

BILL GIRLING-BUTCHER, QSM

Enthusiast who created a world-leading fire service

When we think of Bill Girling-Butcher we almost inevitably recall the man who toiled mightily through the 1960s and 1970s to create an effective, well resourced rural fire organisation throughout New Zealand.

His enthusiasm and encouragement led to the development of the monsoon bucket, which has become an almost standard piece of equipment for rural fire control and has since been widely utilised in many other parts of the world.

Bill was 83 when he passed away recently in Wellington. He was a Fellow and Honorary member of the Institute, and was nationally recognised for his contribution to rural fire protection with the award of the QSM.

Those who knew him would agree that his great passions outside of his family were forestry, fire and football, to which must be added his great concern for the welfare of his many friends and fellows. He was kind, even gentle, humorous but also committed. His strong self-belief is reflected in a short anecdote recounted at his funeral....."Upon arrival at St Patrick's College Silverstream he found himself placed in a B stream class. Deciding this was not the place for him, he promptly got up and moved to an A stream class, sat down and stayed there. He was awarded a prize for diligence in 1934".

The same determination and perseverance no doubt contributed to a successful sporting career which included playing rugby for the Bay of Islands, and later helped him beat polio.

His early years with the Forest Service were marked with the same character. While District Ranger at Ohakune, Bill ensured indigenous sawmillers worked to strict guidelines, and when employment became an issue he is also said to have persuaded Conservancy Office to undertake silviculture programmes involving the thinning and pruning of other pine species, including *P contorta* and *P nigra*. Although the economics of this programme may have been based more on social than commercial forestry grounds, several of these stands also produced high quality sawlogs when cut in the 1990s.

As Fire Control Officer at Kaingaroa he was responsible for organising both a systematic fire protection programme and managing a large land clearing, through burning, operation that became the standard throughout New Zealand. This programme extended onto Department of Lands and Survey administered Crown land around the Taupo Basin, and was been the basis for a further boost to the rural economy of that area.

Outside the Forest Service Bill Girling-Butcher is equally well remembered as absolutely dedicated and committed to rural fire prevention and control. His willingness and enthusiasm to support the development of volunteer rural fire forces was demonstrated through help with training and the careful formulating of appropriate legislation. Friends remember him as someone

who was ready to put pressure on public officials to act when it came to fire matters.

He was widely recognised as one of the world's leading experts on forest and rural fire management.

After his retirement as Forest Fire Control Officer for New Zealand in 1979, companies and countries throughout the world sought his expertise.

Many insurers used him to assess fire-risk in forests, estimate damage after fires and act as an expert witness in court cases.

He helped install forest fire fighting equipment and systems in several other countries, and set up a busy importing business bringing the best equipment and chemicals into New Zealand.

Bill's passion for rugby and his ability to spot individuals of particular capability was also well recognised. He coached in the King Country when some remarkable players, such as the Meads "boys" emerged. This same interest later saw him promote and develop (with strong support from the highest levels) a New Zealand Forest Service regional, inter-island and national rugby competition involving players from the rank and file playing with others with regional and even All Black experience. Later netball was introduced and these activities contributed mightily to the great *esprit de corps* within that department.

Bill was a former RNZAF officer who served in the Solomon Islands during his six years of duty in and after World War II. He was a keen supporter of events involving his old colleagues and became chairman of the RSA. He was also active in the Eastbourne community in other respects, serving as Civil Defence Co-ordinator and Chairman of the National Party.

He was also a keen supporter of the New Zealand Institute of Foresters, a particularly strong supporter of his local section and a regular at annual meetings. His recognition within the Institute reflected both his contribution at this level plus his wider contribution to the forest industry.

Bill Girling-Butcher is survived by his wife Olive and four children, to them goes our commiserations and appreciation for the time Bill was able to so successfully devote to his wider community and forestry interests.

P Berg

JOHN JOHNS

'JJ' made unique pictorial contribution to New Zealand forestry

The recent passing away of "JJ", as he liked to be known amongst his closer friends, marks the end of a lifetime commitment to the creation of images of our heritage of trees throughout New Zealand and a unique contribution in the history of the former New Zealand Forest Service.

John had a real passion for our trees that seems so often absent today - especially those which have been

introduced from other countries but also our remaining unmodified indigenous landscapes. His unique collection of photographic images of our trees - both introduced commercial plantations creating valuable employment and wealth for the nation, and the fine native forest habitats - which he earlier gifted to the National Archives puts this and future generations forever in his debt.

"JJ" brought with him a centuries old proven forestry culture from Europe with caring disciplines aligned to long-term husbandry managed on a sustainable basis for the enjoyment and benefit of both the present and future generations. Where both timber for practical purposes and environmental tranquility were joint goals.

His personal beliefs were often associated with the Gaia concept. Following in the footsteps of the famous American photographer, Ansel Adams for whom he had much admiration and respect, John Johns knew all about the 'benediction of light' which comes through in so many of his forest images.

He was always looking for the elusive "Rembrandts" and "Picasso's" that so often characterise his work.

John Johns service to the forestry sector was recognised when he was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry a decade ago. His lifetime contribution deserved more honours than he received however. He was a quiet man but had a spirit of determination through to his last days.

In more recent years, initially at the instigation of his lifetime and much admired colleague, Dr Lindsay Poole CBE, John spent much time with Jolyon and (Dr) Enny Manning at their special lifetime park, Jolendale Park, Bridge Hill, Alexandra. This he often described as "park headquarters" and declared it a personal 'shangri-la' where he has methodically put together a marvellous heritage of images that will be kept in the University of Otago's Hocken Library.

This was a 'tranquillity base' for John but he also had another very special place close to his home in Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. The local Buddhist Monastery where along with a retired nuclear scientist friend John spent many hours enhancing the tracks and recreational amenity of Monastery's extensive grounds.

John had a lovely quiet sense of humour, an enviable dedication to his art, a close circle of lifetime friends and associates, a great love for his family, and above all a passion for the appreciation and care of our treed landscapes. His was a model life that others in this and generations to come could well emulate. John stood for both environmental and social values that are wanting in so many quarters today.

There has been a great flurry of interest in our indigenous landscape values of recent decades but there is a need also for a better appreciation of introduced flora and fauna that is also an important part of our ongoing heritage. We will miss him so much but his systematic and dedicated record of images will be an inspiration to many yet unborn. We salute your memory John and share with your surviving family members our sadness and grief in their loss.

With best wishes,

-Jolyon Manning

Calendar 2000

The following conferences, expos, courses and other events will be of interest to readers. Details are brief, so please contact the organisers for more information.

March 14-18 2000

AusTimber 2000, Albury, New South Wales
International exhibition and conference for forest industries.

Contact: +61 3 6248 5653

13-15 March

Introduction to Agro-Ecological Modelling with AME
Are you a research scientist in ecology, agronomy, forestry or environmental science? Would you like to know more about designing and implementing simulation models? Would you like to learn how to construct models in a visual modelling environment? Then join our three-day course 13-15 March 2000 at the Darwin Building, Kings Buildings Campus, the University of Edinburgh. Full details and a registration form contact

Vikki.Hilton@ed.ac.uk

March 19-24

International Union of Forestry, Research Organisations
"The Future of Eucalypts for Wood Products"

Launceston Tasmania

Contact: 61 3 6224 3773

April 8 to 9

The South East Asian Network on NTFP Management (SEANN) is organizing its 3rd Regional Workshop on Community based NTFP management at Himalaya Hotel in Kathmandu from April 8 to 9, 2000. Institute of Forestry, Pokhara, Nepal is organizing the workshop in collaboration with various institutions involved in NTFP management in Nepal and India. Abhoy Kumar Das Dean, Institute of Forestry Pokhara, Nepal. Tel: (977-61)- 21563 Fax: (977-1)- 279298, Kathmandu. Email: iofdean@mos.com.np

9-12 April 2000

Workshop on challenges and limitations of optimality approach in plant ecology Hyytiälä Forestry Field Station, Helsinki University, Finland. Please, contact Maarit Raivonen by e-mail. Her address is: Maarit. Raivonen@helsinki.fi

June 19-22

Forest Products Research Conference

Clayton, Victoria

Contact: CSIRO, 61-3-9545 2222

25-30 June 2000

European Observatory for Mountain Forest - OEFM. IUFRO - Task Force on Forests in Sustainable Mountain Development International Symposium Multipurpose Management of Mountain Forests : Concepts, Methods, Techniques Pralognan-la-Vanoise, France First Announcement and Call for Papers Gerard BUTTOUD, chairman of the OEFM scientific board, 14 rue Girardet, F-54042 NANCY, France ; fax : 33383370645 ; e-mail : buttoud@nancy-engref.inra.fr

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