

OBITUARY

P. A. M. Reveirs, 1902-1982

Philip Athol Malcolm Reveirs (Phil) was one of the stalwart group of Rangers who had such a profound effect on the early development of the New Zealand Forest Service. He was born on 18 October 1902 in Ngaio, and began his education at the Terrace Primary School, Wellington, moving on from there to Wellington Boys' College. He was at that time a keen boxer, and obtained a Bronze Medallion. His first employment was with Sladden and Pavitt, Surveyors of Wellington. Anyone who is familiar with his meticulous later survey and mapping work will be aware of his excellence in this field. Much of it was in South Westland, where he was away from home for three months at a time, working under appalling conditions in the silver pine bog country.



Phil joined the State Forest Service as a temporary employee in 1923, and was appointed to the permanent staff as a Forest Guard in 1925. From that time he moved steadily from Ranger to Senior Forest Ranger and Assistant Conservator, becoming a Conservator in 1951. He worked in many parts of both the North and the South Islands. Among his experiences was being in charge of planting gangs during the great planting boom in Kaingaroa Forest in the 1930s, of which he had many hilarious stories. Indeed, one of his most endearing characteristics was a great sense of fun and humour, topped off with an infectious explosive laugh. At the end of his career he was Conservator of the Southland Conservancy for 12 years. He was much respected and liked by his staff for his fairness and kindness, and the way he encouraged people to progress in their work. After retiring from the Forest Service he did consulting work in Southland.

During the war he served as an anti-aircraft officer in New Caledonia. His experiences with spotting from aircraft left an indelible mark on his character, and he avoided air travel thereafter if he could. Nevertheless, he could recall those days with his customary keen humour.

Phil was devoted to his wife who, sadly, predeceased him. They were both keen gardeners, and their home in Invercargill was a place of beauty, lovingly cared for. C.G.R.C.

Arnold Hansson, 1889-1981

Arnold Hansson was born in 1889 in Norway, where he studied forestry, graduating with honours in 1912. At an early age he emigrated to North America, working as an explorer and forester in Canada; during this period he graduated M.A. from Yale. After service as Sergeant-Major with the Ambulance Corps in France, he returned to Canada in 1919, where from Hudson Bay he was appointed Chief Inspector of the N.Z. Forest Service in 1919.

Hansson's initial appointment was to Westland where he was responsible for the establishment of Westland Conservancy during the period October 1920 - April 1921 (where he was known as the extravagant foreigner, the Forest Service having a Model T Ford and there being very few roads on which it could be driven). His report on the Westland Conservation Region contains not a few pertinent observations which we would have done well to observe over the past 50 years:

- The soil of the common rimu-kamahī forest type is shallow and unfit for farming and should remain as forest land.
- The timber lands north of Hokitika are being rapidly depleted by reckless cutting.
- The common conception of local people that native bush will not regenerate is based on belief, not fact. All that is necessary is to keep fires out.

By 1924 he had been responsible for the execution of a "Preliminary National Forest Inventory" about which he wrote much later (in 1964, to A. L. Poole) that "it was a very laudable effort since it was compiled in a little over one year, whereas your own staff, overwhelmingly numerous, with all modern aids, took 10 years after thinking about it for 23 years, a total of 33 years of contemplation".

The list of his reports and papers, now transferred to the National Archives, gives some idea of the breadth and competence