Tony Grayburn receives Thomas Kirk Award

At the 1990 Annual General Meeting at Rototuna, Tony Grayburn became the second modern-day recipient of the Kirk Horn Flask.

Tony joined the Forest Service in 1941, saw 15 months' army service in the Japan Occupation Force in 1945-1947, then studied at the Australian Forestry School, Canberra, in 1949-50.

After serving six years as a forester at Kaingaroa and Southland, he joined the Selwyn Plantation Board in 1956 and received the award of NZ Forest Products at Tokoroa in 1963. There he was successively Operations Forester; Logging Manager; Manager of the Forestry Division; Managing Director of NZFP Forests Ltd and, at the time of his retirement in 1989, Chairman of NZFP Forests Ltd.

He has always been active and influential in industry organisations: President of the Institute of Foresters; an Executive Member of the Loggers' Association; President of the NZ Forest Owners' Association; Chairman of the Production Forestry Research Advisory Committee; a member of the NZ Forestry Council, and other leadership positions.

The following is a slightly abridged version of his speech of acceptance.

"It is a great honour to be the 1990 recipient of this most prestigious and historic award. In accepting the award, I would like to say why it has been easy to contribute to the sector, and to recount some of my most memorable recollections on the lighter side. At the 1988 AGM when being made an Honorary member, I paid tribute to those people who had contributed most to my career direction, viz. C.M. Smith, A.R. Entican, Dave Kennedy, M.R. Jacobs, A.P. Thomson, F.A. Cooney and J.E. Henry, so I will not refer to them again here.

"I have enjoyed my work and associations in forestry. It is easy to do well when you like what you are doing. I have been given enormous opportunities to study and gain experience by all my employers, including the Army. And those opportunities never stopped, including the year I retired. I have had an enormous variety of work and been to many places. This has lead to knowing a large number of people all over the world, many of whom I now class as good friends. Some of those Australian ones are here tonight. I have had a chance to shape sector policy in New Zealand as well as to take part in the management of research and development and the direction of forestry education and training. If I have not done what I should have, it was not through lack of opportunity.

"The major disappointments have been since 1981, the year of that most successful National Forestry Conference, the last one to be held, when we approached the future with such confidence. It was not to be. Government policies changed drastically with enormous effects on the forestry sector. The Forest Service was cut to pieces and disappeared. There was a financial collapse and restructuring in the commercial area which saw the demise of our grand old company, NZ Forest Products Limited. Who would have envisaged that in 1981? The confusion in the sector was added to by the unresolved debate into forest valuation, accounting and asset reporting in financial statements during the decade.

"Here are some of my most memorable recollections:

Going to Wellington in 1941 as a raw country youth to become a clerical cadet, not knowing much of what that might mean. No forward planning here!!

Acting as a wine steward at Mr Entican's daughter's wedding during the war when everything was in short supply. My stories of that occasion were endless.

The embarrassment of a young soldier in a strange land when being entertained by the Director of Forestry for Kochi Prefecture in Japan. I went with some difficulty to the toilet to find that the chief hostess arrived to help me perform that private act.

In 1949 we were part of the Australian Forestry School's first official rugby union team and gave Dunrobin Military College its first defeat in 11 years. Imagine the celebrations.

We were married in Australia and our only non-family guests were a group of forestry students, a gesture we have always appreciated.

Invercargill is always known for its friendliness and hospitality. The old custom of New Year "first footing" at our house was not complete without a visit by Fred Field (retired Conservator) and Mick O'Neill (still single). Then there was that lost day at the Institute's AGM conference in Taupo in 1957 or 1958. I was driven to Arthur Cooney and Dave Kennedy - we never did get to the field trip but did a pub crawl in the opposite direction.

"In 1989, the company and staff gave me a most generous farewell, more than one could ever have wished for. To cap it all off, this Institute has made me an Honorary member and has now added the Kirk Horn Flask Award in recognition of my efforts towards the profession and sector. I feel deeply honoured and thank you all for that recognition and friendship.

"Audrey has not been far away in nearly all of this action - it would not have been possible without her unobtrusive support."

Tony Grayburn receives the Kirk Horn Flask from the Institute of Forestry President, Dr Wink Sutton.