the first Coopworth flocks. Niall's wife Ida was a long time physical education teacher at Ardmore Training College. They both eventually retired to Army Bay on Whangaparaoa Peninsula.

Niall convened the first meeting of the South Auckland Branch of the Association, probably early in 1958, and became its first President. He served on the National Executive from 1961 to 1969, being President in 1967–68. With Ron Wells (NZ Forest Service) and Jack Stronge, Niall had a hand in drawing up the Constitution, some parts of which concerning the Council, he always felt needed revision.

Niall had a touch of blarney from Irish ancestry, a delightful way with words, and a keen wit.

He was very keen to plant trees other than *P. radiata*, but did not have a suitable farm. One of the few people to see the value of shade, he admonished farmers for not planting suitable trees for this purpose.



Niall Alexander

Niall wrote interesting editorials when he was President, and one of his other articles for *Farm Forestry* was reproduced in *Tree Grower* 6/2 May 1985 following his obituary written by Neil Barr.



Frank Bartlett

### Frank Bartlett

Born at Orewa, Frank spent his whole life on the banks of the Orewa River, from 1909 on the property known as “Bankside”.

With only a primary school education, Frank developed an early interest in botany and became intent on identifying the trees on the farm, some dating back to the time of his maternal grandparents. He kept 214 letters from 47 correspondents, many of them noted foresters and scientists, who helped with the description of the exotic trees on the property but also with native plants, weeds, and indeed the whole flora of the gumland soil. Frank became a recognised authority with an incredible first-hand knowledge of plants.

The first meeting of farm foresters was held at “Bankside” after Neil Barr and other local tree enthusiasts had suggested forming a group to further their mutual interest. The early trees of *Eucalyptus saligna*, *E. pilularis*, *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* × *lusitanica*, *Casuarina* spp., and others were of tremendous interest to farm foresters because of their age and size. Later, Frank’s son Ken with his sawmill among the trees, learned much of the problems of cutting the best timber from these species, with seed and timber from “Bankside” spread far and wide.

Frank Bartlett became a Life Member of the NZFFA in 1966.

### Geoff Brann

Geoff and Gill Brann farm a 245-ha property near Te Puke with flat valleys, short steep sidings, and a light pumice soil prone to erosion. They have been planting trees for over 30 years and have over 100 ha in *P. radiata*, 10 ha in eucalypts, 10 ha in *Cupressus lusitanica*, and 10 ha in mixed species such as blackwood, redwood, and conservation areas. An area of about 10 ha of indigenous trees has been fenced off for 18 years with some revegetation.

Geoff has been meticulous in his attention to good tree management, with pruning and thinning done on time. Trees have all been planted to leave as much stock as possible for a cash flow.

Being handy to FRI Rotorua has been beneficial to both Geoff and FRI, with good interchange of ideas and visitors. The 1995 National Conference visited Brann's property for a whole day, delegates being very impressed with the quality of operations. Neil Barr made an effort to attend this field day, one of the last before he died. Neil, Geoff, and Gill had been close friends for many years.

Geoff Brann was elected to the National Executive from 1989 to 1999, being President in 1996–98. He mentioned the great experience of judging for the "North Island Farm Forester of the Year" award on two occasions, visiting 14 properties 1 year and nine 2 years later, meeting and enjoying the hospitality of so many interesting people.

Geoff attended the funerals of both Neil Barr and Vic Stephens, with the two gatherings of so many people making a big impression on him.

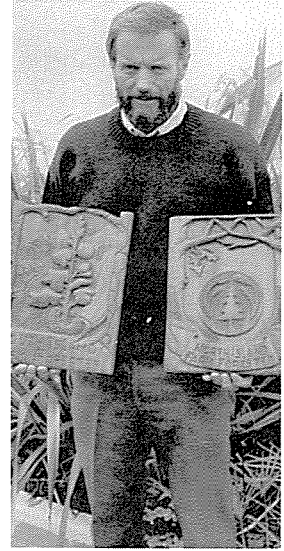
He is keen to see the professionalism built up in the Association, maintained with an Executive Officer in Wellington keeping up a farm forestry voice and strengthening our identity, but appreciates that shortage of finance is a real problem in further development.

### **Bill Buchan**

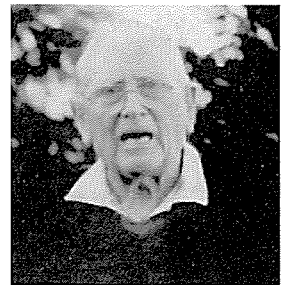
Bill was taken to the first farm forestry meeting in Ashburton in 1958 and came home as President, a position he held for 15 years. He personally arranged all field days, checking the time and mileage in his trusty Super Snipe.

With his wife Doris, Bill planted a large variety of trees on their Digby's Bridge property, mainly for shelter. Western red cedar was perhaps his favourite with its attractive citrus-like scent being very strong on a warm day. Many different poplars, Leyland cypress, and a range of ornamentals made this tidy farm a most attractive property.

Bill was appointed honorary Life Member of the NZFFA in 1981, and died in 1994.



Geoff Brann with the plaques he carved for award to the North Island and the South Island Farm Forester of the Year.



Bill Buchan

### **Malcolm Buist**

A lawyer with various Government departments, Malcolm spent his last working years as Forest Service solicitor. He handled the legal work associated with loans and grants for farm foresters and developed an interest in the Association.

For many years he took a few holidays to attend the annual Conference, being extremely conversant with the rules, and often able to help Presidents at AGMs with a little guidance to get the motion under discussion on to the right track.

Malcolm kept remarkably detailed notes of all that happened at Conferences, both during field trips and at meetings. In 1994 at the Greymouth AGM it was agreed to make funds available to get these notes typed up as a historical record, but unfortunately we were just too late—they had been thrown out in moving house.

Curiosity as to what made the people working at Forest Service Head Office different to those working in other Government departments finally led Malcolm to decide that it was the years they had worked in isolated areas around New Zealand's forests, giving them a practical independence not seen in the city.

At the 1992 Conference he was presented with an award for his services .

### **Harry Bunn**

Harry grew up on a King Country farm, which no doubt helped in his empathy with farm foresters. After a stint in the Air Force in World War II, he completed a B.Sc. at Auckland, then a Diploma in Forestry at Canberra. Following a few years at Pureora Forest and at Waipa Sawmill, Harry joined the staff at FRI where he eventually became Director of the Production Forestry Division.

Through the FRI Symposia on various topics, Harry met many farm foresters and was always keen to visit properties where he thought some interesting planting or silviculture was in progress.



Harry and Neil Barr met in 1957, discovering a mutual interest in eucalypts, and their resulting friendship with much searching debate advanced farm forestry practices in many ways. The growing of the right species of eucalypts to the optimum size for milling was guided by their love and enthusiasm for the genus.

Probably of greater importance was Harry's emphasis on defining the "target" tree—what a grower should be aiming to produce no matter what the species—then coming back to seed, planting, pruning, and thinning to achieve the target. The Barr/Bunn clinics after Harry retired helped spread this message through many Branch field days around the country.

Through his senior position in forestry research and his personal input, Harry Bunn had made a large contribution to the advancement of farm forestry.

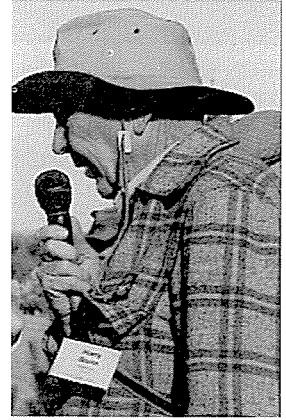
### **Allen Calvert**

Allen spent most of his life farming at Roslyn Bush near Invercargill, but began his working life as an accountant, becoming a partner in an Invercargill firm. He learnt to fly before World War II, spending the war years as an Airforce Flying Instructor around New Zealand.

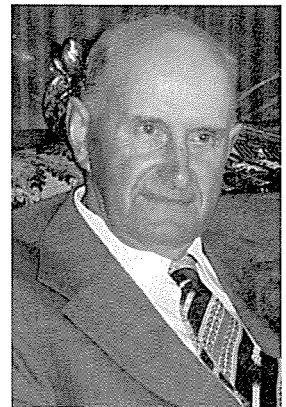
After a few more years in accountancy in Christchurch, Allen and his wife Margaret moved back to the family dairy farm at Roslyn Bush where learning to be a farmer again was difficult after such a long absence. His accountancy skills were in demand by the community, Allen serving as chairman of directors of the Kennington Dairy Factory for many years as well as assisting school and church.

He began planting shelter as soon as he started farming, and after joining Men of the Trees (Southland) he started a nursery for the benefit of members. Later, he and Margaret continued with their own nursery specialising in rock plants and miniature bulbs.

Allen was Vice President of the Men of the Trees in 1960, Secretary/Treasurer in 1962–82, and remained Treasurer until his death in 1986.



Harry Bunn at a field day.



Allen Calvert

He was elected to the National Executive of NZFFA in 1965, and was President from 1969 to 1973. His Editorials in *Farm Forestry* over these years showed his concern for the direction of the Association. He suggested a name change, dropping the “Farm” to encourage urban dwellers, a change which has been suggested several times since. He commended the “Save Manapouri” campaign and conservation in general.

Allen was very conscious of the need to attract new members, and stressed the efforts required by Branch Secretaries to promote Branch activities.

### Geoff Chavasse

Born in England, Geoff’s education consisted of an Oxford degree in history followed after World War II by a further degree in forestry, also at Oxford.

Coming to New Zealand in 1949, Geoff spent a number of years in the South Island, both on the West Coast and in Southland. He developed a deep understanding of indigenous forestry management as well as the establishment of exotic trees.

As a member of Southland Conservancy staff, Geoff helped Dave Milligan and the young Farm Forestry Branch in Southland, and retained an interest in the Association throughout his career.

Geoff joined the FRI staff at Rotorua where his writing ability led to excellent communication of research results to practical foresters, including farm foresters. His compiling of the 590-page Proceedings of FRI Symposium No.22 in 1981 on “Forest Nursery and Establishment” was a tremendous effort and the volume is still used as a reference.

Farm forestry had great potential in Geoff’s opinion, and so he was pleased to be able to contribute in many ways including the writing of a number of articles for *Tree Grower*, and the presentation of opening addresses at Conferences. His address to the 1990 Auckland Conference published in *Tree Grower* 11/3 August 1990 gave a balanced view of the conservation debate with a very knowledgeable background.



Geoff Chavasse

Geoff Chavasse wrote a number of books, including “The Forest World of New Zealand”, beautifully illustrated with John Johns’s photographs.

A strong interest in the Anglican Church stemmed from choral singing as a boy, and finally led to ordination as a priest in 1978.

With his wife Shirley, Geoff developed a hobby farm forestry block near Te Puke on his retirement, with a number of special-purpose species.

### **Lord Cobham**

When in New Zealand as Governor-General, Lord Cobham accepted an invitation to be Patron of the Association in 1959, retaining the office until he returned to the United Kingdom in 1963.

Lord Cobham opened the 1961 Auckland Conference with an address recorded in *Farm Forestry* 3/2 May 1961, entitled “A Satisfying and Profitable Occupation”. He outlined the tree planting he was doing on his 3600-acre (1458-ha) farm in Worcestershire, and said how he admired mixed plantations of oak, ash, sycamore, and beech interplanted with Norway spruce, larch, and poplar.

He spoke of a cedar in Worcestershire planted in 1768 and then 234 inches (6 m) around the bole, about the same as an 80-year-old chestnut in Christchurch. He considered that the speed of tree growth in New Zealand must make them an extremely paying proposition.

### **Richard Davies-Colley**

Richard and Wilma bought the farm near Titoki in 1964. A hilly sheep and beef property, the farm was not high producing and had gully and tomo erosion problems. Over 4000 poplar poles and 1000 willow poles were planted in the early years, with a nursery for pole production developed on the farm. As well as controlling erosion, this planting gave the farm better grass production and considerable landscape appeal.

After small plantations of *P. radiata* had been successfully established, Richard and family planted 12 ha



Richard (above) and Wilma (below) Davies-Colley.



in 1973, with planting spots prepared with an auger on a post hole borer. The area was infested with blackberry, and Richard successfully grazed his sheep from the first year with very little damage to the trees. Eucalypts, cypresses, and blackwood were planted, together with a wide range of ornamental trees around the homestead. Sheep later gave way to an operation raising Friesian bulls, while the three Davies-Colley sons spent their University holidays extracting posts from the pine plantation and actually showed a profit while doing their Agricultural Science degrees.

Richard could see the way to maximise profit from his trees lay in processing them on the farm, and so began a sawmilling operation that has grown in a number of directions. A series of thinnings from the pine plantations provided the first material for a portable mill. A very large shed was built to house a bandsaw and thicknesser, the shed built from squared eucalypt logs grown on the property. Richard and his sons were great believers in do-it-yourself. From building sheds to building sawmills, then on to building drying kilns, the family has shown a remarkable capacity for upgrading second-hand machinery and putting into practice technical skills which have been self-taught or modified from observation of other plants.

What was a barely economic farm unit in 1964 has been built into a diversified number of family businesses employing many people.

Son David Davies-Colley has built a large sawmill for processing eucalypt logs only, mainly for dried and finished flooring which is marketed and laid by a company purchased in Auckland. Son Peter has developed a large forest management business, planting and managing forests for joint ventures or individuals. Son Tony has quite separately developed a very large *P. radiata* sawmill in Whangarei supplying finished timber to varied markets.

Richard and Wilma's involvement in the farm forestry movement has had a large influence in what they have achieved. From being Secretary of the Whangarei, then Mid Northland Branch for some 9 years (and still active on the committee), Richard was elected to the National Executive

in 1976 and was President 1982–84. Richard initiated the Secretaries meeting, later to become the Branch management meeting at annual Conferences, played a part in developing the awards for excellence in farm forestry, and often assisted John Mortimer at the Mystery Creek Fieldays.

Richard and Wilma have put a lot into farm forestry but would say that they have had more out in the form of friendship and travel to all parts of the country. One of the largest field days ever held by the Association was at the 1991 Conference in Whangarei when over 400 visited “Ngarakau”, the Davies-Colley property.

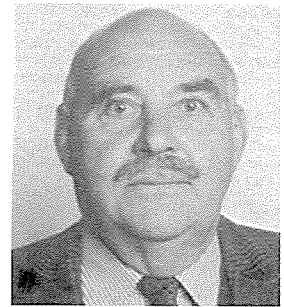
Richard was elected an Honorary Life Member in 1987 and continues his active interest, although golf has intruded a little!

### Hamish Deans

From a pioneering Canterbury family, Hamish farmed his 280-ha “Auchenflower” property out of Darfield with sheep, beef, and some seed production. His interest in trees was increased when taking over a property from his parents where a variety of old trees had been windthrown or broken. He was able to use posts and rails of oak, and had *Eucalyptus obliqua* milled for sheep grating.

Hamish planted some 5 km of shelter including small plantations of a number of species, and developed an interest in many deciduous trees, mostly nut bearing such as walnuts, hazelnuts, and *Pinus koraiensis* which has edible seed. This in turn led him to become involved with the NZ Tree Crops Association as well as farm forestry. He would like to see New Zealand farms scattered with a variety of plantations producing many different woods as well as fruit and nuts. Trees grow so fast here that there should be an advantage on world markets.

Hamish Deans was a member of the National Executive from 1971 to 1979, including a term as President 1976–78.



Hamish Deans

### James Deans

A member of a well-known pioneer family in Canterbury, James Deans was born at Riccarton House, Christchurch, in

1885. The property was filled with a variety of trees planted by early members of the family. James took this interest in trees to “Homebush”, a property he took over in 1908 situated in the foothills of the Southern Alps.

Forestry blocks and a variety of amenity trees were planted, creating a park-like property which was complemented in later years by the establishment of rhododendrons. The property was often visited by individuals and organisations keen to see the collection.

James Deans was father of Association President Hamish, and was elected Patron of the Association in 1963. Sadly, he died later the same year.

### Graeme Flett

Graeme began farming a 3000-ha block near Berwick Forest in Otago, in partnership with his brother John. This was split in 1972 with each farming on his own account. The 1500 ha was developed out of scrub either by cultivation or by oversowing, but tree planting was a feature of Graeme’s land management from the time he was 22.

The property now has about 250 ha of mostly *P. radiata*, but woodlots of Douglas-fir and *Eucalyptus delegatensis* together with 5 km of shelterbelts make up a very large investment in forestry. The farm has been leased since 1996, with Graeme and Joy moving to Milton leaving a son to manage the forest. The family are continuing to plant, and Graeme has harvested 26 ha of *P. radiata*; this helped with his project of writing a family history, which involved fact-finding trips to Scotland and elsewhere.

After a spell as Mid Otago President from 1977 to 1982, Graeme served on the National Executive 1986–97, part of that time being Treasurer, and was President 1994–96. Graeme and Joy visited every Branch in the country while in office which was a big effort but gave them a good idea of the way the Association was running. The appointment of Executive Officer Ket Bradshaw with a permanent Wellington office was made while Graeme was President.

Marketing co-operatives are still likely to be formed by some Branches, Graeme suggests, though they may not all



Graeme Flett

be successful. He thinks it important that Branches and the NZFFA maintain an arm's length relationship so as not to repeat earlier marketing problems.

He also thinks it very important for members to influence District Councils—we have the numbers but unfortunately do not have enough finance to pay for professional time to make submissions to District or Regional Schemes.

### **Ivan Frost**

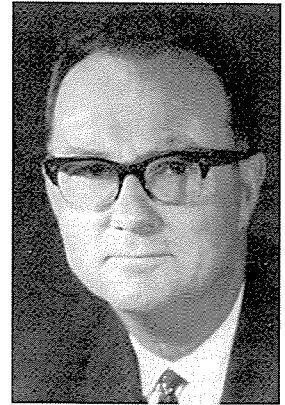
Ivan joined the NZ Forest Service in 1946 after serving in the RNZAF during World War II. Working in many locations in both indigenous and exotic forestry, he achieved Officer-in-Charge positions before being appointed as Senior Forest Extension Officer based in Wellington in 1967 following the sudden death of the previous officer, Frank Morrison. Ivan was in this position for 15 years until his retirement in 1982, and played a big part in Association activities.

The replacement of the Loan Scheme by the Grant Scheme saw a lot less administration for each grantee, but a very large increase in the number of applications. The Extension Service grew from 10 in 1965 to 36, and maintaining an even level of service from these officers spread throughout the country was a big job.

Ivan attended most Executive meetings and it would be hard for today's younger members to appreciate the input from, and the Association's dependence on the Forest Service. Towards the end of Ivan's career this was beginning to change with calls for independence—and, of course, it was just as well as a few years later the Forest Service and its Extension Service were gone.

Ivan is on film giving information in the documentary "In the Company of Trees" made by the Association (now available on video tape).

At the time when the Forest Service sold tree seedlings in large numbers through our Branches, Ivan had the job of keeping independent nurserymen happy about price. This called for a meeting each year with a North Island and a



Ivan Frost

South Island nurseryman, to come to a mostly amicable agreement.

Ivan was made an Honorary Life Member of the NZFFA in 1983, and he and his wife Pauline moved to Te Puke for retirement.



Norm Gill

### **Norm Gill**

The Wellington Conservancy Office of the NZ Forest Service, based at Palmerston North, gave Neil Barr considerable help when he was establishing the first branches of the Association, and getting the Combined Farm Forestry Association off the ground.

The problem of Treasurer to handle membership records came up and so Conservator Ron Wells offered the services of Norm Gill for the job, Norm being a clerk in the Palmerston North office. Norm carried this job on from 1959 to 1982 with the low honorarium of 100 guineas (£105 = \$210) per annum from 1964, doing most of the work at home.

Through these years the Branch Secretary/Treasurer collected local subscriptions and passed on the National portion to Norm who paid for the journal and all other accounts. He found another colleague, W.C. Johnstone, to act as auditor for many years. Attending Conferences and the annual Executive meeting in Wellington made a pleasant change from office work for Norm.

His assistance to the Association was acknowledged by the awarding of Honorary Life Membership in 1983.

### **Joll Hosking**

A friend of Joll's father who had worked at a NZ Forest Service nursery about 1920 thought a living could be made growing trees for farmers in Northland, and so following an Auckland University B.Sc. Joll began a small nursery in 1953 on an alluvial soil near a stream in Whangarei. *Pinus radiata* seedlings were very prone to root rot here and so a piece of volcanic land was purchased with much better results.

From this start, Joll and Marjorie bought their present Maunu property in 1964 where a much larger operation was



possible. Until the late 1960s, nursery work was all by hand apart from cultivation, with wrenching at one stage of over 500 000 seedlings done by spade, weeding by hand or push hoe, and packing of trees for sale in wet hay and hessian bundles.

The next 20 years were exciting times for the nursery industry. Joll visited FRI annually watching the development of undercutting machines, seed sowers, and other tractor-drawn machinery.

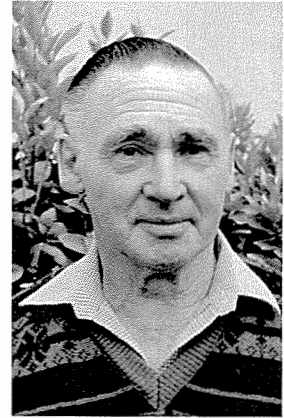
As well as the demand for *P. radiata*, there was increased interest in special-purpose species, shelter species with the growth of the kiwifruit industry, and ornamental trees. All species were grown as bare-root seedlings, with ornamentals “balled” in hessian for sale through retail outlets. The advent of polythene bags for packing forestry trees (followed by cartons), and black plastic planter bags for growing ornamentals enabled a number of operations to be done inside on wet days.

In 1979 Joll and Marjorie bought a small block of land a few kilometres away to establish a small plantation for themselves and to start a small Hereford breeding herd. 3½ ha of *Acacia melanoxylon* were planted and a 2.6-ha FRI *P. radiata* trial.

A garden centre was purchased in partnership with Richard and Wilma Davies-Colley in 1984, with the Davies-Colley half being sold to Joll and Marjorie’s daughter and son-in-law in 1990.

When the forestry nursery was sold in 1989, with the land leased for 12 years, Joll and Marjorie had sold about 70 million trees in 36 years.

Joll was Secretary of the Whangarei Farm Forestry Branch from its first meeting in 1960 for 13 years, and is still on the committee. He became National Secretary in 1967 remaining for almost 10 years, then served as President from 1978 to 1980. A highlight was leading the Association team at the 1981 Forestry Development Conference, addressing some 250 people at the Beehive, a nervous occasion. Joll still thinks these 5-yearly reviews of forestry, setting policy



Joll Hosking

guidelines nationally, were excellent and the lack of a National forest policy now is regrettable.

The 1971 Conference in Whangarei visited the nursery where Joll demonstrated one of the first reciprocating wrenching machines, and in 1991 the Conference visited the blackwoods and the FRI *P. radiata* trial.

Joll did a survey of the North Island to review the shelter situation in 1978, published in *Farm Forestry* 20/4 November 1978, and represented the North Island on the National Shelter Working Party.

He was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Association in 1981.



Will Hull

### Will Hull

W.B.Hull farmed at “Waierua” 50 km east of Masterton, and made a tremendous contribution to New Zealand forestry, not just farm forestry.

He was a true pioneer in the field of pruning. As described elsewhere, he planted both *Pinus radiata* and *Cupressus macrocarpa* at close spacing in 1928, and from ages 7 to 19 the trees were pruned “when they looked as though they needed it” to the remarkable height of 15 m. The careful sawing of some of these trees by FRI showed the remarkable increase in high-quality clearwood, and provided a guide to all foresters of the value of such management.

The NZFFA President at the time of milling, Russell Smith, used some of this timber in the Masterton County Council office as an example to others.

Will Hull was made an honorary Life Member in 1964, but sadly died later the same year.

### Bill Jolliffe, Gerald Hocking, and Ron Wells

These three NZ Forest Service personalities were of great assistance in the first few years during the formation of the Farm Forestry Association.

Bill Jolliffe was the first Extension Forestry Officer appointed in 1951 to help the Forest Service encourage farmers to plant woodlots.

Ron Wells was Conservator of Forests, Wellington Conservancy, based at Palmerston North. He chaired the first Combined Farm Forestry Association meeting in 1957 (when the decision was made to form the CFFA). Ron was responsible for appointing Norm Gill as Treasurer, and chaired a committee of Niall Alexander, Murray Wilson, and P.Easter who drew up the Rules of the Association and arranged for Incorporation in 1963.



Bill Jolliffe

Gerald Hocking was a forester based at Palmerston North with a big input into the young Association, particularly in the field of establishing “graveyard trials” to show the durability of various timbers with different treatments. Gerald’s wife June was National Secretary in 1978–80, and the trees he planted became the foundation for the successful forestry and farming venture now carried on by his son Denis.

All three men were particularly good friends to Neil Barr in arranging meetings to set up new branches. It is doubtful that Neil could have managed without the introduction to farmers provided by these men.

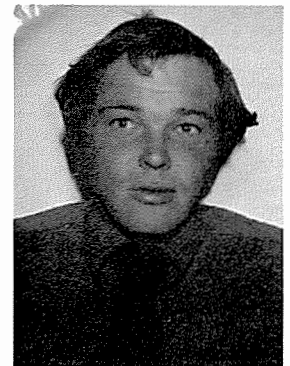
### **John Larsen**

John was National Secretary 1981–91 when the Association was growing fast and creating an increasing workload.

After completing a B.Ag.Sci. at Massey University, John worked for the Catchment Commission until setting up as a forestry contractor. This led to sawmilling, firstly with a batten mill and then a mobile twin-saw Coltart mill and breast bench. John’s operation continued to grow so that now he has a timber yard near Gisborne selling everything from timber to dog kennels to wire and staples.

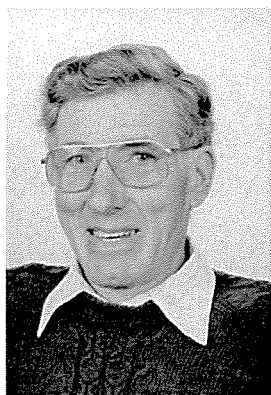
John was Secretary/Treasurer of the Gisborne East Coast Branch from 1976 for a number of years, followed by a term as President 1987–89.

The 1989 National Conference visited John’s mill and watched him cut up a *Eucalyptus obliqua* log under Neil Barr’s eagle eye. The operation went well and was a good promotion for the further planting of eucalypts.



John Larsen

At the 1992 Conference, John was presented with an award to acknowledge the contribution he had made to the Association. With a roll-your-own sticking out one side of his mouth, and his old leather hat, John is one of the characters at Conference.



Tom MacBride

### Tom MacBride

Tom and Noeline started farming in Northland on a dairy farm in 1961. The common problem on Northland hill country of underground tomos led Tom to begin planting poplars under the guidance of the Catchment Commission, and then attending a farm forestry meeting with interest in pine woodlots developing.

The MacBrides bought a beef farm of 296 ha in 1972 near Helena Bay on Northland's east coast, also with erosion problems. Here Tom planted *P. radiata* woodlots to stop the slips, 3 ha of which he was able to harvest in 1995. From looking at forestry as an erosion control mechanism, Tom could now see it as a land use better suited to much of Northland, and with a much better earning potential than farming. While still farming they purchased 147 ha at Whareora where two-thirds were planted in *P. radiata*, 15 ha were covenanted under the QEII Trust, and a small dam was built for wildlife with ornamental trees planted around the edges.

Tom was elected to the National Executive from 1985 to 1995, being President 1992–94, as well as serving on the Mid Northland committee for many years, where Noeline also put in a long spell as Secretary and was made a Branch Life Member.

Tom noted that the loss of the Forest Service drove the Association to be independent, and the \$7500 taxation allowance was a big incentive for farm foresters. He arranged the first Branch leadership meeting in Wellington where one or two representatives from each Branch attended a seminar addressed by many interesting speakers.

Richard Davies-Colley in a note of welcome to Tom as a new Executive member in 1985, observed that the

MacBrides had four daughters, his four horses were all mares, his dogs were bitches, and he had a large herd of run cows!

### John Mackay

John was a second-generation farmer being brought up on the 1700-ha property “Montana” at Moa Flat in West Otago. His father Jack, mentioned elsewhere, began planting trees when he bought the property in 1930 as he could see the desperate need for shelter. The homestead is 550 m asl with the property rising to 731 m.

Trees were planted every year, mostly in multi-row shelterbelts, and after 1970 in larger woodlots also sited to have a shelter value. Many species were tried but those most successful in the harsh climate have been *P. radiata*, Douglas-fir, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, and several eucalypts, mainly *E. delegatensis*, *E. nitens*, and *E. regnans*. John and Anne Mackay established a large garden around the homestead showing what could be grown with established shelter.

In recent years the Mackays have moved to a 40-ha block near Herbert Forest, partly thanks to selling 4300 tonnes of sawlogs from unmanaged shelterbelts, and are busy with new shelter and garden planting.

John was elected to the National Executive from 1981 to 1989 and was President 1986–88, following years on the Northern Southland Branch committee. His years as NZFFA President were not made easier by the ending of the Grant Scheme and the NZ Forest Service, but John recalls that membership did not drop and the tax allowance the Association had fought to hold remained an incentive to establish plantations.

John and Anne were invited to Tasmania to speak to farm foresters there, and thoroughly enjoyed getting in among the eucalypts. John thinks the basic membership of the Association will always be people who have a love of planting trees, and their loyalty will hold the Association together. Any commercial side will survive only if it can deliver an advantage over competitors.



John Mackay

### Mike Malloy

Mike Malloy had a large legal practice in Auckland but became interested in forestry in the early 1970s, and so the family bought a 60-ha block at Woodcocks, near Warkworth. After a year or two planting pines but becoming ever more strongly of the view that the future lay with hardwoods, Mike began planting a range of eucalypts, blackwoods, and oaks, with Japanese cedar and cypresses as interesting softwoods.



Mike Malloy in his stand of *Accacia melanoxylon*.

Mike's reading of the world wood situation, linking the growth of wood to the sun's energy in a world fast running out of traditional fossil fuels, made forestry an ideal land use. Growing hardwoods for their engineering uses and for their natural durability also made sense in an environment beginning to cry out for fewer chemicals and less CO<sub>2</sub> emission.

An example of Mike's innovative thinking was the suggestion he made to the Lower North Branch about 1983 that, to allow easy flow of bulk commodities such as logs and fertiliser through Auckland, a canal system could be built from the Kaipara Harbour to the Waikato River to enable the movement of goods by barge.

Mike combined his legal expertise with his love of trees to put in tremendous work for the Association in drafting the Co-operative Forestry Companies Act 1978, and the Forestry Rights Registration Act 1983. He also assisted the Association in setting up the New Zealand (now the Neil Barr) Farm Forestry Foundation.

Mike and Pat resigned from the Association in 1997 over differences in the direction of blackwood research.

Norval Gibson-Smith in his Lower North Annual Report of 1988 spoke of the huge contribution both Mike and Pat had made to the Association over many years.

“Their inspirational farm forestry has made Mike an Association icon; their generous hospitality, their contribution to extending our horizons in silvicultural thinking and technology, and their service on the committee (Mike has been Chairman, Pat Newsletter Editor) and Mike's legal efforts at the National level have all been valued and appreciated.”

### Sir John Marshall

Sir John was Patron of the NZFFA 1978–88. As a farm forester himself, with 10 ha of *P. radiata* on the family farm near Waikanae, he was naturally interested in the organisation, and hosted Branch field days at his property.

As well as opening the 1979 Auckland Conference, Sir John wrote an article in *Farm Forestry* 21/1 February 1979 on the marketing of forest produce. He wrote of the speed of growth of our trees, and factors such as world population increase with a greater demand for paper and wood products, but was cautious about competition from other Southern Hemisphere countries and the way economic conditions can change, citing new trade barriers, new sources of supply, new products, and currency fluctuations.

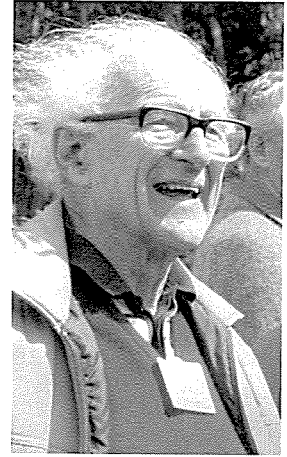
In an Editorial to *Tree Grower* 8/4 November 1987, Sir John wrote of the native trees on his farm and all the reasons there were for planting a variety of trees on our farms.

### Dave Milligan

Dave was born with an undiagnosed congenital heart condition which in later years his medical advisers said should have given him a life expectancy of 1 hour! Instead, he made 73 years, with a large proportion of his time being devoted to promoting tree planting.

Dave and his wife Ethel had a farm at Dipton which did not offer too much opportunity for tree planting, but when the Men of the Trees (Southland) was formed in 1958, Dave became a foundation committee member having already been a member of the Dunedin organisation.

Then the decision was made to form the Northern Southland Branch of the Farm Forestry Association in 1962, with Dave again a foundation member. Buying an old Gestetner, Dave churned out newsletters for years, finally finding the wonders of an electric typewriter and photocopying made it much easier on fingers stiffened with rheumatism. Dave was Northern Southland Secretary for 22 years and took great delight in annual Conferences allowing him the opportunity of seeing so many other properties around the country.



Sir John Marshall



Dave Milligan

With a minor speech impediment, Dave was naturally reluctant to speak at meetings, but became more confident with practice, thanking his friends who pushed him into such situations. He served on the National Executive in 1973–74 and was awarded, with Ethel, Northern Southland Life Membership in 1981. He became an Honorary Life Member of the National Association in 1972.

Just before he died in 1989, Dave wrote some reflections in *Tree Grower* 10/2 May 1989. He described many people and their properties which were all enhanced by the beauty of trees. In particular, he mentioned the huge change in the landscape around Invercargill since the 1950s, largely due to the work of farm foresters.

### **John and Bunny Mortimer**

John had a most interesting background of service with the British Colonial Service in Uganda, and a degree in Commerce before marrying Bunny (Margaret) in 1957, and settling on a property just west of Hamilton which they had inherited “provided it remained green and treed”.



John and Bunny Mortimer



This began an intense interest in all manner of trees by both partners, with particular emphasis on ornamental park-like plantings, but also a big involvement in commercial planting and conservation of native remnants.

Part of the property was developed into the Westlands Golf Course, opened in 1968, giving an opportunity to create a park with an income. This was later sold, allowing John and Bunny to concentrate planting on the remaining “Taitua” property where Charolais cattle were bred—requiring great ingenuity in the use of electric fences to separate the cattle from the trees. Large numbers of trees were established, all carefully indexed and recorded, together with lakes and wetlands for wildlife.

Commercial *P. radiata* plantations were established on another property. John planted under the Loan Scheme and he had something of a battle with bureaucrats who did not allow for different tree growth rates on farm land and insisted on strict tending schedules. They were also slow to pay John noted! These plantings were later converted to the Grant Scheme without difficulty as the NZ Forest Service report stated “in this instance ... the loan can be remitted without delay as tending is well advanced”.

Bunny, meantime, was gaining enthusiasm for conservation, and on the commercial block was able to protect 40 ha under the QEII National Trust, while at home planting of native seedlings was just as important as the exotics.

John and Bunny travelled the country to collect photographs and information to help them write “Trees for the New Zealand Countryside—A Planter’s Guide”. This book has been a great success; it obviously filled a need, selling 10 000 copies to 1997 and being re-printed.

Bunny has had an active public life, as a member of the Native Forest Action Council, President of the South Auckland Conservation Association, and a Waipa County Councillor for some years.

The Mortimers gifted “Taitua” arboretum to Hamilton City in 1997, a very generous contribution to the city’s parks and reserves.

Both John and Bunny were active in the Waikato Branch committee for years, putting in a huge effort at the Mystery Creek Fielddays including the organisation of building a permanent display area. John has also arranged the milling and supply of special-purpose species such as blackwood from logs he is always hunting.

John was elected to National Executive in 1978, where he continued as President 1984–86. His term coincided with the cessation of the Grant Scheme which involved him in a long-running battle with politicians to try to salvage some concessions for farm foresters. The Association was very fortunate to have someone with John's accountancy skills to guide it through these difficult times. His appearance before the Brash Committee and the Select Committee on tax issues resulted in the \$7500 tax deductibility of forestry expenses against other income. This was a significant achievement at a time when Government was intractable with most people looking for assistance. John probably had more contact with Government than any other President, but by doing his homework, he was well received and certainly made politicians aware of the Association.

Both John and Bunny have been elected Honorary Life Members of the NZFFA, and in 1995 both were awarded the QSM for services to the community.

### **Lindsay Poole**

It is hard to realise that a man who worked in the Whaka Nursery in 1926 is still actively interested in forestry matters in 1998—almost the whole life of the Forest Service plus 10 years!

After a degree in forestry at the then-existing Auckland Forestry School, Lindsay worked with the Botany Division of DSIR, becoming its Director in 1949. He served in Britain during World War II, and then spent some valuable time in the Forestry and Timber Section of the Military Government in Germany where he was able to observe the conservative sustained-yield regimes in the country.

Lindsay rejoined the Forest Service as Assistant Director in 1951, serving 10 years under a somewhat difficult Director in A.R. Entrican.

As Director-General of Forestry 1961–71, Lindsay could see the acceleration of forestry growth and processing in New Zealand, including the development of the young Farm Forestry Association. This period included the introduction of the Loan Scheme in 1962 and the Grant Scheme in 1970, necessitating the expansion of an Extension Service to handle administration of these schemes, and to advise farmers how to do the job. The Extension Officers played a vital role in field days of branches of the Farm Forestry Association, helping to develop the expertise among today's members.

After retiring from the Forest Service, Lindsay Poole was Chairman of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council 1971–78, keeping him in touch with the farming community.

His combined botanical and forestry knowledge has led to his writing some notable books, including "Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand" in 1963, illustrated by Nancy Adams. This was a very valuable identification book for use as a field guide. "Tomorrow's Trees" (1992) with John Johns is a magnificent history of New Zealand forestry, and with his "Trees, Timber and Tranquillity" in 1998 Lindsay has put the decisions made by politicians into sharp relief against the discarded wisdom of many dedicated foresters.

Lindsay believes that farm forestry must prove to be of the greatest long-term importance to the country.

He was appointed Patron of the Association in 1971, but could not continue due to other work commitments.

### **Jim and Airini Pottinger**

Jim and Airini took up a particularly difficult property in 1950 north of Tinui in the Wairarapa. The steep hill country was very prone to erosion, subject to fierce nor'-westerly gales as well as extremes of wet and dry. As development proceeded, Jim could see the need for tree planting both for erosion control and for shelter, so set about an impressive tree-planting programme beginning around what was to be their house site in 1952.

The use of electric fences became the main tool in establishing shelter, and Jim's use of many different units



Lindsay Poole when he was Director-General of Forests.



Jim (above) and Airini (below) Pottinger



powered by mains, battery, or solar panels inspired others. All his tree planting, even in extensive plantations, was designed to make farming easier—farming was the first priority. The Pottingers' philosophy was to grow more grass by better fencing and shelter, and so tree planting tended to be in corners to help with stock movement.

By 1980 there were about 50 ha of trees planted on the 525-ha property, plus a large area in poplars. A particular interest was the eucalypts and over 50 species were tried, one of the most successful being *E. fraxinoides* from which Jim was later able to collect seed to sell in quite large volumes.

On the Association side, Jim and Airini took an active part in the Wairarapa Branch committee, with Airini chairing the 1987 Conference committee, and the farm being host to all delegates at that Masterton Conference.

Jim served as National Secretary from 1963 to 1968 when Russell Smith was President, and was on the Executive from 1971 to 1977 being National President 1973–76.

Airini was active in farm and tree planting work, as well as raising a family in pretty isolated, pioneering circumstances. She held her own in the mainly men's world of annual Conferences, and served on the National Executive in 1984.

Jim and Airini have hosted numerous field trips to demonstrate different aspects of farm forestry. Those of us from the National Shelter Working Party who visited Pottinger's property in a gale will not forget hanging on to the Land Rover while Jim described his shelter establishment techniques.

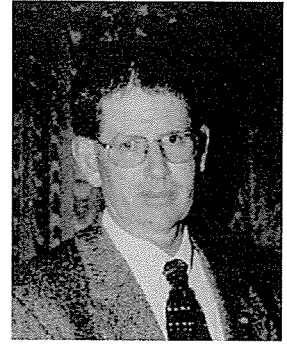
Both Jim and Airini were elected as honorary Life Members, Jim in 1977 and Airini in 1984.

### John Prebble

John and Heather Prebble farm a 630-ha property near Palmerston, North Otago, with sheep and beef and an increasing area in forestry. They now have some 34 ha in woodlots and 3.2 km of shelterbelts. John was a foundation member of the North Otago Branch, serving as Secretary for

the first 12 years. Heather has been Treasurer for the last 8 years.

Elected to the National Executive in 1990, John became President in 1998 and will complete his term in 2000. It has been a particularly difficult period to hold the President's position, because his area has been in the throes of perhaps the worst drought in living memory, going on for over 2 years and coinciding with low stock prices. It at last seems as if sufficient rain and snow may be falling (winter 1999) to be able to look forward to a good spring.



John Prebble

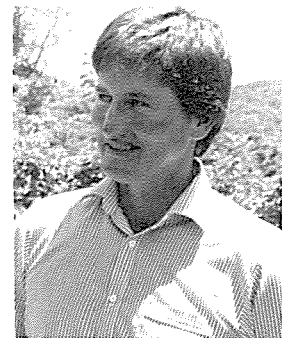
John's position has been made more difficult by a falling membership in the Association. This has been due to a drop in tree planting, probably following the loss of sales to Japan and Korea and heightened by the weak economy. With a drop of income for the Association, John has had to supervise a general belt tightening wherever possible. All members hope things will be improving by the time of his last Conference as President in Balclutha 2000.

### Dugald Rutherford

Following a B.For.Sc. at Canterbury, Dugald did his great OE including some forestry work in different countries before he took up farming "Melrose", a 3800-ha property in North Canterbury, with his wife Mandy in 1974.

"Melrose" is non-arable hard hill country up to 1400 m altitude, but has a 1000-mm rainfall. Dugald has raised stock numbers to 6000, and introduced deer, trophy hunting, and forestry. Forestry is practised on a "best land use" basis, and so has had little effect on stock numbers, but by 1996 was up to 168 ha. Agroforestry with *P. radiata* accounted for 78 ha, and plantations 41 ha, plus 27 ha of Douglas-fir. A number of smaller plantations of other species included macrocarpa, Corsican pine much of which was aerially seeded, *Eucalyptus nitens*, *E. delegatensis*, Lawson's cypress, and larch.

Dugald is close to being able to start an annual timber harvest, and he and Mandy have developed an interest in planting ornamental trees. 40 ha of native bush and swamp have been fenced and retired.



Dugald Rutherford

As a sideline, Dugald jointly formed a company promoting and managing joint venture investment partnerships in forestry covering 600 ha (in 1996).

Following many years on the North Canterbury Branch committee, Dugald was elected to the National Executive from 1982 to 1993, including a term as President 1990–92. During this period he witnessed the growing independence of the Association after reliance on the NZ Forest Service, and the appointment of the first paid Executive Secretary in Mike Smith.

Dugald signed the Forest Accord for the NZFFA and chaired a meeting between Federated Farmers, Forest Owners Association, Ministry of Forestry, and the Institute of Foresters. These actions were satisfying as they reduced tensions between the Conservation movement and foresters in the first case and between farmers and foresters with their land-use battles in the second.

Dugald believes the strength of the Association is in its diverse membership, with a mix of all types of farmers, city businessmen, and small land-holders.

### **Peter Smail**

Peter says he had no formal education, only a degree in commonsense. Although brought up in Christchurch he had only one ambition—to be a farmer. After he had worked on a farm in the Rakaia Gorge for a while, World War II intervened and so he served 3½ years in Italy and with the Occupation Force in Japan.

Peter married Nan (Nancy McArthur) soon after the war, and they went to manage Blythe Downs in North Canterbury with Corriedale sheep and Hereford cattle. In 1953, Peter won a ballot for what was to be his home and life's work until 1992. The property of 570 ha, which they named "Lynton", was near Hororata on the Canterbury Plains but becoming quite elevated. It was stony, dry, and subject to very severe winds from the north-west, with snow quite bad sometimes in a winter or spring southerly.

Recognising the need for shelter, Peter embarked on an extensive tree-planting programme, the main features being

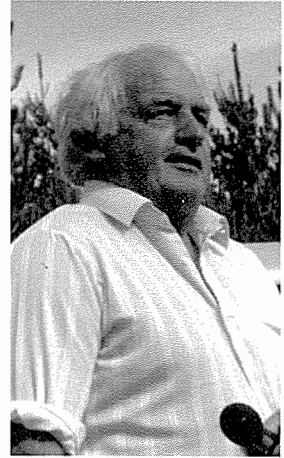
developed from observing the faults of the recommended multi-row *P. radiata* belts. His system of a single row of *P. radiata* with a row of *Cedrus deodara* on the windward side was proved after a few years to give stability in high winds and long life. Some 15 km of shelter was planted by 1964. Plantations followed in due course to give stock shelter in storms and build up a very substantial timber resource.

Peter had met Neil Barr at a seminar on trees at Lincoln College in 1957, beginning a life-long friendship and an involvement in farm forestry. From his membership of Canterbury Central branch, Peter began attending Conferences and was elected to the National Executive from 1971 to 1976, then co-opted for research from 1978 to 1982.

Two National Conferences visited “Lynton”, giving farm foresters from all over the country an idea of the efficiency of Peter’s shelter systems as well as his excellent stock management. He had increased the flock of Corriedales from 1250 to 4000 with great care in wool presentation. The number of field days Peter and Nan hosted must have become something of a strain. As well as farm foresters (individuals as well as Conference groups), Peter had annual visits from forestry students, many overseas visitors, research people, film crews, and reporters.

Peter had a big input into the work of the National Shelter Working Party from 1979 to 1982, with members from various Government departments, Catchment Boards, and the Association. All felt the need for shelter was obvious, but research to give farmers facts on increased yield from pasture, crops and animals was necessary. A good report came out of this group but unfortunately coincided with the great Government cutback of the 1980s, and so little subsequent work on the recommendations has been carried out.

Peter Smail was a member of the Selwyn Plantation Board for 16 years, 5 of them as Chairman, gaining an extensive knowledge of forestry and wood marketing. He and Nan retired to Tai Tapu in 1992, with Peter being involved in lecturing students at Lincoln University on agroforestry.



Peter Smail

Peter's work has been well recognised by the Institute of Forestry, a particular honour for a non-academic forester. He was appointed an Honorary Member in 1980, and awarded the Kirk Horn Flask and Medal in 1992.

The NZFFA elected him Honorary Life Member in 1980 and he won the "South Island Farm Forester of the Year" award in 1979. In 1990, MOF presented Peter and Nan with the "Award for Innovation in Forestry".

Peter is now Patron of the Association.

### **Mike Smith**

Mike has been a rather unusual character to become involved with the Association, but because of his particular skills, has contributed a great deal to three Branches and the parent body.

Getting as far as School Certificate in formal education, Mike says he then had to go to work, but thanks to a useful selection of genes from his parents he found he was able to work out complex legal and business problems and has put this ability to work to good effect. Mike became a Management Consultant based in Auckland, spending his time solving problems for individuals and both small and large companies. Lateral thinking and the ability to follow complicated paper trails, have brought success and meant a very busy life.

Having always had an interest in planting trees, Mike, his wife Donna, and two small children bought a 19-ha property a mile from the end of a road north of Matakana in 1967. He spent his weekends planting trees, mainly *P. radiata*, but also a range of eucalypts, having to carry the trees from the end of the road. There's no record of what the family thought of this! The crop was sold in the price spike of the early 1990s.

On this property Mike tried different pruning and thinning regimes so by 1973–75 he was ready for a larger planting of 46 ha near Woodcocks as a family company. He set up two larger companies near Warkworth—Rodney Forests Ltd of 200 ha with 144 shareholders as a public company, and Wright's Radiata Ltd of 160 ha with 17 shareholders as a



private company, both now (in 1997) ready to harvest as superannuation schemes for the shareholders.

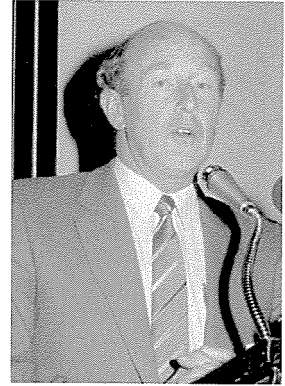
Mike joined the Lower North Branch of the NZFFA, and laughs now at the real concerns of some members that non-farmers should be allowed in. He was able to make things happen as Secretary for 12½ years, with energy and drive.

He and Donna moved to Taupo in 1987, but found no farm forestry branch in existence, and a long way to travel to adjoining branches. In 1988 while he was National President, he arranged the inaugural meeting of the Taupo Branch and was promptly elected Secretary/Treasurer. Largely by buying top-quality seedlings and selling them on to members he built up a healthy bank balance of \$17 000 for the Branch by 1995 and a membership of 128 by 1996. Mike had a term as President of Taupo Branch before he and Donna moved to Palmerston North, just in time to help with the 1997 Conference hosted by Middle Districts.

He was elected to the National Executive in 1980, and continued until his term as President 1988–90. While on the Executive he organised a standard draft of accounts for all Branches and a common balance date.

In 1991, when Mike had just completed his term on Executive, John Larsen retired as National Secretary leaving a growing job and no obvious candidates. Bruce Treeby put a telling paper to the Executive in June 1991 criticising the suggestion that someone from Federated Farmers should act as Executive Secretary. Bruce said it was expensive, we would lose our independence just won from the NZ Forest Service, and Mike Smith had all the qualifications and background in farm forestry to do the job well. Mike took over temporarily until President Dugald Rutherford could arrange an appointment. In fact Mike remained until 1994 with the new title of Executive Secretary and with a small honorarium.

Mike finally decided that the job was taking too much time, with many phone calls, letters, and the building of the library as well as Executive minutes and newsletters. Following the McLagan Review of Association affairs,



Mike Smith

Mike handed the job to Ket Bradshaw, with Federated Farmers continuing to look after membership records as they had since 1983.

The other important task Mike Smith has performed for Farm Forestry has been as President/Secretary of the Neil Barr Farm Forestry Foundation since the first meeting of trustees in 1989. Mike has carefully seen this fund grow to \$128 000 (in 1997), beginning to use some of the interest for various research purposes and the publication of Neil Barr's book on eucalypts. Mike's orderly mind coupled with plenty of drive and new ideas have had a big impact on the Association for over 30 years. He has represented the Association at Parliament, on research committees at FRI, and in numerous meetings.

He was elected an Honorary Life Member at the Tauranga Conference in 1995.

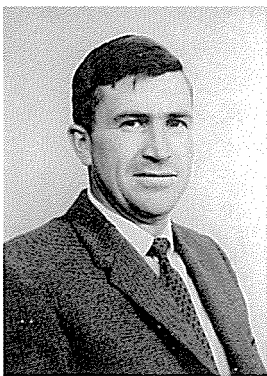
Mike once again offered his services as Executive Secretary in a temporary capacity in August 1999, when the resignations of both Ket Bradshaw (Executive Officer) and the Administration Officer Karen Clunie left no-one to staff Head Office. This gave the Executive more time to think of the type of person required in an administration role when the Association had less income, and Mike's managerial skills have been greatly appreciated by President John Prebble.

### Owen Smith

Owen took over the family farm at Rosewill, Timaru, in 1950 having already talked his father into planting 2.5 ha of *P. radiata* in 1947. Stock management was his priority, and during his ownership of the farm he was able to increase ewe numbers from 936 to over 2000.

Plantations of *P. radiata*, macrocarpa, and Douglas-fir were established, as well as wide-spaced poplars in gullies for shelter and shade.

Owen continued planting trees when he later moved to a 40-ha block, mainly for shelter and amenity. While on this smaller property he worked as a Field Officer for both South Canterbury Federated Farmers and for farm cadets. This



Owen Smith

enabled him to travel widely in the district talking to farmers and cadets, putting in a plug for farm forestry on frequent occasions.

He was one of the few farm foresters to question Neil Barr! Arthur Cooney of the Selwyn Plantation Board told him that pruned trees need shelter, and he was convinced this was good advice when his trees were milled. Wide-spaced trees in exposed situations have swept pith, off-centre core-wood, and tension wood. He said pruning produces clears, but shelter produces straight trees.

Owen was a member of the National Executive from 1976 to 1983, being President 1980–82. This was the time the Association employed Bill Gimblett to co-ordinate marketing, and Owen remembers making an effort to get alongside Federated Farmers instead of having a “them and us” situation.

### **Russell Smith**

Russell was born in Masterton, educated at Wanganui Collegiate School, and spent most of his life farming at Matahiwi. He served on the Masterton County Council from 1959 to 1977, being chairman 1971–77.

Involvement with farm forestry began with Russell becoming founder President of the Wairarapa Farm Forestry Association. He was a member of National Executive from 1959 to 1967, following Neil Barr as the second President 1963–66.

Russell had a great love and knowledge of trees, as shown by the extensive plantings around his “Te Hau” homestead including woodlots, shelter, and ornamentals. The property looked park-like, as could be seen in the photograph accompanying an obituary written by Jim Pottinger in *Tree Grower* 4/3 August 1983.

In one of those rare breakthroughs with the Taxation Department, Russell argued on behalf of the NZFFA for the removal of Death Duties on standing timber on the farm.

He suffered severe burns in a haybarn fire on his farm in 1969 but typically overcame his physical disabilities and got



Russell Smith

on with his life. He had a fine collection of antiques, particularly old silver.

Made a Life Member of the Association in 1973, Russell died in Hobart in 1983 while attending a family reunion.

### Vic Stephens

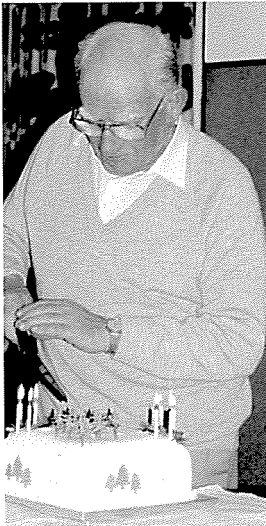
Vic spent his life in the south, being born in Palmerston, then after a move to Balclutha and a stint as a driver in the Middle East during the war, he bought his farm at Kakapuaka. He is credited with establishing the first commercial farm forestry planting in South Otago, and the Conference in 2000 will visit his farm and see these trees.

Bill Wise, a former President of the South Otago Branch, said that Vic held the first farm forestry field day in the area and from that time was always available to provide practical advice to new and established farm foresters. Locally he represented the Branch to obtain planning permission for planting and was a great advocate of farm forestry as a wise land use. Vic was Secretary or Treasurer or both for South Otago for 23 years from the first meeting. He and his wife Joyce, who was very much part of the team, presented the branch with a beautiful beech burr competed for annually for a “Best Planted Farm” award.

An astute businessman, Vic supervised the establishment by the Branch of a nursery growing special lines but also making large purchases from State or private nurseries. He also purchased silvicultural equipment for resale to members and a post peeler for hire. More recently he was instrumental in setting up a separate marketing arm for members.

The Branch is easily the biggest in the country reaching over 500 members at peak and with a very healthy bank balance. Vic was made a Branch Life Member in 1988 and was Patron of South Otago from 1994.

A frequent delegate at Conferences, Vic was at his best at Branch management meetings, with helpful advice to other Branches on how best to run field days, get new members, and make a profit. His advice mixed with good humour and enthusiasm was rewarded with a National Life Membership in 1988.



Vic Stephens cutting his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday cake.

Vic's son Ken carries on with the good work of farming and forestry, and is currently on the National Executive.

### **Jack Stronge**

Although most of his life was spent as a dairy farmer at Opunake, Jack Stronge was a man of many parts. Following education at New Plymouth Boys' High School and Auckland University, Jack became a journalist with the *NZ Herald* and the *Taranaki Daily News*. Following his marriage to Mary Lee, he went back to develop the Arawhata Rd farm, with a break during World War II when he served in Intelligence.

A director of the Oaonui Dairy Company for 27 years, Jack was chairman for 14. He was deputy chairman of the Egmont County Council, president of the Taranaki Savings Bank Board of Trustees, and served on many other bodies.

Jack became the founding President of the Taranaki Farm Shelter and Forestry Association in 1956, and attended the first meeting of what was to become the Combined Farm Forestry Association in 1957. He served on the National Executive from 1959 to 1972, his principal duties being assisting the editor of *Farm Forestry* with journal articles.

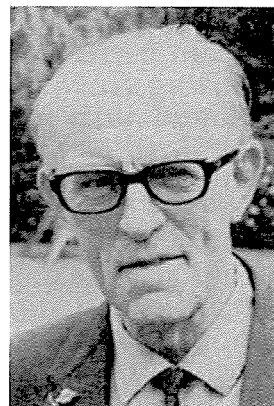
At a time when selling logs at a good price was very difficult, Jack had considerable influence in Taranaki and beyond in advising farmers how to draw up suitable agreements in writing between the farmer and the sawmill.

The first Forestry Development Conference in 1969 saw Jack Stronge leading the debate on behalf of farm foresters. The wisdom Jack had gained from practical experience and business involvement was of great benefit to the NZFFA which bestowed a Life Membership on Jack in 1970.

He made a comprehensive collection of historical books, and wrote various historical works covering the Taranaki area.

### **Joe Taylor**

Joe was a Wairarapa farmer who was an affiliated member of Federated Farmers as Farm Forestry



Jack Stronge



Joe Taylor

representative. In this role he was co-opted to the National Executive from 1974 to 1985.

During this time he was a member of the Timber Preservation Authority, a position long argued for by both farm foresters and Federated Farmers. As both growers and users of timber needing treatment, these organisations considered it essential to have a representative on the authority.

Joe was chairman of the Federated Farmers Lands Committee, and in this role did his best to influence opinion against the land use decisions making forestry a conditional use on farms.

The issue of rural fire fighting had Joe involved as when the NZ Forest Service was disbanded, most country areas were left with no one of experience in handling scrub or forestry fires. This is still a serious issue, with many rural people not aware of the likely repercussions of a fire getting away from their property. Very large sums can be spent on using bulldozers and helicopters to control such fires, and can be charged to the person lighting the fire.

### **Bruce Treeby**

Bruce's formal education included a B.Sc., Diplomas in Agriculture and Agricultural Engineering, and a Certificate in Soil Conservation. His early work was at Palmerston North where he worked with the Department of Agriculture on soil conservation matters; he was then seconded to the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council.

In 1964 Bruce joined the staff of the Technical Correspondence school, now the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, as horticultural tutor. He is currently Senior Lecturer in Natural Resources, Course Lecturer in Farm Forestry and New Zealand Native Plants and Environmental Effects Assessment, and Programme Leader for Bachelor of Applied Science (Environment).

Bruce attended a meeting of the NZFFA Executive in 1966 with the proposal to run a Farm Forestry Course from the Correspondence Institute. The idea was very well received

and the 13 assignments were prepared with the help of Gerald Hocking and, mainly, Ivan Frost. The course opened in 1973 with Bruce reporting that 93 students were enrolled by April and 201 by November. The course is still running with assignments updated, and Bruce reports that hundreds of New Zealanders have been helped to become involved in tree growing. More recently the course on New Zealand Native Plants has also appealed to tree growers as well as conservationists.

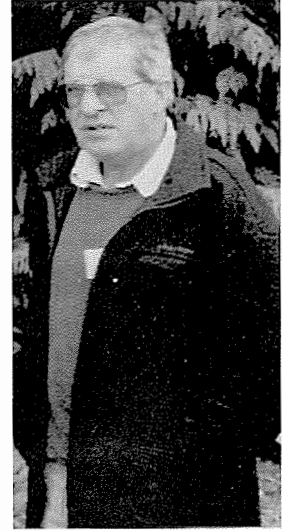
In 1974 Bruce was appointed Associate Editor of *Farm Forestry* to assist John Wilson in obtaining articles for the journal. He was co-opted to the Executive at the same time, remaining in this position for 25 years until resigning at the end of 1998.

In 1980, after some years of dissatisfaction with the *Farm Forestry* journal, Bruce and Joll Hosking arranged the production of *Tree Grower*, going against Executive instructions in increasing the size to A4 which matched other journals and suited advertising. Bruce arranged for the *Tree Grower* to be published by Rex Monigatti when the first publishers closed down, and the relationship between Bruce and Rex continued for 17 years with the quality of both text and photographs (mostly taken by Bruce), improving all the time.

The last few issues after Rex died, produced by his daughter Debbie, were of an excellent standard.

A decision in 1999 to go to six issues of *Tree Grower* a year with more advertising was seen as a mistake by Bruce, involving more work than he could afford time for, and so he resigned.

Bruce has written many articles, conference reports, and “shorts” over the years, with the issue of biosecurity becoming very serious in his mind. He remains on the Forest Biosecurity Advisory Committee representing the small grower and reports on pests and diseases in most issues of *Tree Grower*. He is concerned that most members of that committee are from large forestry companies dealing exclusively with *P. radiata* or Douglas-fir, and it is essential that farm foresters

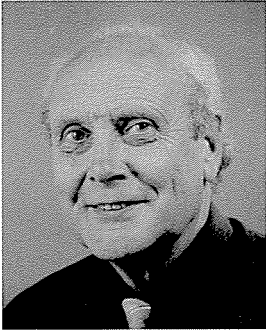


Bruce Treeby

have a watching brief on possible pest introductions affecting special-purpose species.

Bruce is also a member of the Association working party on Forest Certification which may prove to be very important in coming years. As a Trustee of the Neil Barr Foundation, and the Martin New Memorial Hardwood Trust, Bruce has a continuing involvement in Association affairs.

He was elected an Honorary Life Member of the NZFFA in 1990.



Chris van Kraayenoord

### **Chris van Kraayenoord**

In what now seems like the good old days, when soil conservation was encouraged and subsidies granted for the planting of trees to stop farm erosion, Chris van Kraayenoord gave members of the Association a great deal of help and advice.

As Soil Conservator with the Department of Agriculture in Palmerston North, but mainly when in charge of the National Plant Materials Centre at Aokautere, Chris was instrumental in spreading knowledge about the establishment of poplars and willows to New Zealand farmers, mainly through Catchment Boards, but also by visiting many branches of the Association and individual farmers. His breeding programme to produce new hybrids resistant to the poplar rusts allowed the resource created through this erosion-control planting to continue to grow. The country landscape is more beautiful as a result, the soil more stable, and an increasing supply of timber is becoming available.

Chris was a good friend to many farm foresters and, as “Mr Poplar”, his cheerful presence was always an asset to a field day.

### **Henry Meyric Williams**

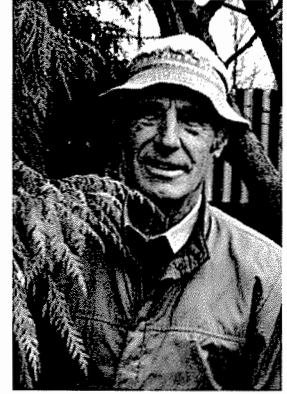
Early farm foresters will remember Meyric Williams as manager of “Ngahere”, a large Hawke’s Bay property with considerable erosion problems. Meyric set about controlling this erosion with wide-spaced poplars which he later used for animal fodder in droughts by judicious topping and limbing.



Neil Barr met Meyric at Gwavas Forest when on his first mission to set up branches in 1956. Neil recalled how helpful Meyric was, with NZ Forest Service assistance, in putting him at ease in talking to a group about the benefits of establishing an Association in Hawke's Bay. It is doubtful that Neil ever needed such help again!

As President and Secretary of the Branch at different times, as well as being active in the Institute of Foresters, Meyric played a leading role in all aspects of farm forestry in the district. He retained his interest in trees after retirement, helping to plan and plant many woodlots, and also assisting with the identification of many trees. He had an excellent collection of timbers which was planned to be left to the School of Forestry.

Meyric and June Williams attended many conferences, always enthusiastic and of good humour. Meyric was elected a Life Member of the NZFFA in 1983, and died in 1984.



Meyric Williams