

Forester of the Year Award

Three excellent nominations made judging difficult. The judges were required to make their selection on the basis of:

- Outstanding academic or professional achievements.
- Representing and upholding the image of the profession.
- Demonstrated leadership in the forestry sector.
- Quality of the presentation of the nomination (of lesser weighting).

Andrew McEwen was selected on the basis of his contribution to NZ Forestry over the last 43 years in terms of these criteria.

This career commenced as a NZ Forest Service forester trainee in Kaingaroa, obtaining a Science degree from Victoria University, a forestry degree from Aberdeen University and three years in general forestry in Southland. He then spent 11 years with FRI as a scientist (including obtaining a PhD in tree growth measurements) before taking up the position of Director of Electronic Data Processing in the Forest Service Head Office.

Those of us with a few grey hairs will recall that these were the days of the IBM 29-80 mainframe and the gradual displacement of the infamous Radio Shacks with up-market IBM desk-top clones having an unbelievable 64K RAM processing power! Andrew's main task was the installation of a computer network with terminals down to district and even forest office level.

Andrew was seconded to the State Services Commission in 1985 where he played a role in the setting up of the Department of Conservation. He was then seconded to the Establishment Unit of New Zealand Forestry Corporation and played a huge role in the privatisation of State Owned plantations in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

For a seven-year period from 1992 Andrew was jointly responsible for the management of the residual Crown forests, which had annual sales of about \$20 million.

He has been actively involved in Treaty of Waitangi



Forester of the Year Andrew McEwen and NZIF President Ket Bradshaw with the Award.

settlements involving forestry land and provided consulting advice to the South African Government on the privatisation of commercial forests. Andrew is now in private practice as a forestry consultant. I was personally highly impressed by one of his more recent commissions – a paper on the pros and cons and business case for a Commodity Levy for the plantation forestry sector.

The judges were particularly impressed by Andrew's commitment to the profession of forestry. His voluntary efforts in producing a comprehensive weekly email newsletter benefit both the forestry sector and the professional standing of foresters and the Institute. Andrew has been highly effective in creating opportunities for networking and in giving a sense of professional community for foresters.

Peter Clark

Response by the Forester of the Year

I was very humbled and somewhat surprised to receive the NZIF Forester of the Year Award for 2005. The receipt of any award such as this is really only possible through the support of others and the particular circumstances that make up a career. It also seems somewhat contradictory to receive an award for enjoying yourself. It has, however, created the opportunity for me to acknowledge publicly some of the people and events that have helped to make my career what it turned out to be (and I apologise to the many that have also contributed but that I have not had room to mention by name).

I started with the former New Zealand Forest Service as a forester trainee in January 1962 shortly after Lindsay Poole was appointed Director-General of Forests (Lindsay, at 97, is still active in forestry and regularly rings to ask me

about forestry or NZIF matters or, as I sometimes suggest, to tell the junior forester what he should be doing). After an induction course in Rotorua, all the forester trainees were posted to Kaingaroa under the control of Peter Olsen, then principal forester at that forest. The single men's camp was quite an experience for a 17 year-old, straight from school. Peter's enthusiasm for forestry was infectious, but he also taught me never to believe that someone else owed me a living. Peter introduced me to NZIF - "there is an NZIF meeting in Rotorua tonight, the vehicle is leaving at 6.30pm so don't be late". How appropriate that 43 years later Peter Clark, Chief Executive of the firm that Peter Olsen went on to establish, should be the one to present the award to me at the NZIF conference at Waitangi.

After a year at Kaingaroa I went to Victoria University

to undertake a science degree. For the first year I worked part time in the records section at Head Office (at that time, the majority of university students were part-time, and lectures were often programmed to take place at the beginning and end of the day so that students could work during the day). Each morning I had to visit a number of rooms and make a list of all the files on various people's desks. I still remember one person who never acknowledged me as I came and went. I hope that ever since I have managed to at least say hello to someone coming into my office, however busy I might be.

A forestry degree at Aberdeen followed. This was before the Canterbury School of Forestry was re-established and each year the Forest Service sent a group of trainees to various parts of the world to study forestry. Clive Anstey was in my year and the next year we overlapped with Peter Berg, Hamish Levack and the late John Holloway – all well respected names in New Zealand forestry.

I was then posted to Invercargill – no question of applications for vacancies or being asked where we would like to go! The conservator was Mick O'Neill – a pretty fiery character who had an instinctive approach to forestry. I was pretty scared of Mick in those days (he used to sit in the executive officer's room at the end of a corridor first thing in the morning – where he could see who was late for work), but a few years later Mick was very helpful with a paper that I prepared for a panel at the 1971 NZIF conference at Wairakei. While in Invercargill I was sent to be a rapporteur at the 1969 Forestry Development Conference in Wellington. The task was to summarise speeches or papers within about an hour of their presentation so they could be provided to the delegates. One lesson was that finding anything substantial in some "keynote papers" could be quite a task – perhaps this brought out a cynical side in me.

After a few years in Southland, I was appointed a Scientist in the Mensuration Group at the Forest Research Institute in Rotorua. Here I reported to Harry Bunn, that formidable director of production forestry research. Harry could reduce your ideas to nothing with the single word "why?", followed by a sort of grunt – but often accompanied by a smile. Working with Harry, you soon learnt the need for some careful preparation and justification for projects – and the need for them to be related to forest management. I believe that Harry was a prime example of the need to be able to have a director of research who did not also have to deal with the administration of the bricks and mortar of the institute (the number of administration files on the piano at his home was legendary). How much more might Harry have achieved if he been freed of administration and able to concentrate full-time on directing research?

Harry sent me to Canterbury for post-graduate studies under Graham Whyte, another stickler for detail and accuracy. While Graham was on sabbatical, Alf Leslie stood in as supervisor. I still remember the two words "so what" that Alf wrote on drafts of sections of my thesis. I was always more careful about subsequent drafts.

In 1982 we moved to the Forest Service Head Office in Wellington where I had the task of acquiring and setting

up a country-wide computer network. I soon learnt that getting Treasury and State Services Commission approval was a lot more than simply saying "the Forest Service is a big organisation, it needs a computer system, the Ministry of Agriculture had got one, so what more justification do you want?" But I also learnt that by working with those "control" Departments and by producing evidence of substance, it was possible to get them on your side and in the end we did get approval.

Being in Wellington at the time of the decision to disestablish the Forest Service brought other opportunities. I was seconded into a State Services Commission unit working on the reorganisation of the government's environmental departments and then into the establishment unit of NZ Forestry Corporation. During this time, and later after the Corporation was functioning, I worked closely with Andy Kirkland, someone with an incredibly analytical mind. From him I learnt the "idiot test" – before accepting the answer you get from a complex model, have a look from a common sense point of view to see if it is reasonable. I also learnt from Andy that if you were presented with new ideas and new analysis, it was possible to change your mind and your position, even about something on which you had previously expressed a strong view. Andy was at times criticised by some people for changing his stance, but I am sure that they did not understand the rigorous process that he put himself through before reaching that point.

Other ideas that affected me came from Alan Gibbs, chairman of the Corporation who would ask "what decision would you make if it was your money? Why would you make a different decision because the money you are spending is the governments or the company's?" Mark Ford, formerly an oil-man, came into the corporation and started questioning what he considered as "forestry dogma". When trying to find answers for him, it sometimes became apparent that it was just that – dogma with little real justification.

Being at the right place at the right time gave me the opportunity that few of us usually get to be able to work right through a huge change. My secondment to the State Services Commission came two days after the government decision to disestablish the Forest Service in September 1985. I was fortunate to be involved in the establishment of the Corporation, the (failed) valuation of the forests it was to acquire, the Government policy change that led to the forests being privatised, the negotiations for the Crown-Maori agreement and the Crown Forest Assets Act, the development of the Crown forestry licence, the sale process of the forests and the management of the unsold forests. Subsequently I became (and still am) involved in a number of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements affecting forests, therefore completing the process established under the Crown-Maori agreement of 1989.

I cannot ignore the contribution that my wife Mary has made to my career and attitudes. At the end of 1966 she "married into the Forest Service", a government department that came under significant attack from the environmental movement, including from her father, Charles Fleming.

Through this link, I learnt to think differently about the nature, origin and status of New Zealand's natural forests and to question aspects of the way in which the Forest Service viewed them and their management. Mary also encouraged me to become more actively involved in NZIF as parts of my career started winding down and she daily provides support to that activity.

Overall, I believe that I was extremely fortunate to have had my forestry career grounded in the Forest Service. There was huge support and friendship in that organisation and in the links which had throughout New Zealand and international forestry. This, and the lessons from the people that I worked with, gave me the background and the contacts

that have enabled me to survive the changes that came later.

Presentation of the Forester of the Year Award to me only makes sense when put in the context of the opportunities that I have had in my career and of the lessons and support that others, many of them members or former members of NZIF, have taught or given to me. I give all of them my thanks. I only hope that some of the initiatives that I am involved with through the Institute of Forestry, and which are based on the help and support that I have enjoyed from others through my career, will in some way, give support and help to others in our profession.

Andrew McEwen

NZIF Travel Awards

The **NZIF Chavasse Travel Award** has been presented to Ian Nicholas, Senior Scientist at Ensis, for a study tour to assess the blackwood market in Australia. The purpose of this award is to enable people interested in the forestry sector to travel overseas, in order to increase both their and the forest industry's experience and knowledge. Ensis are also supporting the study tour.

In his application Ian said that "as a scientist in the old Forest Establishment section of FRI under the late Geoff Chavasse, and having had a blackwood silvicultural trial on the Chavasse Holt property, I consider it an honour to be able to contribute and help the future marketing of

blackwood from the family property and to develop the New Zealand blackwood industry".

The **NZIF John Balneaves Travel Award** has been presented to Charles Sorensson, Wood Performance Leader at Horizon2, to study Clonal Plantation Pines in South East USA. John Balneaves dedicated his career to benefiting the NZ forest industry by the clear presentation of sound and practical research. The purpose of this award is to enable people employed in the forestry sector to travel overseas, in order to increase both their and the forest industry's experience and knowledge. Horizon2 will also be supporting Charles's study tour.

PRESIDENT'S BURL

Last year at the Gisborne Conference two members expressed a need for a more tangible handing over of the leadership of the Institute by the outgoing President to the incoming President. The kaumatua for the Conference, John Ruru, and I discussed options and agreed that the matter was one needing to be deliberated over during the year.



NZIF President Ket Bradshaw with the newly presented President's Burl at the Gisborne Conference.

During the year we agreed that an appropriate tangible item to pass from President to President could be a timber burl from Te Tai Poutini. What we chose was a yellow silver pine burl passed over by a silver pine cutter in Craigieburn Creek on the eastern slopes of the Paparoa Range some 38 years ago. A close friend of mine, Maynard Macdonald, revealed the hidden beauty of the burl and placed it on a base. (It was significant to me that Allan is a hapu of the iwi McDonald).

Laser engraved on the base is Te Kaiwhakahaere o Te Pūtahi Ngāherehere o Aotearoa. John and I trust that the words will have growing significance to each President of the Institute.

So it is with pleasure that I gift this burl to the President as a tangible item to be passed from one President to the next. I leave it to Council to work with tangata whenua on the appropriate kawa (ceremony) to accompany the handing over of the President's Burl.

Peter Allan
19 Pipiri 2005