

tially a woody plant habitat despite occupation in recent centuries by tussock grassland and pasture.

Left to itself, the district would sooner or later revert to woody species such as sweet briar and broom if the seed was available. It is, however, more likely that introduced conifer seed would be more mobile and that the district could be covered in wilding trees over the course of time without intervention. Better, he said, to manage the local soils – and for wealth and employment, if possible.

Members of the group observed *Hieracium* infestation but an accompanying small dog owned by this writer failed

to locate more than the isolated rabbit during the course of the two-day inspection.

The arboretum located in a reasonably sheltered gully site on the foothills at Ribbonwood is already producing some very encouraging progress. The pastoralists, Mr and Mrs Colin and Gwenda Mackay, were most enterprising and hardworking farmers, and we all felt the community was the stronger for such dedication and persistency in a habitat that could so often be very inhospitable. Fortunately the weather was fine for our inspection and the Mackays' hospitality was much appreciated.

An inspection of a mature seven

hectares of Douglas fir at the top end of Lake Ohau, and now set for logging, demonstrated how profitable such enterprise can be in the heavier rainfall zones on the western side of the catchment nearer the Divide. And what a marvellous and memorable drive we enjoyed alongside the big canals with the Southern Alps and Mount Cook as a backdrop. Members of the Institute generally agreed that the visit had proved most worthwhile and that there was indeed an assured place for well-planned forestry consistent with good landscape outcomes in the long run.

**Jolyon Manning**



## PERSONAL PROFILE



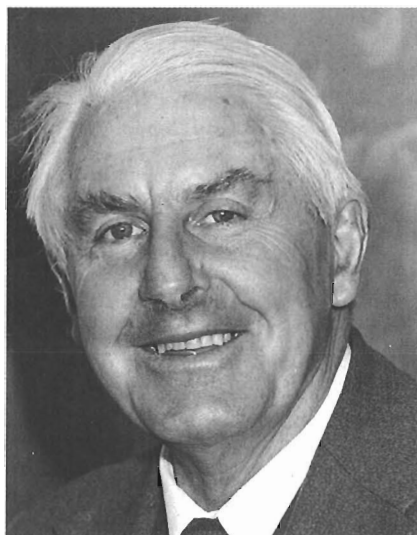
# Ross Smith Macarthur

Ross Macarthur was born in Wellington in 1923, descended from Scottish grandparents who emigrated to Otago. He obtained a broad-based education at Scots College (Wellington), Victoria University and Lincoln College, and he then volunteered for war service. He gained the skills of pilot and navigator and served in Canada, Africa and Europe, at one stage with Malcolm Conway. He then went to Oxford University where he graduated with an Honours degree in Forestry in 1948.

Returning to New Zealand, Ross joined the Forest Service in Canterbury where he "shared an office with Jack Holloway and was lucky enough to do some beech forest field work with him". He also wrote a working plan for Hanmer Forest – a rather academic exercise because there was then no market for the wood.

Ross is an energetic, forthright and indomitable man of great integrity who does not suffer fools gladly and can, when he considers it proper, be blunt and acerbic. He "lambasted" several senior officers about the then universal planting spacing of 6ft x 6ft. NZFS Head Office put him on his mettle, under Fred Alsop and Hugo Hinds, to "find out what the correct spacing should be". Ross thinks that his report (unpublished) "was the best thing I ever did in forestry".

In 1953 he joined the Southland Catchment Board as Soil Conservator and Land Classifier. Four years later he was



**Ross Macarthur**

appointed the first Soil Conservator to the Marlborough Catchment Board. "The early years in Marlborough were a major pioneering effort on a solo basis," he writes, "in a region dominated by sheep grazing, burning and extreme climatic events. Soil erosion was everywhere at both high and low altitudes." From 1957 to 1958 he fought for the use of trees to heal the widespread erosion scars and as a profitable land use, throughout the region. His efforts were eventually rewarded with the formation of the Marlborough Forestry Corporation and his appointment as its Principal Executive Officer as an addition

to his role of Chief Soil Conservator. Formation of the Marlborough Forest Owners Association followed with help from the Forest Service and NZ Forest Owners Association, "and today constraints on forestry are minimal".

His concern about logging impacts on steep country led him to visit Europe a number of times to study steepland logging systems and in 1984 he demonstrated a Wyssen system which proved conclusively its low impact on soils. After retirement in 1985 he formed Skylogs Equipment Co., which continues to promote protective logging systems. He is also now working on a Cork Oak project which he finds rewarding and a source of personal satisfaction.

Ross has been a member of the NZIF since 1949, and from 1970 to 1975 he served on the Editorial Committee of the NZ Journal of Forestry. He has also presented a number of papers on soil erosion, management of steepland soils and of forests upon them. He was made an Honorary Life Member of the NZ Association of Soil Conservators in 1986 and served as President of that body in 1965-67.

Like his working life, his spare-time activities have been, and remain, vigorous, including outdoor recreation on land and sea. As a lateral thinker, he has long been keenly interested in monetary reform. As a staunch advocate of municipal composting and low energy organic farming he managed an organic farmlet for 17 years and is an Honorary Life Member of the NZ Soil Association, serving as President from 1970 to 1972.

To sum up: Ross has throughout his career been a fervent battler for what he believes to be right, and also for the honour and good standing of the forestry profession.

**C.G.R. Chavasse**