

## Obituaries

# Complete forester's lifetime service recalled

**Ken Manson 1909-2002**

Born at Milltown in Ellesmere County on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1909 Ken Manson became enchanted by forestry and spent much of his next 93 years pursuing an active and rewarding forestry life.

By 1930 Ken was a member of a planting gang at the Eyrewell State Forest and by 1932 had joined the Selwyn Plantation Board's (SPB) planting gang.

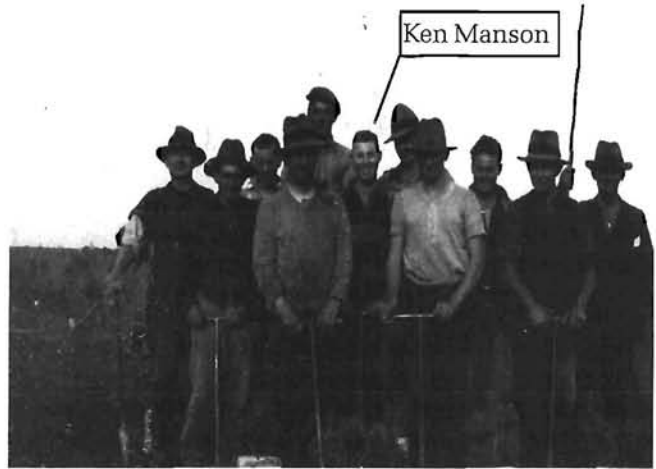
By 1938 Ken was the supervisor of the SPB planting gang which established the 450 ha plantation immediately to the west of Burnham military camp.

World War II intervened and Ken was assigned to a forestry reinforcement unit that left for England in April 1942. He was posted to the 11<sup>th</sup> company, harvesting and milling oak and beech at Bathurst Park. The oak was used to build bodies of railway trucks and the beech for framing Wellington Bombers. The company operated a modern band mill and two more conventional circular mills.

During the war, Ken worked with several well known forestry personalities from that era: Mick Sexton in charge of the 7<sup>th</sup> reinforcements, Major George Gammon CO 11<sup>th</sup> Company, Colonel Elliot OC of the Forestry unit based at Wiltshire, and A P Thompson CO of the 15<sup>th</sup> Company in Italy.

Ken returned to New Zealand in November 1944, married and settled in Burnham from where, until his retirement in 1978, he was based and worked as forest foreman and forest ranger for SPB.

There was no forestry job that Ken could not turn his hand to, no tree that he could not fell, no machine he could not control, no fire that ever escaped from his grasp, no part of the forest that he did not love and



*Eyrewell forest planting gang 1930.*

understand. Indeed he spent the next 34 years of his career as the universal multi-purpose forest ranger. His maps and measurements were meticulous, his care and command of his employees exemplary, his knowledge and understanding of the Canterbury Plains and, latterly, the Canterbury hill forests legendary.

There was a real sense of loss when Ken retired and delight that, until failing health slowed him in his later years, he continued his great interest in the Institute and in forestry.

Ken Manson was the complete forest ranger. He is survived by his wife, Thelma, and two of his three sons.

**Bill Studholme**

## Life-long forester passes away

**R. G. Miller 1910-2002**

On 8 May 2002 Robert Graham Miller passed away in Auckland. Robert was born in the UK on 8 March 1910 and graduated with a B Sc (Forestry) from Edinburgh University in 1931. While still a student he became a member of the Commonwealth Forestry Association, and held membership continuously from the time he joined in 1931 – a total of 71 years. At the time of his death he was the Association's longest serving member.

Robert also joined the NZIF in 1984 and remained a member until immediately prior to his death, suggesting modestly "...as I am now hospital bound and unable to be active in the Institute, I wish to resign my membership, which should save a small amount in Institute costs".

His enthusiasm for forestry and travel took him to many places and he will still have many friends and acquaintances residing in other parts of the world. From 1932-48 he worked as Assistant Conservator of Forests in what was then Northern Rhodesia, then from 1948-54 he was Senior Assistant Conservator of Forests with the Forest Service in Uganda. In 1954 Robert returned to the UK to work for the Government as Assistant Director in charge of the Forestry and Land Section in the

International Land Resources Division of the Overseas Development Department based in Surbiton. Overseas service again called and in 1965 he joined FAO as Forestry Officer, Trinidad and Tobago. Sadly in 1967 his wife passed away. In 1968 he travelled to Australia where he worked for CSIRO in Canberra in a technical capacity before joining Australia National University in 1975 as a lecturer in forest survey in the Forestry Department.

Robert joined the NZ Institute of Forestry when he arrived in New Zealand and was a member from 1984 to 2002, regularly attending forestry events and maintaining an active interest in the forestry sector. This interest also extended to attendance at farm forestry field days. He also became an interested member of the Humanists and Rationalists Association and regularly attended their events. Unfortunately Robert lost a leg about 18 months ago and this curtailed much of his activity, nevertheless his keen interest in forestry matters remained until his death. Members of both the NZIF and the CFA will extend their best wishes to Robert's family.

**Peter Berg**