

vided in the form of two dinners (on successive nights, of course!), well lubricated by their preceding "happy hours". Awards were presented at the official conference dinner, and it was indeed a pleasure to see Geoff Chavasse presented with the Kirk Horn Flask plus a bottle of the vital ingredients with which to keep it well charged.

The organising committee excelled themselves in the efficient organisation of a memorable AGM and Conference, not only in the smooth running of every aspect of the event, but also in the very high level of sponsorship achieved which, for poor consultants like myself, helped to keep the registration costs down to a very reasonable level indeed. This will be a hard act to follow next year. And our thanks must go also to the sponsors for helping make the event both affordable and enjoyable.

#### Dennys Guild

## Forest Valuation Working Party progress report

The Working Party is in the process of developing guidelines for forest valuation. We have met eight times (to the end of April) and have prepared drafts on:

- the purpose for forest valuation;
- alternative approaches to forest valuation for each purpose;
- guidelines on the appropriate method for each purpose;
- standards for forest description.

Draft Standards for Forest description have been written for:

- Description of Land
- Forest Area
- Declaration of Land Value
- Description of Croptyping
- Recording Forest History
- Yield Estimation
- Describing Costs
- Specification of Prices
- Disclosure of Discount Rates.

The Working Party is currently in the process of reviewing these standards. It is anticipated that discussion drafts of the Standards for Forest Description together with other background material will be released for review in June. Comment will be sought from both members and the wide range of other interested parties.

**Bruce Manley**  
Convenor

# The role of forestry in the MacKenzie Basin

Institute President Peter Olsen and Councillors joined a group of members from the Canterbury Section in an inspection and general review of the role of forestry in MacKenzie Basin on March 5 and 6.

We enjoyed the enthusiastic and expert guidance of Nick Ledgard as we inspected established tree planting trials on a representative dry lowland site, earlier planted shelterbelts, and a comprehensive arboretum of various conifer species at the Ribonwood Station, Omarama. The group also viewed the impact of shelterbelt plantings, small established woodlots, and escaped wildings on the impressive tussock grassland landscapes dominating the foothill country around the basin itself.

The weather was beautifully fine and almost cloudless as we ascended the Mount John University Observatory site for luncheon. The panoramic scene lived up to its reputation as a countryside with special qualities that have made it a unique landscape. The shape of the surrounding mountains was more dramatic under a bare tussock mantle. And neither the "barbecue-breaker" daily on-shore gale, nor the more familiar nor'wester, which provide New Zealand records for peak windiness on this most exposed site, were thankfully present on this occasion.

Nick provided a well-balanced introduction to the opportunities and challenges facing land owners and others with an interest in landscape values. This has been a particularly damp season and those unfamiliar with the impact of successive seasons of drought might have gained a rather rosy picture of tree establishment and growth prospects.

To the much discussed and vexed question of tree wildings Nick stated his firm belief in the strategic importance of adopting a firm management policy to control outbreaks at the outset rather than stand by and let the countryside be checked with scattered and unevenly spread trees. The neglect in some districts has jeopardised the support of others in the community who have a less direct interest in sustainable and profitable use of the land.

The scale and special care taken in establishing new and comprehensive Landcare/FRI trials of several conifer species on a carefully selected representative lowland site took most of us by surprise. There were machine-planted rows

of small seedling trees and parallel open sown seed trials for comparison in the rabbit-proofed enclosures. Frost is seen to be a more serious controlling factor in survival than drought – and severe frost sufficient to kill young pine trees and Douglas fir may be absent for several years.

#### Snowfalls

For those who are unfamiliar with sustained frost risk in the inland South Island hill country I quote from the official meteorological report for July 1968:

"The snowfalls on the last four days of June on the high country of both islands and to low levels in the South Island persisted for the first four days of July, and there were further falls about July 10-12, and on the 25th. Frosty conditions, especially during the first half of the month, allowed little opportunity for the snow to melt over the greater part of the South Island. On the hills to the south-west of Mossburn at an altitude of about 650 metres the depth was reported as 70 cm and 350 cm in the drifts, and it remained frozen there for three weeks.

"Very severe conditions were experienced, even at quite low altitudes where a continuous snow cover persisted. For example, Tara Hills, Omarama (altitude 500 metres) had snow lying on the ground the whole month, never less than 14 cm in depth. The mean temperature was  $-5.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ , the lowest ever recorded in New Zealand for a month below the altitude of 1000 metres. On eight days the maximum temperature failed to reach zero C, the lowest maximum being  $-6.7^{\circ}\text{C}$  on the 14th. The air temperature fell just below  $-17.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  on the 6th, 7th, and 14th."

And we have been reminded of particularly cold months in recent years, notably July 1991 and June 1992 in both Central Otago and in the MacKenzie Basin when established radiata pine trees and eucalypts suffered severe damage and loss.

At all events the newly-planted tree seedlings looked most promising and the good depth of soils would enable the young trees to send roots down to a level that would render them more drought resistant. There was some evidence of the importance of mycorrhizal inoculation on this site. Nick commented that the MacKenzie Basin was, however, essen-